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Joy: An Underrated Business Skill

I love smiling, laughing, and the color yellow. Yes, I'm a joyful person - and a CEO. Here's how you too can find joy and use it as a powerful business asset.

This is going to sound really corny, but hear me out: I have generally always been a very joyful person. It's true, right down to the stereotypes: My favorite color is yellow, I love to smile and laugh, and even in the midst of challenges I still find things to be thankful for.

Once I joined the working world, I soon found that my sunny disposition was a valuable business asset! Colleagues and clients noticed it, and I quickly discovered it was one of the strongest reasons I was drawn to the right people and opportunities, at the right time.

Notice that I am using the word "joy" rather than "happiness." Although I strive for happiness, of course, I certainly am not always happy. But for me, finding joy transcends specific circumstances, and takes it a step further to figuring out how to feel good and do well, even when times are tough. Below are some of my insights on joy and how to preserve it:

1. Adopt an Attitude of Gratitude.

Not everyone has a naturally sunny disposition, and that's okay – it's important for people to be authentic...fake kindness can make people run for the hills just as quickly as negativity! That said, everyone has things to be grateful for. Daily, I fill small moments (think being on hold for a call or waiting for my computer to load) with simple thoughts such as "I'm grateful that I enjoy the people I work with," or "I love my sons' hugs." When a huge business challenge gets me frustrated, one way that I get through it is taking comfort in the fact that I have successfully overcome past issues and learned valuable lessons that ultimately improved my business. These pauses for small thoughts of gratitude soon add up to more joy at work! Tip: many people find it helpful to write down the things they are thankful for on small notes and post them in places around the office where they're sure to read them.

2. Joy is Magnetic...

And you can use it to attract business. Complaining, having a bad attitude, not getting along with your co-workers – that negativity is contagious, too, and the results can range from an isolated tough day at the office, to an overall toxic work environment, in which business deals are lost to competitors that reflect a more positive impression. Especially when our company was in the early stages of establishing our brand, we secured deals that easily could have gone to a more established firm. I frequently heard that we won the business because the client could feel the passion for our mission as they interacted with my company's staff and me! Having the necessary business chops is a must, but so is being the type of person that people enjoy working with!

3. Create Joy for Others.

Relationships are essential to my company's success, particularly as a small business owner. I've discovered that being thoughtful and creating joy for others is a surprisingly quick way to create joy for myself. And it doesn't need

to be a heavy lift, just a slight shift in how you already approach your day. Presented with a good opportunity? Think of how to involve one of your contacts. Headed on an interesting business trip? Bring one of your colleagues that would benefit from the trip. Meeting with a contact? Put your phone down and honor them with your full attention. We should of course behave this way simply because it's the right thing to do. But there is no denying that when you treat others how you would like to be treated, it eventually comes back to you (often, tenfold)!

Inevitably, business, just like life, is filled with ups and downs. But those ebbs and flows will feel a lot less bumpy when buffered by a bit of sunshine. So go ahead and add that sunshine each day – joy is good for your life, and your business!