



Search

Browse days

HEALTH & FITNESS

PRINT VERSION

E-MAIL THIS

ADVERTISING



Wednesday, February 26, 2003

MARKETPLACE

- Classified ads
- Newspaper ads
- Buy our photos
- Coupons
- Daily Deals
- Ask an OC Pro

Sections

- ▶ HOME
- ▶ NATION & WORLD
- ▶ LOCAL
- ▶ BUSINESS
- ▶ AT WORK EXTRA
- ▶ SPORTS
- ▶ ACCENT
- ▶ HEALTH & FITNESS
 - General health
 - Men's health
 - Women's health
 - Healthy aging
 - Health resources
- ▶ HOME & GARDEN
- ▶ FOOD
- ▶ TRAVEL
- ▶ SHOW
- ▶ COMMENTARY
- ▶ COLUMNS
- ▶ AP HEADLINES
- ▶ SPECIAL FEATURES
- ▶ REGISTER ARCHIVES
- ▶ BUY OUR PHOTOS
- ▶ WEATHER

Community news

Select a city

Noticias en Español

Interactive tools

- ▶ Traffic
- ▶ Get a map
- ▶ Get directions
- ▶ Yellow pages
- ▶ Discussion board

- ▶ ABOUT US
- ▶ CONTACT US
- ▶ ADVERTISE WITH US
- ▶ REGISTER IN EDUCATION
- ▶ SITE FEEDBACK



Media partners

- ▶ MSNBC
- ▶ OCvive.com
- ▶ myOC.com
- ▶ KPCC Radio

Cinema therapy cheaper than the couch

Choose the right film for your state of mind or the mood you'd like to be in.

By **CASSANDRA BRAUN**

Knight Ridder Newspapers

It's no mystery; we self-medicate with movies to fit our mood. But by applying the techniques of cinema therapy, psychologist Birgit Wolz says we can gain much more. And it's a lot cheaper than going to a therapist.

Here are a few quick ways to use movies as a catharsis.

Modern research confirms what we already know: Laughing makes us feel better. If you're feeling depressed or anxious, choosing a comedy can be an emotional release.

Studies suggest laughing has physical benefits as well, like boosting the immune system and decreasing "stress" hormones.

Some sunny films include "Groundhog Day," "Annie Hall," "Babe," "The Brothers McMullen," "Fried Green Tomatoes," "A Fish Called Wanda" and "Four Weddings and a Funeral."

Sometimes the prescription calls for a "good cry." Watching a movie that make us weep, Wolz says, has a way of releasing repressed emotion, whether it's stress or sadness.

Researchers found that when people cry they release two important neurotransmitters: leucine-enkephaline – one of the brain's natural pain-relieving "opiates" – and prolactin, which is released by the pituitary gland at stress.

Some good "bawlers" include "An Affair to Remember," "Miracle on 34th Street," "The Color Purple," "Grand Canyon," "Terms of Endearment" and "Steel Magnolias."

If you're feeling a little helpless or discouraged, don't take it out on your local drive-through cashier. Live vicariously through cinematic heroes who have fought the odds, or use their example to gain the courage to change your own life.

Again, Wolz says, different people will identify with different characters, so find one that fits you.

Some inspiring movies: "Forrest Gump," "Chariots of Fire," "Do the Right Thing," "Field of Dreams," "Gandhi," "The Shawshank Redemption" and "Erin Brockovich."

Sometimes it's difficult to see the silver lining even if you're trapped in a silver-plated mine, as is the case of Bill Murray's character in "Groundhog Day."

Wolz suggests watching films where characters overcome doubt and obstacles to accomplish some goal.

Movies include "Groundhog Day," "Dead Poets Society," "My Left Foot," "Erin Brockovich," "Philadelphia" and "Welcome to the Dollhouse."

Have a Medical Question? Ask a Physician!

