

humor persona

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



skeptic

YOU QUESTION THE BENEFITS OF HUMOR



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. skeptics 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



*'Some cause happiness wherever they go;
others, whenever they go.'*



OSCAR WILDE

WELCOME

Welcome Skeptic! 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!



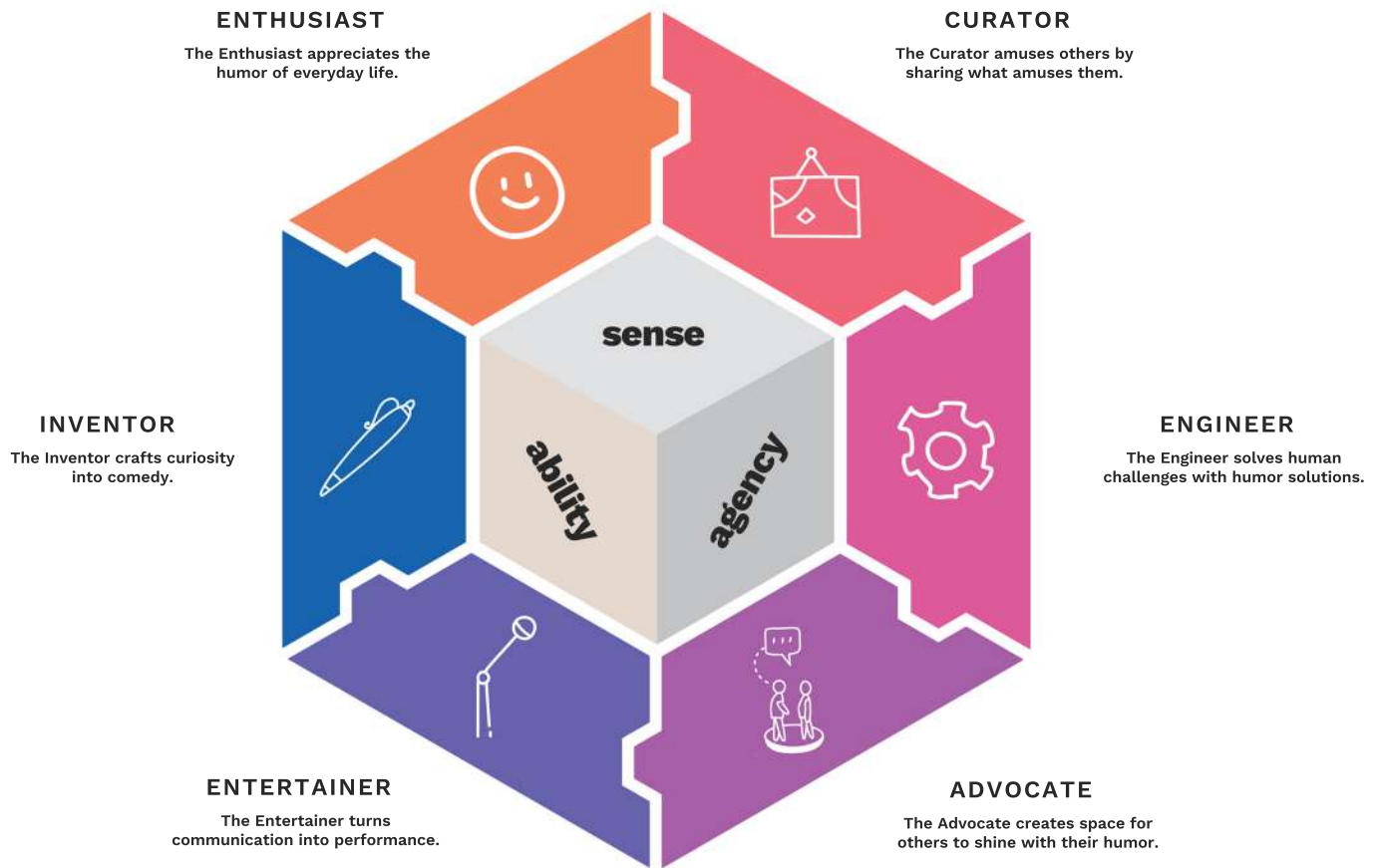
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Tarvin".

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.



you are here



SKEPTIC
The Skeptic discourages the use of humor.

2. OVERVIEW

As The Skeptic, you doubt the benefits of using humor, whether that's by **avoiding humor yourself**, discouraging others from trying it, or actively banning it from your presence.

Why turn a frown upside down when you can wipe a smirk off someone's face? You may have heard about the pros of using humor but feel like they don't outweigh the risks it also brings.

connotations

POSITIVE



focused
no nonsense
straight shooter

NEGATIVE



curmudgeon
cynic
debbie downer



other skeptics...

Attila the Hun (*Ruler*)
Richard Nixon (*President, USA*)
Kanye West (*Rapper*)
Isaac Newton (*Inventor*)
Oliver Cromwell (*General, UK*)
Steve Jobs (*Entrepreneur*)

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 a skeptic:



FOR YOURSELF

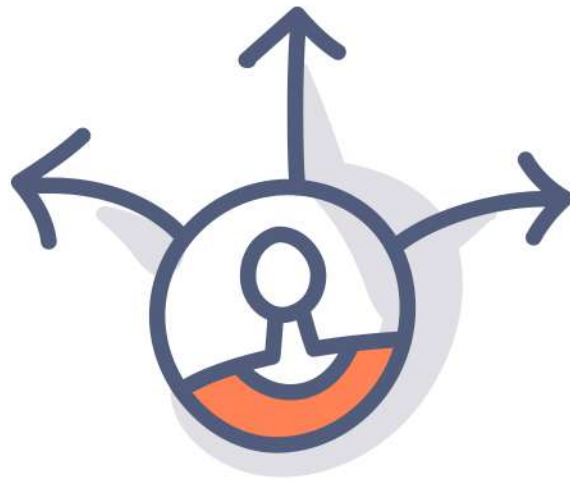
You don't see a strong connection between fun to other desired outcomes and see it as a distraction from what really matters. As a result, you are **always focused on the task at hand**, have the discipline to do the things you have to do (instead of what you want to do), and become surrounded by other no-nonsense people.

While others try to find joy, you concentrate on basic necessities.



*'Do not take life too seriously.
You will never get out of it alive.'*

ELBERT HUBBARD



FOR OTHERS

Other people can appreciate that you are serious about what you do. They know that **interactions with you will likely be to the point**, even if it's not particularly pleasant.

You may notice that other people don't tend to laugh or smile around you because they've either learned or have the impression that it's not something you appreciate.



'You must not think me necessarily foolish because I am facetious, nor will I consider you necessarily wise because you are grave.'

SYDNEY SMITH

4. WATCHOUTS

These benefits come at a massive price for the skeptic. If you never express any humor, people will see you as inauthentic or stubbornly misguided. Humor is a **core part of everyone's experience** and to discount it completely is to discount a part of what it means to be human.

Others will see you as far too serious and avoid interacting with you altogether. While there are definite challenges to using humor, that doesn't mean it has to be shunned from your presence.

YOU SOMETIMES HEAR...

1. "Why are you so serious?"

If you never smile or laugh, people will start avoiding you because your mood sours theirs. You may not actually be in a bad mood, but if your body language suggests that you are, people won't know the difference.

2. "You're not a team player."

Like it or not, how you get along with people can have a big impact on how a team performs. If you're constantly on the outside, not participating or engaging in other people's use of humor, you'll be seen as someone separate from the team.

3. "I'm not allowed to use humor."

If people don't feel psychologically safe enough to use humor, they'll avoid it completely. While very few organizations actively ban humor, if it's not intentionally promoted, many people don't feel like they're able to use. Make it clear that appropriate humor is not only welcomed but encouraged.

5. SKEPTICS AT WORK

The Skeptic is perhaps the most commonly perceived persona at work, particularly at older companies, in older industries, and with older generations. People often feel they use the appropriate amount of humor, it's the other people who are wrong. If you never embrace any of the other personas, it's very likely people see you as the Skeptic.

Whether discouraging humor is intentional or not, the impact may be a short-term bump in efficiency but at the **expense of long-term effectiveness**. Eventually, the organization will experience lower company output, higher stress, increased absenteeism, more turnover, and less engagement.



watchout at work

Just as levity brings more levity, **skepticism brings more skepticism**. Company culture is often defined by the behaviors of the most visible people in the organization, so be mindful of those behaviors.

The #1 reason people don't use more humor at work is because they don't think their boss or coworkers would approve. That means if people aren't laughing or smiling in your presence, you're part of the reason why.

applications at work

1. **Give people some grace** when they attempt to add a little levity to the day, even if it doesn't make you laugh.
2. If you don't feel like participating in something, try to **exit it quietly without making a fuss**.
3. When someone makes an **inappropriate joke** at work, let them know work is not the place for it.
4. Provide **constructive feedback** when something isn't having the positive effect that was intended.
5. Try to **react neutrally instead of negatively** to other people.

when to use

If someone is using humor in an inappropriate way, it's okay to be the Skeptic. Share **why the humor didn't work** or what's inappropriate about it (if you feel comfortable doing so).



'It is a curious fact that people are never so trivial as when they take themselves seriously.'



OSCAR WILDE

6. THE 7 PERSONAS

You're a skeptic, 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.

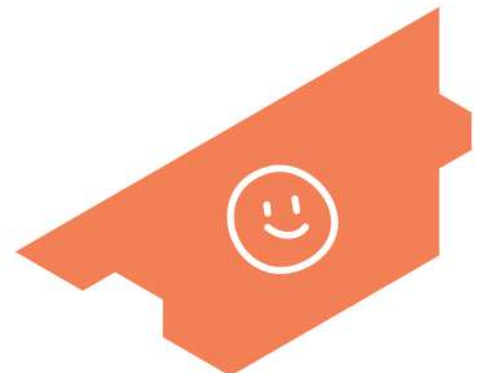


enthusiast

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?

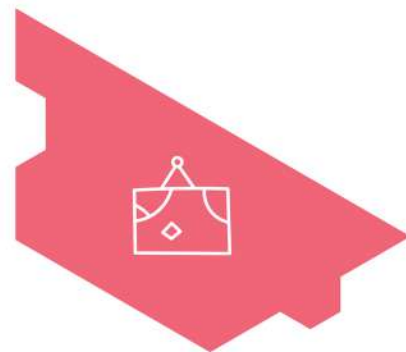


curator

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.

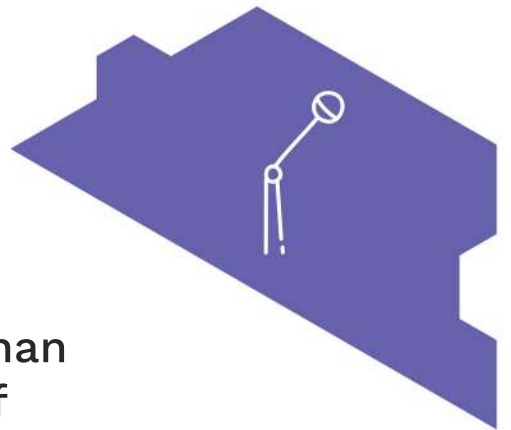


entertainer

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.



engineer

SOLVES HUMAN CHALLENGES WITH HUMOR SOLUTIONS

Engineers make strategic use of humor to solve problems around them, whether that's making their 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. They know how to tap into positive emotions to increase productivity.

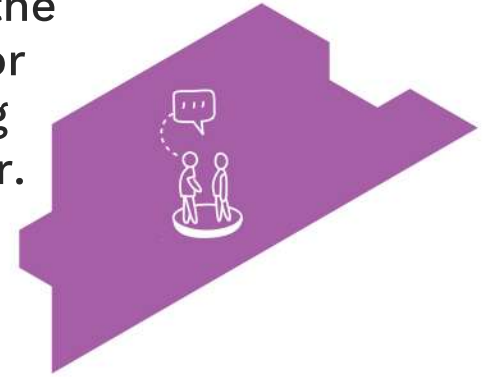


advocate

CREATES SPACE FOR OTHERS TO SHINE WITH THEIR HUMOR

Advocate 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. They provide the space for others to shine.

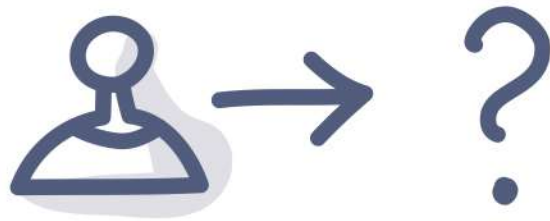


These are the 7 humor personas and, even though this report focused on your primary persona, imagine the results you'll attain and how confident you'll feel when you're able to seamlessly move from one persona to the other.

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 Skeptic.

You doubt the benefits of humor. It's **unlikely that you hate joy**, you may just not seek it out or find it appropriate in certain circumstances. After all, we have seen times where humor has gone wrong.



Whereas other personas **find ways to use humor appropriately**, you avoid it completely to be on the safe side, or because you've tried it in the past and it didn't go well.

As a result, you don't understand how people can be so cavalier with what they say or do, or why they "don't take their jobs as seriously as you do."



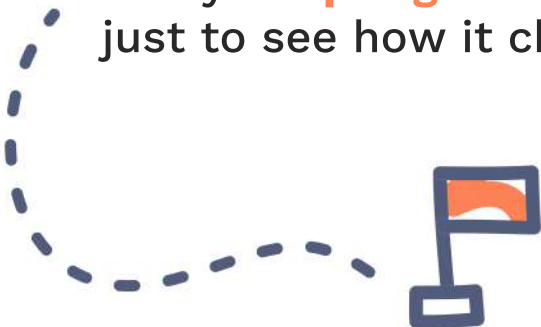
*"You don't stop laughing because you grow old,
you grow old because you stop laughing."*

MICHAEL PRITCHARD

9. PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

how to balance your skepticism

1. **Research the benefits of humor** to see what you might be missing.
2. If someone uses **humor that doesn't work**, reflect on what changes would have made it successful.
3. Avoid engaging with anyone being **overly pessimistic or negative**.
4. Watch a **funny comedy video** to see if it can help boost your mood.
5. Try **adopting the mindset of one of the other personas** just to see how it changes your day.



RELATED SKILL

pessimism

PROMISE

want to be grumpier?

10. NEXT STEPS

Avoid joy in any capacity.

bottom line

Some people think that in order to be taken seriously at work, their work has to be done in a serious way. But serious doesn't have to mean somber. And if you're truly passionate about getting results, you'd use every tool at your disposal to do so, humor being one of the most effective tools we have.



"A leader without a sense of humor is apt to be like the grass mower at the cemetery-he has lots of people under him, but nobody is paying him any attention."



BOB ROSS



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**.

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