

Associazione
Yoga della risata
e Oltre ®



30 ANNI DI YOGA DELLA RISATA : 22 IN ITALIA!

CHE STORIA!



SEMINARIO MEDICAL HUMANITIES

ALESSANDRIA 24 MAGGIO 2025

DOTT.SSA LAURA TOFFOLO

PRESIDENTE ASSOCIAZIONE

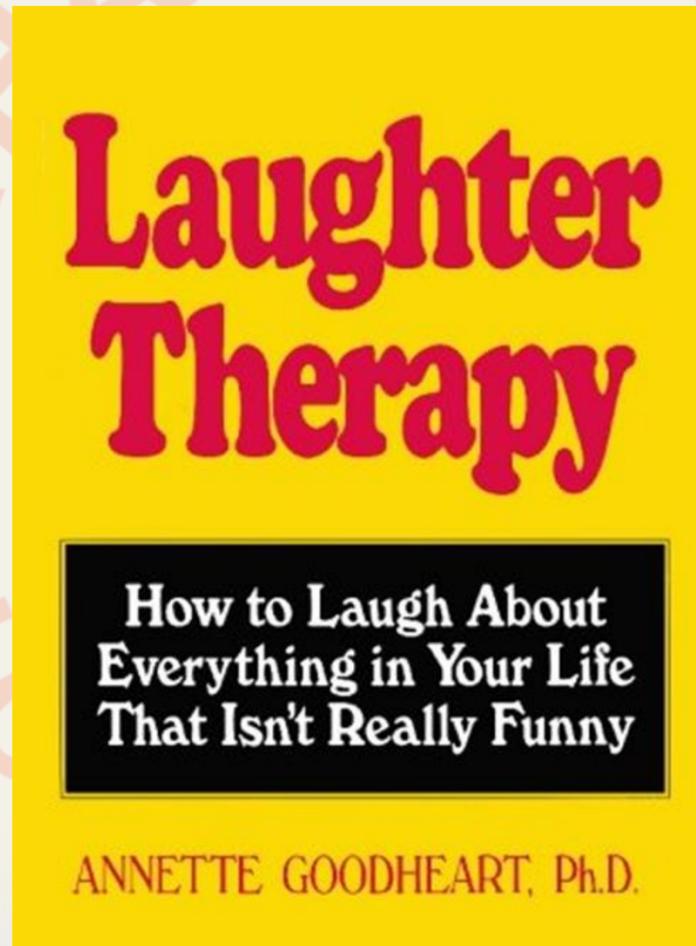
YOGA DELLA RISATA E OLTRE ASD APS

SEMINARIO MEDICAL HUMANITIES

ALESSANDRIA 24 MAGGIO 2025



LA PRIMA AD USARE LA RISATA INCONDIZIONATA COME TERAPIA E' STATA UNA DONNA



LA MAGGIOR
PARTE DEI PRATICANTI
YOGA DELLA RISATA
E' COSTITUITA DA
DONNE

1° EDIZIONE 1994

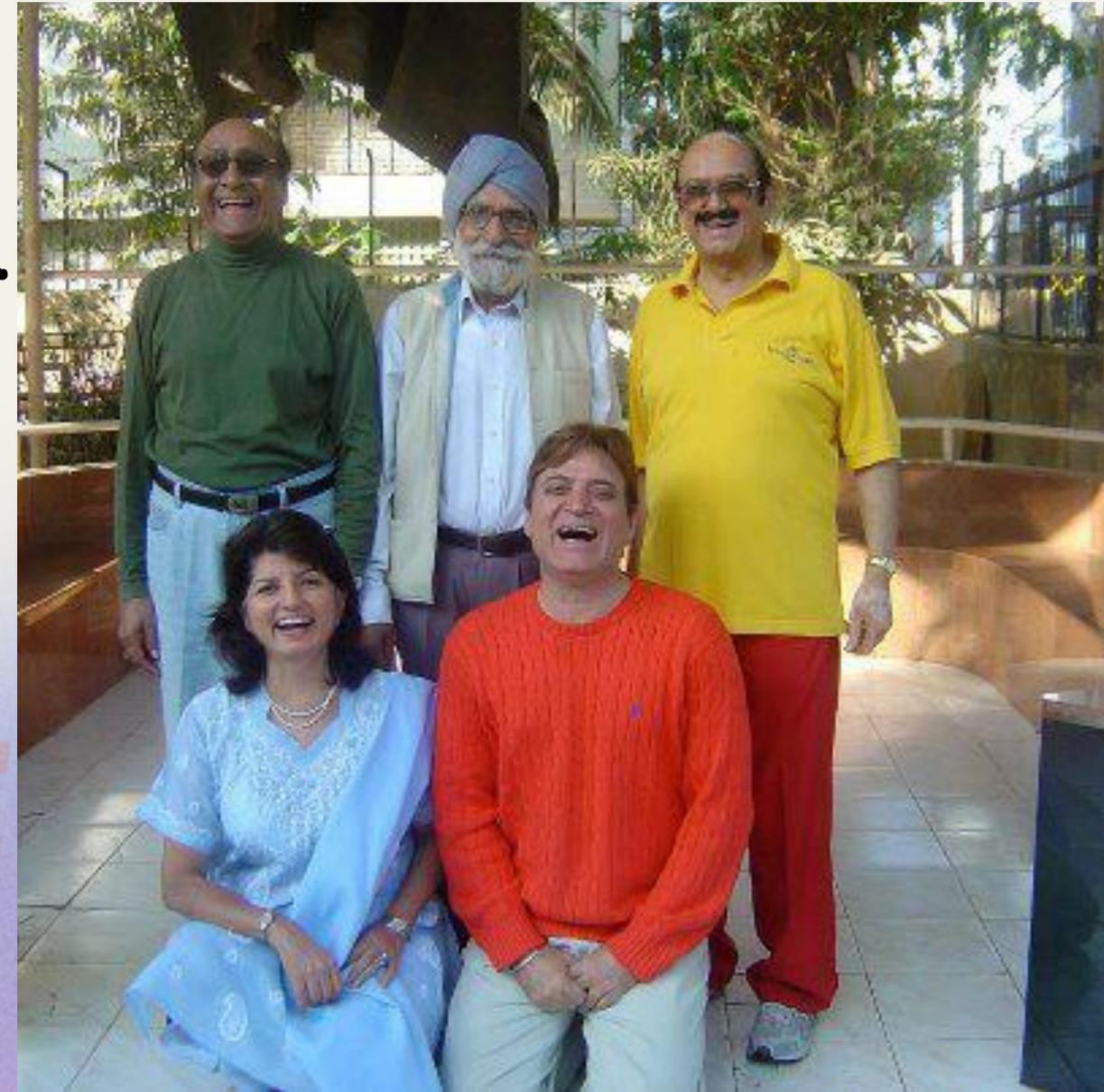
Annette Goodheart Ph.D.

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1995 : IL 13 MARZO NASCE LO YOGA DELLA RISATA



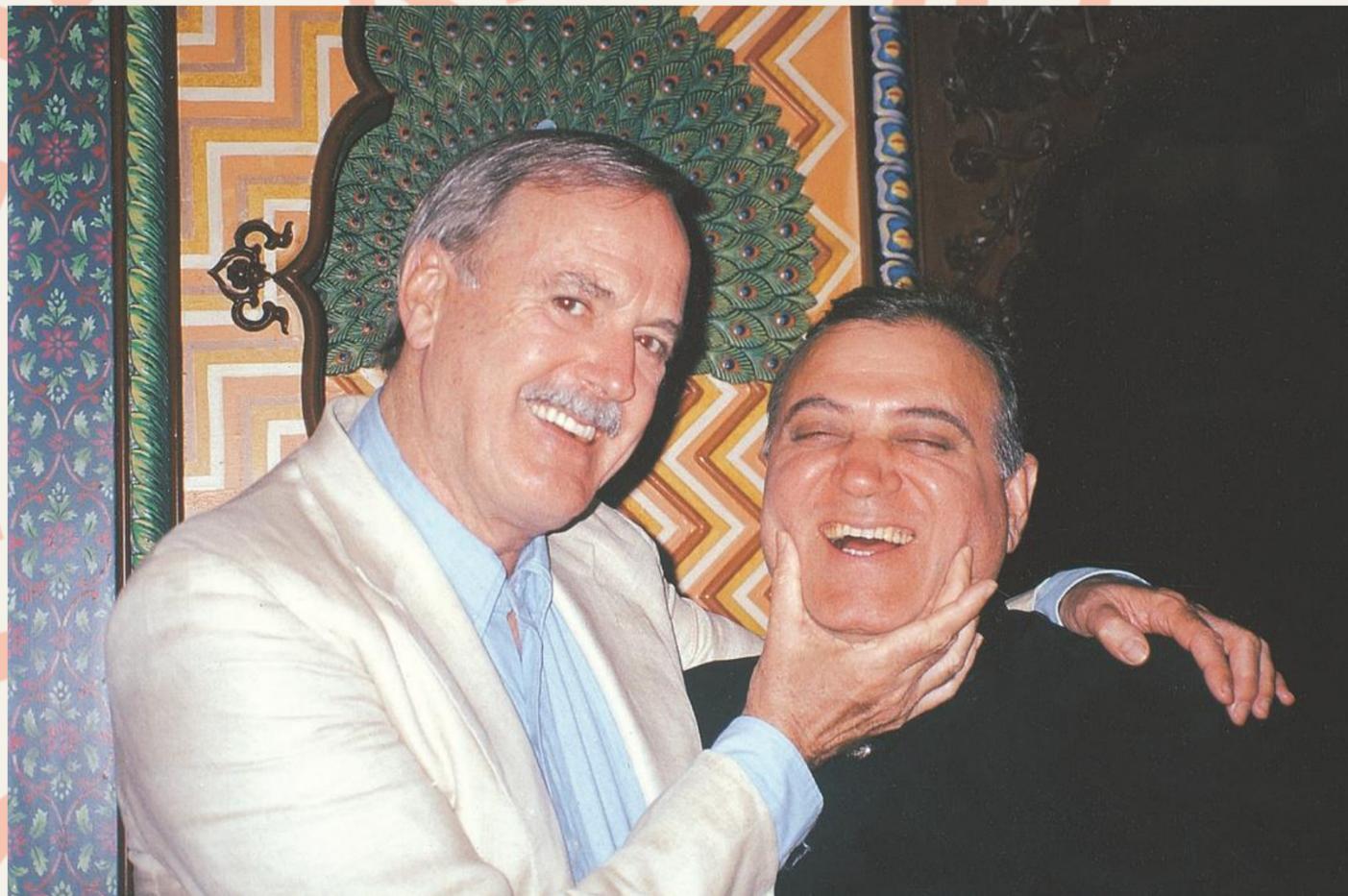
1998 : A GENNAIO IN INDIA LA 1° GIORNATA MONDIALE DELLA RISATA

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1995-98 : IL DR KATARIA IN INDIA CON L'ATTORE INGLESE JOHN CLEESE



**UN GRUPPO DI DONNE INDIANE NEI
PRIMI INCONTRI PUBBLICI**

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1999 : YOGA DELLA RISATA SUL SUNDAY TIMES (SINGAPORE)



Singapor

October 24, 1999: THE SUNDAY TIMES

SUNDAY PLUS • HEALTH

5

THE BEST MEDICINE

Laugh to start your day great. No joke

Dr Madan Kataria, founder of 'laugh clubs' in India, believes firmly in the therapeutic qualities of laughter

By LEA WEE

BEFORE breakfast every morning, Dr Madan Kataria and his wife, Madhuri, will wag their index fingers mockingly at each other, and double over with laughter.

No, they are not trying to be funny.

They are just having one of their daily "laughing" exercises.

You can call this Indian couple the foremost crusaders of the chortle in this unhappy modern age.

Dr Kataria, 44, a general medical practitioner from Mumbai, is the founder of 400 "laughing clubs" in India, located mainly in public parks.

There, members would gather every morning, and giggle and guffaw away for 20 minutes, in between breathing and stretching exercises.

Dr Kataria, the author of a new book called *Laugh For No Reason*, believes that you do not need a joke to tickle

your funny bone.

"Laughter is very infectious. In the cinema, you will find that some people laugh even though they do not understand the jokes. They laugh because others are laughing," he tells Sunday Plus.

It was American journalist Norman Cousins, diagnosed with a life-threatening spinal disorder in 1979, who inspired research into the impact of humour on health. He found that Marx Brothers movies and *Candid Camera* episodes made him forget his pain. He lived for another 10 years and wrote a bestseller, *Anatomy Of An Illness*.

Since then, scientists have found that laughter boosts the levels of endorphins, the "happy" chemicals which relax your muscles, and give you a sense of well-being.

Dr Lee Berk, from the Loma Linda University Medical Centre in California, found that the exposure to humorous videos lowers



In the pink of health are Dr Kataria and wife Madhuri, who begin each day with a bout of laughter.

stress hormones, and shores up immune system cells, which fight coughs and colds, and natural killer cells, which destroy abnormal cells.

To help stimulate laughter, Dr Kataria has invented about 30 comical expressions.

His idea of faking laughter has been met with some scepticism, but he argues that research has shown that such laughter is as healthy as the genuine article.

He had tried using jokes when he first started a laughing club with four sceptical friends in 1995.

"After 15 days, we ran out of good jokes and people started saying 'dirty jokes which upset some women.'"

The strapping man, who was clad in humourless black for his interview with Sunday Plus last Wednesday, certainly does not need a reason to dissolve in mirth.

"They show that while laughter is no substitute for popular medical advice, it is certainly useful as a preventive medicine," he says.

punctuation mark in his sentences.

Indeed, he seems to have perfected the disconcerting skill of alternating between looking serious and looking funny.

In the middle of a conversation, he would contort his face suddenly to demonstrate a particular comical expression he was talking about.

Dr Kataria was invited to Singapore last week by Beacon Consulting, which will be marketing his programme in Malaysia and Singapore.

The "Eureka!" moment came to him while he was working on an article for a monthly health magazine in Mumbai, which he edits.

He found a mine of research on the healing effects of laughter, from lowering stress levels to boosting the immune system.

"They show that while laughter is no substitute for popular medical advice, it is certainly useful as a preventive medicine," he says.

He sounded off the idea of a laughing club to the early morning exercise crowd at the Lokhandwala Garden in Mumbai.

"They started to laugh at me, and said I'm crazy."

But with laughing clubs all over India today, and a membership of 40,000, Dr Kataria appears to have the last laugh.

He has been featured in the National Geographic magazine and the Wall Street Journal and the Los Angeles Times newspapers.

He has also made appearances on television programmes on the BBC, CNN, ABC News, and will be appearing in a programme on Discovery Channel.

In May this year, he set up two laughing clubs in the United States, and will be selling his laughing club programme to companies in Singapore, Australia, Sweden, Norway and Malaysia.

The programme's price tag, however, is no joke. A full-day workshop can cost up to US \$5,000 (S\$8,355).

Inspired to start a laugh-a-day session? Here's how to begin

DR MADAN KATARIA turned to the ancient practice of yoga for inspiration for his laughing programme.

Certain comical expressions are direct adoptions of yogic poses. The "lion laughter", where you stick your tongue out, widen your eyes, and pose your hands like the paws of a lion, is culled from a yogic lion pose.

Other expressions are simply playful gestures.

In the "argument laughter", members start laughing by pointing the index finger accusingly at one another.

A bout of stimulated laughter lasts for 30 to 45 seconds. Breathing or stretching exercises which move the diaphragm and abdominal muscles rhythmically, are done in between, to

prevent over-exertion or tiredness.

The whole session should not last more than 20 minutes, to prevent over-strain.

To make it easier for those who find it difficult to giggle for no reason, the session begins with a warm-up exercise where they clap their hands to the rhythmic chanting of Ho Ho Ha Ha.

But Dr Kataria cautions that these sessions may be too stressful for those with angina, hernia and chest infections. They are also not recommended for pregnant women, and those who have just had an operation.

◆ For more information, you can visit the website www.worldlaughter.com

HEALTH SNIPPETS

The good news is ...

KIDS OF SINGLE MUMS DO JUST AS WELL

SINGLE mothers can draw courage from this recent piece of news to emerge from the Cornell University in the United States.

Researchers there found that children raised by lone

mothers do just as well as in vocabulary, reading and mathematics as those from two-parent families, even though the single mothers were much less well off.

What appears to play a big influence on how well the kids did at school is their mothers' level of education, rather than the absence of a father.

The bad news is ...

LICORICE CAN BE BAD FOR MASCULINITY

SEVEN healthy young men who volunteered to eat 7g of licorice every day for a week in the name of research, had more than they bargained for by indulging their sweet tooth.

After only four days, their testosterone levels plum-

met by about 44 per cent, according to researchers at the University of Padua in Italy.

Glycyrrhizic acid — a compound in liquorice root extract — has a crippling effect on an enzyme involved in the production of the hormone.

◆ Source: *The New Scientist*

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1999-2000 : IL DR KATARIA IN AMERICA CON STEVE WILSON, SEBASTIEN GENDRY...



**2001 : 1° VOLTA IN ITALIA
CON PATCH ADAMS !**



**Sebastien ha inventato
LAUGHTER WELLNESS
LOU : Laughter Online University**

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**2003 : IL DR KATARIA
ARRIVA A ROMA !
1° LEADER TRAINING**



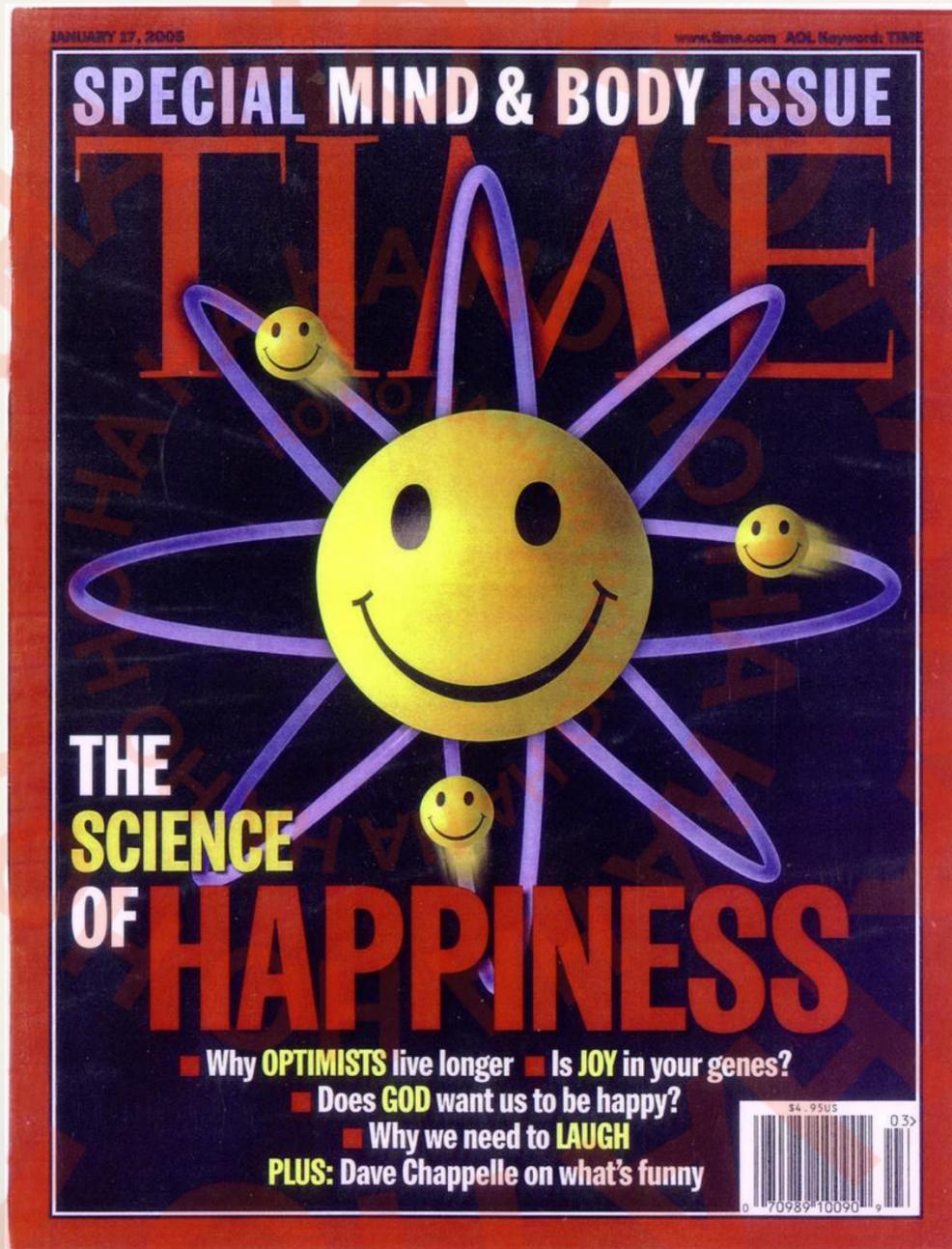
**2004 : 2° LEADER TRAINING A
ROMA E IN TV CON LICIA COLO'**

**NASCE IL SITO
YOGADELLARISATA.IT**



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2005 : TIME S'INTERESSA DELLO YOGA DELLA RISATA



happiness | laughter

While laughing adds a level of communication to conversation, it can also create a wordless bond across a room. As much as we might dread an attack of the giggles in the middle of a poetry reading or a eulogy, it can also be a lot of subversive fun—particularly when the bug spreads to the person sitting next to you.

The infectious nature of laughter is behind the idea of the laugh track—humor's Muzak—and while canned yuks ought to have all the freshness and appeal of canned peas, they work. "Early television planted people in live audiences and they'd laugh on cue," says Lee Berk, professor of pathology and anatomy at Loma Linda University in California. "Now we have the laugh track instead."

A far easier way to get a laugh—if harder to pull off at parties—is tickling. Nearly all of us are at least a little ticklish, but far and away, the best tickle targets

are babies. Behaviorally speaking, that makes sense. If ever there was a two-way pleasure street, it's the delight a baby takes in being tickled and the joy the parent experiences in the tumble of laughter it elicits. In a relationship in which verbal conversation is necessarily at a minimum, that is a great way to make a connection.

But there's more than bonding going on when we tickle. There's learning too. It's no coincidence that the parts of the body that are most ticklish are also the most vulnerable—the stomach, the throat and the groin region where the femoral artery lies. Best to learn early that when those areas get touched, you pull away or tuck in your chin.

And best to make it a joy for parents to provide that lesson, if only to make sure that they teach it often and you learn it well.

"This may explain why we lose our taste for being tickled as we get older," says human ethologist Glenn Weisfeld of Wayne State University in Detroit. "By adulthood we've learned how to counter unwanted thrusts."

Laughter may protect us from not only predators but also disease. One of the reasons doctors prescribe exercise for their patients is that even light exertion can increase heart and respiration rate, oxygenate the system and reduce levels of stress hormones. As long ago as the 1980s,

EXERCISE

Learning the Yoga Way of Laughter

Six in the morning is way too early for the kind of raucous guffaws that are echoing around a sports ground in central Bombay. Walkers and joggers are frowning at a group of 40 people hooting and slapping their thighs, eyeing them with the jealous disapproval that hardworking commuters reserve for all-night partyers on weekdays. But this is no carousers' dawn chorus. There are no drinks and very little talking, and most of the group will shortly be on their merry way to work. What there is, nonstop for 45 minutes, is hysterical, weeping laughter. So what's the big joke?

Actually, there's none. Dr. Madan Kataria, 45, explains that when he started his first laughter club in 1995 after reading about the medical benefits of a good giggle, he ran out of funny stories in a week. So, throwing in a few yoga



NOW THAT'S FUNNY Bombay women let loose with the "lion laugh," a typical laughter-club routine

stretches, he tried encouraging people to laugh for no reason. His formula for laughing yoga clubs proved infectious. There are 1,800 such clubs in India alone, and an additional 700 around the world from Finland to the Philippines. Every year on a Kataria-inspired holiday called World Laughter Day, celebrated on the first Sunday in May, 10,000 Danes gather in Copenhagen for the world's biggest mass chortle. One of the world's funniest men, British actor John Cleese, was so overwhelmed by the good humor he felt for his fellow man after a session at Kataria's club in Bombay, he called it a "force for democracy."

The physical and psychological benefits of laughter are the subject of serious scientific study, but Dr. Kataria, who practiced general medicine before taking up his laughter mission, prefers intuitive explanations: "We don't need doctors to tell us it's good for us. We know it is."

One of Kataria's students, Aika Bhatia, who volunteers her time to teach at his clubs, says laughter pulled her out of depression. "There's a lot of pressure in my job," says Bhatia, 35, a middle manager at an import-export firm. "But now if I get stressed, I just have a little laugh at my desk and forget everything."

What if you just don't feel like laughing? Kataria says there's no problem with faking it: "Your body doesn't know the difference." At his clubs, which charge no fees, instructors get the yuks rolling with a "Ho, ho, ha-ha-ha" chant or perhaps the "lion laugh," which involves sticking out your tongue and flapping your hands by your ears. "Laughter can't solve your problems," says the laughing yogi. "But it can dissolve them." It's not that great a pun. But Kataria, like a man without a care in the world, nearly laughs his big, smiley head off. —By Alex Perry/New Delhi

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2005 : TEACHER TRAINING A INTERLAKEN (CH)



2006 : CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE A BERLINO, CON LA NOMINA DEI PRIMI AMBASSADOR

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**2007 : CONFERENZA
INTERNAZIONALE A
MALLORCA (SPAGNA)**



**MADAN CON LAURA E
SIMONETTA DALL'ITALIA**

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2008 : TEACHER TRAINING col Dr KATARIA a OSTIA (ROMA)



**LA CANOA CON LA MITICA
ANN-MARIE (Presidente
Onoraria della nostra
Associazione)**

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2008 : TOUR IN ITALIA DA FIRENZE COL FUTURO SINDACO...



....A MILANO CON YOGA FESTIVAL

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2008 : NASCE

**L'ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE YOGA DELLA RISATA
E VIENE PUBBLICATO IL 1° LIBRO ITALIANO**



1° MEETING DELL'ASSOCIAZIONE A CHIANCIANO TERME

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2009-11 : TANTI LEADER TRAINING....



.....VIAGGIO IN INDIA PER VISITARE I
CLUB E IL PARCO dove è NATO LO YDR
LOKANDWALA (MUMBAY)

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2012 : TANTI SERVIZI IN TV SU RAI1, RAI2... PER LA GIORNATA MONDIALE DELLA RISATA E OLTRE (SU TG1 E TG2 COSTUME E SOCIETA')



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2013 : PRIMI TEACHER TRAINING ITALIANI



A CENTENO (VT)



A ORVIETO (TR)

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2013 : CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE A LISBONA (PORTOGALLO)



**COI CD ITALIANI DI YOGA
NIDRA E BREATH CONNECT**



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2013 : UN MEETING MEMORABILE A BAGNO DI ROMAGNA (FC)



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2014 : A OTTOBRE IL CONVEGNO GRATUITO A ROMA



CON MEGASESSIONE DI RISATE

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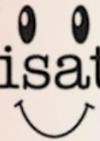
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2014 : IL DR.KATARIA IN UN CLUB A ROMA



...DA PAPA FRANCESCO UNA DELEGAZIONE... DI RIDENTI

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2015-17 : NUOVI TEACHER TRAINING E NASCITA DI NUOVI FORMAT



RESPIRO E RISATE AD AREZZO

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2018 : CONGRESSO ITALIANO A RIMINI



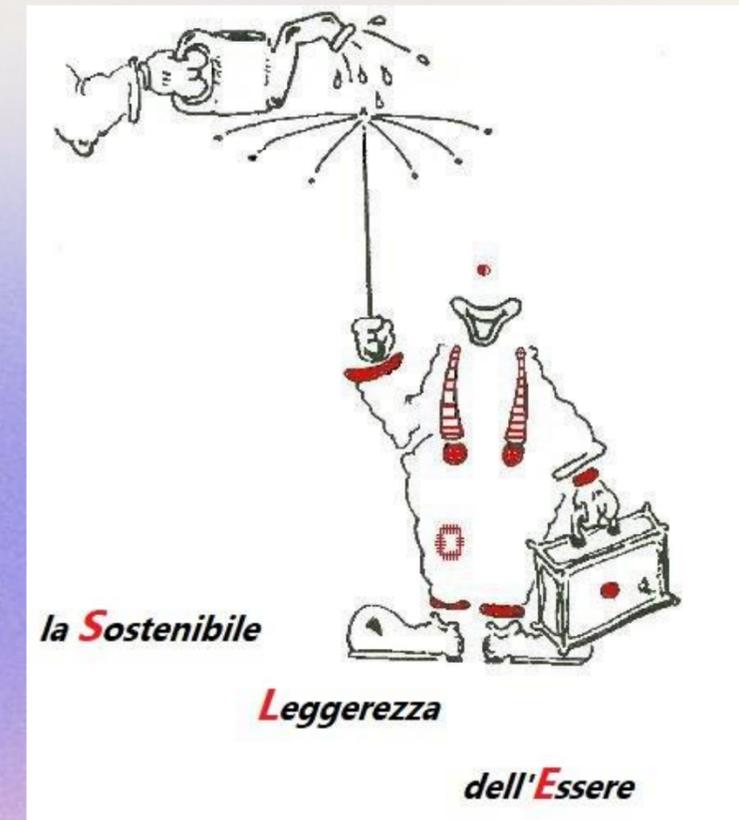
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2018-19 : L'ASSOCIAZIONE ACCOGLIE MOLTI NUOVI FORMAT E CAMBIA NOME



Mariella Passaquindici



ANDIAMO OLTRE !

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2019-22 : IL COVID E LA NASCITA DEL CLUBONLINE



2020 : COLLEGAMENTO ONLINE DAL MEETING DI ISCHIA

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2023 : CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE A NASHIK IN INDIA



**L'ASSOCIAZIONE YOGA DELLA RISATA E OLTRE
RAPPRESENTA L'ITALIA**

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**GRAZIE INFINITE AL DR. MADAN KATARIA PER CHIAMARMI
LA MADRE DELLO YOGA DELLA RISATA IN ITALIA**

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2024 : IL "MEETICO" Meeting A ROMA ! Con Neuroscienziati e OLTRE



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2025 : UNA MARATONA ONLINE PER CELEBRARE IL 13 MARZO

30 ANNI DI YOGA DELLA RISATA IN UNA MARATONA

Yogadellarisata.it
e Oltre

Maratona di Risate

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Yogadellarisata
e Oltre



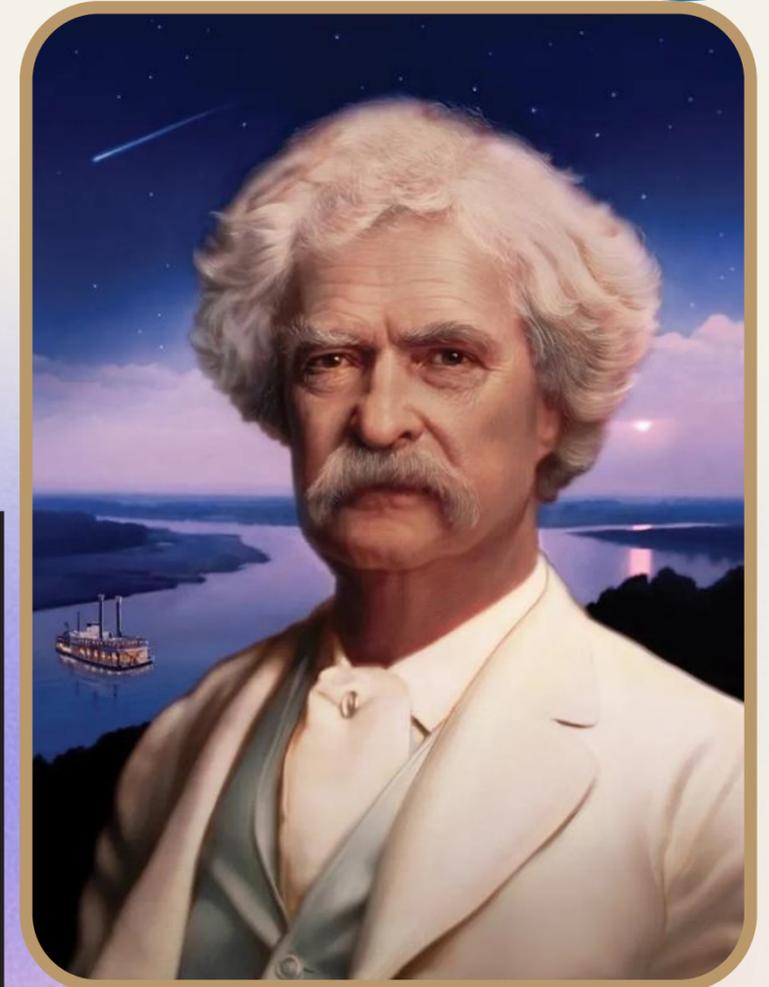
**SIATE SINCERI E SEMPLICI,
QUESTO È L'ESSENZIALE.**

LA BELLEZZA SALVERÀ IL MONDO

Fedor Dostoevskij

**INUTILE PRENDERE SUL SERIO
LA VITA:
TANTO NON SE NE ESCE VIVI**

Mark Twain



**GRAZIE PER L'ATTENZIONE e ...
BUONE RISATE!**