

FIVE: THE JOYFUL DECISION *Today I will choose to be happy.*

My very life is fashioned by choice. First I make choices. Then my choices make me. **The Joyful Decision** is perhaps the most misunderstood of all the Decisions. **The Joyful Decision** demonstrates that happiness is a choice, and if you're not happy right now, it's a consequence of your own choosing, not the circumstances of life.

The Joyful Decision - Today I will choose to be happy. The Joyful Decision, when fully understood, becomes a powerful catalyst for change in your life. Happiness is a choice. This Decision can liberate your spirit with the infinite joy available in each moment of every day.

ANNE FRANK - "Our very lives are fashioned by choice.

First we make choices. Then our choices make us." *Diary from*

The Joyful Decision is more controversial on its surface than any of the other **Seven Decisions** because people don't understand it.

1. The Joyful Decision - **Today I will Choose to be happy.** I know now that happiness is not an emotional phantom floating in and out of my life. **Happiness is a choice.** Happiness is the end result of certain thoughts and activities, therefore awake each morning with the decision: "Today I will choose to be happy. I will greet each day with laughter." Then take note what you feel: Excitement has begun to flow through my bloodstream. I feel different. I am different! I am enthusiastic about the day. I am alert to its possibilities. I am happy! Laughter is an outward expression of enthusiasm, and I know that "enthusiasm is the fuel that moves the world." I laugh throughout the day. I laugh while I am alone, and I laugh in conversation with others.

a) People are drawn to me because I have laughter in my heart.

The world belongs to the enthusiastic, for people will follow them anywhere! Today I will choose to be happy. I will smile at every person I meet.

My smile has become my calling card. It is, after all, the most potent weapon I possess. My smile has the strength to forge bonds, break ice, and calm storms. I will use my smile constantly.

I will always smile first. That particular display of a good attitude will tell others what I expect in return.

Wise man - A wise man once said, "I do not sing because I am happy;
I am happy because I sing!"

Discouragement, despair, frustration, and fear will always wither when confronted by my smile.

b) The power of who I am is displayed when I smile.

Today I will choose to be happy. I am the possessor of a grateful spirit.

It is impossible for the seeds of depression to take root in a thankful heart. Discouragement, despair, frustration, and fear will always wither when confronted by my smile.

My God has bestowed upon me many gifts, and for these I will remember to be grateful. Too many times I have offered up the prayers of a beggar, always asking for more and forgetting my thanks!!

My decision: "I will greet each day with laughter. I will smile at every person I meet. I am the possessor of a grateful spirit. Today I will choose to be happy."

c) Beware of Conditioning a Happy Choice.

The Joyful Decision has been conditioned out of most people. Most people don't realize happiness is a choice!

Complaining is an activity just as listening to the radio is an activity. One may choose to turn on the radio, and one may choose not to turn on the radio. One may choose to complain, and one may choose not to complain. I choose not to complain.

Who wants to be around a complainer?

And everyone else is just like you. They want to be around happy people too. And this is why, today, you must choose to be happy. It is the beginning of a new life.

I urge you to choose to be happy. There are so many things about which we can choose to be happy! Happiness is not some emotional phantom floating in and out of your life. You can choose happiness every day. Laughter and enthusiasm are the fuels that move the world. The world belongs to the enthusiastic, and people will follow them anywhere.

2. Become the Possessor of a Grateful Spirit

I want to urge you to condition yourself, on a daily basis, to find things to be grateful for.

Happiness – true happiness, that is – comes from deep within. Happiness comes from a grateful heart. It is impossible to be ungrateful and happy at the same time.

Just as a breeze cleans smoke from the air, so does a grateful spirit remove the cloud of despair. It is impossible for the seeds of depression to take root in a thankful heart.

From this moment on, you will ignore the conditioning that has pervaded your life to this point.

You will ignore the conditioning that says you must wake up with a scowl on your face.

You will ignore the conditioning that says children who laugh boisterously get on peoples nerves.

You are creating a new conditioning!

You are the possessor of a grateful spirit.

You are grateful for the laughter of children, for situations that make you struggle and make you stronger. You are grateful for the ability to find **your** way out, because you will be able to lead others out.

You are a leader.

Your conditioning from this point on says, "Today I will choose to be Happy."

a) Cultivating a Grateful Spirit

To condition yourself to be happy, you must possess a grateful spirit.

Learn how to express gratitude.

Expressing gratitude magnifies our happiness and brings us more happiness.

I do not deny the reality of my situation. I deny the finality of it. This too shall pass.

Most people don't get thanked. There are so many invisible people running in and around and out of our lives, providing services we take for granted, and they never get thanked.

When you stop and say, "Hey! Just wanted to say thanks for what you are doing," the look on their faces will make you happy! (Like the garbage pick-up crew)

It's easier to be happy when you are sharing happiness and gratitude.

The possessor of a grateful spirit who shares that gratitude with others is conditioned to be happy. He wakes up happy!

b) Developing Your Happy triggers

List 5 things you can do each day to make yourself laugh and smile. What can you think about?

The point is there are “happy triggers” all around us, but we don’t actively seek them out, we may only accidentally trigger them on rare occasions. By conscientiously identifying happy triggers, you can choose to be happy whenever you wish

Point in Action: A great exercise for becoming a happy person is to sit down with a piece of paper and a pen and list the things for which you’re grateful.

3. The magic of Smiling

When someone mumbles, “People don’t help me”, I think to myself: Of course they don’t help you! They don’t even want to be around you! Smile! Put some energy into your voice! Become somebody others want to be around.

When I choose to smile, I become master of my emotions. Discouragement, despair, frustration, and fear will always wither when confronted by my smile.

The smile Exercise

Smiles are contagious. Smiles affect your biochemistry. *Smile for the next 60 seconds as you remember your favorite leisure activity.* Why do you enjoy it? What benefits do you gain by pursuing that passion? Feel your smile through your entire body, including your breathing. How do you feel?

Care to smile for more than 60 seconds? GO FOR IT!

a) Gaining the Interest of Others

When I choose to smile, I become the master of my emotions. Discouragement, despair, frustration, and fear will always wither when confronted by my smile.

How do you treat people when they “enter the room”? Are they uplifted as they encounter you?

Do you know people who brighten the room as soon as they walk through the door? Their presence alone puts a smile on people’s faces. These rare souls focus their energy and attention on making others laugh and smile. They ask questions of people they meet and genuinely want to hear the answers. They take such an interest in others that others can’t help but take an interest in them.

4. The Secret to lasting Success

I’m about to reveal the biggest secret to the Joyful Decision.

The one thing that can change everything!

I’ve got the secret. Are you ready? It’s going to blow your mind because it’s so simple.

You can learn it in a couple of days, and it will change everything.

REMEMBER: People are drawn to a person with laughter in his heart. The world belongs to the enthusiastic, for people will follow them anywhere!

Here is the secret: Smile while you talk.

I am not saying “smile a lot” or “smile at everyone you meet.”

I am saying SMILE WHILE YOU TALK!

Very few people do this. Just watch. Even when people tell a joke – they wait to smile until the punch line.

Learn to smile while you talk, and your life will be forever transformed. And if you throw on a little chuckle while you are talking, even better.

Why will everything change? People cannot help but smile at somebody who smiles at them!

I do this all the time when I speak. I'll walk around the room as I'm talking and look people in the eye, nod, and smile. Soon I'll have many people nodding with me in unison, because when you nod and smile at them, they will smile and nod back.

You want people to join the church planting team? You want unbelieving MEN to invite you into their apartment?

You want MEN to begin Bible meetings?

Learn to smile while you talk!

The same positive results will transform your family. Your spouse, your kids, your neighbors – everybody will react to you differently when you smile as you talk.

a) Smile while talking exercise:

For the next 5 days, 5 to 10 minutes practice smiling while you talk.

Then add – chuckle so a slight laughter comes through your voice.

Then lift an eyebrow and open your eyes.

Then add a little nod

Then add a faster cadence to your speech.

Think to Remember: *My smile has become my calling card. It is after all, the most potent weapon I possess. My smile has the strength to forge bonds, break ice, and calm storms. I will use my smile constantly.*

GOD HAS A FEW THINGS TO SAY ABOUT JOY

First of all HE created the Garden of Eden. HE also instituted several week-long feasts. Finally HE will consummate things in Heaven.

Jesus said: *"I have told you this so my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* Joh 15:11

Nehemiah said, *"- - - the joy of the LORD is your strength."* Neh 8:10

David said: *"You have shown me the paths that lead to life, your presence will fill me with joy."* Act 2:28

Paul said: *"God's Kingdom is a matter - - - of joy which the Holy Spirit gives."* Rom 14:17

John said: *"We write this in order that your joy may be complete."* 1Jn 1:4