

## *Our Emerging Future... meet it at the door laughing!*



These are not easy times, and our lives are filled with the unexpected. Nothing could be as unpredictable as the emerging future... a future that presents itself tomorrow, next year, or even in the next ten minutes.

We are living at a time when so much around us generates fear, anxiety, discouragement, and even hopelessness. Even when our minds know that no amount of planning or worry can change things, we may experience our hearts pounding at a rapid rate.

We are confronted with the mystery of it all, that which is beyond our comprehension.

So when all is said and done, what could be considered a possible, helpful, faith-filled response, yes, and even a contemplative response to our emerging future?

**MEET IT AT THE DOOR LAUGHING!**

Photo: <https://unsplash.com/s/photos/open-door>

### *Readings:*

*For who can know the mind of God? Who can know God's counsel, or who can conceive what God intends? For the deliberations of mortals are timid, and uncertain our plans. Scarcely can we guess the things of earth, and only with difficulty grasp what is at hand; but things in heaven, who can search them out? Or who can know your counsel, unless you give Wisdom, and send your holy spirit?*

Wisdom 9:13-14, 16-17



*Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well on in years. So Sarah laughed to herself, 'Now that I am past the age of childbearing; and my husband is an old man, is pleasure to come my way again?' God asked Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh? Nothing is impossible for God.'*

Genesis 18:11-14

Picture: <http://iamthewordthecomforter.blogspot.com/2008/09/gods-angels-old-testament.html>

## *Reflection Questions:*

- ❖ How does humor and laughter play a part in contemplative living and being?
- ❖ In what ways does laughter bubble up in your day to day life?
- ❖ What does the theme of this reflection piece say to you, “*Our Emerging Future... meet it at the door laughing*”?
- ❖ Think of a time when God’s unexpected action in your life left you amazed, delighted, or even laughing?

## *Something to Ponder...*

### *Benefits of Laughter:*

**Laughter relaxes the whole body.** A good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after.

**Laughter boosts the immune system.** Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease.

**Laughter protects the heart.** Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.

**Laughter lightens anger’s heavy load.** Nothing diffuses anger and conflict faster than a shared laugh. Looking at the funny side can put problems into perspective and enable you to move on from confrontations without holding onto bitterness or resentment.

**Laughter draws you closer to others,** which can have a profound effect on all aspects of your mental and emotional health.



Photo: <https://www.guideposts.org/how-laughter-benefits-us-spiritually> (adapted)

## *How to develop your sense of humor*

**Laugh at yourself.** Share your embarrassing moments.

**Attempt to laugh at situations rather than bemoan them.** Look for the humor in a bad situation, and uncover the irony and absurdity of life.

**Surround yourself with reminders to lighten up.** Wear a Mickey Mouse watch. Choose a humorous computer screensaver.

**Remember funny things that happen.** If something amusing happens or you hear a joke or funny story you really like, pass it on.

**Don't dwell on the negative.** Embrace the realities of life, but try to avoid dwelling on news stories, entertainment, or conversations that may erode your spirit.

**Deal with stress.** Stress can be a major impediment to humor and laughter, so find ways to help keep stress levels in check. Contemplation/meditation can help move one to a different and perhaps deeper place.

**Don't go a day without laughing.** Consciously find something each day that makes you laugh.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm> (adapted)

***Reflection/Conversation Questions:*** (select whatever question(s) speak to you)

- ❖ As you consider the positive effects of laughter, with which points do you most resonate?
- ❖ Describe the last time you laughed to the point of tears or breathlessness?
- ❖ How do you see laughter, light heartedness as essential in a particular situation in which you are engaged at this time?
- ❖ Is laughter as a “holy response” a skill to be learned, or a natural impulse?
- ❖ How does laughter deepen your ongoing “God quest?”



Photo: <https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/723787/age-happiness-study>

## *Having Come This Far*

I've been through what my through was to  
be

I did what I could and couldn't  
I was never sure how I would get there

I nourished an ardor for thresholds  
for stepping stones and for ladders  
I discovered detour and ditch

I swam in the high tides of greed  
I built sandcastles to house my dreams  
I survived the sunburns of love

No longer do I hunt for targets  
I've climbed all the summits I need to  
and I've eaten my share of lotus

Now I give praise and thanks  
for what could not be avoided  
and for every foolhardy choice

I cherish my wounds and their cures  
and the sweet enervations of bliss  
My book is an open life

I wave goodbye to the absolutes  
and send my regards to infinity  
I'd rather be blithe than correct

Until something transcendent turns up  
I splash in my poetry puddle  
and try to keep God amused.

~ James Broughton



Poem: *Packing Up For Paradise: New and Selected Poems by James Broughton 1946-1996*

Photo: <https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/step-in-a-puddle-and-splash-your-friends-day>

***Final Reflection Question:*** (May you be laughing by now!)

- ❖ As you consider the poem by James Broughton, what would “keep God amused” about you as you live into the future?

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