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When your values are clear, your decisions are easy. — Roy Disney

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— McKay*

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VALUES - BASED QUALITY OF LIFE™ *Newsletter*

Because Making Smart Choices About Your Money Impacts The Quality of Your Life

Over the years, we have found that there are elements of your life that are more important than money. These elements - Physical Health, Relationship Health, Inner Health and Career Health - cannot be delegated.

We hope that you find these articles to be of value in improving the quality of your life.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

The Link Between Happiness and Health

By Elizabeth Scott, MS

Happiness and Health Go Together.

Happiness and health have been anecdotally linked for quite a while now--'laughter is the best medicine' has become a cliché for a reason--but research backs up what many people have instinctively assumed all along: that happiness and health really are connected, and that one's level of happiness really can impact the level of one's health.

The relatively new field of positive psychology is exploring the factors that contribute to emotional resilience, happiness, and health, among other life-affirming topics, and what we now know for certain about these topics can help us all live healthier, more meaningful lives--and reduce stress.

"Experiences that induce positive emotion cause negative emotion to dissipate rapidly. The strengths and virtues...function to buffer against misfortune and against the psychological disorders, and they may be the key to building resilience. The best therapists do not merely heal damage; they help people identify and build their strengths and their virtues," wrote Martin Seligman, former president of the American Psychological Association and the father of the field of positive psychology, in his book *Authentic Happiness*. And solid research continues to culminate, supporting this view. Here are a few important studies on happiness and health:

Happiness and Longevity: A landmark study involving nuns was able to pinpoint health benefits that come with positive emotion. (Nun studies work well

because so many other lifestyle variables are uniform, so reported differences can often be narrowed down to a handful of factors, like personality and outlook.) In studying the lives and deaths of the nuns, given clues to their emotional state, researchers were able to make an important discovery about happiness and health--positive emotion is correlated with longevity! 90% of the most cheerful quarter of nuns was alive at the age of eighty-five, whereas only 34% of the least cheerful quarter lived to that age. Similarly, 54% of the most cheerful fourth was alive at age ninety-four, versus 11% of the least cheerful.

Happiness and Marriage: As if that's not enough, positive emotion is also linked by research to marital satisfaction. In another astonishing study, researchers were able to examine the cheerfulness of smiles in women's yearbook photos and predict which ones, on average, would be more likely married, stay married and experience more personal wellbeing over the next thirty years. (Hint: it was, again, the most cheerful group.) What's striking about this is that healthy relationships are linked to strong immunity and, thus, overall health and so the 'upward spiral' continues.

Happiness and Optimism: Researchers have also found optimists to have longer lives. Optimism is distinct from positive emotion, though the two are related. Rather than just being cheerful, however, optimists tend to see the world in a distinct way: when positive events occur in their lives, they give themselves personal credit, attribute the cause to lasting traits under their control, and see

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"The heart and soul of the company is creativity and innovation."

- Bob Iger

CAREER HEALTH

3 Monthly Tasks You Should Do To Maintain Your Career Health

By Heather R. Huhman

What do General Electric, Proctor & Gamble, Intel, and Siemens all have in common?

They have all been recognized for their dedication to leadership and career development throughout all levels of their organizations. These companies have been ranked for providing “extensive training, education and mentoring programs,” according to CareerBuilder.

So what’s the takeaway for job seekers? If your current employer isn’t offering any career development opportunities, take control of your career health. This will provide you with a safeguard for when a job change is necessary, and you’ll be on the right path toward your career goals.

What do I mean by career health? In short, I’m referring to maintaining your current skills, learning new ones, and being present in the industry in which you work. It’s easy to get into a lull and forget new things are happening, new skills can be attained, and new networking contacts can be made.

Here are three monthly tasks to help you maintain your career health:

1. Periodically look back on your current skills, accomplishments, and setbacks.

To maintain career health, you should periodically reevaluate your job history. Some questions to consider include:

Have you been involved recently in a successful project or outcome?

Have you faced career setbacks or errors in the past month?

What are your strongest skills? What are your weakest?

Take the time to acknowledge these points and write a little about each in a document on your computer. Noting your achievements and setbacks will make it easier for you to maintain your personal brand, update your resume and cover letters, and pinpoint improvements you need to make in the future.

2. Develop new skills via webinars, professional organizations, education, or volunteering.

Now that you’ve identified the skills you’d like to improve, do just that!

If you’re not already a part of your industry’s professional organization, become a member now. This organization likely offers access to webinars, peer mentoring programs, and conferences as part of your membership fee.

If you are a part of a professional organization, how long has it been since you were actively involved? If it’s been more than three months, consider watching a webinar or another career development benefit.

Getting a certificate or second degree is also a viable option for people who are looking to rev up their careers. But if you’d like to save the money, try volunteering somewhere that will allow you to develop the new skills you desire. This will also add to your resume when the time comes to dust it off.

Develop new knowledge and skills via at least one career development tool per month to maintain your career goals.

3. Keep up with your professional contacts and make new ones every now and again.

Think back on the last time you networked. Were you actively looking for a job at that time?

If you said yes, don’t feel bad. We all have a tendency to ask for things only when in need, especially during a job search. But networking is something that should occur even when you’re not actively looking for a job.

Maintaining your networking contacts takes some time and attention. So keep notes in your address book on your networking contacts so you don’t forget as you meet them. Search through your list to see if there’s someone you could touch base with this month. Maybe you can offer help with something they need.

Stay cognizant of other people’s needs so when your turn comes along, it won’t be so difficult to pinpoint your network and find job leads.

Take time to maintain your career health. Look back on your months with your career goals in mind. Be responsible for your career development and become more valuable as an employee.

Don’t they say hindsight is 20/20?

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each good event as a sign that more positive events are to come. (See this article for more on traits of optimists.) This specific lens through which they see the world allows them to maintain more of an internal locus of control (a sense of personal control over things), as well as resulting health-promoting behaviors and is associated with many benefits, including longevity: one study found that optimists had a 19% longer life span on average. Clearly, happiness and health can be linked by optimism.

Happiness and ‘Mature Defenses’: Another factor that’s closely related to positive emotion and optimism is a set of strengths known as ‘mature defenses’. These traits, which are not displayed by everyone, and vary over a lifespan, include altruism, the ability to delay gratification, future-mindedness and humor. According to a Harvard study that followed a cohort of men through their lives, the mature defenses are closely linked with joy in living, high income and a vigorous old age in men from varied backgrounds.

Happiness and Health: Happiness researcher Robert Holden conducted a survey and found that 65 out of 100 people would choose happiness over health, but that both were highly valued. Fortunately, we don’t have to choose: happiness and health go hand-in-hand. As Holden stated, “[T]here is no true health without happiness”.

There is also ample evidence that unhappiness—depression, anxiety, and stress, for example—are also linked to poorer health outcomes. These negative states, if chronic, can dampen immunity and increase inflammation in the body leading to a multitude of diseases and conditions.

The principles of Positive Psychology can combat these negative states, further increasing the likelihood of health.

Read more about Positive Psychology for tips on maintaining an attitude and lifestyle that’s conducive to greater happiness and health.

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INNER HEALTH

5 Ways to Stop Dwelling on Negative Thoughts

By Amanda MacMillan

When something's bothering you, you know that getting your mind off of it is easier said than done. In fact, research shows that when people are instructed not to think about a specific topic, it makes it even harder to get that topic out of their minds. But rehashing negative thoughts over and over in your head, also known as rumination, can be unpleasant and counterproductive—and in some cases, it can even lead to chronic depression.

"It's like a needle in a groove," says Guy Winch, Ph.D., psychologist and author of *Emotional First Aid: Practical Strategies for Treating Failure, Rejection, Guilt and Other Everyday Psychological Injuries*. "As the groove gets deeper and deeper, the needle has a harder time getting out of the groove." What's more, rumination can actually make you more angry or upset than you were originally, because the issue becomes magnified in your mind.

Luckily, there are a few techniques that can help you stop dwelling on negative thoughts and refocus your mind on something positive, says Winch; it just takes a bit of distraction and a healthy dose of willpower.

Go Shopping in Your Mind

One distraction trick Winch recommends is to visualize yourself in the grocery store. "Try to picture all of the items on one shelf in the store, and the order that you see them in," he says. Don't do a lot of food shopping? Think about something else that requires concentration: the order of books on your bookshelf, or the order of songs in an album or playlist you like to listen to, for example. You don't have to do it for long—maybe 30 seconds or a minute, but the key is to be disciplined about it and do it each time that negative thought comes back—even if that means doing it 20 times an hour. "It may seem temporary, but if you reinforce these patterns enough, it can improve your mood and your decision making abilities," says Winch. "You can actually train your brain to go in a different direction when these thoughts come up."

Keep Positive Company

If you can't get troublesome feelings out of your mind, it may have something to do with your social circle. In a 2013 study, Notre Dame researchers found that it's common for college students to pick up rumination-like behaviors from their roommates. Because rumination often involves worrying and thinking aloud, it's a habit that can be easily mirrored by other people, the researchers say. Avoid perpetually negative people when you can, or at least be aware of what habits might be rubbing off on you.

Physically Throw Them Away

It may sound crazy, but clearing your head of a nagging thought could be as easy as writing

"Positive thinking will let you do everything better than negative thinking will."

- Zig Ziglar

it down on a piece of paper—and tossing it in the trash, according to a 2012 Ohio State University study. People who wrote down negative things about their bodies and then threw them away had a more positive self image a few minutes later, compared to those who kept the papers with them. "However you tag your thoughts—as trash or as worthy of protection—seems to make a difference in how you use those thoughts," says study co-author and psychology professor Richard Petty, PhD. Don't want to waste paper? Doing this exercise on the computer, by dragging a text document into the "trash can," worked too.

Have a Cup of Tea

Negative thoughts can occur for many different reasons—but if yours are focused on feeling lonely, you may gain some comfort by warming

up, literally. Yale researchers discovered in 2012 that people recalled fewer negative feelings about a past lonely experience when they were holding a hot pack. (They also found that lonely people tend to take longer hot showers.) Substituting physical warmth for emotional warmth can be a quick fix, the researchers say—just don't let it take the place of real human interaction in the long run.

Reframe Your Situation

"If your urge to ruminate is very strong, distracting yourself isn't going to be easy," says Winch. "So before you try, it may be necessary to reframe or reappraise the situation in your head. If you get stuck in the airport for hours because of a cancelled flight, for example, don't think of what you're missing out on. Instead, see it as a chance to get work done, or to call your parents or an old friend. Once you've successfully reframed your situation, it may be easier to distract yourself with a visualization exercise (like Winch's "shopping list" exercise), a book or crossword puzzle, or a quick stroll.

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RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

Four Keys to Building Strong Work Relationships

By Systemation

Most work environments require interacting with others. Some people view these interactions as separate events they must endure and others view them as enriching, ongoing relationships. The truth is, you get out of your work relationships what you put in. If you are totally independent in your work environment, not requiring anything from anyone, then you don't need to read any further. But, if you're dependent on others, then you need to learn how to build strong work relationships.

There are four key behavior traits that contribute to building strong relationships. You need to be trustworthy, care about the other person, be committed to excellence in your performance, and bond through adventure. Let's look at each of these in more detail.

Be Trustworthy

It is important for you to do what you say. When you commit to something others listen and then watch. They want to know if you can be trusted to deliver on your commitment or if you will just blow it off. When delivering something will you deliver it as requested and on time or will it be incomplete or late.

Others also want to know if you are going to attempt personal gain at their expense. They will watch how you go about getting things you want, looking for methods or actions that take advantage of others. Even if they are not involved, it will be a tell tale sign that they need to watch their back when working with you.

Care About Them

People want to know if you care about them as a person or see them as an object, a means to an end. No one wants to be viewed as a resource for someone else's consumption. They want to be known as a unique individual with life experiences, emotions, and a choice in their work demands. Showing someone you care about them requires showing respect regardless of their

position in the company and gaining general knowledge of who they are and what they like and dislike.

In practice this means scheduling a meeting or conversation instead of just dropping in or calling. If you can't schedule in advance, do not interrupt an ongoing conversation, politely wait and then ask if it is a good time to chat. Before you discuss any business ask them about their personal life. When you are first building the relationship, ask general questions about their past and current experiences. Topics could include family, hobbies, vacations, pets, past

“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”

- Colin Powell

jobs, etc. As time goes on, you can ask more specific questions, but wait until you sense trust developing between the two of you.

Another way to show you care is to reflect back the information you receive. If Sally tells you she has a big vacation starting tomorrow, then make sure you ask her about it the next time you see her. If Bill tells you his dog died, don't forget about it and then ask him if he took his dog to the park two weeks later.

Commit to Excellence

Very few people like to work with low performers. You can't help but get a little slimed from someone else's deficiencies and poor results. Working with a person like this can require twice the effort and time of a competent worker. This is why your work attitude and quality affects your work relationships. Committing to excellence means showing initiative and not waiting for someone else to point work out to

you. Having a can-do attitude signals you are not afraid of a challenge and that you will carry your weight when times get tough. Remember to be thorough and complete when you declare something finished. This will not only make you pleasant to work with, but it will also inspire others to follow your commitment to excellence.

Bond Through Adventure

Adventures are not all good or all bad; they are a mixture of both. In a work environment they are always experienced with a group of people, and have a general beginning and end. Adventures never kill us nor take us to nirvana and they usually have a central theme. In our personal lives adventures may be vacations, kids sports teams, neighborhoods, community efforts, etc. In work environments, they may be projects, departments in transition, recessions, building moves, working with a very difficult person, etc. Adventures almost always develop deeper bonds because they are shared experiences that we get to survive together, laugh and cry about, reminisce about, and to some extent relive the emotions again.

The key to reaping the benefits of bonding through adventure is by creating adventures in your day-to-day work environment. This starts with identifying the themes of your group adventures, highlighting the highs and lows you experience, acknowledging things will change and the adventure will end, and enforcing the group experience of it.

Each of these key behaviors requires multiple interactions over time to make a difference. There is no pill you can take to instantly have strong work relationships. In the beginning, ten good interactions may take you a level deeper in your work relationship with someone, but one bad one will set you back a level. Over time grace becomes more a part of your relationships and good and bad interactions become less pivotal to the relationships strength. Strong work relationships will not only make you more productive, they will make you a lot happier too.

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