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The Secret to Smiling More Often

Do you want to know the secret to smiling more often?

Of course you do! Smiling is the result of feeling happy, right?

Not exactly. In fact, the secret to smiling more often is this...

Smiling more often.

I'm giving this advice for free, so perhaps that is what it's worth. But it's true.

That really is it.

My story

I was a generally grumpy person. (OK, I still am to some extent) I scowled at people not because they failed at a project or showed up late. I scowled because anyone dared to interrupt me while I was thinking. Or because anyone dared to expect me to show up on time for a meeting. Or, for any reason whatsoever.

As I've mentioned before, I [played competitive golf](#) in college and professionally for a short time. I worked with a sports psychologist in college and we stumbled on something one day that really helped me in golf, in business, and in life. At the time it was quite the breakthrough for both of us.

We had been working intensely on [positive visualization](#), but it wasn't sticking with me. I would see the shot, see my success, but doubt would still creep into my mind. So I suggested something out of the blue and our eyes lit up.

The next time, as I stood behind the shot visualizing it, I smiled at the result.

I smiled.

That was it. Something so simple, and yet so effective.

Why it works

We found through testing that it did two things:

1. It rewired my brain to see the result as a positive experience. I was pre-emptively reacting in the same way I would if I had actually hit a great shot (which in mind, I had).
2. It released endorphins and to some extent, we believed dopamine into my system. The result was that I felt calmer and more positive about the shot.

At first, I had to force myself to do it. Over and over, I drilled it. Every single practice shot for months and months. Tens of thousands of times.

My smile was completely fake. I still felt the same doubts at first, but somehow I truly did feel calmer and more positive.

Despite being contrived and forced, it still worked. It was certainly better than not smiling at all.

Over time, it became a part of my pre-shot routine. Over time, I enjoyed smiling. And over time, it felt more natural and effective.

So, if you want to smile more, if you want to feel happier, and you want to have more influence on those around you (a smile goes a long way in that department), then force yourself to smile.

6 ways to get in the habit of smiling more:

1. **Smile the moment you wake up.**
2. **Remind yourself in the morning that you are going to smile more today.**
3. **Set reminders to smile.** Use your phone calendar or work calendar as reminders.
4. **Create cues to smile.** Smile at certain cues. When your hand hits the door to your house as you enter from work is a good time. Or when you enter the office. Or when you see a certain model of car. Pick your cues and then use them as reminders.
5. **Think happy thoughts.** Our daughter, when she was about twenty months old, put it best: "Today, Aracelli chooses happy thoughts."
6. **Smile at everyone you see today.** And tomorrow. And the next day. Then keep it up.

It really is that simple. And it really is that effective. Start today.

Have you noticed positive effects from smiling more?