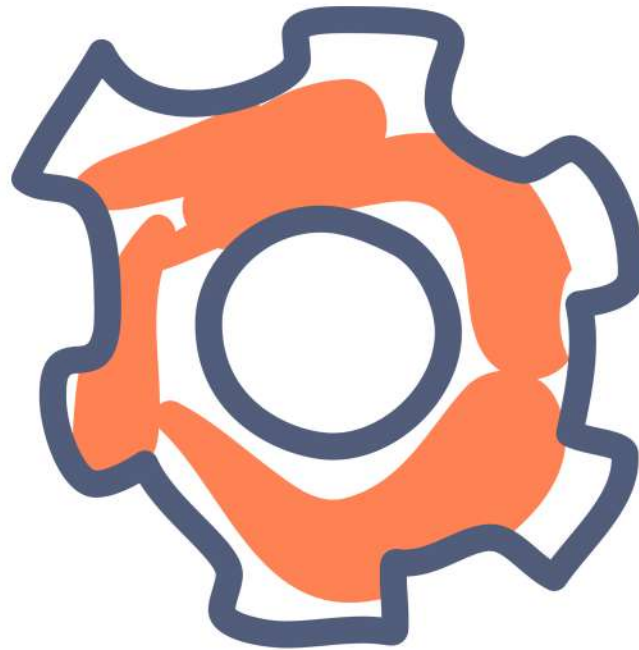


# humor persona

build a happier, healthier, and  
more productive life with humor



# engineer

YOU SOLVE HUMAN CHALLENGES WITH HUMOR SOLUTIONS



# TAKE A PEEK INSIDE

Knowing your humor persona can be the missing ingredient to becoming more memorable, improving your connection with co-workers (and fellow humans), and enjoying life *more*.



## table of contents

1. getting started
2. overview
3. benefits
4. watchouts
5. engineers at work
6. the 7 personas
7. optimize your team's personas
8. what makes you different
9. putting it into action
10. next steps



*'There is more logic in humor than in anything else.*



*Because, you see, humor is truth.v'*

VICTOR BORGE

# WELCOME

Welcome Engineer! You're about to unlock a more productive, less stressed, and happier you by tapping into your natural sense of humor.

I know first hand how transformative learning the skill of humor can be. Growing up, I was the nerdy introverted kid who was much better with computers and video games than I was with other people. I always wanted to make friends and be social, but it was hard work and draining. I would sometimes feel awkward speaking up or dejected when I would start to share a story only for the conversation to move to another topic.

Things changed when I went to university and got pushed into doing improv comedy. While I wasn't very good to start, I had a blast learning the principles of thinking and reacting on my feet. From there, I tried my hand at stand up comedy. Once again I was terrible, but enjoyed the process and found a weird comfort in the structured nature of the art.

As I discovered, refined, and employed my sense of humor, I started noticing other changes too. I was more comfortable presenting in meetings, I was quicker to speak up, I had confidence when talking with strangers, and, when I shared stories with friends, they not only paid attention, they laughed. I also discovered that how I used humor was different than some of the other people around me, just how you use humor is different than me. Each person has a style of humor that comes more naturally to them.

Since then, I've helped more than 50,000 people, from over 100 countries on 6 continents, learn how to tap into their own humor to get better results and have more fun. I'm excited to see where your humor takes you, so let's get started!



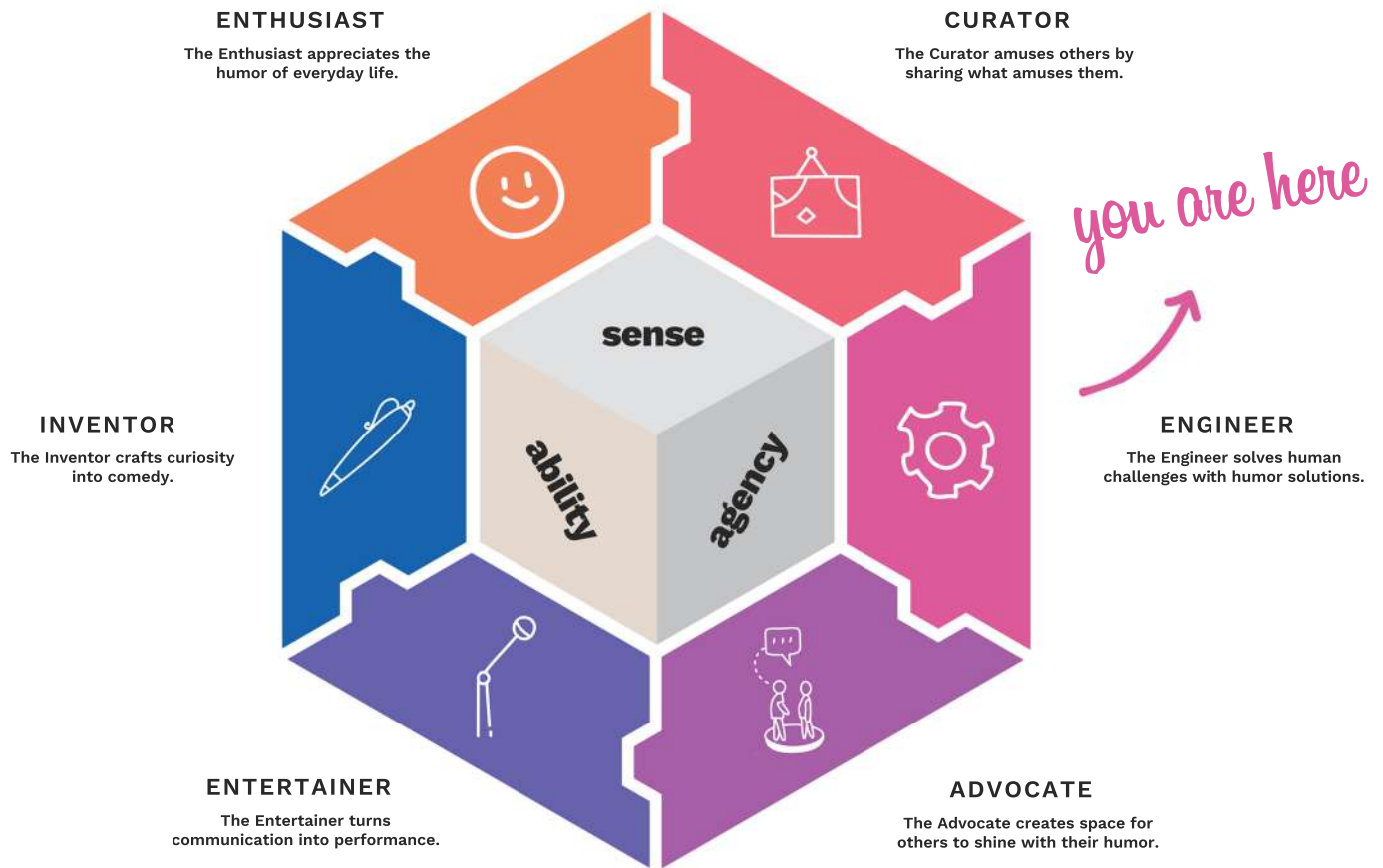
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Tarvin". The signature is fluid and cursive, located to the right of the portrait.

**ANDREW TARVIN**

Founder of Humor That Works

# 1. GETTING STARTED

There are 7 primary humor personas that people typically adopt: Enthusiast, Curator, Inventor, Entertainer, Engineer, Advocate, or Skeptic. It starts first with nurturing your *primary* persona.



**SKEPTIC**  
The Skeptic discourages the use of humor.

## 2. OVERVIEW

As The Engineer, you make **strategic use of humor to solve problems** around you, whether that's making your own work more fun, getting past a sticking point, or better managing the hardest resource there is to manage: humans.

Unlike computers, humans have "emotions" and have to "sleep" and do things out of "joy" and not because they were programmed to. You know how to **tap into positive emotions to increase productivity.**

### connotations

#### POSITIVE



resourceful  
problem solver  
effective

#### NEGATIVE



formulaic  
manipulative  
robotic



### you're in good company

Andrew Tarvin (*Humor That Works*)  
Abraham Lincoln (*President, USA*)  
Barack Obama (*President, USA*)  
Jacinda Ardern (*Prime Minister, New Zealand*)  
Hannah Gadsby (*Comedian*)  
John Oliver (*Last Week Tonight*)  
Benjamin Franklin (*Founding Father, USA*)

### 3. BENEFITS

Each of the 7 personas come with their own strengths, weaknesses, benefits, and impact on the world around them. These are the benefits to being an engineer:



#### FOR YOURSELF

You understand the mechanics of humor so that you can apply them to **help you achieve a goal.**

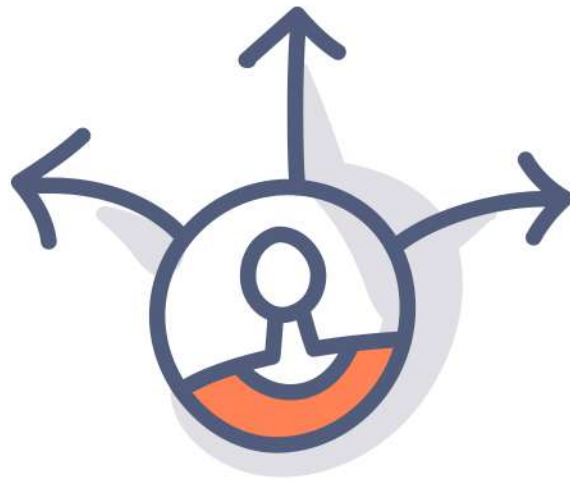
As a result, you get results. You leverage humor to execute faster, think smarter, communicate better, connect closer, and lead further.

While others know that **humor is fun**, you know that it's also **effective.**



*'Humor is by far the most significant activity of the human brain.'*

EDWARD DE BONO



## FOR OTHERS

Other people appreciate your ability to get work done in an enjoyable way. They take joy in witnessing and participating in the **clever ways you execute** what has to be done.

You may notice that people come to you when they need help solving a problem because they know they'll not only get a solution, but they'll also **enjoy the process of working with you.**



*'Some things are so serious,  
they can only be joked about.'*

NIELS BOHR

## 4. WATCHOUTS

If your humor is too laser-focused, it **can come across as cold**, insincere, or so exact as not to be funny. Humor can sometimes be just for fun, it doesn't always have to serve some very specific purpose.

If you use humor with no joy yourself, people will see you as **manipulative instead of helpful**. Nothing takes the fun out of having fun quite like someone who is using it for nefarious purposes.

### YOU SOMETIMES HEAR...

#### 1. "I don't have time for this."

If you're using humor to solve a problem, and other people don't see how the humor is connected, they may feel like it's a distraction. Be sure to make it clear how humor is helping the current situation, not distracting from it.

#### 2. "Is that supposed to be funny?"

You may share humor that you think perfectly fits the situation, it might just not be very funny. This is often still better than completely boring content, but it does mean the humor can be improved.

#### 3. "That's not what I was looking for."

If you effectively use humor to get people excited about something that isn't very good, the audience may feel manipulated. A "bait and switch" is a type of joke, but it's also a sleazy sales technique that should be avoided.



## 5. ENGINEERS AT WORK

The Engineer is the most clearly defined persona for the workplace. It's all about getting better results by adding a bit more fun. **Humor can help solve many of the biggest challenges** we face today: stress management, strategic thinking, constant uncertainty, information overload, increasing distractions, and the disintegration of work/life balance.

Intention is a key part of **incorporating humor into the workplace**. If you start by focusing on the problem, it's easier to identify possible humor solutions. And when you do so, people don't see your humor as frivolous or as a distraction, they see it as an effective way of getting results.



### **watchout at work**

Not everyone is in agreement with how great humor is as a solution. Some people were taught that work is supposed to feel like work. This mentality is often misguided or flat out wrong, but that doesn't make it easy to combat. While you may clearly see the link between the humor you used and the outcome you received, others may not.

Be sure that the **connection is clear** to everyone involved.

# applications at work

1. Find a way to make a **mundane task more fun**, such as reading emails in an accent in your head.
2. Follow the **Pomodoro Technique** to increase efficiency while preventing burnout.
3. Take on a new perspective (like that of a 5-year old) to see **old challenges in a new way**.
4. **Diffuse tension** with a bit of levity to recalibrate the mood.
5. Try one of the **applications from the other personas** to solve a problem you are facing.

## when to use

When you need to get something done or solve a problem, bring out the Engineer. Look at any challenges from a humorous angle and identify ways to play your work.



*'If you want to tell people the truth,  
make them laugh, otherwise they'll kill you.'*



OSCAR WILDE

## 6. THE 7 PERSONAS

You're an engineer, however, there is a high likelihood that you will recognize yourself in more than one of these 7 types: **Enthusiast, Curator, Inventor, Entertainer, Engineer, Advocate and Skeptic**. That is because the way you use **humor isn't set in stone** and can change depending on the context, the people you're with, or simply how you're feeling that day.

Once you've mastered the persona that comes most naturally to you, I recommend you start exploring the other ones as well. The more **familiar you become with the other humor personas**, the more likely you are to forge meaningful connections AND the better you'll become at adapting yours to match theirs.



### enthusiast

AMUSES OTHERS BY SHARING WHAT AMUSES THEM

Enthusiasts enjoy the humor of everyday life, whether that's a funny TV show, someone trying to make them smile, or the absurdities of human existence.

What's not to laugh about being a conscious, bipedal organism on a rock hurtling through an ever-expanding universe of uncertain origin?

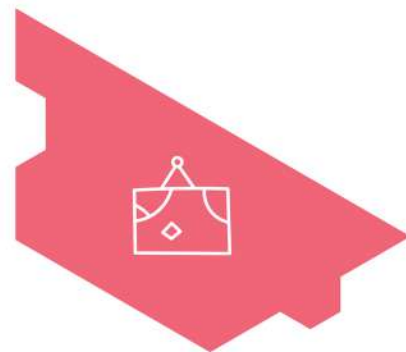


## curator

AMUSES OTHERS BY SHARING WHAT AMUSES THEM

Curators like to collect and share the things that make them laugh or smile. Whether that's a funny meme, an interesting quote or stories they've picked up along the way.

As Buddha said, "Happiness never decreases by being shared," neither does the hilarity of the perfect gif in a group chat. They realize they don't have to create humor to curate moments of levity.



## inventor

INVENTOR CRAFTS CURIOSITY INTO COMEDY

Inventors find satisfaction in creating humor from the things that happen to them, whether that's playing through scenarios in their head, building stories from life events, or writing jokes because it's a pun thing to do.

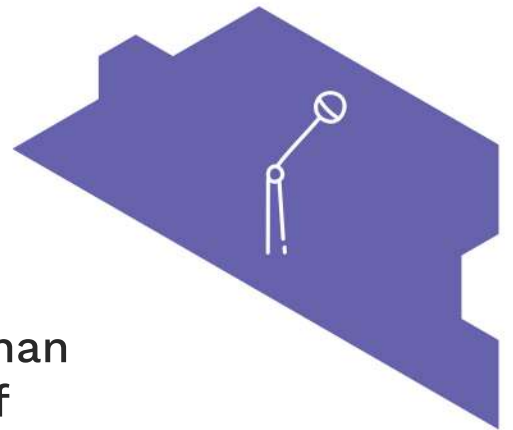
Inventors understand the importance of structure and make use of comedic devices, like the comic triple used in the previous sentence.



# entertainer

URNS COMMUNICATION INTO PERFORMANCE

Entertainers know how to speak in such a way that other people listen, whether it's a message they planned, an idea they had in-the-moment, or simply a facial expression that says it all without saying a single word.



After all, giving a funny look is different than being funny looking. When people think of someone funny, they are who they have in mind.

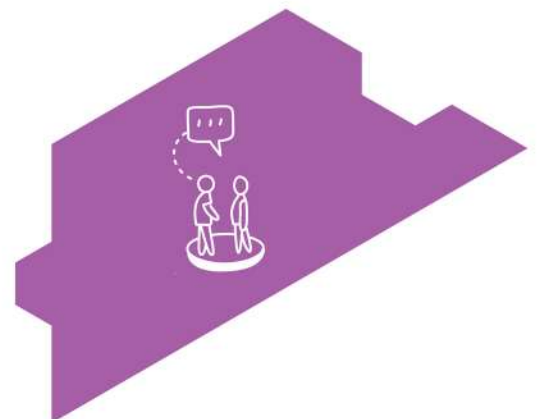


# advocate

CREATES SPACE FOR OTHERS TO SHINE WITH THEIR HUMOR

Advocates encourage more joy and positivity in the world, whether that's by talking about the benefits of humor, creating opportunities for people to share their humor, or encouraging individuals to embrace their sense of humor.

One would hope that you wouldn't need to tell people to have more fun, and yet here we are.



# skeptic

## DISCOURAGES THE USE OF HUMOR

Skeptics doubt the use of humor, whether that's by avoiding humor themselves, discouraging others from doing it, or actively banning it from their presence.



Why turn a frown upside down when you can wipe a smirk off someone's face?

Being a skeptic isn't always bad. They understand that humor doesn't always work.

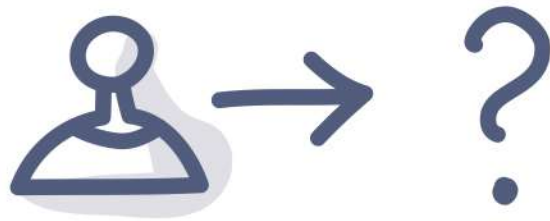


These are the 7 humor personas and, even though this report focused on your primary persona, imagine the results you'll attain and how confident you'll feel when you're able to seamlessly move from one persona to the other.

## 7. OPTIMIZE YOUR TEAM'S PERSONAS

Once you've refined your own humor persona, you'll be able to spot qualities from the **other personas in the people around you**, your family, friends, colleagues, even that guy in the subway who's laughing a little too loud at a video on youtube.

By knowing the personas of the people around you, you'll have a strong advantage in connecting with them and they won't even know it. Imagine being able to **set them up for success** (and fun) by putting them in positions where they can leverage their strengths. This leads to high performing teams that actually like each other and aren't on the verge of burning out.



**to humor  
is to human**

If we're asking people to bring their whole selves to work, humor absolutely has to be part of the equation.

Whether you decide to do a team or organizational assessment (or not,) simply getting your team to reflect on how they choose to let their personality and **sense of humor show at work** is an incredibly valuable exercise.



# THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE ON YOUR TEAM

Who are the **enthusiasts**?

Who are the people that lift others up and how can you make sure they also feel appreciated?

What about the **curators**?

Tap into their ability to know what's going on by asking for stories, pictures, or examples whenever you need to communicate something out to the larger team.

Identify the **inventors** so they can help you create effective communication and use the **entertainers** as meeting leaders or event emcees.

Find the **engineers** so you can go to them when you need help solving a problem and leverage the **advocates** to create a more positive workplace environment.

And for the **skeptics**, encourage them to explore the type of humor they're most comfortable with and know that they may not enjoy what you do no matter how impressive or funny it is, so don't let the haters get you down.





## 8. WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT

Now that you have a better understanding of all the personas, let's return to you as the Engineer.

You recognize that humor can go way **beyond just making someone laugh**; you know it can capture attention, deflect criticism, build rapport, and 30+ other benefits.



Whereas other people just focus on fun, you see **humor as a means to an end**, that it can be used for something more. As a result, you don't understand how people can assume that humor at work means you don't take your job seriously.

You also don't fully appreciate when people attempt humor that doesn't have a purpose when it could be so much more effective.



*"People rarely succeed at anything unless they have fun doing it."*

DALE CARNEGIE

## 9. PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

### how to nurture your logic

1. Think about work you need to do today. Try to **come up with at least one way to make it 5% more fun.**
2. Review examples of **creative problem solving** to get inspiration for your own work.
3. **Debrief recent activities you've enjoyed.** Identify what you liked about them and see what could be carried over to future tasks.
4. Create the **Humor MAP** for a challenge you're facing by identifying the medium, audience, and purpose.
5. Ask a funny friend how you could **make a task more enjoyable.**



#### RELATED SKILL

problem-solving

#### PROMISE

want to be more productive?

## 10. NEXT STEPS

Create the Humor MAP for a challenge you are facing today.

### bottom line

What gets fun, gets done. When you think of humor as a tool, you start to recognize the problems it might be well-suited to solve.



*"Once we realize that the boundaries between work and play are artificial, we can take matters in hand and begin the difficult task of making life more livable."*



MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALYI



# how well do you know your team?

Think about the people on your team right now. Which of the personas do you see? Diversity strengthens a team and makes it more cohesive. Leaders need to know how to tap into their team's variety of personas to give them the best chance to succeed.

We can also **run the assessment for your team or organization** so you can skip the guesswork and know exactly how to best leverage each person.

If you have questions, or want to learn about some of our other programs like the cubicle comedy challenge, let's connect!

Find me on LinkedIn at drewtarvin or you can reach me directly at **[andrew@humorthatworks.com](mailto:andrew@humorthatworks.com)**.

HUMORTHATWORKS.COM



@HumorThatWorks



@HumorThatWorks



@HumorThatWorks



@HumorThatWorks



@HumorThatWorks



@HumorThatWorks

