THE GRAVITY OF LAUGHTER

Join Vivien and Neil Schapera of the *The Schapera Show* and *The Schapera Channel*
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Back in the 1960's, when Vivien was a little girl, she saw the first version of Mary Poppins featuring Julie Andrews. She loved the movie! To see her favorite heroine step out of the pages of a book, and be presented in glorious technicolor, together with animation, singing and dancing, was utterly entrancing.

The movie left a lasting impression on Vivien's psyche, especially because there was a formative moment for Vivien – the scene where Mary Poppins takes the children to visit an old gentleman who is laughing so much that he has floated up to the ceiling. As the children watched, and joined in the energy, they became lighter and lighter, until they became so light, they also floated up to the ceiling. The song they sang was called "I Love to Laugh" and that's when Vivien, who was a very serious little girl, knew that she too loves to laugh.

For Vivien, humor and laughter are an integral part of "everyday magic." *Everyday Magic* is the title of Vivien's second book, and in the opening paragraph, Vivien explains: "Everyday magic is the funny side of sad, the truth in paradox and the reality which hides behind the illusion of everyday life."



Vivien discovered the “funny side of sad” after her brother, Michael, died. The circumstances of Michael’s death were tragic – he was murdered. One day, about two years later, Vivien was sitting at a traffic light, waiting for the light to change, when she suddenly burst out laughing – she was remembering Michael and some of the extremely quirky things he used to do. Michael was a cross-dresser and he loved to suddenly appear in public in a dress, gloves, high heels and a big hat to top off the ensemble. She was thinking of the delight he took in surprising people by selectively showing his true self. As Vivien laughed, she realized that Michael, her only sibling, would forever be with her, and everything was going to be alright.

Vivien is not the only one who has discovered this particular magic. In *Still Me*, Vivien read a striking report by Christopher Reeve when he shared this story: He was receiving physical therapy after he became a quadriplegic. During the session he could hear peals of laughter coming from the cubicle next door, where another quadriplegic was receiving therapy. What was so hilarious? The woman was remembering how she became paralyzed – she had tripped over her little dog and gone flying through the air and down the stairs, landing badly on her neck. As she was receiving therapy, she was picturing the scene and saw the extreme humor. What could possibly be comic about becoming paralyzed from the neck down? Apparently, someone who has gone through this experience *can* see the funny side!

Laughter is very important because it is the antidote to stress. When Vivien was writing *The Complete Guide to Crystal Surgery,* she came face-to-face with the harsh reality of *why* stress is related to four out of five of the leading causes of death in western society. Basically, stress undermines the body’s fundamental design so that our functioning becomes severely compromised. How so? When we are under stress our autonomic nervous system switches away from regulating our physiological functioning and attends instead to pumping out hormones that cope with stress. Which physiological functioning? Oh, nothing important … just our breathing and heartbeat, for example. Not only that, stress sabotages our immune systems.

Laughter, on the other hand, has an equally impressive set of benefits that can balance the negative effects of stress. In a nutshell, laughter helps your immune system, lightens your mood, and reduces pain. Humor also releases anger, promotes forgiveness and helps you to become more grounded. Perhaps best of all, laughing together with someone else creates a resilient bond.

Bottom line: Laughter is healing. Perhaps, that is why Vivien, who works as a healing practitioner, has a secret desire to become a stand-up comic?

Vivien is an award-winning teacher, practitioner and writer living in Cincinnati, OH USA. In private practice for over 40 years, she is also the founder of three schools, and the author of numerous blogs, vlogs, and books, including *Everyday Magic* and *The Complete Guide to Crystal Surgery.* For more information, please visit www.CrystalHealingTechniques.com