

Anatomy of an Illness
Norman Cousins

a review by Denise Waldron

"Hope, love, will to live, humor, confidence, great expectations, cheerfulness, all these, I believe have therapeutic value." These characteristics are all prescribed by Norman Cousins, adjunct professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the USC School of Medicine, for a treatment he calls "Laughter therapy".

In his book, Anatomy of an Illness, Cousins examines the use of the mind in the treating of an illness. He draws his conclusions on the subject from his own personal experience of a life threatening heart attack and research done with other patients with similar medical experiences.

Cousins uses laughter as the bases of his treatment. He thinks of laughter as a form of internal jogging. He recommends a person begin slow, but try to achieve good, solid laughter for at least five minutes a day and build up from there.

The benefits include increased blood circulation, pulse rate, exercise for heart and lungs, release of tensions and anxieties, plus just good - old fashioned fun.

Cousins has correlated this therapy in research being done on the Type A (high stress characteristics) and Type B (low stress characteristics) types of personalities. Cousins was not surprised to discover that many of the characteristics of laughter therapy were found in the personality type of the low stress person.

So the next time you feel sick or blue, go ahead and laugh. It's good for your health!

WELLNESS RESOURCES

- Ardell, Donald B. High Level Wellness: An Alternative to Doctors, Drugs and Disease. New York: Bantam, 1979.
- Ardell, Donald B. 14 Days to a Wellness Lifestyle. Mill Valley: Whatever Press, 1982.
- ** Cousins, Norman. Anatomy of an Illness. W. W. Norton & Co., 1979.
- ** Cousins, Norman. Human Options.
- ** Farquhar, John W. The American Way of Life Need Not Be Hazardous to Your Health. New York: Norton, 1978.
- ** Ferguson, Tom. Medical Self Care: Access to Self-Help Tools. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980.
- Peter, Laurence and Dana, Bill. The Laughter Prescription.
- ** Ryan, Regina Sara and Travis, John W. The Wellness Workbook. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1981.
- ** Books are available in the Health Education Center (located between the pharmacy and Area B in the Student Health Center). Books may be checked out for two weeks.

Film - "DISEASE CONCEPT OF ALCOHOLISM/DRUG ABUSE

Thursday, May 16

11:30 - 12:30

12:30 - 1:30

Room 101 EMU

(No charge - Bring sack lunch)

Representatives of various alcohol/drug treatment centers will be available.

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Health is a precious thing... the only thing indeed that deserves to be pursued at the expense not only of time, sweat, labor, worldly goods, but of life itself; since without health life becomes a burden and our affliction.

-- Montaigne

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