

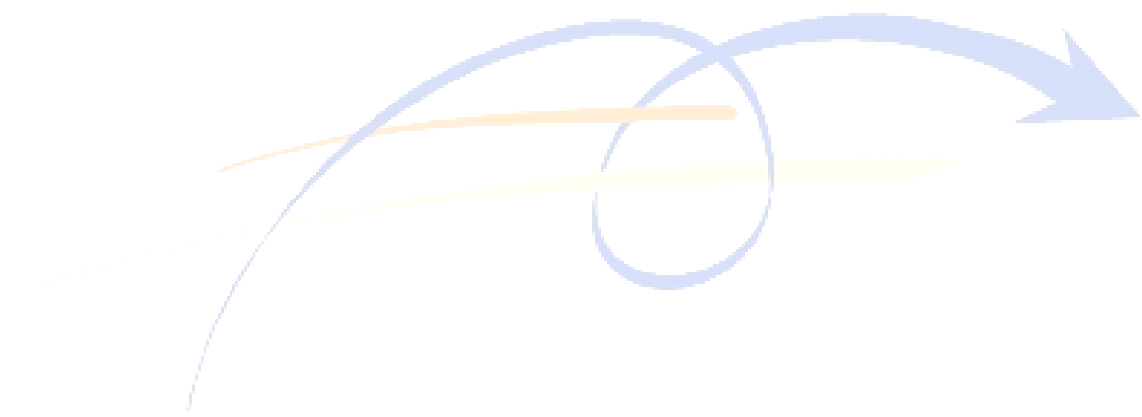
Excelerator

JUMP START

Excelerated Positivity™

Quick actions you can take *right now* to **Jump Start** your *Excelerated* life.

Steven M. Huskey



"We don't live for happiness, we live for holiness. Day to day we seek out pleasure, but deep down, human beings are endowed with moral imagination. All human beings seek to lead lives not just of pleasure, but of purpose, righteousness, and virtue."
~ David Brooks

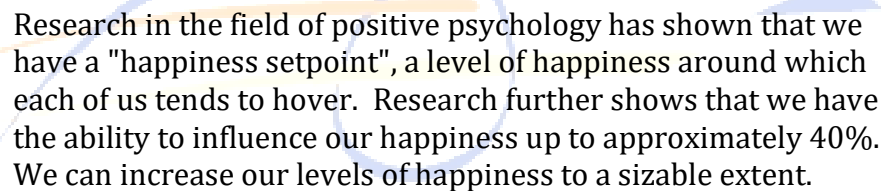
"This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it."
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Excelsator Jump Start

Excelsated Positivity™ -- building the skills in positivity that help you flourish -- is one practice for creating your **Excelsated Life™**, a life of flourishing and well-being, and a life of meaning, purpose, and service.

This **EXCELERATOR JUMP START** provides quick actions you can take *right now* to **JUMP START** your **Excelsated Life™** and to begin enjoying increased levels of positivity – **Excelsated Positivity™** – by building the skills that help you thrive and flourish.

Why Use Jump Start?



Research in the field of positive psychology has shown that we have a "happiness setpoint", a level of happiness around which each of us tends to hover. Research further shows that we have the ability to influence our happiness up to approximately 40%. We can increase our levels of happiness to a sizable extent.

But does it matter? Why be happy? Who really cares?

Well, anyone who cares about improved health, improved brain functioning, and even improved profitability. A number of recent studies show that it is possible for positive emotions to increase personal resources, both physical and mental.

Scientists are able to measure how positive emotions affect us. These studies show that increases in positive emotions result in improved immune functioning, reduced inflammation from stress, increased resistance to infections, improved resiliency, and lowered cortisol in the body. Increased positive emotions improve thinking ability, including increased cognitive flexibility and improved speed and accuracy in thinking and reasoning. Positivity matters.

There is another reason why happiness matters. The late Dr. Chris Peterson, one of the founders of the positive psychology

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Create Your Life.

EXCELERATOR JUMP START: BUILDING THE SKILLS THAT HELP YOU FLOURISH

"If you deliberately plan on being less than you are capable of being, then I warn you that you'll be unhappy for the rest of your life."
~ Abraham Maslow

movement, often boiled down the findings of positive psychology to this phrase: "*Other people matter.*"

As you work to build your own positivity, remember that "other people matter" to you but consider the flip side as well . . . you matter to other people.

Dr. Peterson suggested that we take this into account and reach out to other people, especially people who are difficult, edgy, or hard to love. These are the very people who may need a friend the most. And when you get right down to it, doesn't that describe most of us at one time or another?

When To Use Jump Start?

Use this **EXCELERATOR JUMP START** for a quick boost to get yourself started on the path of creating your **Excelsior Life™** or to get yourself back on track when you feel you have gotten off course. Whenever you find yourself in need of a positivity boost or you feel like Life is getting you down, **JUMP START** your ability and your resolve to boost the 40% of your positivity that you control as you pursue your **Excelsior Life™**.

"People tend to liken their emotions to the weather, viewing them as uncontrollable, ... research shows not only that our emotions are controllable, but also that we can take the reins of our daily emotions and steer ourselves toward better physical health."
~ Barbara Fredrickson

How To Use Jump Start?

Here are steps you can take *right now* to begin building the skills in positivity that help you flourish – to begin learning and using **Excelsior Positivity™**. These are short, quick actions intended to give you a **JUMP START** for this step in creating your **Excelsior Life™**. Read through the list and choose one or two action steps that stand out for you and that you are attracted to. Then do them today – right now if possible – or schedule them in your calendar to do as soon as you can. If you need more of a boost, continue with more of the activities.

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"There are people who are unhappy regardless of the work they do or the relationship they are in, and yet they continuously fool themselves into thinking that an external makeover will affect them internally."
~ Tal Ben-Shahar

"Positivity opens us. The first core truth about positive emotions is that they open our hearts and our minds, making us more receptive and more creative."
~ Barbara Fredrickson

What To Do

☞ Take a walk. So much good can come out of the simple act of walking . . . just walk. Our bodies are made for physical exercise, not for sitting in front of a TV or computer terminal for hours on end. Going outside and having a walk gets you in the fresh air and sunshine, clears the head and the senses. Walk with no other purpose in mind, just walk. This is a perfect ritual to begin or a small reward with which to treat yourself. No expectations, no ulterior motive . . . just walk.

☞ Create a ritual. Breaking a bad habit or creating a beneficial habit is quite difficult but necessary if you desire a change. Creating a ritual can help you "burn in" a new habit. What is a ritual you want to set up that would make you happier? Meditating 1st thing every morning? Having a date night with your spouse once a week? Participating in a family game night each week? Exercising every day?

Remember that a ritual is made up of precise behaviors performed at specific times. It is necessary to commit to practicing the behaviors until they become second nature, so start very, very small. Make it something that is so ridiculously easy that you are certain to do it every day until it becomes a habit.

☞ Practice acts of kindness. Studies show this is one of the quickest, surest ways to boost positivity. Select in advance what you intend to do, how much, and how often. If you do too little, you won't receive much benefit in happiness; too much, and you may end up feeling overburdened and fatigued. For the maximum benefit, do one new and special large act of kindness or three to five smaller ones.

☞ Buy experiences rather than stuff. A study released in 2009 from [San Francisco State University](http://www.sfsu.edu) shows that most of us enjoy and are enlivened by *doing* things more than by purchasing things. According to the research, money spent on things such as theater tickets, trips, or enjoyable dining brings more pleasure than money spent on jewelry, clothes, or electronics.

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"A joyful life is an individual creation that cannot be copied from a recipe." ~ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

☞ Nurture relationships. According to Susan Lyubomirsky, author of *The How of Happiness*, the cause and effect between social relationships and happiness goes both ways. That is, happiness leads to better relationships and good relationships lead to increased happiness. One way to invest in better relationships is to make time for them. Brian Tracy says "*Children spell love t-i-m-e.*" Commit to spending more time with your family, friends, and loved ones and watch your feelings of happiness rise.

☞ Practice compassion. Practice treating yourself, as well as others, with compassion. Remember the command to "love your neighbor as yourself"? This presumes that you have love for yourself first. You cannot give away that which you do not have.

Complete the sentence: "To become 1% more compassionate to myself, I can _____." Then, do the activities you come up with.

☞ Say "Thank you!" An attitude of gratitude keeps you open for the abundance that is available for all of us. Imagine that you are standing at a pool of clear, cool water and that you are extremely thirsty. If you grab a fistful of water, how much water do you get? But, if you cup your hands, even though some water spills out, you still get a good drink from the water that remains. You cannot grasp your way to abundance. But when you are grateful for what you have, you open your self to receive more.

☞ Adopt an "Optimalist" mindset. You increase your positive experience of goal setting when you understand that goal achievement is a series of steps and that even the loftiest achievements are won one step at a time. It works for any goal, but especially one that is a big stretch and that may seem unreachable.

Think about a goal that is important to you. Write down the goal and then describe the steps you will take to reach it. Sometimes, it is helpful to think about the goal as if you have already reached it, then look backwards at the steps you took. What was the last thing you did to reach your goal? What did you do right

"Now and then it's good to pause in our pursuit of happiness and just be happy." ~ Guillaume Apollinaire

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EXCELERATOR JUMP START: BUILDING THE SKILLS THAT HELP YOU FLOURISH

What is an *Excelsator*?

Excelsator is a combination of two words:

excel - to shine, to be outstanding, be first rate and exceptional

and

accelerate - to move forward at an increasing pace.

Excelsators are ideas, concepts, and programs that help you move forward in creating the life you want while increasing your ability to be outstanding, first rate, and exceptional.

before that? Before that? etc. Write about the obstacles you encountered and what you did to overcome them. Make the story a vivid narrative, as if it were an adventure story -- your adventure.

[Adapted from Ben-Shahar]

- ☞ Give yourself small rewards. What is something you enjoy tremendously but never seem to allow yourself? Perhaps it's spending 15 minutes catching up on the news, taking a short walk, reading a chapter in a good book, or leafing through a magazine. Maybe it's taking a luxurious bath, or spending some time in meditation, or playing with your dog. Begin making a list of small, pleasurable rewards with which you can treat yourself throughout the week. Then when you've finished a tough task or just need a boost to get going again, select one of the rewards from your list and give yourself a treat.
- ☞ Anonymously assist. This means to do something for someone without any chance of recognition. Maybe you've heard this stated as Random Acts of Kindness where you do something good for a stranger - such as feeding a parking meter that has expired or sending a cheerful - but anonymous - note to a friend. Part of the fun is finding creative ways to help others while remaining anonymous.
- ☞ Increase your integrity. When you have integrity, there is no division between what you say you will do and what you do. Research has found a 2-way link between integrity and self-esteem. Increase one and the other increases as well. Select one behavior that you want to perform. Make it small enough that you are certain to perform it. Then do what you say you will do.
- ☞ Practice religion and spirituality. There have been a number of studies into the consequences of having religious beliefs, participating in religious life, or seeking after the sacred, and a growing body of research indicates that religious people are happier, healthier, and more resilient than non-religious people. Practices that have been shown to be effective include: seeking meaning and purpose in life, praying, meditating, and finding the sacred in everyday life.

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Resources:

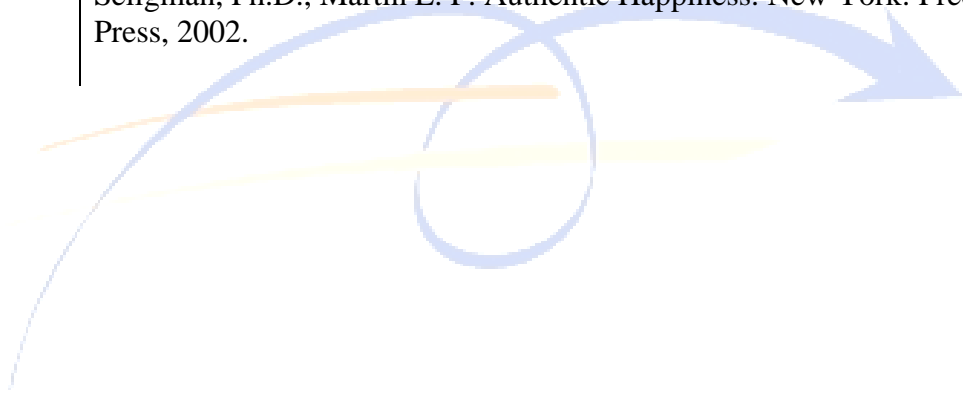
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Requests to the author for permission should be addressed to the following email: Steven@my-excelerator.com

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