



FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

"One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we are not prepared." ~ Merlin Olsen

Issue #22
July 9, 2021

If you did not receive a previous issue, [let me know](#) I will resend it to you.

Are You Fully Charged?

The two key scarce resources in life are energy and time. I just finished reading Are You Fully Charged? The 3 Keys to Energizing Your Work and Life by Tom Rath because I want to learn how to maximize my energy. It's a terrific book and a must read. Rath is the grandson of Don Clifton, who spent his career studying people's strengths. He also has a health condition that requires him to spend one week per year in a hospital to determine if the cancer in his body is still under control. Knowing that he could have at most less than a year to live keeps him very focused on making each day count: "I have spent most of my life working on what will outlast it....I see all of this time I spend as an investment in the future that can grow when I'm gone." The three keys to a full charge are:

Meaning: doing something that benefits another person

Interactions: creating far more positive than negative moments

Energy: making choices that improve your mental and physical health

Only 11% of people report having a great deal of energy, which is a problem if you want to get the most of out life.

The book has 21 short chapters, which I will now summarize.

1. Create Meaning With Small Wins

“The essential thing people want in a job today is work that will allow them to create meaning for others....Of all the events that engage people at work, the single most important—by far—is simply making progress in meaningful work....Small wins generate meaningful progress.” So your long-term goals and projects should be focused on helping others, and you should break them down into smaller (monthly, weekly or daily) steps so you can generate small wins every day.

Abandon the Pursuit of Happiness

“The pursuit of meaning—not happiness—is what makes life worthwhile....Putting your own well-being before well-doing pulls you in the wrong direction. People who spend their life seeking happiness are unlikely to find it....trying to create happiness for yourself can have the opposite effect....the more value you place on your own happiness, the more likely you are to feel lonely....”

Swim in the Deep End of Life

Renowned psychologist Roy Baumeister found that “Happiness without meaning characterizes a relatively shallow, self-absorbed or even selfish life,” and it is the pursuit of meaning that sets humans apart from animals.

In one study, participants who “were happy but lacked meaning in their lives (pursuing a purpose bigger than themselves)...had the same gene expression pattern as people dealing with constant adversity....Over time, this leads to chronic inflammation, which is related to a host of illnesses....Every minute you can set aside your own happiness for the sake of others will eventually lead to stronger families, organizations, and communities....What endures is creating meaning in your own life and in the lives of others.”

2. Pursue Life, Liberty and Meaningfulness

Holocaust survivor Victor Frankl wrote, “Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue.” One study found that “teenagers who had the greatest brain response to meaningful actions had the greatest declines in depressive symptoms....teens who made more self-fulfilling decisions were more likely to have an increase in risk of depression.” I know narcissists who seem depressed, but I don't know any who seem to have well-being.

Get a Charge From Within

“Meaningful work is driven by intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, motivation....You are driven by what you yearn to do even if there is no reward or compensation.” This is basically the definition of *ikigai*. “...deriving any motive whatsoever from external incentives could decrease performance.” Adding money to the mix can screw up a good thing, because it makes the exchange more transactional.

One study concluded, “Helping people focus on the meaning and impact of their work, rather than on the financial returns it will bring, may be the best way to improve not only the quality of their work but also...their financial success.”

“Try to find activities outside of work that appeal to your intrinsic motivation. One study found that employees who were encouraged to engage in creative activities *unrelated to work*, such as creative writing or other artistic endeavors, subsequently performed better *on the job*.” This is similar to Google's policy of allowing its employees to spend 20% of their time working on their own side projects, and to what I am now doing with my own career and this newsletter. “Researchers found that simply being able to decorate your workspace with things like plants, art or pictures of loved ones could increase productivity by up to 32%.”

Forge Meaning in the Moment

“Meaning does not happen to you—you create it. One of the most important elements of building a great career and life is attaching what you do each day to a broader mission. Until you understand how your efforts contribute to the world, you are simply going through the motions each day.”

3. Make Work a Purpose, Not Just a Place

Researchers in one study were amazed by how differently people viewed the same job. Some saw it as a paycheck while others considered it their calling: “...the difference lay in whether or not a worker had strayed from their formal job description and become involved in meaningful interactions and relationships with [others].” Rath writes, “The work you do each day is how you make a difference in the world....If you can find the right work, you can create meaning every day....The concept of bringing people together in groups, tribes, or organizations is based on the premise that human beings can do more collectively than they can in isolation.”

4. Find a Higher Calling Than Cash

“Countless studies have shown that nonfinancial incentives...can be more effective than financial incentives. People who wrap their identity around their...income rarely find satisfaction in their work. Someone else will always have a bigger house or a better car. It is a race you will never win....while money does matter to an extent, it should not be the primary determinant when allocating time and effort. Instead of starting with classic economics to prioritize my time, I now begin by asking *how my time can make a difference for others*.”

Avoid Upward Comparison

“...if you are able to reach a level of basic financial security, making money becomes less important for your daily well-being. At much higher income levels, increases in annual pay are unlikely to produce any real effect....Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman...found that wealth can lead people to spend less time doing things that are

enjoyable and more time doing things that create stress. Unless dying with more money than anyone else in the cemetery is your ultimate goal, you need to evaluate the health of your career more broadly.”

5. Ask What the World Needs

“You create meaning when your strengths and interests meet the needs of the world....[understand] what the world needs from you and how you can productively apply your strengths and interests. Start with a focus on others' needs to ensure that the things you are passionate about have a practical application....Those who make a profound difference....begin by asking *what they can give*. Starting with this question allows you to direct your talents toward what matters most for others....explore some of the most pressing needs in your...community....Look for ways that your unique talents, background, expertise, dreams and desires can serve some of these...needs.”

Double Down on Your Talents

“There is something that you can do better than anyone else in the world....the most potential for growth and development lies in the areas where you have natural talent to start with. The more time you spend building on who you already are, the faster you will grow....Starting with your natural talents—then investing time in practicing, building skills and increasing knowledge—yields a much greater return....research suggests that when you use your strengths, you can double your number of high-quality work hours per week from 20 to 40....people who focus on their strengths every day are six times as likely to be engaged in their jobs and more than three times as likely to have high levels of overall life satisfaction. If you spend most of your life trying to be good at everything, you eliminate your chances of being *great* at anything.”

6. Don't Fall Into the Default

“You should be able to spend *some* time every day engaging in activities that energize and recharge you....seek out small things that enable you to make daily forward progress....I have several friends who say they get more personal satisfaction from a few hours of volunteering than they do from anything else.”

“Effective 'job crafting' starts by looking at how much time you dedicate to specific *tasks* that give you energy each day. It also entails looking at the way your *relationships* at work and your *perception* of what you do create meaning for others....Also consider how you can spend more time around specific people who energize your work and less time around those who don't....Work is like any other social network: both negative and positive emotions spread quickly.”

7. Initiate to Shape the Future

“...what you will be most proud of a decade from now will not be anything that was a result of you simply responding. What will matter later in life is what you *initiate* today....If you want to create a positive charge for others, your ability to do so will be

almost directly proportional to the amount of time you can spend initiating instead of responding....In most cases, reactionary time greatly outweighs proactive time....Manage your communications...instead of letting them run your life. If you don't, you will inadvertently spend a majority of your time responding to other people's needs instead of creating anything that lasts.”

Put Purpose Before Busyness

“Being 'busy' is often the antithesis of working on what matters most....If you are busy throughout the day and bouncing from one thing to the next, you're probably not focusing on constructive activity.”

Focus on Less to Do More

“A study found that [people's cell phones] are unlocked *110 times per day* on average....the average worker loses 28% of each day to distraction....On average, people spend about half of their time thinking about something other than what they are doing at any given moment....Trying to do a little bit of everything leads to doing nothing of substance. When you let the demands of a day pull you in 20 different directions, they do exactly that —causing you to react to a bunch of small things instead of doing anything big....the human mind functions better when it is highly focused....The occasions when I have been able to completely disconnect for a full day of writing have been some of the most peaceful, productive and liberating days of my life.”

Silence Pavlov's Bell

“Today, endless notifications have turned into the electronic equivalent of Pavlov's bell....Nearly a quarter of workers basically sit around watching their inboxes, and read information the second it arrives.” One study “found that people experience less stress if they check their email fewer times a day....When people experience telepressure [feeling the need to respond immediately], it is associated with a decrease in sleep quality, more sick days, and the likelihood of mental and physical burnout....One group estimates that it takes 67 seconds to recover from every [alert] message you read....Set up specific times to catch up on news, email, and social networking sites.”

8. Focus for 45, Break for 15

Since the 1960s, schools in Finland have held classes for 45 minutes followed by an unstructured 15 minute break, which gives students renewed energy and focus. One study found that the most productive people work for about 52 minutes—which they treat like a sprint--followed by a break of about 17 minutes. “They make the most of those 52 minutes by working with intense purpose, but then rest up to be ready for the next burst.” And during the break, the most productive people were “more likely to go for a walk or tune out rather than checking email or Facebook.”

Use Purpose to Prevent Plaque

“Serving a higher purpose can prevent mental deterioration and Alzheimer's disease....It can also help you think better and sharpen your mental acuity....Being able to see the purpose of your work also yields benefits for your health and well-being....[in one study,] those with a sense of purpose had a 15% lower risk of death.”

Keep Your Mission in Mind

“Try to remind yourself why you do what you do every day...[which] keeps you motivated....It can be as simple as...having an image, quote, or statement that brings the 'why' of your job to life....[Doing so] could also make you a lot more productive....If, in your job, you have difficulty seeing the direct influence you have on another person, it's worth taking the time to try to make that connection.”

9. Make Every Interaction Count

“...we are not only influenced by interactions with our friends but also by our friends' friends—and our friends' friends' friends. People we've never met. Each of our interactions ripples outward in the network. [One researcher says] '...you can affect ten, a hundred, sometimes more, individuals from your actions.' Life is a composite of millions of individual interactions. These moments...give your days a positive or negative charge. The actions you take throughout every single day accumulate to shape your years, decades and overall life.”

“Even brief interactions count....a person who has a dozen mildly positive things happen during a day will feel better than someone who has one single truly amazing thing happen....it is the little things that count....people who reported having great interactions throughout the day were *nearly four times* as likely to have very high well-being....you can make a conscious choice to add a positive spin to your next conversation [which] is likely to improve your subsequent interactions.”

Assume Good Intent

“...it is crucial to do everything you can to turn [potentially negative] mishaps into a positive situation.... Even when faced with obvious bad intent—which is rare—it is still in your best interest to try to turn the situation into something positive. Then you avoid getting worked up and dwelling on it for the rest of the day.”

Focus on the Frequency

“All relationships are formed through a series of interactions....What many people take for granted is that *existing* relationships require regular and frequent interactions to thrive.... the people you interact with throughout the day have an enormous influence on your well-being.” Two researchers “studied the way relationships affect happiness levels....If a friend in one of the participant's social networks lived within half a mile of that participant (and was happy), the probability of the participant's happiness increased by more than 40%. If a friend in someone's network lived within two miles of the participant, this influence was cut in half....This influence continued to decrease with additional

distance. [The researchers] noted, 'The spread of happiness might depend more on frequent social contact than deep social connections.'...people greatly underestimate how everyday interactions influence their daily experience."

10. Be 80% Positive

"When you experience negative emotions as a result of criticism or rejection...your body produces higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol, which shuts down much of your thinking and activates conflict and defense mechanisms....The release of cortisol is also a sustained response, so it lasts for a while, especially if you dwell on the negative event."

"...Positive exchanges boost your body's production of oxytocin, a feel-good hormone that increases your ability to communicate, collaborate and trust others...[which] leads to more expansive thought and action. However, oxytocin metabolizes faster than cortisol, so the effects of a positive surge are less dramatic and enduring than they are for a negative one. We need at least three to five positive interactions to outweigh every one negative exchange....*At least 80% of your conversations should be focused on what's going right.*"

Use Positive Words as Glue

"Most of the words you use carry either a positive charge or a negative charge....Positive words...are the glue that holds relationships together...Words with a negative charge have roughly four times the weight of those with a positive charge."

At Least Pay Attention

"...negative comments are less harmful than ignoring someone....being ignored is even more detrimental to mental and physical well-being than harassment or bullying....[researchers concluded] 'ostracism actually leads people to feel more helpless, like they're not worthy of any attention at all.'...When people are ignored, they have a tendency to assume the worst....Even negative feedback is better than nothing at all. When others critique you, at least you know they care enough to pay attention....The ideal [feedback method] is when a dose of reality is paired with several servings of encouragement."

11. Start Small and Be Clear

"...the things that give your day a positive charge are usually in plain sight and do not require major purchases. A warm interaction with your spouse....Going for a walk outside on a nice day. Talking to one of your best friends on the phone....These small gestures might even be more effective at boosting another person's well-being than larger acts...."

Use Questions to Spark Conversation

"People love to talk about themselves....talking about oneself triggers the same reward centers in the brain as food or money....[one neuroscientist wrote,] 'Self-disclosure is extra rewarding....people were even willing to forgo money in order to talk about themselves.' The more open you are about yourself, including revealing embarrassing moments and

occasional mistakes, the more likely another person is to trust you....being humble and embracing self-deprecating moments is an asset....humility creates trust....people want to associate with someone who is comfortable being embarrassed in front of others.”

Connect for Speed and Creativity

“Anything of substance in life is created by working with others....Relationships boost achievement and create efficiency....if you are in a better mood, your creativity increases and your thinking becomes more expansive....people who have 'best friend'-caliber relationships at work are *seven times* as likely to be engaged in their job.”

12. Take a Break for Relationships

Want What You Already Have

“If you spend time with people who care about your development, you will grow. If you surround yourself with people who are hostile and negative, they will inevitably bring you down....For instance, when a friend smokes, it increases the odds that you'll smoke by 61%. Even if a friend of a friend smokes, you are 29% more likely to smoke. This influence goes out to someone *three degrees* away from you in a network. If a friend of a friend of a friend smokes, you are 11% more likely to smoke. This is what researchers have dubbed 'the contagion effect' in relationships, and it applies to everything from smoking to obesity levels.”

“...[this] works in a positive direction as well. If you have a friend who is happy, it increases your happiness level even more than a \$10,000 increase in annual pay. When you do something kind for another person, he or she is more likely to pay it forward, as is the next person, and so on. Almost any investment in another person has an exponential return beyond what you can see in the moment.”

“...the best way to produce sustainable increases in well-being is to appreciate what you already have and to continue creating new positive experiences with the people who matter most....When you value what you already have...you won't feel the angst of wanting more. Any time you create experiences in the context of your existing resources and relationships, it has a compounding effect on your well-being.”

Use Your Phone When You're Alone

“Nothing adds more value to life than close social relationships. This is why it is so important to focus on the people you are with when you are with them....the mere presence of a smartphone can ruin a conversation....researchers found that simply placing a [cell phone] on the table or holding it in [your] hand was a detriment to conversations. Any time the phone was visible, the quality of the conversation was rated as less fulfilling...People [had] higher levels of empathetic concern when phones were not visible....a visible cellphone decreased both attention and the ability to perform complex tasks.”

“Giving your undivided attention to others tells them how much you value their thoughts, opinions and time. Intently listening to what another person is saying is a great way to forge new relationships and invest in your existing friendships....most of the time people are talking to you, you are not truly listening....when you're not paying full attention, other people can tell subconsciously....people listen at about 25% efficiency compared with what is possible....the average person listens for just 17 seconds before interrupting.”

13. Put Experiences First

“The best experiences create memories and well-being that last for years to come. There is no better use of your financial resources than to spend them on meaningful experiences with other people....If you plan a vacation well in advance, you experience several exciting months of anticipation. Then you have the actual experience of a trip with friends or family, followed by many years of fond memories....You might get a small spike in happiness immediately after the purchase, but the excitement of buying that new car fades quickly....Even brief interpersonal experiences, such as going out to dinner with your spouse...or taking your kids to a sporting event, are a much better use of your financial resources.”

“One notable exception is spending on material goods that help you learn and grow, such as books, videos, sporting goods and musical instruments. A study found that experience-oriented products *do* lead to increases in happiness....people underestimate the extended value of experiential purchases....[a researcher concluded] 'they actually provide both more happiness and more lasting value.'...after an experiential purchase, people's ratings of whether their money was well spent are 106% higher than their initial forecast....most people...spend far too much on material goods relative to experiential purchases....experiences make people happier because they fill basic psychological needs for human growth.”

Buy Happiness (for Someone Else)

A Harvard professor who “has spent much of his career studying the relationship between finances and overall well-being has found that the raw accumulation of wealth is not what matters most....What's more important is *how people spend* their money....if you buy a coffee for someone else, it boosts your well-being and the other person's happiness at the same time....people leave a huge amount of happiness on the table by spending primarily on themselves....When you are considering purchasing a material item, ask yourself how it will benefit another person or your relationships.”

Plan Ahead for Well-Being

“When you're planning an event, think about how it will increase the well-being of other people...and share as much detail with them as possible....looking forward to a vacation or event provided even more happiness than the event itself. Even the memory contributed more to long-term well-being than the actual experience....a study found that the effect of anticipating a vacation can increase well-being for weeks and even months....Unlike material goods, which you adapt to and forget about over time, people tend to recall

shared experiences with rose-colored glasses.”

14. Avoid Flying Solo

“The best moments in life rarely happen while you are sitting around alone....people consistently describe social events as their most influential memories over a lifetime....consider whether your [priorities and] goals involves [other people]....The...premise of a relationship is that two people are better off together than they are divided....it is so important to assume positive intent every time you meet another person.”

15. Build a Cumulative Advantage

“...researchers have discovered that the earlier in life you focus on a person's...successes, the greater the gains over time....confidence at a young age led to...a cumulative advantage—the careers of confident individuals took off at an exponential pace....The benefits continued to increase by the year. The earlier people gained self-confidence, the more measurable the difference, even in their physical health....identify someone who may need a little encouragement....a few encouraging words can go a long way....the ultimate strength is finding and developing talent in others....words that give people a positive charge should be as specific as possible....As you help other people see what they do best, you will help them build a cumulative advantage over time.”

16. Put Your Own Health First

“Some of the most caring people also tend to be the least healthy....In many cases, working longer hours is a *disservice* to those you intend to serve....people who have very high energy levels...are more than *three times* as likely to be completely engaged in their work....you need to *put your health and energy ahead of all else*.”

“I make sure to get some activity in the morning so I'm in a better mood and my thinking is sharper....It is remarkable how quickly these small choices accumulate, for better and for worse....When things go wrong in any one of these three areas—eating, moving or sleeping—it throws everything else off course. A poor night of sleep leads to skipping a workout, lousy food choices, and so on. The good news is, doing just one of these things well can lead to an upward spiral in the other two areas....Doing all three well is the key to having more energy throughout the day.”

17. Eat Your Way to a Better Day

“...the types of food you consume influence your health more than your total caloric intake....ask yourself if what you are about to eat is a net gain or loss....consuming protein in the morning...reduces subsequent cravings for both sweet and savory foods....eating foods with a low glycemic index in the morning prevents spikes in blood sugar later in the day....There is absolutely no dietary need for any added sugar—a toxin that fuels diabetes, obesity, heart disease and cancer. Sugar substitutes are not much better; they simply lead you to crave more sweet foods.” Substitutes such as Splenda are one of the worst things you can eat because they wipe out your beneficial, symbiotic gut bugs. It's like swallowing

a hand grenade.

“You are far more likely to eat what you can see in plain view....clean out your pantry...and get rid of anything with low nutritional value....The more you plan to make healthy choices *in advance*, the less willpower you will need....”

18. Learn to Walk Before You Run

“Moving around and getting more activity every hour is what will keep you fully charged....the human body is not built for a sedentary lifestyle....every two hours of sitting cancels out the benefits of 20 minutes of exercise....even seven hours of moderate to vigorous physical activity a week was not enough to protect against the hazards of excessive sitting.”

Keep Sitting From Sapping Your Energy

“Sitting may be the most underrated health threat....When you sit down, the electrical activity in your leg muscles shuts off quickly. Your rate of burning calories drops to just one per minute. The enzymes that help break down fat fall by 90%. After sitting for two hours, your good cholesterol drops by 20%....Little things like stretching and standing a couple of times every hour make a difference....Walking increases energy levels by about 150%....Small bursts of activity will do as much for your mind as they will for your physical energy. Regular breaks from mental tasks...increase both creativity and productivity. You simply think better when you move more...even brief periods of activity improve learning and attention and help your brain function more effectively.”

Measure to Move More

“One of the best ways to increase your activity levels is to measure how much you move every day....walking boosts my energy levels....my total step and distance count for the day...has become my single best gauge for whether I had a good day or a sluggish and stressful day....10,000 steps per day is a good target for overall activity.”

Get a 12-Hour Charge in 20 Minutes

In one study, people who did a moderate-intensity workout for 20 minutes “had a much better mood immediately following the exercise....What surprised researchers was how long this increase in mood lasted. Those who exercised continued to feel better throughout the day. Even...[up to] twelve hours later, they were in a better mood than the control group....if you work out late in the day, you essentially sleep through and miss the boost in mood that exercise produces....You simply think better when you are active. ‘...when we exercise...blood flow increases everywhere in the body, including the brain. More blood means more energy and oxygen, which makes our brain perform better.’”

19. Sleep Longer to Achieve More

“When you miss an hour of sleep, it decreases your well-being, productivity, health and

ability to think....The best performers [in K. Anders Ericsson's landmark studies of elite performance] slept for 8 hours and 36 minutes per night on average....Ericsson found that [elite performers] take frequent breaks to avoid exhaustion....When you work on a task for too long, it degrades your performance.”

Don't Show Up for Work After a Six-Pack

“One study suggests that losing 90 minutes of sleep can reduce daytime alertness by nearly one-third....One scientist who studied this extensively claims that four hours of sleep loss produces as much impairment as a six-pack of beer. An entire night of sleep loss is equivalent to a blood alcohol level of 0.19%, which is double most legal limits for intoxication.”

Get a Vaccine for the Common Cold

One study found that people “who averaged fewer than seven hours of sleep a night before being exposed to rhinovirus were nearly three times as likely to catch a cold following exposure....[However,] total time in bed was not the most important metric....The sleep efficiency metric was an even more powerful predictor of which participants developed a cold....quality of sleep beats quantity by a wide margin.”

Fight Light, Heat and Noise

“...what you do in the hours before you go to bed could matter most....This research found that using a smartphone late at night not only leads to poor sleep but also creates fatigue and lower engagement in the workplace. The light from electronic devices alone can suppress your melatonin levels by as much as 20%, which is a direct threat to sleep quality....Be cautious about bright light from any sources in the hours leading up to your bedtime....[a cooler temperature in your bedroom] prevents your natural body clock from waking you up in the middle of the night....Creating a routine in which you eliminate as much variance as possible is critical for a good night of sleep. Prioritize seven to eight hours of high-quality sleep ahead of all else.”

20. Eat, Move and Sleep to De-Stress

“Of all the ways that eating, moving and sleeping well influence your health, how they can buffer against stress may be the most remarkable....stressors accumulate and contribute to aging.”

Keep Stress From Snowballing

“Of all the things in life that can derail a good day, stress is the most common culprit....chronic stress can create an extraordinary amount of damage over time. Excessive stress accelerates aging and increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer and early death....As stressful days compile, your energy levels, health and relationships worsen. There is almost no way you can feel energized when you're dealing with chronic stressors....Rarely, if ever, is putting up with intense stress worth the consequences for your health and well-

being.”

Avoid Secondhand Stress

“Difficult interactions with other people are at the root of most people's stress....When a spouse or close friend is stressed out, even about something unrelated to your relationship, you can inherit that stress in no time....be a little more conscious of what your emotional temperature and words do to other people....In particular, consider if there is any chance you are unintentionally transferring stress to [others].”

21. Respond With Resiliency

“*How you react* to potential stressors determines whether you will suffer the consequences....Responding to a situation as a stressor will leave you depleted, but reacting to the same event as a challenge could increase your energy and provide a positive charge....[One] study revealed that participants who became upset by daily stressors and dwelled on them were more likely to suffer from chronic health problems... 10 years later....'Our research shows that how you react to what happens in your life today predicts your chronic health conditions [for] 10 years in the future, independent of your current health and your future stress.'...when you remind yourself why you are doing something challenging, your brain sees a motivator instead of a stressor.”

Push “Pause” Before Responding

“When you face an immediate and acute stressor, your instinct is to fight back and respond immediately....Technology makes it much easier to exacerbate a stressor with a quick response....The more something gets under your skin, causes your heart to race, and makes you breathe a bit more quickly, the more important it is to step back before speaking or typing a single word....do everything possible to avoid a rash response. Not only is it likely to make things worse, but it also tells people around you that you cannot control yourself....This will give you time to think things through....”

Grin to Bear It

“Making yourself smile, even if it is fake and forced, may help you get through simple stressors.” In one study, “the group that was smiling through the tasks responded better to the stressors [and] had lower heart rate levels and lower...stress levels....smiling may reduce the intensity of the body's stress response, regardless of whether you actually feel happy....” In another study, 52% of people who had their frown muscles disabled by Botox injections showed relief from depression compared with 15% in the placebo group (though I don't think this is a reason to get Botox).

Epilogue

“The best use of an hour is to invest it in something that will continue to grow. When you add a positive charge to another person's day, it carries forward into each of their subsequent interactions....You are much better at helping yourself if you are also helping

another person with a similar problem....people may be even better at solving a creative problem for another person than they are at solving the same problem for themselves. It seems that people are wired to do good and create meaning, even for complete strangers.”

Share Your Most Precious Resources

“Spending time on others yields a greater return than spending time on yourself. The same principle applies to how you use your financial resources. The act of giving does more for you than buying something for yourself....This is the central finding from a body of...research: Giving improves well-being in many ways....giving money to charity could (paradoxically) increase a person's subsequent wealth....” Everything else equal, a family that gives \$100 more to charity will earn on average \$375 more in income, which is statistically attributable to the gift.

“...this effect held true for more than just money. People who volunteered time...were also likely to make more income in the future....people consistently felt happier when they donated to charity versus buying themselves a treat, even when they would never meet the beneficiary of their gift....it appears that something deeply embedded in people's natures makes them feel better when they act altruistically....You have a limited number of days to make a difference.”

Ω

I would love to hear from you! I thrive on feedback from readers. If you have any comments, suggestions, insight/wisdom, or you'd like to share a link to a great article, please [email me](#).

Generally, I don't have time to answer questions about your specific situation, but if you have a general question that I think other readers also have, [let me know](#) and I will provide an answer in a future issue.

Feel free to forward this to a friend. If you would like to subscribe (it's free!) or unsubscribe, [email me](#) with either “subscribe” or “unsubscribe” in the subject line.

Disclaimer

The content of this newsletter is intended to be and should be used for informational/educational purposes only. You should not assume that it is accurate or that following my recommendations will produce a positive result for you. You should either do your own research and analysis, or hire a qualified professional who is aware of the facts and circumstances of your individual situation.

Financial Preparedness LLC is not a registered investment advisor. I am not an attorney, accountant, doctor, nutritionist or psychologist. I am not YOUR financial planner or investment advisor, and you are not my client.

Investments carry risk, are not guaranteed, and do fluctuate in value, and you can lose your entire investment. Past performance is not indicative of future performance. You should not invest in something you don't understand, or put all of your eggs in one basket.

Before starting a new diet or exercise regimen, you should consult with a doctor, nutritionist, dietician, or personal trainer.

Copyright 2021 Financial Preparedness LLC