

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COMEDY:

## Why We Laugh and What Humor Does for Us

### FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Use this guide with any comedy you are watching together. The goal is not to analyze the jokes to death. It is to notice what laughing together is actually doing.



#### 1. BEFORE WATCHING

*Set the stage and open hearts and minds.*

- Everyone name the funniest thing that happened this week. It does not have to be from a screen.
- Guess out loud: is this going to be funny because of surprise, because someone messes up, or because it says something you are not supposed to say?



#### 2. WHILE WATCHING

*Notice what the laugh was made of.*

- When the room laughs hard, say so. Shared laughter is doing something, and it is worth marking.
- Watch for the moment you knew the punchline was coming and it still worked. Why did it still work?
- If something lands badly for someone in the room, let that be okay to say out loud.



#### 3. AFTER WATCHING

*Reflect together and make meaning.*

- Who was the joke on, most of the time? Did that change how funny it felt?
- Was there anything you laughed at that you would not have laughed at alone?
- Which character would have found this funny, and which one would not have?



#### 4. FAMILY REFLECTION

*Go deeper with empathy, honesty, and connection.*

- Everyone name your own kind of funny: silly, clever, weird, dry, physical. You will not all match.
- Name a time humor helped somebody get through something hard. Those stories are worth telling.
- Try this: name one running joke your family has that nobody outside would understand. That is a measure of how connected you are.



#### DR. Z TAKEAWAY



Laughter is mostly a social signal, not a review of the joke. We laugh far more with people than alone. So the most useful question after a comedy is not whether it was funny. It is who was laughing, and who was not.



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Connection heals. Conversations help.