

7 Habits of Light Hearted People

By Patricia Morgan © 2007

I am more and more convinced that to take life over seriously is a frivolous thing. Eric Hoffer in 1952

Perhaps as Kay Redfield Jamison indicates in *Exuberance: A Passion for Life* genetics does influence such human characteristics as exuberance and playfulness. But there are some habits that can encourage a lighter heart. Try some of the following:

1. **Smile** to become instantly more likeable, attractive and approachable. To help brighten your face, think of your blessings. Smiling actually changes your emotional state. People like and trust smilers more. It's been said that telephone listeners can *see* our smile. Mother Teresa encouraged smiling to help improve the world. Research studies have shown that smiling cools our brains while frowning heats it. It's like having our very own internal air conditioner. Bring on the summer heat wave!
2. **Laugh** whenever possible. Discover your own giggle, snicker and cackle triggers. Laughter and smiling are social indicators that we are enjoying the company we keep. Laughter helps increased alertness, blood circulation, creativity, enthusiasm, productivity and decreased muscle tension.
3. **Feel.** Accept your own and others' feelings by gently listening for a rainbow of sad, hurt, scared, mad and glad expressions. Feelings tell you everything about you and little or nothing about managing the world. Use your smart brain to strategize while using your feelings as a personal barometer. Notice what you are doing and with whom when you feel repeatedly hurt or angry. Notice when you feel happy. Got there more often.
4. **Let Go** of trying to exert power over others. Not only will your stress level drop, your relationships will improve when you learn to trust other people to live life their way. Avoid the *Control Hole*. Catch yourself when you say, "You should," "You must," or "You have to."
5. **Acknowledge your Humanness** or you will waste energy aiming to be perfect, wanting to be right and feeling uptight. Accept yourself and others as perfectly imperfect. Then you will better to do what Richard Carlson suggests--*Don't Sweat the Small Stuff of Life*.
6. **Create Surprises** with pleasant acts of care and cheer. Every day there are nasty and uncontrollable changes in our world. Bring balance. Be a daily Super Surprise Agent. Ideas can be simple like the following:
 - Leave a note or phone messages saying, "I appreciate you for . . ."

- Celebrate small and big efforts of the people around you.
 - Now and then wear something fun or silly, like a pair of Groucho Marx glasses, noses and mustache.
 - Give sincere compliments whenever possible.
 - Hum or sing appropriate lines from songs.
 - Wave or smile at others.
7. **In-joy Yourself** as you only get one free supply of *your* life. Take your challenges seriously and yourself lightly. Know what you love to have, do and be. List what activities and things please your sense of vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Think about what is physically, mentally, emotionally, creatively, socially and spiritually energizing for you? Now, go in-joy yourself!

Patricia Morgan is an author, speaker and workshop leader. She helps people develop light hearted strategies for strengthening resilience. She can be reached at 403-242-7796, patricia@lightheartedconcepts.com or www.lightheartedconcepts.com