



Guidelines for choosing films

Laughter works as medicine

Laughter can create distance from problems, and enhance a sense of wellbeing: Scientific research has proven what many have held intuitively for a long time: laughter can lead to an increase in activity in the immune system (T cells, immunoglobulin A and G, gamma interferon, and Natural Killer Cells). Laughter can also decrease stress hormones, which constrict blood vessels and suppress hormone activity (epinephrine and dopamine).

If you are obsessing over something and just want to get a little vacation from your troubles, a funny movie can be a powerful tool. This is not about "escaping" from your problems. It might help you to approach a solution with less emotional involvement and a fresh and creative perspective. If you are feeling good already and would like to enhance your sense of well-being, view a film that makes you laugh.

Which movie makes you laugh depends on your taste, personality, and life situation. [Recommendations](#).

Crying for emotional catharsis

Researchers found the reason why we feel better after crying. They discovered two important neurotransmitters in tears, which release emotional stress. Leucine-enkephaline is one of the brain's natural opiates associated with pain relief, while prolactin is released from the pituitary gland in response to stress. Unreleased, pent up emotions may find an outlet somewhere else such as in ulcers, colitis and other stress-related disorders.

Sometimes we experience challenges in your life, such as losses or disappointments, as so overwhelming that tears don't even come, even though we know from experience that it would feel so good to cry. A movie that makes you cry can stimulate the emotional release you need. This might lift your spirits for the moment and open the door to a new perspective. Your emotional healing process can start this way. [Recommendations](#).

Gaining hope and encouragement

No film by itself can reverse a negative worldview. But if you feel temporarily helpless and discouraged, movies that begin in despair and end in triumph can give you hope. If you can identify with characters, trapped in their circumstances, and share their disappointments as well as unsteady steps toward liberation, you may find reason for optimism in your own situation. You can gain the courage to do what is necessary to change your situation. [Recommendations](#).

Questioning negative beliefs about yourself and rediscovering your strengths

Sometimes you may hold negative beliefs about yourself. At those times you are not aware of your assets and the means by which you can access them. You need some help to recall forgotten and discounted resources and to become aware again of opportunities for those resources to be applied. Allow yourself to identify with film characters that have their ups and downs, as they do in almost all movies. Did they find solutions to their problems through skills that you may have forgotten you had too? Most likely, these skills seem still somehow familiar and accessible to you. A shift in your perspective can happen, when you recognize and appropriate resources from your own repertoire.

An integration of your "reel life" into "real life" can best take place when you reflect on the movie afterwards by yourself, or with a therapist, or a friend. Ask yourself: Do I discount the skills and strengths that I have in common with the movie characters. Write these strengths down on a sheet of paper. Place this paper somewhere in your house where you see it frequently. [Recommendations](#).

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Improving communication

Your communication with your partner, friend, or colleague might be strained because you try to communicate a concept that is unfamiliar to him or her. Some movies demonstrate how communication can go wrong. You can learn from them as well as from the films that model good communication. With a friend or partner you can watch a movie together. Choose a film with the message you want to convey. A movie can introduce understanding through readily grasped images. By watching the film together and explaining to your partner or friend why you picked that particular film, you may be able to enter into a more productive conversation. The film serves as a metaphor that might more accurately represent the feelings and ideas that you had trouble putting into words. [Recommendations](#).

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