



## DEVELOPING A COMIC VISION

*A workshop by Tim Gard, CSP, CPAE*

*"We cannot always control the little irritations that occur to us and around us everyday, but we can control our perception of those irritations if we develop, use, and share our Comic Vision."..... Tim Gard*

**Workshop Summary:** Today, almost everyone has heard of, or read about, how humor can be used in the workplace. However, when humor occurs during work time it can have a very positive or an equally negative effect. Harnessed positively, good humor can be a strategic skill and act as a positive factor in communication, morale and stress reduction. However, bad humor can become a negative factor in the same areas while becoming a source of complaints and civil rights violations.

How can we harness the power of laughter and insulate against negative humor? Tim Gard suggests we use and develop our own Comic Visions. In this workshop, tailored to your group, Tim Gard will share his proven methods for "Developing a Comic Vision".

Participants can expect to improve their communication skills as they explore the physical and emotional benefits of laughter and humor in this comprehensive Comic Visions class. They will also gain humor insights as they define the boundaries between good and bad humor at work and discover ways to avoid stress at work and at home. Stress is not what occurs to us, but is the result of our perception of an occurrence. Although we can't choose what potentially stressful things happen to us or around us every day, we do have a choice in how we perceive their impact. Having a Comic Vision is choosing to laugh at the things we can, being serious about the things we have to, and actively harness humor as a strategic skill. Developing a healthy sense of humor and a Comic Vision can naturally insulate us against stress and burnout. Laugh and learn how to effectively use humor as a tool at work and at home with Tim Gard.

**OBJECTIVES:** Upon completion of the program participants will be able to:

- Understand the complexity of using humor in a diverse workplace.
- Use laughter and good humor to prevent or cope with stress and change
- Recognize the physical and emotional benefits of laughter
- Discover Comic Vision alternatives to telling jokes at work

- Identify and defuse situational stress
- Use Comic Vision strategies to manage conflict
- Define Good and Bad humor
- Design their own Good Humor Plan
- Harness laughter as a positive communication tool
- Laugh and learn as you develop your own Comic Vision with Tim's proven stress buster methods, and good humor office toys.

**Workshop: One to Six Hours or as a Keynote of one hour to 90 minutes.**

**Keynote: One hour to two hours.**

### **Comic Vision Program Modules:**

#### ***Module #1***

This module provides an overview to the Comic Vision concept. Participants learn about the types of stress and how to deal with common situational stress factors they routinely encounter at work and at home. The group learns how to develop their own Comic Vision to choose to laugh at the things they can and be serious about the things they have to. Tim's favorite props and stories are used to illustrate how and why participants should harness laughter to avoid stress. Participants discover they don't have to tell jokes to use humor and that anyone can use their own comic vision as a tool to overcome and avoid stress everyday. Having a Comic Vision provides us with the ability to perceive the humorous side of some potential irritations and laugh at them rather than getting mad or stressed.

#### ***Module #2***

We cannot avoid all the negative stress factors that occur in our lives so participants also discover how to use their Comic Vision as a balance to stress, and come to understand that it is OK to be serious about our work, but we do not have to be solemn about everything that occurs at work. They also learn to harness laughter to benefit and amuse themselves and others without having to just "tell jokes". The main point throughout this module is that while they cannot always control the things that happen around them, they can control their *perception* of those things through their Comic Vision. Also gained is the critical ability to utilize humor as a skill.

#### ***Module #3***

We all enjoy humor and seek laughter because it makes us feel good, however many of us do not understand exactly how laughter affects us. From ancient

times to today's technology, scholars have researched and appreciated the physical, emotional and therapeutic value of laughter and this module highlights the recognized, scientific, proven benefits of laughter and humor. Not only is laughter fun, its side effects are well researched and documented, and it is actually good for us! A comprehensive reading list is also discussed.

#### ***Module #4***

Participants learn how to apply good humor in the workplace and how to utilize practical, proven techniques in stressful situations. Workplace humor has the potential for either a highly positive or a strongly negative effect. Good humor can be a strategic communication skill and act as a positive factor in productivity, morale and stress-reduction. Bad humor can have the opposite effect, and additionally can result in complaints and civil rights violations. Insights are gained by defining the boundaries between good and bad humor at work and thus, the ability to develop and implement a Humor Plan is attained.

#### ***Module #5*** (optional, not recommended for groups larger than 50)

In this last module the group learns to juggle together in small groups. Using juggling as a team development device enables participants to rediscover the joy of learning new things and the importance of learning from mistakes. They are reminded of the fun in not taking themselves so seriously, as well as that not everything that looks difficult is beyond reach. Customized for your group of 50 persons (or fewer) this session exemplifies how working together can be both fun and productive. Most of all, the group has fun as they laugh and learn together.

### **Trainer Background & Credentials:**

**Tim Gard** is a nationally recognized humorist, and authority on stress reduction through humor, interviewing techniques and fraud prevention. . Tim began his career with social services as an Eligibility Technician (ET) in Kalispell, Montana. It was while working with the Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services that he began to develop training to help fellow eligibility workers deal with stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue inherent to their jobs. He discovered in those early training sessions that sharing his own good humor and enabling the group to develop a Comic Vision of their own proved to be a very effective and fun way for people to deal with, and even avoid, the sometimes intense personal and professional stress most people encounter every day. He later developed and shared training programs on such topics as "How to Deal with Welfare Fraud Personally and Professionally", "Interviewing Techniques" and "Field Interviews/Homevisits". When Montana implemented an investigator program, Tim became one of the first Eligibility Investigators in Montana. In 1989 he moved to Denver, Colorado to join the staff of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) as a Program Reviewer. While with FNS, he continued to lecture and consult on interviewing, stress reduction through humor and self-esteem at local and national conferences. In February 1994 Tim resigned from FNS to devote all his time to training and seminars.

Today, Tim is a highly sought-after speaker both inside and out of the human services field. Author of Secrets of Choosing and Using Props, he speaks at over 100 events annually, offers his own line of "stress buster" toys and appeared on TV talk shows. Throughout the last

decade Tim has provided his good humor seminars, nationally and internationally while developing a reputation for hilariously entertaining fast paced and informative programs. Tim is a navy veteran who served tours in San Francisco and aboard the U. S. aircraft carrier Midway based in Japan. He majored in communications at Flathead Valley Community College and Montana State University in Bozeman.

**REFERENCES:** Tim provides keynotes, presentations, and training for a variety of local, state, and national organizations. His clients have included American Public Welfare Association, National Eligibility Workers Association, United Council on Welfare Fraud, Public Service Company of Colorado, Ball Aerospace, Colorado Credit Union League, U.S. Department of Energy, First Data Corp., First Interstate Bank of Denver, Sysco, Colorado National Bank, Amoco Production Company, National Park Service, U S WEST, Universities of Colorado and Wyoming, TCI Cable, United Way, UNIPAC Service Corp., U.S. Navy, Idaho Power, IRS, PacifiCorp, National Eligibility Workers Association and numerous other city, county, state, federal, private industry, and professional organizations.

**AWARDS /CERTIFICATION:** Professional member of National Speakers Association. Awarded CSP (Certified Speaking Professional) designation in 2000. Less than 8% of speaking professionals receive this award. Awarded CPAE (Council of Peers Award for Excellence) designation and was inducted into the Speaker Hall of Fame in 2006. To date, 181 men and women have been inducted in the CPAE Speaker Hall of Fame, with up to five inductees named each year. The CPAE designation honors professional speakers who have reached the top echelon of platform excellence.

Recipient of recognition awards from the Indiana Chapter of International Association of Personnel in Employment Security, The National Eligibility Workers Association, The State of Florida, The Wyoming Department of Family Services, The Social Security Administration, The United States Naval Reserve, Fitzsimons Hospital, State of Arkansas, U. S. Department of Agriculture and many others.

*“A person does not have to tell jokes to use humor as a skill at work and at home you can simply develop and use your own Comic Vision. I believe that a healthy sense of humor and a Comic Vision can insulate us from daily irritations that can stack up and eventually cause major problems in our lives. Your Comic Vision can naturally prevent stress and burnout.*