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## Anderson's "The sense of humor: Let humor fast track you to healthier, happier living" (book review)

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# Book Reviews

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Anderson, M. E. (2016). *The sense of humor: Let humor fast track you to healthier, happier living*. Atlanta, GA: Elk Lake Publishing. 330 pp. \$12.95. ISBN 9781942513971

Max Elliot Anderson wrote this book on humor to encourage its use in daily life. The author also attempts to explain the role of humor in health, teaching, relationships and ministry. He sees humor, used well, as a God-given gift to relieve stress and ease relationships. Anderson promotes humor as vital to family life because it can bring families together and help them get through difficult times. The author quotes, “A cheerful heart is good medicine” (Proverbs 17:22, New International Version).

According to Anderson, “Gelotology, the actual study linking humor to health got started in the United States in the 1930s” (p.27). He also mentions the famed Dr. “Patch” Adams, who “is a groundbreaking physician whose groundbreaking work in the field of humor’s positive effects in healthcare led him to establish the ‘Gesundheit Institute.’ This health facility has treated thousands of people at no charge” (p.26).

Anderson argues that humor is underutilized in education, believing that classrooms are often humorless places. He claims that, “The more our society has been directed toward left-brained activities—the things logical and linear—we have lost sight of the fun and excitement in learning” (p.72). In addition to making learning fun, humor has the potential to help students become more comfortable and confident in the classroom, by increasing interest and reducing stress. He also explains that humor exercises visual and linguistic intelligence.

Pastors and those in ministry are urged to cultivate a godly sense of humor and seek humorous illustrations and observations to make their messages relatable and memorable. Anderson does give warnings that not all humor is beneficial. Humor that hurts or offends is not of God.

The second part of the book consists mostly of clean, inoffensive jokes and humorous material on varied topics, which can be used for speakers. There are a few about forgetful seniors and about women drivers, but not worse than are typically used by comic strips. One problem I noticed throughout the book, is that while the author does include to whom the quotes he uses are attributed, footnotes and a bibliography are lacking. Otherwise, this book should be useful to educators, ministers and others.

## Reviewer

Cynthia Hammell