

LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS

With Gail Lowney Alofsin

THE POWER OF POSITIVITY: HAPPINESS AS A CHOICE!

"Everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it."

Andy Rooney

"I will be happy when I lose weight, buy a new car, have a boyfriend, make more money..." sound familiar? Chances are you have experienced these thoughts or have listened to these words from a friend or colleague. The truth is, happiness is a choice.

Wake Up!

Wake up and choose to be happy. When you wake up in the morning, you should decide what kind of day you would like to have. There is an expression, *"Don't let anyone else get behind the steering wheel of your mind – choose your own thoughts!"* Every day offers the opportunity for a new beginning. There may be times when extenuating circumstances influence your day, your week and your month. If you find yourself commencing every day in an ornery mood – it may be time to re-frame your thought pattern.

Reframe!

Practice "re-framing" your thoughts – personally and professionally. Take a look at what truly aggravates you about a colleague, client or friend. Perhaps there is something in their life, a situation or influence, inciting their behavior. Perhaps there is nothing wrong with their behavior - are you envious of their success or talents? The grass is always greener. Reframe the way you think about things, especially your life. Re-frame your mindset from a "have to" to a "get to." You do not "have to" go to work, the gym, networking event or family outing, you "get to." Pay attention to how many times you say "have to" when it comes to items that are, indeed, a privilege.

Gratitude!

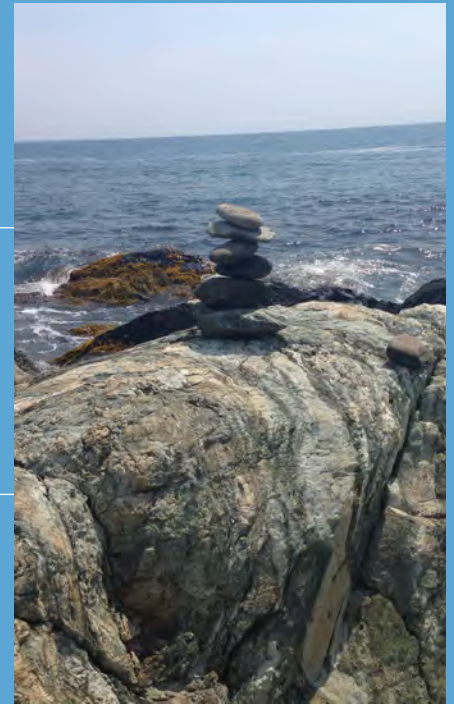
What is going well in your life? Focus on this. One of my octogenarian friends, Sister Ernestine, professes that when she wakes up and knows her name, she knows it is going to be a great day!

Make it a practice to thank your co-workers and your team. You may think, *"Why should I thank my co-workers? It is their job to get that done. They are getting paid to come to work."* Sound familiar? Yet how do you feel when you are thanked?

Avoid Comparison. Do your best not to compare yourself to others. Live in a state of gratitude, be thankful for the gifts and blessings in your life. Take a minute to list these gifts – every day! You woke up, opened your eyes, got out of bed, had running water, enjoyed a great cup of coffee, the list goes on. There is always something to be thankful for. Even in the midst of tragedy, you can find something you are grateful for. In the words of Socrates, *"He who is not contented with what he has, would not be contented with what he would like to have."* Gratitude is powerful!

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Sonja Lyubomirsky, an esteemed professor at the University of California, Riverside, has researched human happiness for close to two decades. Her research concludes that 50% of our happiness is determined by genetics, 40% by our habits, thoughts and actions (the things we control) and 10% due to our circumstances (career, home and living situations). While this may be counterintuitive as we feel that money, things, a great job,



beautiful home will make us happy, happiness initially comes from within.

Think about what this means for you! Intentional happiness is 40% under your control? What are the "simple" things that make you happy? Smell of the ocean? Mountains? Exercise? Baking? Reading a book?

Lyubomirsky's research on "Positivity" in the workplace deduced that a positive work environment is 50% more likely to have lower employee turnover, 38% more likely to build productive teams and 44% more likely to have higher customer satisfaction. Positivity is a vitamin!

The Power of Positivity

The value of your relationships, personal and professional, is a catalyst for your success. Your "value" to your clients, colleagues and friends is determined by your deeds and actions. Are you living these values? Test yourself – take a look at your calendar and it will reveal what you value most. What is guiding your most significant relationships?

The happiest people look beyond themselves to assist others. We live our lives – accumulating and achieving. At some point, the focus is off us and our inner mantra becomes *"How can I serve?"*

And finally, think about your relationship with yourself. You spend

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more time with yourself than anyone else. A positive you, will make for better company! Happiness is YOUR choice! Live every heartbeat!

Gail Lowney Alofsin is an author, speaker, adjunct professor and business executive. Her new book, *Your Someday is NOW – What are you Waiting For?* has raised over \$25,000 for non-profit organizations since it was launched in April 2014.

A lifelong student and humanitarian, Gail believes that we all have the capability to be a leader in our own lives, influencing the lives of others to positive peak performance and success. She can be reached at 401-640-4418, gail@gailspeaks.com, twitter: [@gailalofsin](https://twitter.com/gailalofsin) and gailspeaks.com.