



Mantra #1

Change Your Lens on Life

**Gratitude, the ability to count your blessings,
is the ultimate way to connect with the heart.**

—BAPTIST DE PAPE

*author of *The Power of Heart**

Viewing life through a new lens doesn't have to mean putting on rose-colored glasses or wishing for a Disney movie ending. Our perspective on life affects how we experience it, how we interact with others, and, ultimately, our wellness and well-being.

Goodbye, Windy City. We're Going West!

I remember looking up at Bald Mountain (nicknamed Baldy by skiers) for the very first time. The mountain embodies winter life and recreation in the beautiful town of Sun Valley, Idaho. I felt its majesty, size, and beauty and thought, "People actually *ski* down that monster of a hill?"

It was the summer of 2011, and our family had just moved out West in a quest to escape the rat race that had become our life in Chicago. I considered myself a recovering management consultant who had survived a successful rise to the top of a great firm. In the process, I had become an expert at memorizing

the names of the flight attendants who served my regular routes in and out of Chicago. Yes, I traveled a lot and logged many billable hours on the go.

My husband, Jeff, was an investment banker who had started out on Wall Street before following his career to Chicago. While he loved his work, he had had enough of the stress that drove people to find extreme ways to unwind. One of the most memorable—and bizarre—stories included people running across trading floors and screaming before dunking their heads into vats of guacamole to relax.

We hit our thirties as a career couple and were blessed with two wonderful kids: Elena, born in 2000, and Alexander, in 2003. Parenthood turned our world upside down. We learned quickly that our competitive careers had nothing on the world of suburban baby playgroups.

“Did you get a spot in the baby Spanish class?”

“I had to sleep outside in line just to get my little Gracie signed up!”

“I feel so much better knowing that my Tommy has passed swim certification!”

“Yes, we got Charlotte passed when she was only three weeks old!”

“Which of the ‘Baby Mozart’ series is your favorite?”

“Peter really enjoys the Rachmaninoff!”

“In our house we prefer to have professional musicians play for Cassidy. That way she can actually feel the vibrations of the music and fully integrate it into her learning!”

As Elena and Alexander passed through their toddler years, we tried to keep up—golf pro classes at age two and career coaches at age three—but we were getting tired of the scene. After a few years as both a parent and a principal in my firm, it became clear that a change was in order when we realized that Elena did not understand any English. She was a Spanish speaker, just like her nanny, her primary conversation partner while my husband and I were away working. At first, I thought it could be a great asset and something to brag about at mother-daughter playgroups, but upon further reflection, I opted for a career change. I looked for work I could do from home and secured my certification in nutritional counseling. To get there, I had to earn additional credentials beyond my graduate degree, which took almost five years, not a surprising timeline given that I was balancing part-time work and studying in the few hours a day Alexander was at preschool. While in the homestretch of achieving my certification, I stepped into the non-profit world and founded Nurture, a nutrition and wellness education organization. Nurture is dedicated to improving the nutrition and wellness of children and families, especially low-income families.

I also spent some time at home and spoke a little English with my daughter!

A few years later, we started to vacation out West as a family. We noticed that everything seemed better when we immersed ourselves in nature. Perhaps it was that things were simpler. Jeff had always been a big skier and loved the mountains, while I was a sunshine and water gal. Inevitably, we landed in Sun Valley every year for at least a week or two. I didn't consider myself a skier, but I gave it a try on the bunny hill. It was nothing I was

serious about. That is, until we actually decided to *live* in Sun Valley.

The move was a major risk for our careers, but we were willing to take it. By then, Nurture had taken off, and I was ready to hand over operations in Chicago to a new leader while I attempted to expand operations beyond the Windy City. Jeff would travel for his work no matter where we lived, so we figured, with the business world becoming more and more virtual, we could amp up our Skype accounts and head West.

When we arrived in Sun Valley, Elena entered fifth grade and Alexander was in third. They were eager for an adventure and they bubbled over with excitement. We all smiled as we pulled into the mountain town with a total population of less than 1,500. There were only about 20,000 people living in the area that stretched from one end of the remote valley to the other.

Where is everyone?

Is there really only one grocery store?

*Why are there animal heads mounted
in the garage of our rental home?*

Jeff and I had taken a huge financial risk and left behind a wonderful support network of family and friends in Chicago. We knew only a few people in this teeny, tiny town, yet we kept up a positive front and a smile. That was our calling card. Our ability to smile through adversity had been a savior to me, and I knew it was going to save us over and over again as we started anew in this different place.

DON'T BE IN A WORRY STATE.
LOOK FORWARD AND APPRECIATE.

Transform Fear into Love

Despite my professional experiences with demanding clients and the relentless pursuit of billable-hour targets, what I feared most in 2011 was Bald Mountain. With Jeff being an accomplished skier, he planned on taking only a few runs here and there whenever he could break away between meetings and phone calls. It was obvious that he was not a ski partner who could help me work on the basics. My kids, then 8 and 10, had already passed me by and had long since stopped waiting for me at the bottom of our runs. No one wanted to go on the bunny hill with me. My kids made rapid progress on the slopes; being so lightweight and low to the ground made it easier for them to recover from falls. I was taller, weighed more, fell more often, and quickly began to ache. I developed a hematoma on my outer thigh from repeatedly falling on it. My neck gaiters (scarf-like loops of warm fabric) became *thigh gaiters*, as I pulled them around my legs and butt to cushion my falls. I was getting so bruised that I had resorted to wearing Jeff's huge and highly padded hockey pants while I skied. Perhaps that fashion faux pas was the reason my kids were pretending not to know me. I needed to find serious ski instruction, and quickly.

I learned about Die Incredible Vimin Alpine Shredders (DIVAS) from another mom who also was a beginner skier and had searched for all the help she could get. The Sun Valley Snowsports School had started this women-only group a year

earlier, and I heard it had filled up pretty fast, so I was surprised to get a spot. “No problem, honey!” said the woman on the other end of the phone line.

No problem?

I had no idea what to expect on our first day of class. “Okay, everyone, we are going up the lift to do a ski-off!” yelled Nick, the red-coated DIVAS program manager. I was a nervous wreck inside. *What did “ski-off” mean?* After snowplowing my way down the smallest hill, I was partnered with a lovely group of grandmothers (cool grandmas, for sure). For the next several months, we skied together every week, talking on the lifts about kids and grandkids. We skied our way down and improved our skills. I soaked up every word that the amazing (and often intimidating) ski instructors offered.

I also did something that transformed my beginner ski status in an important way: I showed up every single week wearing a huge smile. It didn’t matter that I often had to alternate these smiles with tears of frustration (whenever my expert husband took me out for a *quick run down the bowls*). It didn’t matter that I had to alternate these smiles with looks of shock as I checked out my butt bruises at the end of the day. I simply knew I had to keep smiling. And it paid off.

At the end of my first DIVAS season, I received an honor that made my year: the Best Attitude Award. It made the pain of all those bruises vanish into sweet oblivion. I don’t think I’ll ever get an award that means as much as that card and t-shirt handed over at a local bar. It filled me with love for my new favorite sport, the mountain on which we played, and all the amazing people I was going to meet.

GIVE THANKS,
EVEN FOR FALLING IN SNOW BANKS.

Embrace Your Inner Superhero

As I learned through my bruising first attempts at skiing down the mountain, when you smile, whether you feel it inside or not, you are sending a signal to your body that *all is well*. When I interview people on my radio show, I always ask them to smile when they talk. Believe me, you can hear it over the air! You sound more approachable and less nervous if you speak through a smile.

Smiling is part of important body language that affects you and those around you, but it's not the only way we can impact how the world perceives us. Dr. Amy Cuddy, who is on the faculty at Harvard Business School and is a researcher of nonverbal behavior, advocates assuming dominant positioning before and during a meeting or talk to give yourself more power and influence. Wonder Woman was onto something when she assumed the wide-legged, proud stance with arms bent and hands on hips! There's evidence that the Wonder Woman pose actually reduces your levels of cortisol (the stress hormone) and raises your level of testosterone (a hormone related to strength).

Putting a smile on your face makes people see you differently. With a smile, you are viewed as more attractive, reliable, relaxed, and sincere. You are rewarding others and yourself when you smile. And because smiling is contagious, others are likely to smile back. By smiling, you release feel-good chemicals

in your brain, feel more confident, project a more pleasant voice, and activate reward centers in the brains of those around you. It is always a win-win to smile.

PUT ON A SMILE.
IT NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE.

When Ants Attack

Back in Chicago, when Alexander was three, we were invited to a birthday party for my dear friend, Julia. We were in charge of bringing a cake and, given that Julia was one of the most accomplished cooks I knew, I felt pressured to find a recipe that would have a wow factor. My friend Chase had recently invited us over for dinner and, for dessert, had served a bundt cake with a delicious chocolate glaze in a beautiful pattern dripping down the sides. Chase had five kids, so I knew she didn't mess around with complicated recipes.

“Just melt some dark chocolate and add a tiny bit of olive oil to give it a smooth texture,” Chase said. “Then drip it down the cake in a pretty pattern. It is sure to impress!”

On the day of the party, 30 minutes before we had to leave, I was in the kitchen following Chase's instructions. I had the help and full attention of Alexander as we poured the dark chocolate over the cake.

“Great job, Alexander!” I said, as we finished the glaze. It was just starting to harden, and I did think that it would look beautiful.

“I am just going to go upstairs to take a quick shower before we go to the birthday party,” I told Alexander. He nodded solemnly, pretending to go off to the playroom to busy himself.

About 15 minutes later, I came downstairs to find a boy with wide eyes and a huge ring of chocolate around his mouth.

“Mama. The ants. They came. And ate the cake!”

Very seriously, he led me to the kitchen, where the cake stood, yellow and pockmarked. There was not a morsel of chocolate to be found.

“Look, mama. See? The ants!”

I looked at my darling son, with his huge ring of chocolate around his mouth, and remembered the *DO NOT EAT* signs my stepmother used to hang on jars of chocolate chips. As a teenager, I had felt a lot of shame and guilt taking chocolate chips from those containers. I didn’t want him to feel that same way.

“The ants did like that cake, didn’t they?” I said with a smile. “Let’s go wash your face, okay?”

I got on the phone with Julia and gave her the quick story, which elicited huge giggles.

“Okay, I’m good with the half-eaten cake ... Let’s go with it.” Julia was not only a superb cook, she was also a great sport.

We arrived at Julia’s birthday with the cake, and all enjoyed a lovely meal. Our mealtime stories included the mystery of the ant attack on the cake. As the meal progressed, I noticed that Alexander was wobbling in his chair with half-closed eyes. I think he was stuffed full and hitting the sugar low at the same time. I refrained from chuckling, and no one scolded or judged. That day, Alexander learned his own, very personal and memorable lesson about how what you eat translates

into how you feel. Now a tween, Alexander must make his own decisions about what to eat, based on how the foods actually make him feel.

AVOID SHAME,
FOR A HEALTHY LONG-TERM GAME.

Transform Unhealthy Relationships into Healthy Ones

I knew early in my consulting career that my positive attitude would help me get promotions, clients, and success in the business world. This realization occurred well before I read the evidence in Shawn Achor's *The Happiness Advantage*. He found that performance improvements, such as 37% in sales, 31% in productivity, and 40% higher likelihood of receiving a promotion, are all linked to happiness. Happy people are nearly ten times more engaged at work, get better grades, and even live longer.

I learned the importance of showing up with a smile, no matter how I felt on the inside, from Frank. He was the highly successful head of the Los Angeles office of the management consulting firm where I worked. I was in the Chicago office, and it was a rare and special occasion to work with one of the senior partners from another city. I learned quickly that being assigned to a project with Frank could be a curse or a blessing, depending on whom you asked. Because of his extremely high expectations, he was known to work his consultants into the ground, yet it was also observed that those who worked well with him moved ahead quickly.

When I was assigned to my first project with Frank, I was responsible for managing my own team of two consultants. Steve and Alice, who at that time made up my small team, had different personalities and would learn different lessons from our project. Steve was new, on the naïve side, and needed guidance. He was the easy one. Alice was extremely bright, experienced, and had lots of ideas. She was the difficult one. Alice often left me exhausted and unhappy.

“Hey, Kathryn! Hey! Do you have two quick seconds to talk?”

“Sure ...”

“Did you get stuck in that horrible traffic jam on 290 this morning? What a nightmare.”

“Yes. It did finally get moving though,” I said.

“No way. I can’t believe how stupid people are. No one in this town can drive in the snow. It reminds me of this time when I was visiting my aunt, who is a terrible, crazy person, by the way, and it snowed in South Carolina. Now THOSE people are *really* crazy!”

“Interesting. I went to Emory and used to visit South Carolina all the time. Loved it. My roommate, a Merit Scholar, was from there.”

“Really? I had the worst roommate in college. I remember when ...” Her voice droned on and on and on.

Was she really talking about a toga party in 20-degree weather? Cars breaking down on road-trips? A blind date from hell?

My lifeblood was being sucked by an energy vampire. I looked inward for some positive thoughts, and I resurfaced to the light.

“Great, Alice. I have to run because we need to get busy on Frank’s project.”

That snapped Alice out of her ridiculous story. She had worked with Frank and knew what lay ahead. The next week was a day-and-night marathon of work as we prepared our client kick-off meeting presentation materials according to Frank’s guidance. By the time we reached the client site in California to meet Frank in person, we all were feeling overworked and exhausted.

“Okay, what’s the status on the kickoff meeting presentation?” Frank drilled us over breakfast.

“Well,” Alice said bravely, “Let me show you on the overview page of our report. I just have to get it out of my bag that hopefully survived the terrible taxi driver that picked us up from the airport. I swear he dropped my bag and had no right to be driving a taxi because he had no sense of direction. And the hard braking was nauseating! Smelled bad in there, too ... I’m sure he had made someone before us puke ...”

“I don’t care about your bad taxi driver!” yelled Frank. “And our client *especially* won’t care about your bad day, your bad driver, or any bad smell you experienced!”

“Sorry, Frank, it was just that we had a really hard week at the office, and then my cat was sick, and then we had this huge snafu with our contractor that is re-doing our kitchen ...”

“NO talk about your sick cat! NO talk about your botched home projects!” yelled Frank.

People at the Holiday Inn breakfast bar were staring at us. It was an awkward moment but a pivotal one for me. We were professional services providers, and people were buying a relationship with us as much as they were buying a service. Clients

expect you to be confident, upbeat, and positive. No one wants to hear about your tough day.

Frank concluded, “No matter what your day has really been like so far, it has been GREAT as far as the client is concerned! Couldn’t be better!”

FOR AN ATTITUDE OF THANKS,
FOLLOW THE RULE OF FRANK’S.

Food as Fuel

As I later reflected on our breakfast meeting and Alice’s trail of misery, I wondered how her days were starting even before she got ready to leave for the office. Now, as executive director of Nurture, with my certification in nutritional counseling, I have gained a lot of experience teaching children and adults about nutrition.

For starters, I have learned that in our American culture, we need to develop a better relationship with food. Eating from fear or guilt is not good for you. Eating to cover up insecure or sad feelings is not good for you, either. If you deny yourself food, that behavior is equally unhealthy. Recognize, instead, the necessity of food as the gas in our tanks and a source of our energy.

We all need to view food as fuel. This lesson was brought home during my 2009 search for a head of children’s programming for Nurture.

“Remember that kids have different objectives around food than adults. They want to run fast, feel great, and do better in

sports and in school. They could care less about cardiovascular disease,” said Juliette Britton, my top candidate.

“You also will completely alienate yourself the minute you say that their favorite cookie or sugary drink is ‘bad.’ Never use the word ‘bad’ when talking to kids about nutrition!”

Juliette got the job. I loved her philosophy, and she had the right background. She had been a children’s nutrition educator in Colorado and was in Chicago studying to get her registered dietitian degree.

I observed Juliette’s teaching style over the next few years, and Nurture adopted her techniques and lesson plans for kids. The key was to avoid confusing nutrition jargon and keep it simple. Lessons start by establishing a vocabulary to talk about food. We call it the *go vs. slow-down* lesson, using words that make sense to kids and refer to what they want to do.

Do they care that canned frosting has fats that may be bad for their heart? Not so much. Do they care if eating unhealthy foods will make them slow down, not have sustained energy, or make them sleepy? Yes!

By understanding why the body needs food, it becomes much easier to decipher what types of food provide the best fuel. Any food with calories provides energy for the body. However, not all calories are created equal. A powdered-sugar donut has the same number of calories as a bowl of oatmeal with strawberries and slivered almonds. Yet, while the body feels hungry several hours after eating the donut, the oatmeal is filling and nutritious.

“What foods give the body long-lasting energy?” our Nurture instructors ask an eager group of kindergarteners.

“Carrots!”
“Apples!”
“Meat!”
“Cheese!”
“Strawberries!”
“Broccoli!”

These answers are right on target. Note the absence of low-fat energy bars, fast food, baked chips, and processed foods. The only responses were whole foods, mainly fruits and vegetables, which Nurture calls *go* foods because they fuel the body with long-lasting energy, vitamins, minerals, and nutrients to support growth and activity. *Go* foods include fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, nuts, legumes, eggs, milk, and whole grains. *Go* foods fuel the body so it can move!

“What foods slow the body down?” we ask the kindergarteners.

“Cookies!”
“Cake!”
“Ice cream!”
“Brownies!”
“Potato chips!”
“French fries!”
“Candy!”
“Soda!”

Nurture refers to foods that have little nutritional value as *slow-down* foods or *sleepy* foods. These foods may provide a

short burst of energy, but they soon leave the body feeling hungry or tired. *Slow-down* foods slow down the body.

“If *slow-down* foods make us sleepy, does that mean we can never eat them?” we ask the kindergarteners.

“No,” they say wisely. “*Slow-down* foods are okay every once in a while.”

What I love most about this Nurture lesson is how even kindergarteners understand that *go* foods are the best, but *slow-down* foods can be part of a balanced diet when consumed in moderation. We are not making anything bad or creating shame.

By promoting a positive relationship with food, we are setting the stage for a healthy, energized relationship with food. Energy is a buzzword that is loved by kids and adults because it implies movement and fun. *Go* foods, on the one hand, capture this liveliness. *Slow-down* foods, on the other hand, promote sleepiness. And not many children want to feel sleepy!

LEARN TO VIEW FOOD AS FUEL,
LIKE NURTURE TEACHES KIDS AT SCHOOL.

You Are What You Eat and So Much More

I have learned so much from my friends and Nurture board members who graduated from the Institute of Integrative Nutrition (IIN), namely Eila Johnson, Stacey Patillo, Kami Miller, and Jody Moss. These lovely ladies consistently remind me that what we put into our mouths constitutes our *secondary foods*, which are important but less so than our *primary foods*.

Primary foods are relationships, daily activities, and spiritual practices that sustain us at a basic level. These primary foods have a whole lot more impact on our stress levels than what we put on our plates and into our mouths. We can't fix secondary food issues without addressing the primary ones. Ideally, we fix the problems by changing the way we look at both primary and secondary foods simultaneously. Thus, on our quest for better wellness and productivity, adjusting our lens on life through yoga and other practices that unify our mind, body, and spirit, is as integral as changing our views on food and nutrition.

IT'S NOT JUST THE FOOD ON YOUR PLATE
THAT CAN DEplete YOU OR MAKE YOU FEEL GREAT.

The Power of the Lens

Also from Achor's *The Happiness Advantage* comes the idea of "Falling Up." Falling Up is the concept that failure will inevitably happen, so it should be viewed as a normal, even positive, part of life. Achor believes that people's perceptions are based on their individual "Explanatory Style." Achor advises us to avoid helplessness, a disempowered attitude that generally leads to a destructive path of inaction. Falling Up requires people to look for the opportunity in any setback rather than settling for despair. This proactive attitude is what separates the successful from those who give up.

For me, Explanatory Style is *the lens on life* through which I choose to view a situation. It is a choice that each of us can make

every day, many times a day. I like to recall an equation I learned in graduate school that explains how we arrive at satisfaction:

$$\textit{Satisfaction} = \textit{Perceived Reality} - \textit{Expectations}$$

What parts of the equation do we control? Both perceived reality *and* expectations. We have the ability to influence our happiness in and satisfaction with life by managing those two components individually.

Let's start by managing our expectations. Common sense will tell you that if you set your expectations too high, you will likely end up disappointed. My advice is that you don't expect the world to be handed to you on a silver platter. Life isn't supposed to be endless leisure and comfort. Life is, in fact, a classroom in which we constantly learn important lessons. Don't expect it to be easy, but don't assume it will be terrible, either.

As you'll learn in Mantra #3 (Zoom Out for the Best View), the law of attraction—the concept that you can manifest things in your life through the power of thought—is an important force. Of course, we have to work hard for our rewards and not just wish for them. You'll learn in Mantra #4 (Plant Your Poles) that I advocate setting realistic, attainable goals as you endeavor to reach your life vision. Along the way, I suggest an even balance between proactivity (working hard) and receptivity (letting things flow to you).

Once we have set our expectations at a realistic level, we turn to the second component: perceived reality. It should be obvious that if you view your reality as poor or low, your satisfaction will also be poor or low regardless of expectations. But

why not choose an optimistic Explanatory Style to interpret events? Throw out that pair of negativity-infused goggles and put on some new ones! Make the most of every situation and boost your perceived reality. By looking at reality through a positive lens, we avoid sinking into helplessness and blaming others for our circumstances. Those with a positive Explanatory Style are much more likely to see what they can learn from their circumstances and drive themselves toward higher performance. They are also more likely to be satisfied with life and happy.

Let's use the example of moving to a new home to demonstrate how your lens on life can affect your happiness and satisfaction. Most people expect that moving will involve a lot of time and work and little fun. Let's assume that the rating for expectations is low (say, 4 on a scale of 1 to 10). But what is the perceived reality? Let's view the situation through two different lenses.

- **The negative lens:** "I am so overwhelmed by the fact that we have to move next month. How are we ever going to survive doing everything on our to-do list?" Perceived reality score? Low. (Let's assume a score of 3 on a scale of 1 to 10).
- **The positive lens:** "Moving next month will give our family an adventure and fresh perspective! We are going to have a lot of fun!" Perceived reality score? Higher. (Let's assume a score of 7 on a scale of 1 to 10).

We are viewing the exact same event, but in the first scenario, our perceived reality is low, so our satisfaction and

happiness are negative. Mathematically, the situation translates as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \textit{Satisfaction} &= \textit{Perceived Reality} - \textit{Expectations} \\ -1 &= 3 - 4 \end{aligned}$$

In the second scenario, our perceived reality is higher, so our satisfaction and happiness are positive. Mathematically, the situation translates as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \textit{Satisfaction} &= \textit{Perceived Reality} - \textit{Expectations} \\ 3 &= 7 - 4 \end{aligned}$$

See how the lens creates a completely different outcome for you and, likely, those around you? The move is either a “bummer” (-1) or “okay” (3) experience based on how you view it.

I love that *response* is part of the word *responsibility*. Know that you are responsible for your own responses to events; you cannot change other peoples’ responses or actions. You can suggest a positive lens, but it is up to them to choose to use it and change their perspectives and, ultimately, their perceived realities. In her book, *Happy for No Reason*, Marci Shimoff writes about unconditional happiness. Using stories from her own life, as well as from the 100 people she interviewed, she shows how it is possible to be happy regardless of external circumstances. She demonstrates that it is not the size of your bank account or even the perfect mate that creates happiness. True happiness comes only from within.

Here’s an exercise to help you manage your happiness and satisfaction. Start each day with:

“Thank you, Universe, for the great day coming up.”

*Then, add your own details of how
you want the day to turn out.*

Before you go to bed at night, reflect on the day and find the positive things you experienced. If something didn't turn out the way you wanted, accept the possibility that the outcome was meant to be and that it can pave the way for something even greater. Then, as you are falling asleep, do this mental exercise:

“Thank you, Universe, for the great day you've given me.”

Then, add your own details of why you are thankful.

Watch as your satisfaction and happiness grow over time.

SATISFACTION IS BASIC MATH.
MANAGE HAPPINESS ON YOUR LIFE PATH.

Putting a Positive Lens to the Test

Let's think back to the story of my consulting project with Frank, Alice, and Steve. After that fateful breakfast at the Holiday Inn, I set a new goal for my relationship with Alice: More satisfaction and happiness at work for both of us.

I began observing people at meetings to see if a positive or negative attitude played an important role or had any obvious effect on meeting outcomes. We consultants love correlations, often depicted as scatterplots, so I would jot down my observations on flights home. Over time, the correlation between attitudes and

outcomes proved to be undeniable. As the consultant team's attitude improved from negative to positive, the client meeting outcomes improved. Conclusion: The attitude of our team was a critical element of our success.

Before every meeting, I started to preach the importance of our attitudes and smiles. Having a smile on was easy when flights arrived without delays, projects stayed on schedule, and the team and clients got along like old friends. But I reminded my consultants—and myself—that smiling in the face of duress was key. There were many times when I smiled on our way to a client meeting, despite a lack of sleep or lost baggage. I would remind my team and myself that *smiles beget success*. Bad attitudes and bemoaning situations out of our control lead to ruts and poor performance.

There was a pivotal moment within my unit when I knew that the *smiles beget success* lesson was fully integrated. It was about a year after our project with Frank and the blow-up at the Holiday Inn breakfast bar. We had spent the last year learning how to use *smile power* despite all odds. I finally felt that Alice was ready to deliver her first solo pitch, and I trusted her with a new client opportunity. The client's office was a few blocks away, so Alice's plan was to grab lunch in the café downstairs, spend some time preparing, and then walk over for the afternoon meeting. She gave herself plenty of time to ensure that she was completely ready when the presentation began.

I knew she would check in with me after the meeting, so I went through my email right before I left the office that evening. When I read her message, I doubled over with laughter and felt a sense of pride and relief.

TO: Kathryn
FROM: Alice
SENT: Mon 3/14/98 5:00PM CST
SUBJECT: meeting update

Hi. Update. Did you hear about the major elevator issue in our building today? I was in the middle of it!

I was on my way down to grab a bite to eat when the elevator jerked to a violent stop. The air conditioning went off and everything went dark. You know I am not a fan of enclosed places. Then the minutes—and then what felt like hours—started to tick by! It was 300 degrees in that elevator!

I started to freak out. Would I be late to the client presentation? Would I boil in this dark inferno? Was anyone coming for me? I started sweating like a maniac. I think I almost had a panic attack!

Then I remembered what you have been saying, “Smile, smile, smile.” So I just started smiling and pretending that I was already in the presentation, doing a great job. Occasionally I would envision an arctic breeze coming through to cool me down. The sweat was pouring, but at least I was doing something productive and imagining that I was comfortable.

Finally, the lights came on and the elevator jolted to a start. The door opened and the maintenance guys stared at me, hoping I was not going to come screaming out of that hot prison. I realized it had only been 30 minutes, not eight hours, but it was still a crazy journey. I walked

calmly to the ladies room and dried off the sweat.

I grabbed a smoothie on the way out since it was almost time for the meeting to start.

I got to the client building and prepared myself for the inevitable small talk.

“Good afternoon, Alice. How are you today?”

(Dramatic pause. Do I start off with my nightmare commute? No. Smile!)

“GREAT! THANKS!”

And we got straight to some really productive work.

You would have been proud. I think the meeting went extremely well, and they asked for a proposal. So, good news. Smiles beget success.

I will see you back in the office tomorrow morning.

Alice

OF HAPPINESS BE YOUR OWN CREATOR,
EVEN WHEN YOU'RE STUCK IN THE ELEVATOR.

Mantra #1: Change your lens on life is a reminder that positivity can benefit you through many walks of life. Positivity can help you as you make major transitions, learn a new sport or skill, or struggle through work challenges. Smiling is an important component of positivity, as is body language. Remember how the Wonder Woman pose can reduce cortisol levels and increase testosterone. As Alice taught us, keeping a

positive attitude even through challenging situations can increase the likelihood of success. Having a positive relationship with food is one of the best ways to establish healthy and balanced eating habits. *Change your lens on life* does not advocate putting on rose-colored glasses but instead taking a filtered view that magnifies the best of life.

ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS CHAPTER

FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE:

Know that your perspective shapes your reality. An optimistic lens can be most helpful during:

- **Transitions.** Make your decision, then make that decision the right decision. A smile will often seal the deal. Don't waste energy with what-ifs.
- **High-pressure events.** When you are scared or nervous, smiling will positively change your body chemistry, the tone of your voice, and the way others perceive you.
- **Challenging times.** Optimism will increase your chances of a successful outcome. Remember that when working with others, you get more with honey than with vinegar.

FOR SUCCESS IN WELLNESS:

- Remember that it is not just the food that you put on your plate that affects your wellness and energy levels. Evaluate your relationships, activities, and spiritual practices to get a more complete picture of how you nourish yourself.

- Avoid thinking about foods as bad versus good.
- Approach slow-down foods with moderation instead of making them taboo. Increase your intake of foods that make you go with energy.