



Enthusiasm is the master value

Bởi:

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“Every memorable act in the history of the world is a triumph of enthusiasm. Nothing great was ever achieved without it because it gives any challenge or any occupation, no matter how frightening or difficult, a new meaning. Without enthusiasm you are doomed to a life of mediocrity but with it you can accomplish miracles.”

Og Mandino: [*The Greatest Salesman in the World*](#)

Enthusiasm is Core Action Value #10 in the course I teach on *The Twelve Core Action Values*, but sometimes I think I should have placed it first because I am increasingly convinced that enthusiasm is the master value. When people are enthusiastic, it makes everything easier: enthusiastic people have the courage to take risks, the determination to persevere their way through obstacles and setbacks, are more committed to service, and tend to become natural leaders. But without enthusiasm, everything is more difficult – making it through the day is like swimming across a pool filled with Jell-O.

Enthusiasm is the ultimate sales pitch. Aren't you more likely to buy from someone who is cheerful, optimistic, and passionate than you are to buy from a negative, bitter, cynical and sarcastic pickle sucker – even if they are both reading from the very same sales script? Here are ten actions you can take to be more enthusiastic and cultivate a more positive attitude – beginning with yourself and then sharing with others at home and at work:

1. Recognize that enthusiasm is a series of choices. The most important development in human evolution was not the offsetting thumb or the enlarged brain. It was the realization that by conscious will, the mind can be disciplined, that people do not have to be slaves to their thoughts and emotions. We each have the power to consciously decide how we perceive the world, and to discipline how we react to what we see. By conscious will we can decide whether to be an optimist or a pessimist; whether to accept personal responsibility or blame others; whether to see in adversity a door closing in our face or another door opening to exciting new opportunities; whether to become an educated skeptic or an ignorant cynic.

2. *Be a visionary, not a victim.* You can be a victim complaining about past injustices, or you can be a visionary dreaming about future accomplishments, but you cannot be both. Visionaries are usually bubbling over with enthusiasm, while victims are more likely to suck the enthusiasm out of everyone around them. Choose to be a visionary and walk toward your future with passion and enthusiasm, and never to be a victim dragging around a sad past behind you.

3. *Turn off the TV.* Just in case you hadn't already been given enough reasons to turn off your television set, researchers have demonstrated that watching TV is positively correlated with being depressed; the more time a person spends in front of the boob tube, the more likely they are to be discouraged, depressed, and unenthusiastic about life. Turn off the plug-in drug and get a life!

4. *Be an energy faucet.* Are you an energy faucet or an energy drain? When you leave a group, do people feel energized or exhausted by your recent presence? People like to be around others who energize them, and seek to avoid those who sap their energy. The best way to become an energy faucet is to truly take an interest in the concerns of others, and to elevate their confidence and ability to address those concerns. Make it a point of smiling and saying hello to everyone you pass in the hallways. Your enthusiastic smile might be the best gift they have received all day!

5. *Erase the Graffiti of Negative Self-Talk.* Nothing can sap your energy and enthusiasm more quickly and thoroughly than your own negative self-talk. In his book *The Evolving Self: A Psychology for the New Millennium*, Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi showed that for a variety of evolutionary reasons, the human mind automatically gravitates toward negative, frightening, and depressing thoughts. It is your challenge to confront these self-inhibiting notions before they interfere with your pursuit of your future vision. Pay attention to all of the negative self-talk going through your mind. Hint: it will almost always be in the second person ("You are an idiot," not "I am an idiot"). Every time your inner critic verbally abuses you, stand up to it. The inner critic is a bully, and bullies always buckle when confronted with courage. Whenever your spoiled inner brat tells you that you're not good enough, that you can't achieve great goals, or otherwise puts you down, erase that mental graffiti and replace it with a positive (and more likely to be truthful) self-talk saying exactly the opposite.

6. *Get enough sleep.* Sleep deprivation can increase anxiety and worry, says James Mass in *Power Sleep*. When you skimp on sleep, you can end up with "overwhelming feelings of not being able to cope, even with simple problems or moderate workloads; increase in worry, frustration, and nervousness; and inability to maintain perspective, or to relax, even under moderate pressure." Most of us require *at least* eight full hours of sleep every night. "The process of sleep," says Maas, "provides tremendous power. It restores, rejuvenates, and energizes the body and the brain." Turning off the TV and setting aside

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that mystery novel so you can go to bed earlier can help you be more fully alert, creative, enthusiastic, and alive during your waking hours.

7. *Outlaw gossip.* Participating in gossip saps the energy from group conversation, and beyond that it is a fundamentally dishonest act. Even if the words being said by the gossip-monger are technically true, they will be subject to false interpretation and to distortion as the gossip is spread.

8. *Change your reference group.* Sociologists tell us that one of the most important, if not *the* most important, influences on our lives is the people we spend time with, the people with whom we identify. This is what they call our reference group. We are all profoundly imprinted by the characteristics of the reference groups with which we identify, in both conscious and subconscious ways. If your reference group consists primarily of people who are depressed, pessimistic, and chronically whining about how the world has made them a victim, over time it will be almost impossible for you to not fall into that emotional quicksand. On the other hand, if you spend time with people who are confident and optimistic, their attitudes will rub off on you. Consciously seek out people who have the qualities you would like to emulate. This entails sticking your neck out, making those proverbial cold calls, joining Rotary or the Optimists Club, and otherwise getting out of your shell.

9. *Stay in shape.* Commit yourself to engaging in some sort of exercise as soon as you get home, and before you open the fridge and turn on the tube. Regular exercise is a proven catalyst for a more enthusiastic perspective on life.

10. *Give your complaints the Valley Forge test.* Whenever you find yourself complaining about something, imagine being transported back through time to Valley Forge during that horrible winter of 1776-77. Visualize yourself describing this complaint of yours to the freezing, starving patriots who sacrificed so much to win the freedoms that you now enjoy. If your suffering makes them cry out in sympathy, then you *really do* have a legitimate gripe, so by all means keep whining about it if you must. If, on the other hand, your mind's ear hears them laughing at your "problem," then either drop it or deal with it, but stop whining about it.

In its original Greek usage, "enthusiasm" referred to being blessed with a divine spirit within. When it comes to your life and your business, that divine spirit is happiness at home and money in the bank.