

# *Living with Enthusiasm*

**How the 21-Day Smile Diet  
Can Change Your Life**

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Inspired Life Publishing Company  
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*Living with Enthusiasm: How the 21-Day Smile Diet Can Change Your Life*

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## *Practice the Super Smiling Enthusiasm Extravaganza Daily Delight Ritual*

***How often do you hear yourself say “Wow,”  
“That’s amazing,” or “Ohhh, that’s so beautiful!”?***

- a. Not often enough.*
- b. Whenever I’m chasing tornadoes or passing a car accident.*
- c. Every time I look in the mirror.*
- d. Every day there are at least ten billion things – a sunrise, a child’s laugh, the bud on a rose, my cat’s purr. . .*

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Every day, you have the opportunity to make the next 24 hours great. Regardless of what is going on around you, you can choose to make the most of a situation and keep your spirits high. Some days it takes a little more effort than others and, once in a while, it takes *a lot* more effort, but it is possible. When you create a daily routine that includes spontaneity, joy, and appreciation, you’re earning interest in your enthusiasm bank account that will take care of you during emotionally lean times.

The daily routine I’ve created for you today is called the “Super Smiling Enthusiasm Extravaganza Daily Delight Ritual.” Humor me, please – I know it sounds hokey, but it is fun. And it just might bring out the playful part of you that is often suppressed by the more serious, skeptical, “I don’t have time for nonsense” aspect of yourself. You’ll be incorporating several of the techniques you’ve already learned (16-second smile, 30-second laugh, etc.) plus seven new strategies that are described below.

## The Rituals You Know

- 16-Second Smile. Wake up to your smile. Any time is a good time to smile.
- 30-Second Laugh. Do this at least once a day. Fake it if you have to.
- Smiling-heart-breathing-thank-you Meditation for 1–5 minutes. You can do this with your eyes open. Try it at a stoplight or just after you hang up the phone.
- Creative Napping. Use this to solve problems and re-energize your system at the end of a workday.
- Positive Expectations. Enjoy the future by feeling excitement for it now.

## Seven More Rituals to Create More Enthusiasm

**1. Talk enthusiastically to yourself in the mirror.** Greet yourself in the mirror, smile and say something loving to yourself such as, “You are an amazing spirit. I love you.” Or try this: Smile and say, “I’m full of enthusiasm and I feel fabulous.” This may be a stretch, but remember, the mind goes to work on what you tell it. Garbage in, garbage out or good in, good out; it’s your choice.

In the next 10 seconds, call out as many words or phrases that inspire you, or read these words out loud to yourself with conviction and emotion. *PEACE! JOY! FREEDOM! I LOVE YOU! MY FAITH! CHILDREN! SLEEP! LAUGHTER! SUCCESS! MONEY! WORK! VACATIONS! THE OCEAN! CLEAN AIR! MUSIC! MY HEALTH!* How do you feel now? You’re absolutely right – full of energy! Happy! Ready to go out and do something BIG! Don’t wait for big things to move you. Your own thoughts and words can move mountains! Say them out loud. Sing them. Call yourself and leave an encouraging message on your answering machine. Keep the message in your mind all day.

**2. Read an inspirational passage** before you get out of bed. Even one or two pages in the morning can change your perspective on the day. Have you ever found yourself waking up too early in the morning, your mind

racing with worry about your upcoming day? Or trying to fall asleep at night with thoughts of anxiety, not sugarplums, dancing in your head?

What do you do the hour before you fall asleep at night? Watch the news? Answer e-mail? Surf the web? Read a thriller? What's the first thing you do when you can't fall asleep or get back to sleep? Do you lie in bed letting your mind get the best of you? Or do you reach for a book that relaxes and soothes you into a restful dream state or inspires, delights, or motivates you to start your day early? (This is a great strategy for insomniacs.)

While I know sleep researchers say you shouldn't do anything in your bedroom but sleep or have sex, I find that a good book always gets me ready for sleep and helps me begin my day with a smile on my face. I treat myself to inspirational reading for five to 15 minutes in the early morning and the same in the late evening before bed. Why? Because it keeps my mind focused on the good. (You'll find suggestions for good inspirational books in the Resources section.)

**3. Move your body to energizing music** for three minutes. Crank up your stereo or strap on your Walkman and do a full-body shake to one of your favorite songs. Every culture since the beginning of time has used music to create specific moods. Perhaps you already use soothing music to relax yourself; what do you use to create more energy? What music inspires you? What songs or performers get your juices going? Tina Turner? Beethoven? The Beatles? Start your day with energizing music or any time you need a pick-up (or soothing music if you're wired).

Maintaining a flexible body is also helpful in creating enthusiasm. How often do you take stretch breaks during your day? Do you find your energy waning at times? To put more enthusiasm into your body, try the body shake. Think like a rag doll. While walking in place, shake your shoulders and your hands. Yes, you look very strange, but your body will be moving and you will be laughing – two signs of an enthusiastic person.

Use the body shake at least three times a day and you'll find yourself more relaxed and energized. Here are three routines to get you started:

- To get your energy going in the morning, turn on your favorite CD or the radio and do the body shake to one song (about three

minutes). If you live with others, get them involved. You'll all be in a better mood in a few minutes. If they're not interested, do it yourself in the bathroom at home or in the restroom stall at work.

- At the end of your day, use the body shake to shrug off the tension you've accumulated through the day.
- When you want to get rid of people who make life miserable, start body shaking in front of them. (Just kidding, but wouldn't it be fun?)

**4. Share appreciations at meals or meetings.** Reconnect with your family and friends. Tell each person something you appreciated or something good you noticed that he or she did that day. It is easy to thank strangers who help us with groceries or let us move ahead in line at the post office when we're in a rush. But when it comes to family or coworkers, showing gratitude can be often overlooked. We have expectations and needs that we attach to people close to us. They get on our nerves so easily, we build resentments and stop giving thanks, forgetting how a simple "thank you" can melt even the stiffest resolve.

*The deepest craving of the human spirit is to be appreciated.*

– William James

I love sharing meals with others. My adopted family in San Diego, the Gardners, has a family ritual that I am always thrilled to be a part of. At their Friday night Shabbat dinner, after saying prayers and breaking bread, Dan, Dianne, Lilly, Max, and wonderful Grandpa Henry (until he passed away last year) go around the table and share one appreciation to each person at the table. Can you imagine if every family made this a daily ritual how much kinder our world would be?

*I can live for two months on a good compliment.*

– Mark Twain

You can also bring rounds of appreciation into your workplace. On Day 13, I shared the story of a bank manager who conducts appreciation meetings. I know a supervisor at a large grocery chain who selects one motivating quote every week for her staff. Every Monday, 15 checkout

clerks receive a small card in an envelope with the “Quote of the Week” and a personal note of appreciation from her. It is a great morale booster and a company ritual they look forward to.

**5. Practice random acts of verbal appreciation.** Look for ways to acknowledge and thank people, especially strangers who appear down on their luck. I was at my local pharmacy one day waiting in the checkout line. I was feeling rushed and wishing the musty-smelling elderly woman standing in front of me would stop fumbling for her change and making excuses for why she didn’t have enough money to pay for her cigarettes and gum. As I was complaining to myself, she happened to drop her change. I didn’t hesitate to help her. With shame, I must admit, it wasn’t because I was being a Good Samaritan; I was annoyed and wanted to move her along.

When I handed the coins to her, she looked up at me and smiled. I was stunned. Beyond her toothless grin, her blue eyes sparkled like the waters of the Caribbean on a perfect day. I gasped and without thinking, gushed, “You have the most beautiful blue eyes I’ve ever seen.” She reached out her arms and hugged me. When she let go, she smiled, tears running down her cheeks, and said, “My husband used to tell me that all the time. Nobody’s said that to me since he died 15 years ago. He said one day he’d come back and I’d know when he did. God bless you. Now I know!”

**6. Create the “Ohhh Effect.”** Seek beauty wherever you can. Each day, find something that makes you gasp in awe at how amazing it is to be alive. Enthusiasm is born of delight, wonder, passion, curiosity, and connection – connection to yourself, to other people, and to the mystery and the majesty of life. This feeds my spirit. If I haven’t had an “Ohhh Effect” in a while, I’ll even go so far as to find something ordinary such as a pen and say out loud with energy and exaggeration, “This is the most amazing pen I’ve ever seen. I *love* that it allows me to write my thoughts down. Can you imagine the first person to discover writing on papyrus and how she must have felt to see her thoughts on paper?! Imagine all the labor it took to get this pen in my hand.” You can do this wherever you are with most things, people, and situations. Try it when you’re angry with someone you love,

remembering all the positive things you've appreciated about him or her. It has tremendous power to shift energy.

**7. Relax and appreciate your body** while listening to instrumental music or a meditation tape that guides you to relaxation. Allow yourself to focus on each major body part and organ, starting at the top of your head and moving down through your body to your toes. Thank each part for doing its job and keeping you healthy.

### **The Super Smiling Enthusiasm Extravaganza Daily Delight Ritual**

Now you're ready for the big day, a rich day filled with positive thoughts and actions. At first glance, the ritual may appear overwhelming, so be sure to read through the suggested levels of involvement and the action step that determines which level works best for you. The more you practice this ritual, the better you'll feel and the more you'll want to do it.

#### *Morning Wake-up (20 minutes)*

- 16-second smile
- 1–5 minutes of smiling/heart breathing/blessings meditation
- 1–2 pages of inspirational reading in bed
- Loving and/or enthusiastic self-talk in the bathroom mirror
- 5 minutes of stretching or yoga
- 3-minute body shake, jumping jacks (flushes the lymph glands) and/or free-form movement to your favorite music

#### *Morning Wind-up (5 minutes)*

- 16-second smile and 30-second laugh on way to work
- 3-minute call to a friend for shared appreciation and a 30-second laugh
- Create/review positive expectations and goals. One each for the day, week, month, year
- Look for something beautiful to admire – “Ohhh Factor”

*Mid-Day Energizer (5 minutes)*

- Shared appreciation
- 16-second smile and 30-second laugh

*Noontime Energizer (5 minutes)*

- Random act of appreciation and kindness
- 16-second smile and 30-second laugh

*Mid-Afternoon Energizer (5 minutes)*

- 16-second smile and heart breathing meditation during a brisk 10-minute walk (alone or shared with a friend)
- 3-minute body shake and dance to music

*Early-Evening Revitalizer (30 minutes)*

- Body shake and dance to music or take a 20-minute creative nap
- Appreciation with others at dinner – 5–10 minutes during a 15–60 minute meal
- 16-second smile and 30-second laugh

*Late-Evening Reverie (20 minutes)*

- 5–15 minutes of stretching or yoga
- Positive self-talk in bathroom mirror
- Inspirational reading
- Positive expectations for tomorrow
- Body relaxation with a 16-second smile
- 1-minute thank you meditation
- 16-second smile (if you're still awake)

## **Can I Really Do All of This in One Day?**

You may be wondering if I actually do this every day. I certainly try to, but like you, some days are busier than others and sometimes I forget. That's why it's such a great idea to set aside one day every week or month for a mini-retreat. When you do, you'll re-energize yourself and significantly add to your enthusiasm bank account.

Next we'll cover four levels of involvement. Do what feels right for you and let go of any guilt. This day is not meant to burden you; it is about helping you add more enthusiasm to your life at whatever level works best for you. The first time you do the wake-up and late-night reverie segments, follow the order in which each technique is listed so you get the full benefit of the experience. Then feel free to experiment with what works best for you.

*Level One:*

- Read through the techniques and choose the ones that jump out you, the ones that your intuition is telling you most need to do. Or choose the one that sounds like the most fun. Commit to doing the technique all day long whenever you think of it. For example, if you're not already doing the 16-second smile throughout the day, commit to doing it once an hour.

*Level Two:*

- Choose one section of your day to focus on and do each of the techniques for that section: For example, you may not have time to do all the morning and afternoon activities, but you can do the Late-Evening Reverie.

*Level Three:*

- Commit to doing a full day as a mini-retreat. This is a fantastic gift to give yourself. And once you do it in its entirety, you'll be so pleased by how much energy you have, you'll want to do as much as you can each day.

*Level Four:*

- Share it with a close friend or a group of friends and do the day together.

*May we be filled with loving kindness,  
May we well and wealthy,  
May we be peaceful and at ease,  
May we be safe and happy.*

– Adapted from a Buddhist prayer

### ***Today's Action Step***

Incorporate as many of the above tips into your day as you can. Avoid watching TV, reading the newspaper, or listening to radio news today. Just for today, walk away from gossip. Just for today, stop yourself if you begin to complain. At the very least, do the 16-second smile on the hour until you go to bed. If you have the time, schedule a day in your planner to do the entire day's activities.

### ***Tips for Creating More Enthusiasm***

- ❑ Sit in your favorite chair early in the morning or late at night when everything in the house is quiet. Put a smile on your face. Do nothing else but hold your smile and enjoy the stillness for five minutes longer than you would normally allow yourself.
- ❑ In your journal, draw a line down the middle of one page. On the left-hand side, make a list of five choices that keep you out of balance (saying yes when you want to say no, eating in front of the TV or in the car, overspending, etc.). On the right-hand side, next to each of your five items, write down one daily ritual you could do instead of the imbalanced choice. (Use the daily ritual list to help you.)
- ❑ Describe your perfect day and write it in your journal or say it into a tape recorder. Read it to yourself every day and allow your intuition to guide you toward actions that bring you closer to that experience.
- ❑ Spend one hour making choices from your heart. With each decision you make, focus your attention on your heart and ask the question, "What is the best action for me to take next?" Listen

and follow what your heart says. Regular practice will lead to more balanced, enthusiastic choices. (Visit [www.heartmath.com](http://www.heartmath.com) for more information.)

- ❑ When you do your stretching, let yourself groan. I know it sounds strange, but it feels great and helps your body and mind relax.

### ***Questions to Ask Yourself***

- When was the last time you *gave* yourself a day *all* to yourself? What did you do?
- What will it take for you to give yourself a day (or even an hour) of spontaneity, joy, and appreciation – someone asking you what you want for your birthday? A loving friend to remind you? Achieving a goal? Giving yourself permission?
- What are three of your favorite inspirational books or passages? (Put them next to your bed.)
- What is beautiful to you? (Be specific and describe at least five different sources.)
- What are you most grateful for today? (Count five blessings.)

## About the Author

Mary Marcdante is a communications and stress management expert, professional speaker, and author who helps people appreciate their lives and businesses appreciate their people. Since starting her personal development company twenty years ago, she has spoken to over 250,000 people around the world. Her clients include Procter & Gamble, Hewlett-Packard, Speaking of Women's Health, Northwestern Mutual, Deloitte & Touche, ABWA, Financial Women International, and Nordstrom.

Mary is the author of *My Mother, My Friend* and *Inspiring Words for Inspiring People*. She is also a contributing author to four *Chicken Soup* books and *A Woman's Way to Incredible Success in Business*.

Mary's work has been widely covered in the media, including *ABC World News Now*, *Fox News*, *Pure Oxygen*, *ivillage.com*, and in the *Wall St. Journal*, *Glamour*, *Modern Maturity*, and Milwaukee's *Lloyd Street Elementary School News*.

Mary is an industry and community leader and volunteer. She is a past president of the Wisconsin and San Diego chapters of the National Speakers Association. She is a grand prizewinner in *Self Magazine's* "Realize The Dream" contest for her work in helping women realize their potential.

For more information on speaking engagements, media appearances, special discounts for bulk purchases or for personally signed gift copies of *Living with Enthusiasm*, please contact Mary at:

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