

MATTMCWILLIAMS

Live with Passion. Lead with Purpose. Leave a Legacy.

7 Benefits to Rediscovering the Kid in You

How Childlike Behavior Can Open the Door to a Better You

I had the day all planned out. We arrived at Sea World right on time, all thirteen of us. First we could watch the dolphins, then ride our first roller coaster, then later in the day at 5:00pm sharp, the whale show. Everything was going perfectly...until the rain came.

Ten minutes into the whale show, the skies darkened and then opened with a vengeance. The radar showed that the rain would not let up for hours. The show was cancelled and the day, it seemed, was ruined.

My initial, adult reaction was that of frustration, followed shortly by disappointment. For a brief moment, I sulked at the lost opportunities and ruined plans. Then, something changed.

When Life Gives You Rain, Get Wet

One simple shift, literally a physical shift, changed everything for me that day. We moved to the front row. Away from the dryness of the overhang, down into the pouring rain. Within seconds, we were drenched.

Half an hour later, we made the long trek back to the car. The whole way, I jumped and splashed in the puddles. I kicked water on my nephew. I acted like...a kid again.

Instead of being upset at the ruined plans, my childlike behavior opened up new possibilities for me. I was enjoying the rain. I was *playing*.

The Benefits of Acting Like a Kid

For the rest of the day, my attitude was better. I was happier and more energetic.

That night, I sat down to write a blog post and it turned out to be one of the best (and fastest) posts I've ever written. The words practically flowed onto the page. I sat back and admired my work, pleased and quite surprised. That post turned out to be one of my most popular posts of all time, with literally thousands of social shares.

Could it be that playing in the puddles made me a better person? Could it be that acting like a child for just a moment had benefits that lasted all day?

I believe so and that day at Sea World helped me recognize the 7 benefits of rediscovering the kid in you. Here they are:

1. Increased Creativity

Rediscovering the kid in you requires creativity. It requires you to dig deep into your subconscious memory and to pretend that you are young again.

When you do that, it unleashes a creative flow inside of you.

Some might call splashing in the puddles or playing make believe or acting like a kid nonsense. But nonsense is necessary, as Dr. Seuss says, because it wakes up your creative brain.

Fantasy, the ability to dream big, to see things no one else can, and to enjoy the puddles is a necessary ingredient in living a meaningful, world-changing life.

When you rediscover the kid in you, it will open up creative paths you'd forgotten you even had.

2. You Become Smarter

When you play like a child, good chemicals like dopamine and serotonin literally flood your system. These chemicals have been known to increase short-term and long-term memory as well as opening up your mind to new possibilities.

In short, play makes you smarter. Acting like a child makes you smarter. Much like expressing gratitude or smiling, when you take time out to play, it has lasting benefits when you do need to focus or work.

3. You Will be Healthier

Have you ever noticed that people who are the most playful are often the healthiest?

Who is typically more vibrant and healthy? The curmudgeon who is always yelling at the kids for being too loud or the dad who is playing along with them?

Simply put, one of the best ways to fight aging is to *act younger*. You'll also feel better every day.

4. You Will be More Optimistic

It's hard to think negatively when you are playing. It's impossible to worry when you are splashing in puddles.

Children are naturally more optimistic. And when you rediscover the kid in you, you too will be more optimistic.

When I spent time splashing in the puddles that day, I forgot about the cost of the trip. I forgot about the missed opportunities. I forgot about my problems and had a more positive outlook on life.

5. It Helps You Connect with Your Kids

If you have children, nothing helps you connect with them better than getting down to their level. Nothing.

Play with them, make believe with them, splash in puddles with them, get messy with them.

Take the time to be a kid again and your children will never forget it...and neither will you.

6. You Attract Other People

News flash: Fun people are more likely to attract other people to them.

More importantly, you attract the right kind of people...other fun people.

Sure, you could surround yourself with stuffy, boring, always serious people. Or you could surround yourself with people who make you laugh, feel better about yourself, feel young again, and make your life more enjoyable.

Does that sound like the type of people you want in your life? *Then be that person!*

7. Life Will be More Fun

I had two choices that day at Sea World.

- Walk back to the car as though I'd lost something, trying to keep dry in a downpour.
- Embrace the situation, realizing I had a unique opportunity.

I chose the latter and will remember that day for the rest of my life.

Life is more fun when you let your inner child out to play. But you have a choice to make:

- Let your inner child out and experience a fuller life.
- Repress the kid inside and never discover the benefits I listed above.

The choice is yours.

What benefits have you found from childlike behavior?