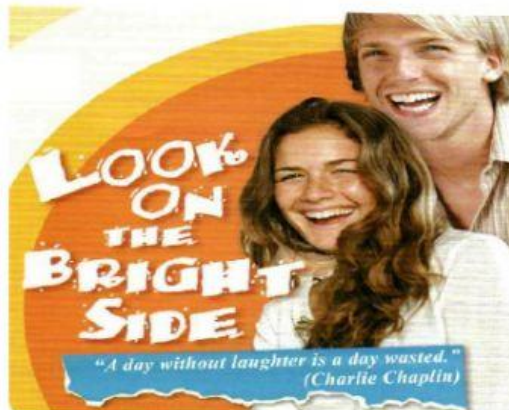




Read the text. For questions 1-6, choose the best answer 1, 2, 3 or 4. .

By the time I got to the community centre, I was already five minutes late. When I finally found the room, a diverse group of young and old people were wandering around, pointing at each other and giggling. It was one of the most ridiculous sights I had ever seen, but I shouldn't have been so taken aback, because this was a laughter yoga class!

Laughter yoga was started in 1995 in Mumbai, India, by Madan Kataria, a doctor. He had been looking into the medical advantages of laughter and found that a great way to relieve stress was to laugh for 15 to 20 minutes every day. He formed a public 'laughter club' in a park and before long, a new movement combining laughter and special breathing exercises had been created. The idea took off and, unbelievably, there are now around 5,000 laughter yoga classes taking place around the world!



At first, I was very sceptical. How could a bit of silly giggling feel like exercise? Our instructor Maryanne explained that laughter reduces stress, improves circulation, tones muscles and even helps the respiratory system. In fact, just the simple act of smiling, she said, tricks our bodies into thinking we are happy as it releases stress-fighting hormones called endorphins. Well, I was certainly willing to try it to help me let off steam after my stressful week! As warm-up exercises, Maryanne asked us to walk around the room while chanting and clapping. Afterwards, we lay on the floor, kicking our legs in the air, and to my surprise I started to snigger. Then we pretended to joke with old friends and drink from imaginary tea cups. The room was soon full of chuckles, giggles and roars of laughter. I have to admit the laughter was contagious.

At the end of the session, I felt refreshed. It was as if a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. Before we left, Maryanne gave us a list of 'easy actions for joyful living' and told us to try out some before the next class. The list included simple things such as meditation, helping a neighbour, learning a new skill or even stopping to admire a wild flower or looking up at a starry night sky. That should be easy enough, I thought! Firstly, I tried meditating for 10 minutes each morning. I sat silently with my eyes dosed and focused on my breathing while observing my thoughts. At first **that** was hard! But as the week progressed, the clutter in my mind was eventually replaced with a feeling of peace and calm.

The next thing I did was offer to help an elderly neighbour carry her shopping bags home. She appreciated it and I felt lighter in my step afterwards. Friday was a terrible day. I stepped in a huge puddle, got soaking wet on my way to college and then my car wouldn't start so I had to catch two trains home. Taking advice from Maryanne's list, at the end of the day I wrote down three positive things that happened that day. My friend brought me a warm drink when I arrived at the college. I listened to my favourite music on the journey home. My brother promised to look at my car for me the next day.

I read somewhere that happiness doesn't just happen, you have to work at it; but I found that it doesn't actually take that much work. So, try it out for yourself - you don't have to go to a laughter yoga class. You can smile and laugh more, look for small ways to bring joy to others and yourself and focus on the positive things in your life not the negative. I don't think you'll regret it!

1. When the writer arrived at her class, she felt ____ .
1. embarrassed because she was late.
 2. more comfortable than she expected.
 3. amused and surprised by the group's behaviour.
 4. relieved that she found the room.
2. Madan Kataria founded laughter yoga in order to ____ .
1. improve public health.
 2. reduce his stress levels.
 3. make exercising more fun.
 4. have a career change.
3. After listening to the instructor talk about laughter yoga, the writer felt ____ .
1. more uncertain about it.
 2. sure that she was right.
 3. more open-minded.
 4. embarrassed about her attitude.
4. What does highlighted **that** refer to?
1. finding the time to meditate
 2. not worrying about the past and future
 3. facing day-to-day worries
 4. thinking about the future
5. On Friday, the writer managed to ____ .
1. avoid feeling unhappy about her day.
 2. solve her problems quickly and easily.
 3. strengthen relationships with family and friends.
 4. try a few ideas from Maryanne's list.
6. How did the writer's attitude change during her experience?
1. She realised how much she had to be happy about.
 2. She started to appreciate those around her more.
 3. She realised that simple actions can make you happier.
 4. She began wanting to encourage others to try laughter yoga.

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