

5 Habits to a *Happier* Life Starting Now!

BY JUDY KAY MAUSOLF

It is both my cause and my career in life to help others get happier and more successful!

My latest book I wrote is titled, “*TA-DAH! Get Happy in 5 Seconds or Less!*” I love learning about what makes us tick—especially regarding happiness— what helps

us succeed at happiness; what sabotages our happiness as well as the effects happiness has on our life. There are so many interesting studies to support the benefit of being happier and not just from a feel good standpoint.





WHEN WE ARE HAPPIER WE ARE:

- More successful
- More intelligent
- More creative
- More productive
- and healthier

The bottom line is that when we are happier we maximize our potential!

College yearbook photos can actually predict future happiness and well-being. Smiling on demand, it turns out, is actually easier said than done. Some of us break into a radiant smile of authentic happiness, while the rest of us pose uncomfortably.

There are basically two types of smiles: a genuine smile and a fake one. This distinction has been of interest to researchers for quite some time now. In fact, the genuine smile has a name. It's called the "Duchenne smile," named after the French physician Guillaume Duchenne, who studied the physiology of facial expressions in the nineteenth century. You may also be familiar with the term Duchenne as a form of Muscular Dystrophy.

The Duchenne smile involves both voluntary and involuntary contraction from two muscles: the zygomatic major (raising the corners of the mouth) and

the orbicularis oculi (raising the cheeks and producing crow's feet around the eyes).

A fake smile or, as I like to call it, a "Say Cheese" smile involves the contraction of just the zygomatic major since we cannot voluntarily contract the orbicularis oculi muscle.

Researchers Dacher Keltner and LeeAnne Harker from the University of California, Berkeley analyzed the smiles in 141 photos from the 1960 Mills College yearbook. They divided the photos by Duchenne smiles, Say Cheese smiles, and the non-smilers.

The researchers followed up with these women at age 27, 43, and 52 and asked them questions about their life satisfaction and status of their marriage. They found that the Duchenne smile predicted positive outcomes in marriage and well-being up to 30 years later.

Take a moment and do a selfie photo test. Are the corners of your eyes crinkling? No worries if not! Here are 5 habits to help you achieve a happier life with crinkly eyes!

1

PRACTICE BEING PRESENT IN THE MOMENT

The first habit is to practice staying in the present moment. Right here, right now is the only moment in time that we can make a difference. Yesterday is over and gone and tomorrow is just a prediction of the future. Stop dwelling on the past. Our past does not define our future! We can learn from our mistakes or the mistakes of others and move on.

Stop worrying about the future. Worry is just a negative prediction of the future. What we worry about usually doesn't happen. Something totally different happens that we didn't even worry about and yet we survived it. Which just goes to show us that worry is a total waste of time and energy. Instead of worrying have a plan for the future then let it go and get back to the present moment. Be mindful and savor the moment. Savoring means being aware of pleasure and giving deliberate conscious attention to the experience of pleasure. For example, taking in a deep breath of air right after a rain shower and slowly letting it out while noticing how fresh it smells or feeling the warmth of the sun on your face on a cool day. Here are three techniques to help you savor the moment even more.

- Share it with others
- Take mental photographs or even a physical souvenir
- Let yourself get totally immersed and try not to think just sense

2

PRACTICE HAVING SPF (SUPER POSITIVE FOCUS)

The second habit is to practice focusing on the positive instead of the negative in life. What we focus on grows. Look for three potential positives in any situation or any person. It is not surprising that what we look for is what we see. The minute you find yourself focused on the negative ask yourself the following questions:

- What are three potential positives?
- What lessons can I learn from this?
- What changes can I make to make it a more positive experience?

3

PRACTICE SHOWING GRATITUDE

The third habit is practice showing gratitude daily! Close your eyes for a second and imagine a regular day. A routine day that happens often and that you most likely take for granted. What would you miss if it were no longer? Whatever you would miss, practice giving thanks and praise. The reality is when we focus on what is already in our life and give thanks and praise we feel grateful. Often times we get so busy in our lives we no longer see what is good and right, we just take it for granted. Things in life become routine and everyday blah. It is important to get rid of the distractions and noise to create awareness. What is it that is good and right in your personal and professional life? Grab a pen and paper and write everything you can think of in a 2 minute time span. Writing things down creates clarity while also creating a list you can revisit.

At work, have a team meeting and ask everyone to share what they feel is good and right in the practice. Use an easel pad and markers to write down the team's responses. The more we practice showing gratitude; the more grateful we feel; the happier we become; the more we have to give thanks and praise. It is a very fulfilling cycle of positive circulation!

4

PRACTICE USING SIGNATURE STRENGTHS

The fourth habit is to practice using our signature strengths. A signature strength is a moral trait, a psychological characteristic that can be seen consistently in many different situations over time. It is not a one-time display of something. It's something that is innate to us that we know we kick butt at doing! Examples of signature strengths are: curiosity, love of learning, judgment, ingenuity, social intelligence, perspective, valor, perseverance, integrity, kindness, loving, team player, fairness, leadership, self-control, prudence, humility, appreciation, gratitude, hope, spirituality, forgiveness, humor and zest!

These are strengths of character that we self-consciously own, celebrate, and exercise every day in work, love, play, and parenting. When we utilize our signature strengths we are filled with joy and well-being. Have you ever felt like fist pumping and shouting to the world, YES, this is what I am meant to do! When we feel this way we are in the flow of life. Flow cannot be sustained through an entire eight-hour work day; even under the best of circumstances, flow visits us for a few minutes on several occasions.

"Flow occurs when the challenges we face perfectly mesh with our abilities to meet them!"

Take time to make a list of your top five signature strengths? Look for ways you can utilize your signature strengths daily and you will bring abundant gratification, authentic happiness and significant purpose to your life.

5

PRACTICE RECRAFTING

The fifth habit is to practice recrafting. Recrafting is taking something and remaking it into something better. Our economy is rapidly changing from a money economy to a satisfaction economy. The stark findings about life satisfaction is that beyond the safety net, more money adds little or nothing to well-being and happiness. Work is defined as either a job, a career or a calling. We do a job for a paycheck and not satisfaction. It's just a means to another end (like leisure or supporting a family). When the wage stops, we quit.

A career is a deeper personal investment in work. We mark our achievement through money and advancement. Each promotion leads to higher prestige, power and salary.

When the promotions stop or we top out we look elsewhere for gratification and meaning.

A calling is a passionate commitment to work for its own sake. Individuals with a calling see their work as contributing to the greater good, to something larger than they are. The work is fulfilling in its own right, without regard for money or advancement and engages their signature strengths. A dentist who views the work as a job and is simply interested in making a good income does not have a calling, while a garbage collector who sees his work as making the world a cleaner, healthier place could have a calling. The key is not finding the right job, it is finding a job we can make right through recrafting and engaging our signature strengths. We have a choice about what work we do, and about how we go about doing our work!

Here is how you can recraft your work

to produce more flow:

- Identify signature strengths
- Choose work that lets you use them daily
- Recraft your present work to use your signature strengths more
- If you are an employer, choose employees whose signature strengths mesh with the work they will do. If you are a manager make room to allow employees to recraft the work within the bounds of your goals.

A happy life consists of practicing being present, focusing on the positive, showing gratitude and living our signature strengths every day in our work and our play for the greater good of all. We can choose to live a happier life! The crinkly eyes are the bonus!

Contact Judy Kay today if you would like to learn how she can help you build a happier, healthier and higher performing culture!



JUDY KAY MAUSOLF, OWNER & PRESIDENT OF PRACTICE SOLUTIONS, INC.

Judy Kay Mausolf is a dental practice management coach, speaker and author with expertise in helping others get happier and more successful! She coaches teams how to grow their practices by becoming better leaders, working together better and delivering service with more passion and fun. She provides teams with what they need to know on how to communicate positively, effectively and have a better attitude on a daily basis. She teaches teams how to get the re-engaged and accountable by building a culture based on happiness, trust and respect.

She is Past President of National Speakers Association (Minnesota Chapter), Director of Sponsoring Partners for the Speaking Consulting Network, and a member of the National Speakers Association and Academy of Dental Management Consultants. She is author of two books; "Ta-Dah! And "Rise & Shine!", and a contributing author for many dental magazines. She also publishes a monthly newsletter entitled "Show Your Shine".

Judy Kay lives in MN with her awesome husband Steve who makes her special coffee every morning and Zoe...it's all about me, 7 pound Yorkie!

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