

How to have a great day

I've run into a few challenging days lately, so I figured I'd put together a list of "How to Have a Great Day." I hope it helps you – and me.

Greet each day with a positive start.

Yes, this sounds simplistic – but it's very true. If you get out of bed, growl at the alarm clock, curse your kids, kick the dog, and swear at every other commuter on the highway, you're going downhill fast. In order to start positively, try these keys:

- Go to bed early enough to get a good night's sleep. If you're sleepy, you're starting off with two strikes against you. Go to bed earlier
- Lay off the mind-altering substances, unless you're talking about books. If you're a drinker, don't drink yourself into a stupor. If you're taking some sort of illegal drugs, (or binging on Snickers Bars), then get rid of them entirely.
- If you use an alarm clock, try one that's not quite so irritating. There's nothing that sets me off quite as much as being jarred awake by something that sounds like an air raid siren. I feel the same way about talk radio – but of course, that's just me.
- Improve your commute. Listen to books in your car. Give yourself enough time to get to the office comfortably. Stop swearing at the guy in the other car. (Try smiling – he'll wonder what you've been up to). Take a different route to work occasionally.
- I use music in the mornings. I've got an iTunes mix called "quiet morning," and it's full of stuff that helps me feel more positive.
- Say "good morning" to others – and mean it!

Keep your mind where it belongs.

No, I'm not suggesting your mind is in the gutter – only that with most of us, our minds wander into negative territory from time to time. Hey – I know where I'm coming from here – I've been fighting a negative mood all day long. One person I know puts a rubber band around his wrist – he snaps it when he gets in a negative mood, jarring him back to reality. Try these:

- Don't let other people railroad you into a bad mood. If you want to be in a bad mood, then put yourself there – don't let other people do it for you!
- Stop **reacting** to everything that comes your way. Choose to **act**, not **react**. You are the master of your soul and your mood.
- Keep your mind on your goals, your task list, your accomplishments. Concentrate on the positive, and the negative will flee.

If you find yourself in a really bad mood, plot a way out.

If you're physically lost (like I was in Santa Clara last week), it's important to find a way out. When you're emotionally lost, you also need a method to get out of it. Here are the first steps:

- Decide where you want to be going, and then concentrate on getting there.
- Don't let the little problems on the way deter you from your destination. Keep your mind on where you're going.
- Map a way out of there – take a deep breath and determine how you're going to deal with the current problem – and then put your mini-plan into action. There is no better way to deal with a problem than with constructive action – or as the old adage states “The best way out is always through.”

Hey – we all get in bad moods; we all have bad days – and we all can turn the bad days into great ones.

The key to having great days is to make them great – plan them, enjoy them, relish them. It's not difficult to turn a bad day into a great one – and it's easy to start off a day on a great pattern.

The phrase “Have a Great Day” should be more than just something you hear from the clerk at McDonald's. It should be the way you – and I – live life to its fullest.

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