

Fun in the Success Zone

What is your fun quotient? Do you take time for fun and to enjoy life, or is your life all work and no play?

Steven Jobs, founder and CEO of Apple, said, "When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: 'If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right.' It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: **'If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?'** And whenever the answer has been "No" for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something."

The result of his philosophy is obvious in Apple's product line – not only are their products functional and in high demand but they are fun. Fun is part of their product success. However, what if you aren't Steven Jobs and your career or personal life isn't fun? For many, work is not fun anymore or maybe never was. The marketplace isn't fun and neither is the economy and listening to the 6:00 news. Are you one of the millions that have been affected by the downturn in the economy taking right with it your fun quotient?

Government research shows that Americans are spending less time on work hours and more time on leisure activities. However, more leisure time does not necessarily equate to more fun and enjoyment. People tend to treat their leisure, social media and personal activities as if they were an impending obligation on their "to do" list significantly reducing the enjoyment of anything fun.

It's all about balance:

- work life/personal life balance
- have to do/want to do balance
- meeting the demands of others/meeting your self-needs balance.

Balance is key to reducing stress, self-motivation, being fully engaged, more productive and re-energizing.

Create a Fun Inventory

There are as many definitions of fun as there are people. According to the dictionary, fun provides a source of amusement, enjoyment or merriment. What you need to know is that things like working out at the gym, playing competitive games like golf or tennis and bicycling for exercise are not considered fun. For some people, visiting family or attending social events are not fun but rather stressful and obligatory. Even competitive card games with serious card players are no longer in the fun category.

Not sure what your fun quotient is or how to create a Fun Inventory? Creativity is the bridge from a hectic stressful life to a more fun-filled enjoyable life. Get into your fun zone by developing and regularly using a personal inventory of fun things to do.

Learn Something New! Lifelong learning is a key to re-invigorating and re-energizing you physically and mentally along with being fun. It is not a fun activity if you have to learn something just to make it work better. For example, reading a book on how to install and use your newest computer program is not fun or creative but a necessity. Your body will look at it as simply another obligation and more stress.

Fill your lifelong learning process with things on your bucket list. If you'd love to be a gourmet cook, take some classes and enjoy yourself. If you always wanted to build a model railroad or fly radio controlled model airplanes – then do it. Learn to play a musical instrument, sculpt, paint, knit, crochet, garden, all of these would work as fun as long as you do not approach them as an obligation with specific time constraints.

Change Your Focus! If you have had to focus for years on earning an income and raising a family or still are, add some spice to your life by changing your focus to doing something just for you. Once a week do something that will make you feel great about yourself and re-energizes you. Go to a spa for a full day of relaxation and pampering or go on a boat outing to swim with the dolphins. If you are not near the ocean to see dolphins, take a leisurely hike along a stream or sit on a park bench and watch the world go by while contemplating the joy of living.

If you can't leave your office or your home, creatively visualize that beach or hiking trail in your mind and spend two minutes mentally in that quiet peaceful atmosphere. You will return to your work refreshed with greater clarity and more focus. Play meditative music or uplifting music that will instantly transport you to a more fun place.

Laugh! Get rid of the nightly news and the talk shows that take cheap shots at others so they look good and watch a hilariously funny movie or your favorite sitcom that always helps you relax. If you love old-time television, download episodes of Red Skelton, I love Lucy, Jackie Gleason, Cheers or Seinfeld. They are guaranteed to take you to a fun place. Sometimes you will just laugh at the hairstyles and the clothing.

Create your own Fun Inventory. You will be able to add a number of things once you start to focus on the need for fun. **End each day ask yourself the question, "Did I do something today to have fun or bring me joy?"** If the answer is no too many days in a row, re-evaluate what is happening in your life and how you can change it to create balance.

Stop stressing! Stop over-thinking! Stop worrying so much and take action! Get out of your easy chair. Get out of the kitchen and the laundry room. Get out from behind your desk and your computer. Log off and get a life. Get into the Fun Zone by being more in balance so you can reduce stress, be more successful and enjoy life more.

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