

Stress is a **Laughing** Matter

Using **Humor** to Enhance Well-being, Resilience,
and Productivity



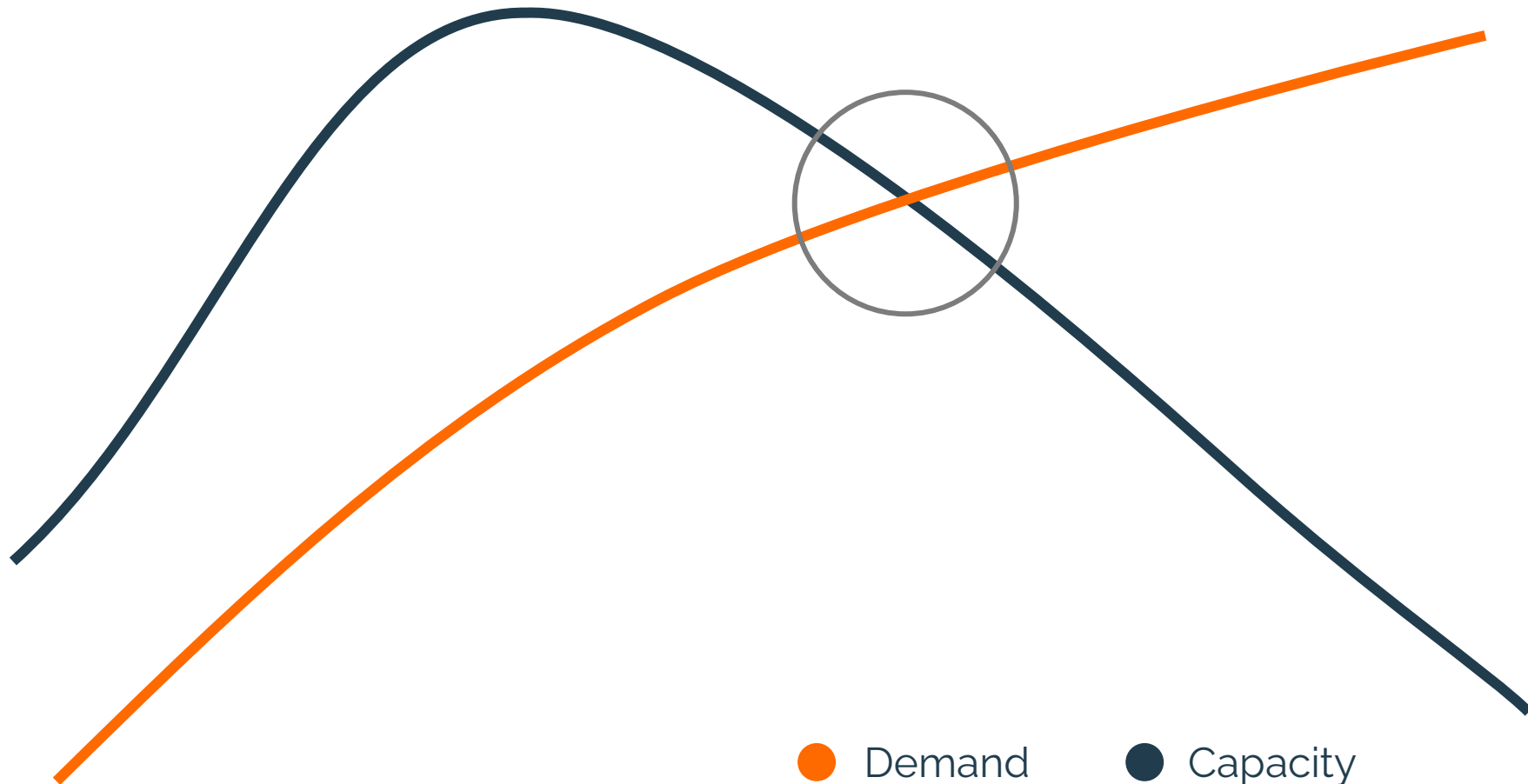
What is Stress?

The non-specific response to a perceived threat

What happens when our demand exceeds capacity

(Dr. Heidi Hanna, Stress Mastery Academy)

Stress Load



Scary Statistics

Workplace stress costs the U.S. Economy 550 million workdays and more than **\$500 billion per year**

(American Psychological Association, 2023)

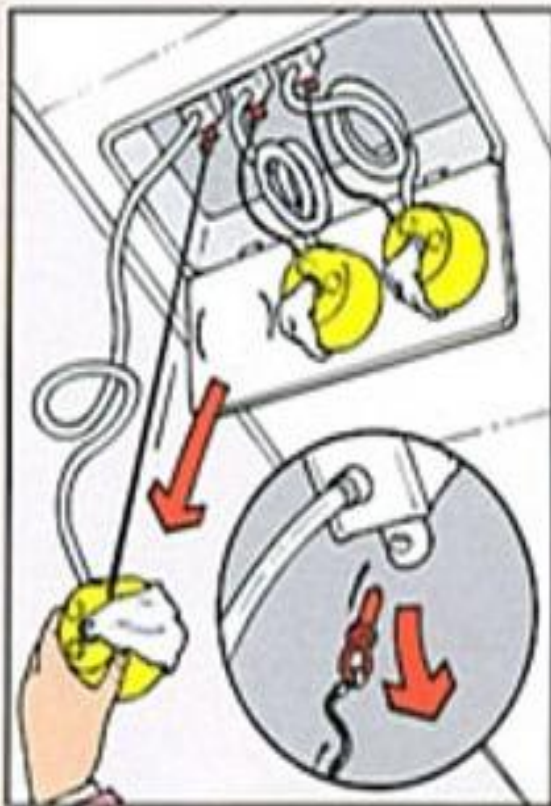
Globally, **56%** of Gen Z & Millennials searched for new jobs due to **stress** while **25% quit**

(Deloitte Global GenZ/Millennial Survey, 2023)

68% of people just feel like a **statistic**

(Me, Today)

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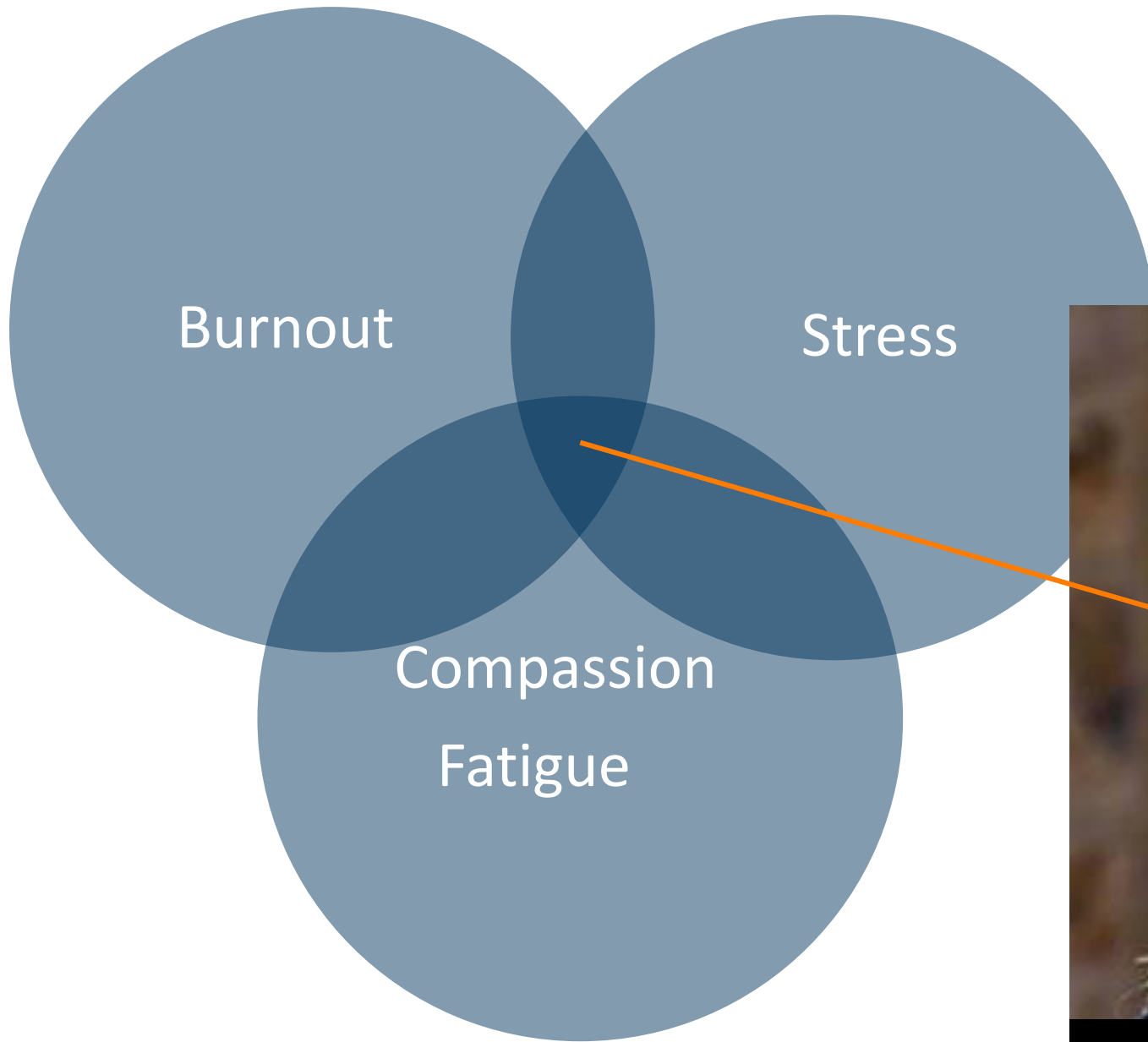


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Experiment:

A picture is worth a
thousand thoughts







**People with a
well-developed
sense of humor are more
positive & optimistic**



Optimism

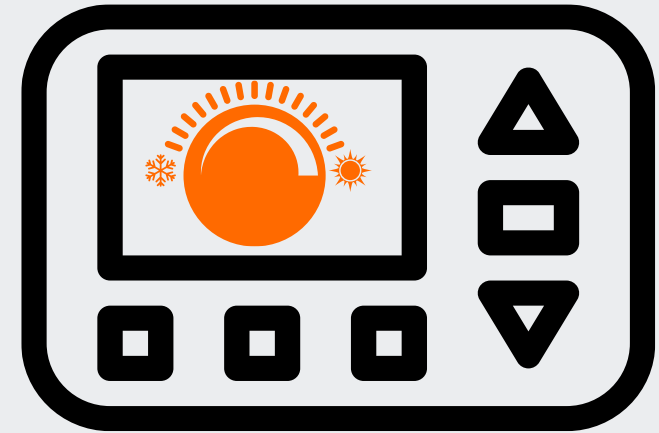
You can be a

Thermometer



or

Thermostat



**People with a
well-developed
sense of humor are more
resilient**



WHEN LIFE
GIVES YOU
Lemons
MAKE A
LEMONADE



Humor is
life's
sweetener



Developing a Humor Habit

(Using humor to cope with life's struggles)

- Reduces stress
- Lessens the impact of traumatic events
- Increases overall life satisfaction
- Leads to greater resilience & psychological well-being



Chronic Seriousness

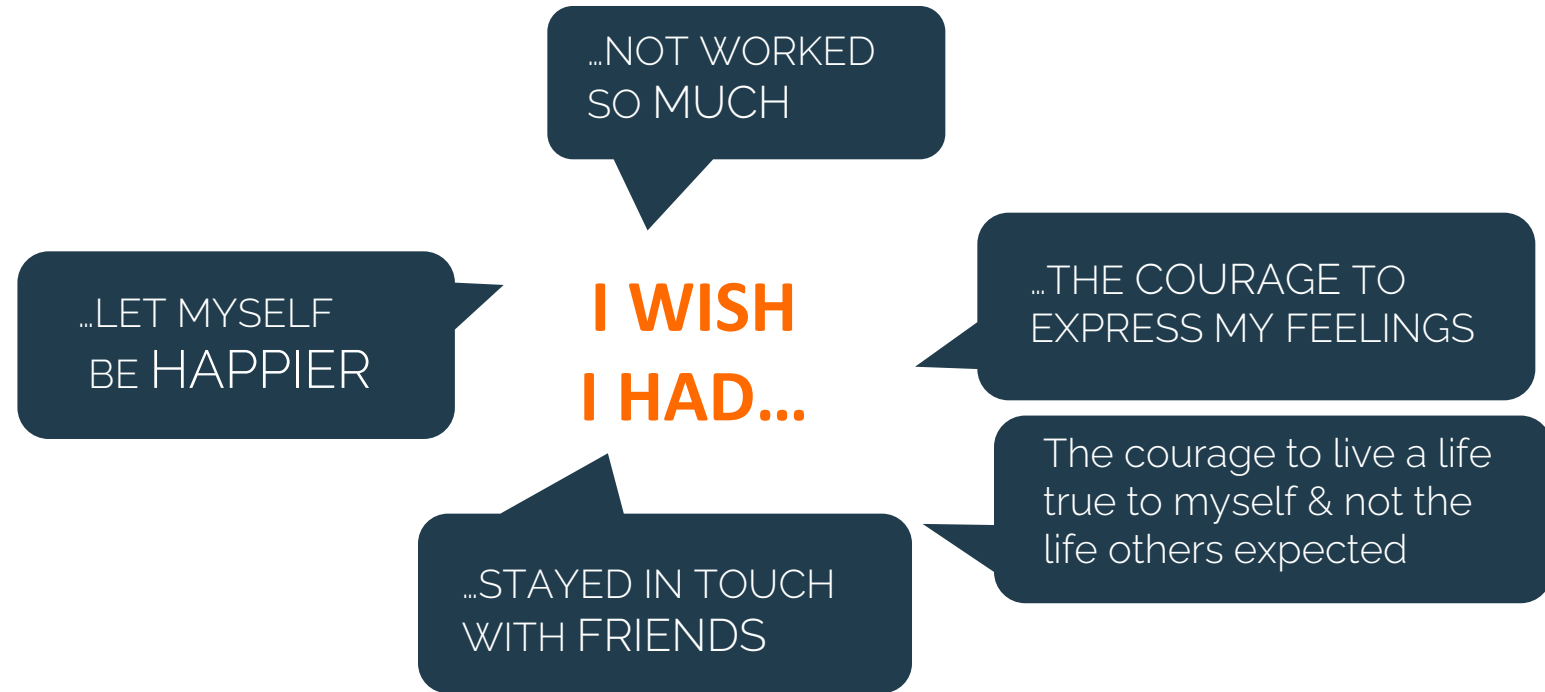
- 1.4 million people
- 166 countries

When we hit **age 23**, our propensity to laugh begins to evaporate.





TOP 5 Regrets



Ware, Bronnie. The Top Five Regrets of the Dying, Hay House, 2012



TOP 5 Regrets

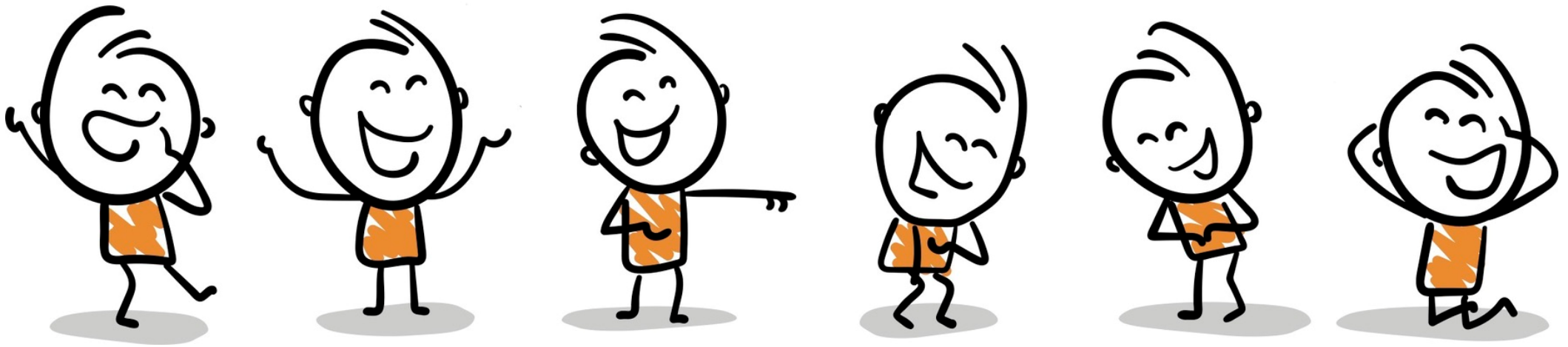
I WISH
I HAD...

Laughed more
and had more
silliness in my life

Ware, Bronnie. The Top Five Regrets of the Dying, Hay House, 2012



Humor Helps



A Few **Benefits** of Humor & Laughter

- Lowers Blood Pressure
- Decreases Muscle Tension
- Increases Pain Tolerance
- Boosts T-Cell Production
- Decreases Inflammation
- Massages Internal Organs



Funny Fact:

Humor Boosts Productivity

People who watched funny videos on their break were **twice as productive** afterward as those who took breaks with no humor.

-Journal of Business Psychology



Humor & Leadership



More **supportive**
& approachable

(Southern Speech Communication Journal, 1988)

Builds **credibility**

(Journal of Applied Communication Research)

Reduces social distance

(Communication Reports, 1995)

Best Leadership Traits:

Work Ethic
&
Sense of Humor!





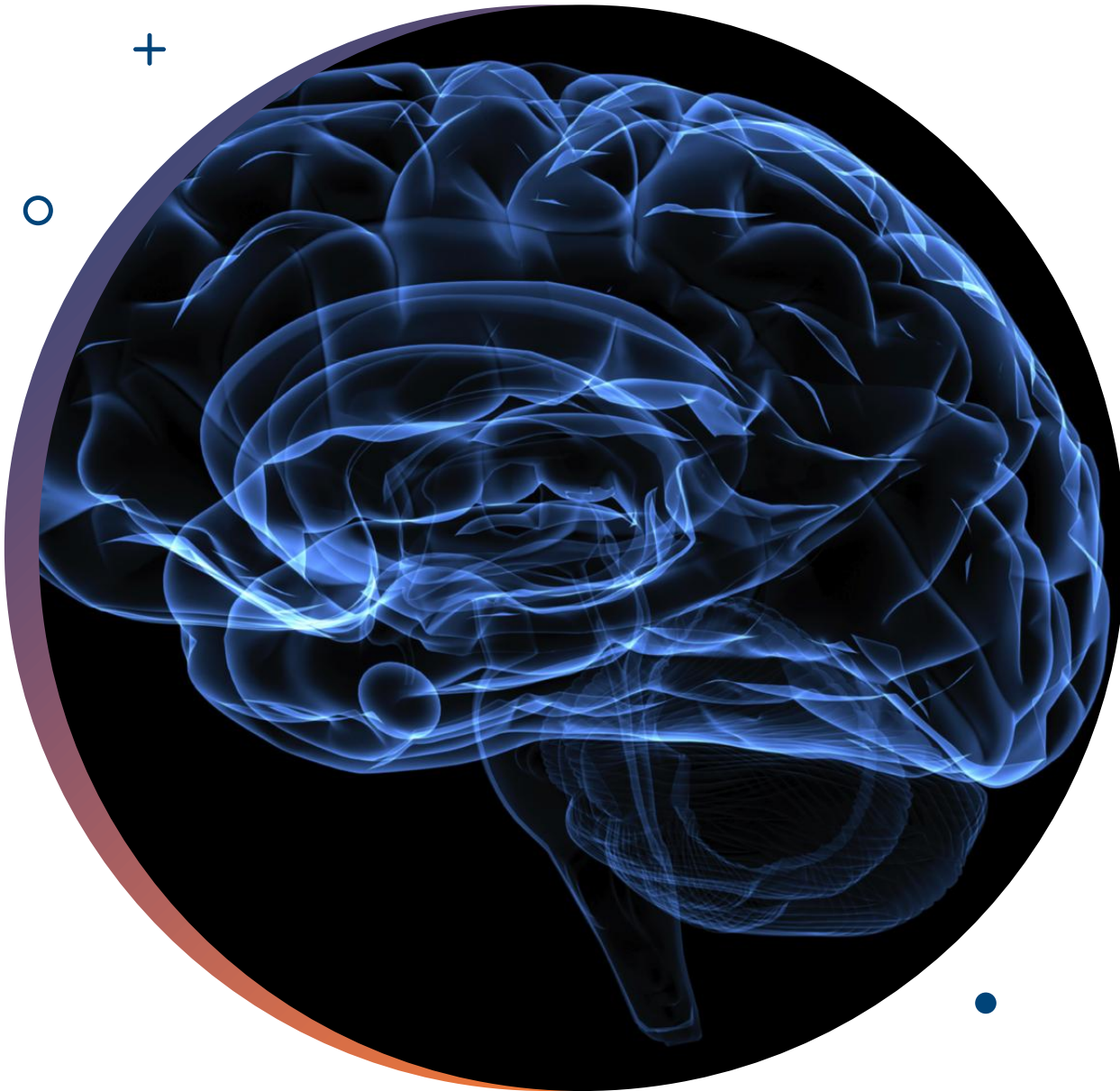
Humor Decreases Stress

Funny Fact:

Just the **anticipation of humor** can lead to a 39% decrease in stress

-American Physiological Society. Research by Dr. Lee Berk, et al. Loma Linda University





Dopamine
Oxytocin
Serotonin
Endorphins

Experiment

Something Weird

About you
that **you love**

or

Something weird that
makes you happy



HOW DO WE CHANGE I WISH TO I DID?



Humor Habits



Humor Habits



3 Funny Things Intervention

FUNNY FACT:

Writing Down 3 Funny Things
from each day for 1 week



Increases Happiness & reduces
Depressive Symptoms up to 6 months!

Ruch, W et al. Front. Psychol. 2018;9:821.

Humor Habits



Humor Jar

Humor Jar

1. Write down something funny or amusing from each day this year and put it in the jar.
2. Open the jar on New Year's Eve and relive your funniest moments of the year!

P.S. - IT ALSO
WORKS GREAT
AT THE OFFICE!



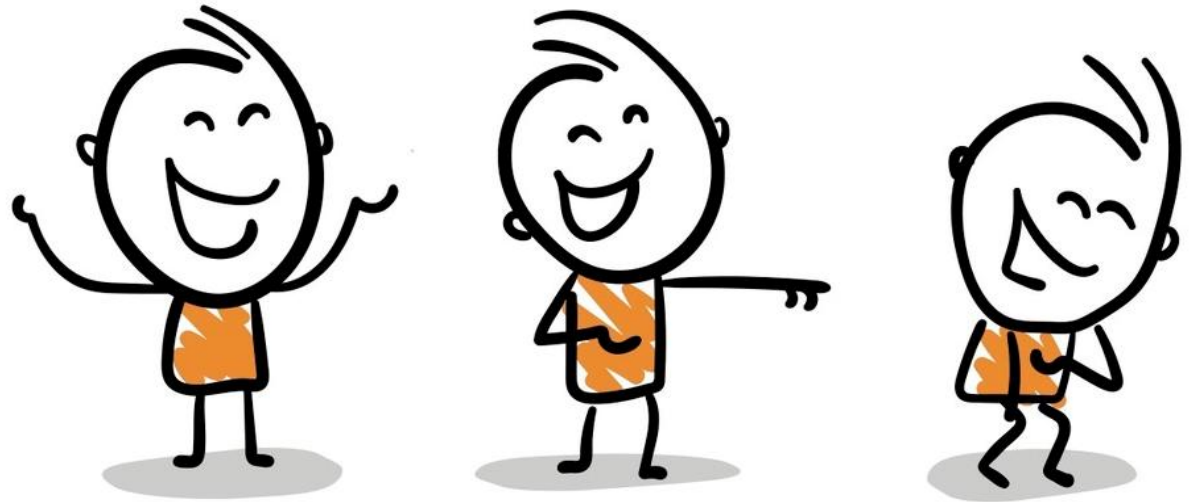
Humor Habits



Play the “*What I Could’ve Said*” Game

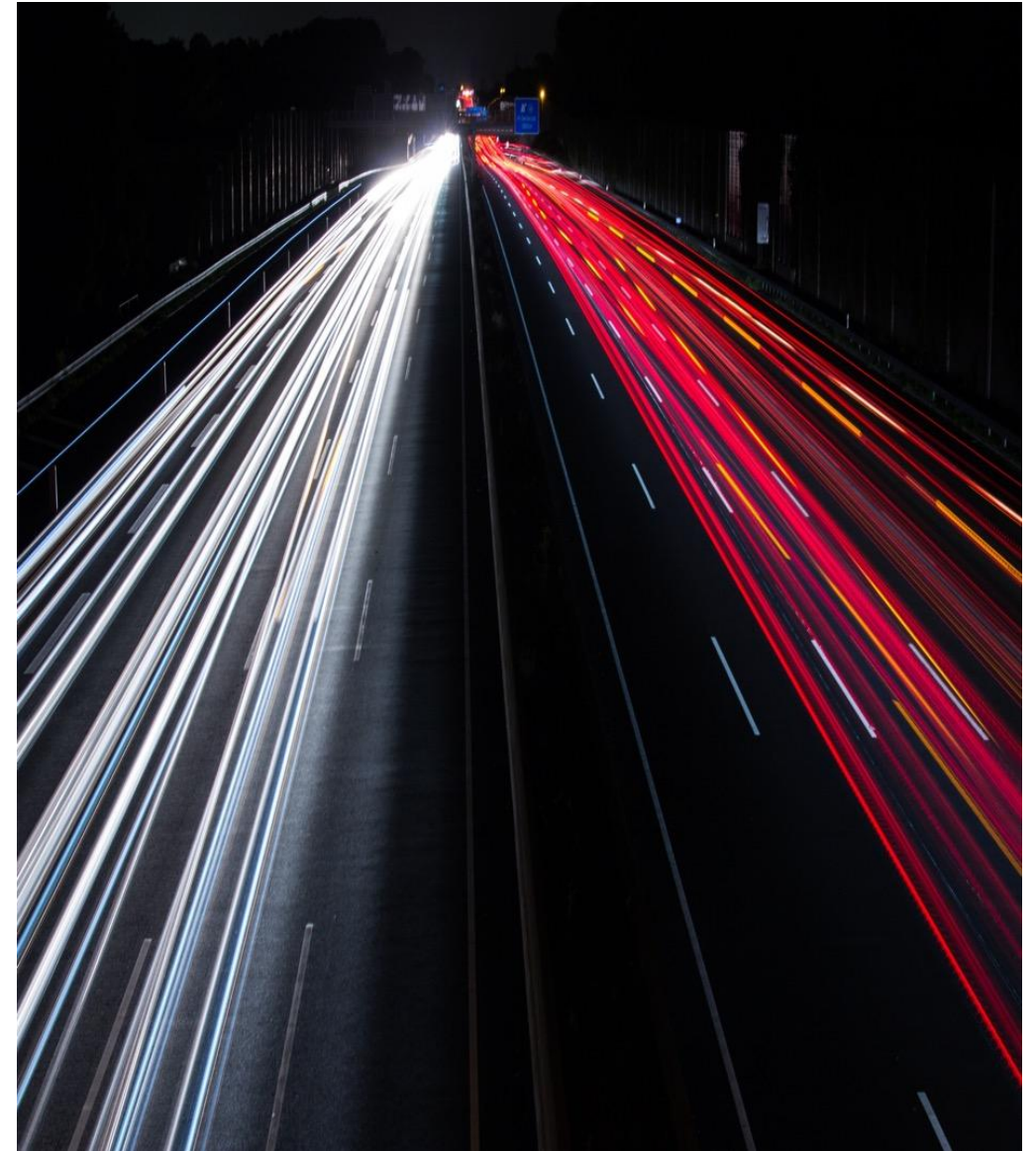
Humorous Reappraisal

Leads to significant boost
in well-being & resilience



**“Don’t live your life as
an actor in a drama,
just to reach the end
to find out you were
the director,
and it could have been
a comedy.”**







HUMOR IS NOT A TALENT.



HUMOR IS A HABIT.

*"To truly laugh, you
must be able to
take your pain and
play with it."*



Experiment

Think of your “pet peeves” or annoyances



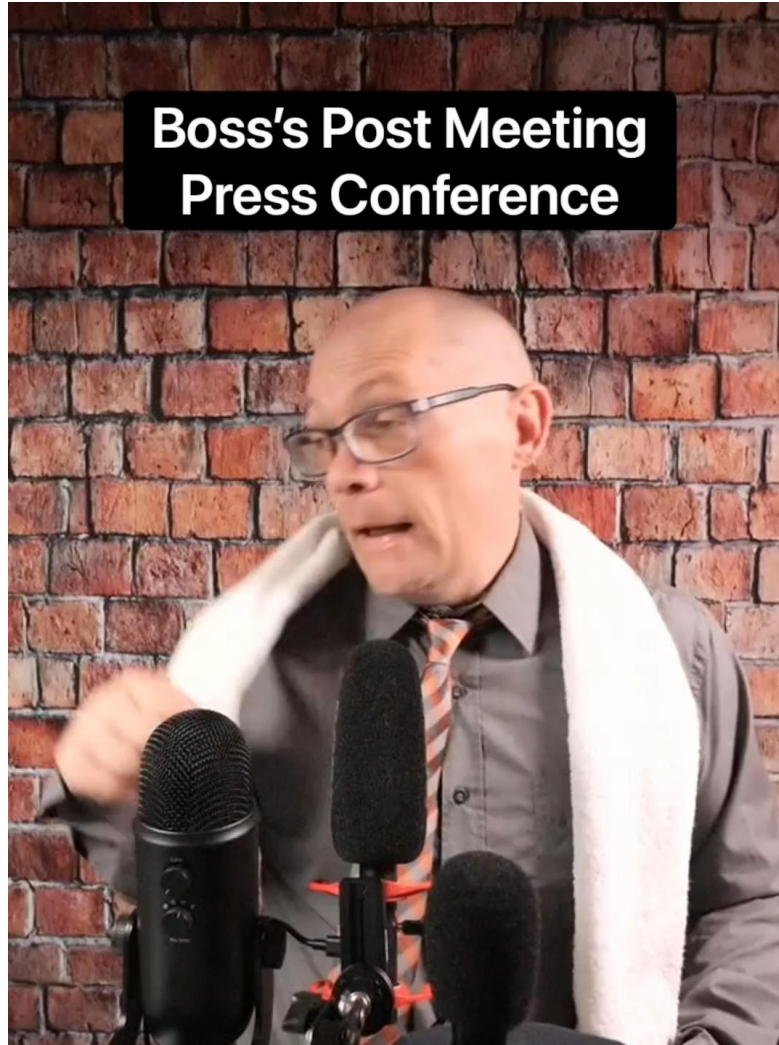
Comparison

Just compare **your feelings or situation** to something completely different. The more far fetched, the better

Pain Point:

Running an **effective** meeting

Boss's Post Meeting Press Conference



 @paulosincup



Exaggeration/ Heightening

Just exaggerate your situation to a ridiculous extreme or heighten it to the next possibility

Exaggeration/Heightening



"Hi honey, I blew a tire and I've been waiting for a tow for 3 hours but I'll be home as soon as I can..."

Please tell the kids I love them, wish them luck in college, and text me photos when they produce grandchildren."

Signing off Zoom

 @paulosincup



Fun over
Funny



More FUN at Work Means...

300%

More Innovation

HBR

51%

Less Turnover

Gallup

37%

Sales Increase

Martin Seligman

31%

Boost
in Productivity

Greenberg & Arawaka

Fun at Work Should Be...

Brief

Inclusive

Consistent

On
Company
Time

100 ways to have more fun at work

100 Ways to Have More Fun at Work!

Start with Yourself

1. Listen to something funny or upbeat on your way to work instead of news.
2. Think of the toughest part of your work week and try to find some humor in it. Exaggerate it, compare it to doing something else, imagine doing it as a famous character.
3. Tell colleagues about an embarrassing moment that happened to you.
4. See if anyone can do an impression of you (be prepared for it to be funny!).
5. Post a funny selfie online of you making a funny face or being goofy instead of a serious picture.
6. Point out your mistakes or mishaps before others find them: the coffee stain on your shirt, your mismatched socks, your bad hair day, your misspelled word, or your broken button.
7. Do anything to show others you don't take yourself too seriously and it's ok to laugh at yourself. You sat the tone!!
8. Read emails at your desk in funny accents.





Meetings

9. Start the meeting with a quick fun go-around question like: "What is a guilty pleasure TV show, song, or movie?", "If you had a super power in your job what would it be?", "The weirdest thing you've eaten" etc. - Studies show it boosts problem solving & creativity!

10. "Role with it".


Get out of the normal meeting rut or spark creativity by assigning "roles" for your next meeting or brainstorming session! Try to give people a role that is opposite of the role they normally play in your meeting. You can find hats/props cheap online. Example Roles:

 **Queen/King:** This person wears a crown and gets to run the meeting, while you take a back seat for once! (Make it someone who could use the practice running a meeting or needs some empowerment!)

 **Devil's Advocate:** Give devil horns to wear and they must come up with viewpoints. (Make this the person who is typically very agreeable or ambivalent!)

 **Peace Keeper:** Give them a hippie wig or an angel halo. Their job is to make sure everyone gets a chance to speak and to keep harmony at the meeting. Assign the person who typically talks too much in meetings this role.

 **Rose Colored Glasses:** This person will be optimistic and supportive of all ideas! Give them red tinted sun glasses and assign someone who is typically negative or confrontational.

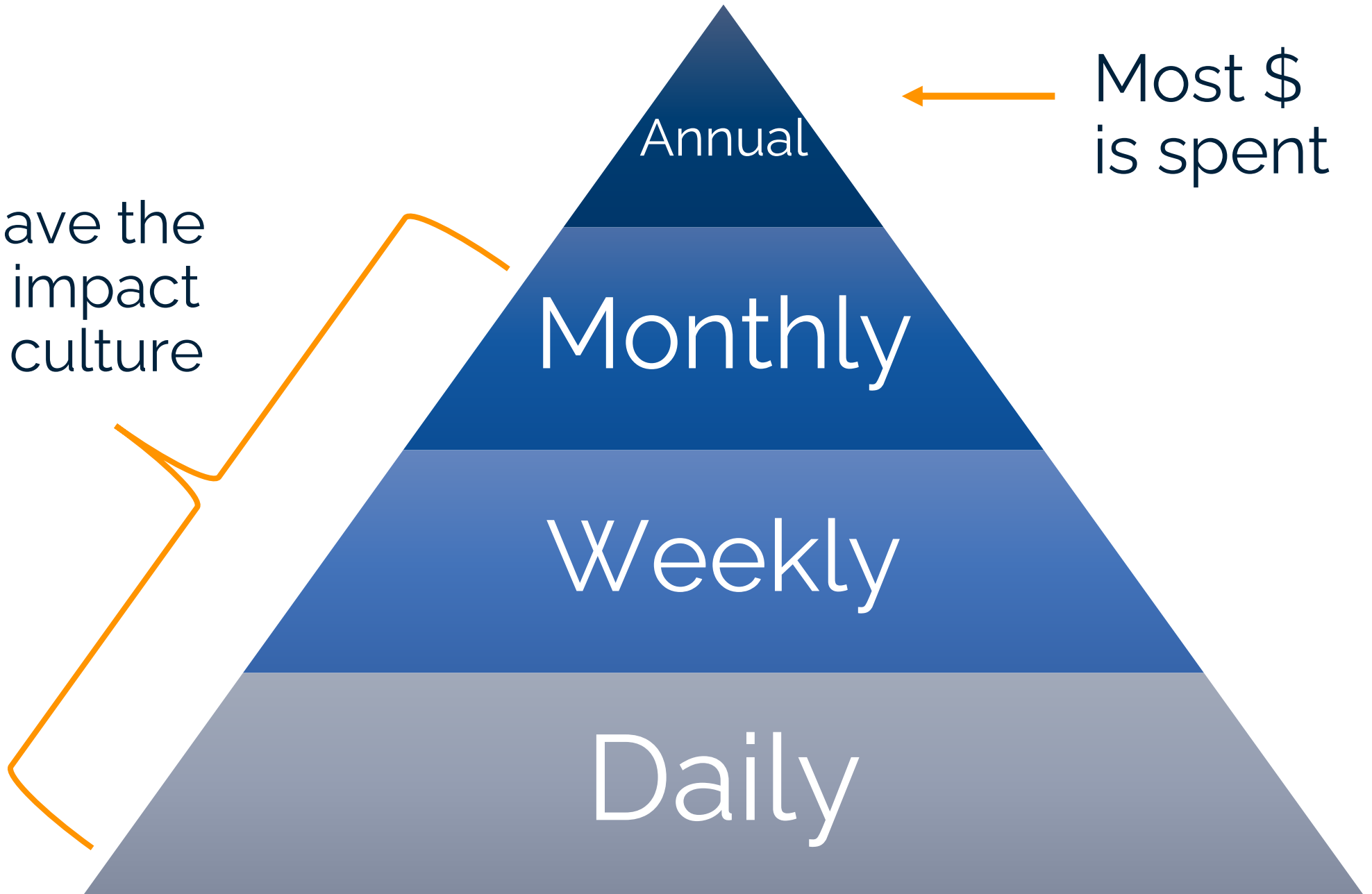
 **Wacky Idea Guy/Gal:** Give them a funny hat (maybe one with a propeller). They are to come up with the craziest out of the box ideas they can! It is good to give this to someone who typically shoots down ideas without supplying their own or who is on the quiet side.

Those are just a few ideas of roles to play, but you can come up with your own! Role play for the whole meeting or just to break the ice or brainstorm a topic.

Rituals



These have the
biggest impact
on your culture



Earn it



Using **Humor** Positively





Resilience

Humor helps individuals cope more successfully with traumatic situations & leads to greater positive affect and **psychological well-being**

Europe Journal of Psychology



It's not about laughing at our
problems, its about **laughing**
through them.



Thank You!

Let's connect
@paulosincup



Get the slides!

