

HOW DO YOU GET AND KEEP ENTHUSIASM?

By Kare Anderson

Getting enthusiasm is a little like learning to breathe: Nobody can tell you exactly how to do it, but without it you're in big trouble. No one but you can discover that compelling purpose or exciting goal that ignites enthusiasm inside you, but you can learn a great deal from others about how to use it to maximum advantage.

Here are some insights I've learned from some real experts on enthusiasm; what's more, I've tested and proven them in the laboratory of my own life.

1. Enthusiasm is born on the inside

In the daily grind of life you can lose touch with what really matters. There are so many routine decisions to make, so many challenges to be met, and so many burdens to carry, that you can lose your perspective. However, as you connect with the enthusiasm planted deep within you, you'll feel it begin to grow and grow. Soon, you'll be back on track.

It's not the first mile of a long and arduous journey that gets to you - you're excited about getting started. And it's not the last mile - you're thrilled about getting there. The miles that get to you are the long and tedious ones in the middle where you can't see where you're coming from or where you're going.

Always remember that enthusiasm comes from the inside out, not vice versa. It's easier to motivate yourself from within than to pump yourself up with empty sayings.

2. Enthusiasm grows when you focus on solutions and opportunities, not problems and circumstances

Life for you will always be as you choose to see it. You can focus your attention on the problems and circumstances which surround you, or you can keep your eyes on the solutions and opportunities.

I recently read a story that illustrates it better than

I can explain it. It seems that a number of farmers in Pennsylvania were sitting around complaining about the increasing cost of electricity and the unpleasant task of disposing of all the waste their cows generated. But the Waybright brothers and their brother-in-law, who run the Mason Dixon Farms near the town where I went to college - Gettysburg, decided to quit complaining about all the manure the cows were generating, and to do some generating of their own - electricity. They built a power generator that runs on methane gas produced from heated manure from the 2,000 cows. Generating much of their own power, they cut their annual electricity bill from \$30,000 to \$15,000.

As you might guess, most of the other farmers laughed at the project and called it "Waybright's folly" (and other even less flattering names). They were satisfied to see their problems and to seek out their Congressmen to complain about their miserable circumstances.

But no one's laughing anymore. In fact farmers, Congressmen, and agriculture ministers from around the world are beating a steady path to the Mason Dixon farms. Soon the Waybright brothers were selling some of their excess power to their once jeering neighbors.

And that's no bull!

Okay, so you're not in the cow business, and your biggest problem is not electricity bills, but the principle works in any area of life. Enthusiasm - with all the good things that go with it - comes when you turn your eyes from the problem or circumstance and focus on the solution and opportunity.

3. Enthusiasm thrives around positive people

A lot of people say that enthusiasm is contagious. My experience would indicate that negativism and pessimism are far more contagious. It is always easier to believe the worst than to hope for the best - especially if you are struggling against overwhelming odds. It's even worse when you're tired, or have just suffered a severe setback.



Don't waste your creative energies on people who are always putting you and your ideas down. Seek out those positive and successful people who can give you a boost.

If you want to be enthusiastic and have the enthusiasm which produces success, always spend your time with positive, enthusiastic, and successful people.

4. Enthusiasm recharges itself on momentum

Jerry Reed's popular song of many years ago put it very nicely: "When you're hot, you're hot!" Believe me, it's more than empty words.

Of course, William Shakespeare said it with more eloquence in these famous lines from Julius Caesar:

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and miseries."

It's when you feel most enthusiastic that you need to throw yourself into life's biggest challenge. Celebrate your greatest victories by plunging into even greater challenges. Take full advantage of the momentum you gain with each hard-earned step.

Nothing feeds enthusiasm like success, and nothing can hold back enough enthusiasm.

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