



Nowadays everyone's inbox is filled with memes, cartoons and jokes about our continuing political, economic and environmental disasters. And even though each joke is another reminder of a horrible situation, we laugh. Why?

Because we have to; laughter is critical in terrible times because it reminds us we can still feel joy, and that the purpose of life is to do more than just survive. No matter the circumstances, people always crave what author Phillip Pullman calls "the value of simple delight."

Comedy vs. The Apocalypse looks at how comedy fights despair with a different kind of distancing: lightening frightening things by making them seem ridiculous. And laughter's benefits are more than just psychological; physicians have long known that humor has real health effects. And not just doctors: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine," says no less an authority than God.

Join David Misch, Mel Brooks, Samuel Beckett, Sarah Silverman, the Dalai Lama, Laurel & Hardy and Key & Peele to see how comedy laughs at tragedy – from the Black Death to the Holocaust to 9/11; how it's happening now; and how humor can help us get to tomorrow.

David Misch wrote and produced stage and screen comedy for more than 40 years; his credits include "Mork and Mindy," "The Muppets Take Manhattan" and "Saturday Night Live." He's also an author, playwright, songwriter, recovered stand-up comic, teacher (his own comedy courses at UCLA and USC), and has spoken at the Smithsonian Institute, 92Y, Yale, Columbia, the American Film Institute, Grammy Museum, Sony Pictures, Oxford University, Austin Film Festival, Raindance Film Festival (London), CineStudio Paris, VIEW Cinema Conference (Torino, Italy), University of Sydney and many other venues. Too much more at davidmisch.com.