

**Feeling Anxious or
Overwhelmed?**



Get it done (and have fun)

It's all a mind game. I don't mean the stack of papers, full email inbox, or angry looks from your spouse are your imagination. The real game is what goes on inside your head when you see the stack of papers. It is what you make of a critical remark, flat tire, or PC that lost your big project file.

We are the creators of our own attitudes, and the truth of a situation or event is what we make it out to be. Say 60,000 people attend the world series between San Francisco and Oakland. Half are Giant's fans, the other half are A's fans. The Giants win the 7th game in the bottom of the 9th. Half the crowd leaves frustrated and angry at the "bad" game, and half leave thrilled about the "good" game. It was the same game.

You can suffer from a life experience, or you can learn, move on and thrive. The choice of how you react to an experience is yours.

This booklet is about building a positive attitude in all areas of your life. Having a positive attitude is simply a more enjoyable way to exist. It just plain feels good.

A nifty side effect of having a positive attitude is that your most important work is completed with greater ease, less effort, and more fun.

I hope that this booklet can be a catalyst for improving your sense of well-being, and bringing you more joyful experiences as you accomplish great things in your life.

Blessings and Joy!

Sid Smith

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1 Imagine how things could be much worse. I know this sounds strange, but when you imagine how things could be much worse, you can appreciate what is here, now. You're alive! Your eyes work well enough to read, your body is still working, and your mind is still thinking 60,000 thoughts a day. Richard Wiseman in The Luck Factor says "Lucky" people see how their situation could have been worse, then move forward. "Unlucky" people dwell on the negative side of the event, carrying it with them.

2 Make it a personal challenge. When you run up against an obstacle in your life, why not make moving past it quickly a personal challenge? Once, when I was much younger, I replaced the clutch on my VW bug. As I was cleaning up, I noticed a vital part sitting on my tool bench. Oops! Rather than getting upset, I made it a personal challenge, and timed how quickly I could drop the engine, replace the missing part, and put the engine back in. I did it in less than an hour!

3 Take a 30 second commercial break. It's easy to get thoroughly embroiled in today's crisis. You can change your attitude instantly by taking a 30 second break. Imagine yourself floating on a peaceful river, standing at the top of a high mountain, sailing in the warm South Pacific, or sitting blissfully in a beautiful meadow. Go, for 30 seconds, to a place that brings a smile to your face. Then leave and come back to your task refreshed. Try this a few times and see how quickly your energy can shift. This is your own private virtual reality machine.

4 Ask a different question. Often the questions we ask hold us back. Rather than ask, "Why me?, Why now?", or "Who would do such a thing?", try changing the question. Ask "What do I want here?, or What can I learn from this?" Changing the question shifts your perspective to a more positive focus in which numerous new possibilities arise.

5 Choose another dish from your smorgasbord of thoughts. We have, on average, about 60,000 thoughts in a day. What if you could choose which thoughts you put on your plate? You can. I really dislike brussels sprouts. Why would I put a bunch of these on my plate, then complain about them? Wouldn't it make more sense to leave them behind and put something that I like on my plate instead? If a thought brings pain, worry, anger, or suffering, choose to focus on another thought that brings you joy, happiness, and gratitude.

6 Celebrate your mistakes. It's totally human to make mistakes. Thomas Edison said "Results! Why, man, I have gotten a lot of results. I know several thousand things that won't work." He succeeded *because* he was willing to embrace his failures, and celebrate them because they brought him that much closer to success.

7 Choose it, not simply do it. You can say "I have to do this", or you can say "I *can* do this". Even better, what if you *chose* your activities? When you're ready to write that report, don't simply *do it* because you *have to*. CHOOSE to write the report because you can. The fuel pump on my car went out about 2 miles from home. I *chose* to thoroughly enjoy the walk home, even stopping at a couple of shops I hadn't noticed before. **Choose** to be with what is, instead of **having** to be with what is.

8 Ask what's working, not what's wrong. When you ask what's working about a situation, you open yourself to many new ideas and solutions. Asking what's wrong, or not working, forces you into a mindset that is trying to solve a problem with the same thinking that created it. Einstein said it isn't possible to solve a problem with the same thinking that created it. Instead of focusing your meetings on the issues, shift the focus to discussions of what's working, and how you can make it even better. The issues will naturally arise from this discussion, *and* will be addressed with a positive attitude.

9 What's the best that can happen? Our tendency is to think about the worst case scenario. While this is very necessary at times, we forget to ask about the best case. What's the best that can happen, if everything goes easily and smoothly? Create an image of the best case scenario in your mind. Once you have the image, ask what thoughts, beliefs, and actions will allow that scenario to unfold. Proceed down that path with great and positive anticipation.

10 Smell a flower. No, really! Smell a flower, or even a bunch of flowers. Our brains are often working overtime to solve the problems, deal with the crisis, or get our 5-page To-Do list completed. The rest of our senses are ignored. Stopping to smell the roses (or nearest available flower) helps you remember about feeling good. When you feel good, it's easier to cultivate positive thoughts, and you get more done!

11 Take a walk. A corollary to sniffing the flower: why not walk while you're doing it. Part of the reason negative attitudes are so difficult to shift is that we are not moving. An attitude is simply energy, and when your physical energy is static, your emotional and mental energy will also remain static. To move an attitude, you sometimes need to move your body. Get physical, allow the energy to move, and then shift your attitude. PLEASE do this in meetings!

12 Eat a bowl of cherries. Another corollary to sniffing the flower is taste. Can you *taste* success? Can you taste ease, joy, fulfillment, and good vibrations? Yes. Rather than fill yourself with candy or pop, try serving a bowl of fresh cherries (or your favorite fruit) at your next meeting. No pit-spitting, though!

13 Get lucky today. Spend one entire day saying to yourself “I feel lucky today”, then notice what happens to your general attitude. You’ll also experience more “good” as a result because you’ll be on the look-out for lucky breaks – anything from finding a dime on the sidewalk to landing a big contract. We can train our minds to look for lucky breaks, but not by focusing on things that go wrong, only by looking for “luck”.

14 STOP... any negative thoughts in their tracks. A simple trick for doing this is to carry a rubber band around your wrist. Every time you catch yourself having a negative thought (about yourself, your work, life, or anyone else), snap the rubber band. It won’t take long for you to stop the thoughts *before* you have to snap the rubber band. Another, less painful, technique is to say OUT LOUD, and VERY LOUD, “STOP!”. Of course, you may want to use this technique in private. It is, however, very effective. For groups, keep a “Fun-time Jar” at all meetings. Any negative comments require a quarter placed in the jar.

15 Avoid the news for a month. We are bombarded with negative news and negative messages on TV and even in the print media. Try NOT watching the news or reading the newspaper for 30 days. Notice how you feel at the end of those 30 days, and how much easier it is to shift your attitude and stop negative thoughts before they get carried away.

16 Use a spiral notebook to keep a record of positive things that happen every day. We tend to focus on and remember what went wrong, and easily take for granted everything that went well. You got up, there was food for breakfast, traffic was light on the way to work, and you had a delightful lunch with a colleague. Write these down so that when it seems everything is going wrong, you can remind yourself of all the things that are going right.

17 Read an inspiring book. Instead of reading a novel before you go to bed, try reading a few pages of something inspirational, such as Rumi, poetry, Wayne Dyer, or other teachers. Bring these inspirational stories and ideas into work and share them with your colleagues. Have everyone on your team take turns sharing an inspirational quote every week. What you read (and hear) directly influences your thinking, and your thinking determines what you create.

18 Listen to music that gets your bones moving. If you find your attitude sliding down hill, listen to a little music that makes you feel good. It can be instrumental, experimental, hip-hop, or country western. The genre of music doesn’t matter as much as how it makes you feel. If you feel good after listening to the music, then it’s a keeper. Have a small stack of these ready and waiting.

19 Watch an upbeat movie. We can do much to create a positive environment for ourselves. Movies are another source that can bring you up or pull you down. And again, it’s not the genre of movie that matters (horror, comedy, inspirational, documentary, action, etc.), it’s how it makes you feel. Do you watch a certain kind of movie and feel really good about yourself afterwards? That’s a good movie to watch to help shift your attitude.

20 Do something unexpected and fun. Routine keeps us going in the same line of thinking. Imagine that thought is a train. If the terrain never changes, the train keeps chugging along with the same perspective. Have that train take an unexpected detour over a mountain, and everything shifts. Take a different route to work. Stop to talk to a stranger on the way to lunch. Answer your phone differently every day. Play, have fun, relax. Start each meeting with a different story, quote, or even song (if you’re so bold).

21 Do some house cleaning. Work can get so hectic that everything is in disarray, including your life. A task as simple as clearing off your desk and filing all paperwork can improve your attitude 100%. Buy the book Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity by David Allen, and follow his outline for organizing your office space.

22 Take a small risk. I'm not talking BIG risk here, such as jumping from a plane without a parachute, or telling your boss she/he's a complete idiot. Take a small risk, like taking the lead with your manager instead of waiting for her to tell you what to do. Take a small risk in your business by writing a slightly off-beat or controversial article and sending it to your favorite clients. Say something you believe strongly to someone you trust – something you've never told anyone else. Then, congratulate yourself for successful risk-taking.

23 Let go of the past! Two monks were walking back to their monastery. Because of a storm, the river was unusually high. They came across an old woman who was not strong enough to cross the river on her own, so one of the monks offered to carry her. He let her down on the other side, and the monks continued on. Several miles later, he asked his friend, "something seems to be troubling you. What is it?" His friend replied, "you know it is against the rules of our order to be touched by a woman, yet you did." To this, the monk replied, "my friend, I let that woman off my shoulders hours ago, yet it is you who still carries her." Once you've carried your burden across the river, let it go and leave it behind you.

24 Do a favor for someone. I'm talking about a random favor, not necessarily helping with an event that was planned two weeks in advance. Open the phone book and pick a name at random. Send them a \$10 bill with an anonymous note (no return address) that you're passing on good feelings. Buy a smoothie for that road worker or flagger who's standing in the sun all day. Play around with this idea and see how it shifts your attitude.

25 Keep a jar of fairy dust handy. OK, so you don't have fairy dust. Get some glitter, or maybe some essence of rose to spray around your office. When you want to shift your attitude, sprinkle the fairy dust (or give a little spray), say a few magic words, and invite in a little lightness and levity. If you're bold enough, try this in a meeting.

26 Say no to something you'd rather not do. I emphasize the smiling part. Saying no doesn't have to be a dramatic affair. "No, thank you, I'd rather not criticize anyone." If you have a choice, and you know it won't feel good, practice saying no. If you don't have a choice (mandatory meeting), **choose** to be there, and choose to have a positive attitude. Then, say no to negative thoughts.

27 Only add to your To-Do list those things which you absolutely want to get done today. Check them off as you complete them, and by the end of the day you'll feel as though you've accomplished a tremendous amount, which you have. All other items can be placed in a *Someday* file in your file cabinet. You can refer to the *Someday* file periodically and add these to your daily list (or remove them entirely). Oh, and notice I didn't say to choose items you *have* to get done!

28 Smile and say yes to something that makes you feel good. How often do we refuse a gift that will make us feel good? Pretty much every time we're complemented! Smile, say "thank you", and accept the gift for no other reason than it feels good. Then, turn around and give that same gift to someone else.

29 Compliment someone. Tell them what you appreciate about who they are, then *don't* follow up with “constructive feedback”. Constructive feedback is criticism cloaked as “something good”. When you complement someone, *they* will look for ways to improve because the complements feel good. And, you'll feel good yourself. If you *must* give feedback, look at what the person is doing well and how they can improve, rather than what they're doing wrong.

30 Say something nice about yourself. What is one thing you appreciate about yourself? Notice it and say it out loud or in your mind. Do you like your legs? How about that ability you have to cook incredible meals. Did you make a very good presentation last week? Find some way to celebrate yourself. Even when you can't seem to resolve a sticky problem, remember another challenge you solved, and remind yourself that you're capable of getting it done. Oh, and don't forget to write this in your spiral notebook!

31 Move your reminders. If you keep a white board or bulletin board with items you want to remember, move things around. Take a few moments to move papers or notes, remove those that are no longer appropriate. This gives you a sense of movement and progress. So often we feel negative because of a sense of being stuck, or a feeling that nothing ever changes. Things will change if you allow it.

32 Respectfully ask for what you want. You know when you're not getting what you want - it doesn't feel good. Someone goes around you, speaks down to you, or complains incessantly. Your client, partner, boss, or employee won't make a decision. Say what you need/want: “It's possible I wasn't clear about what I want from you, and if so I apologize. I ask that you...”, then be clear about what you want. Finish with “are we in agreement?”.

33 Don't wear it if it doesn't fit. Would you wear a hat that was two sizes too small? Of course not. Then why do you insist on wearing someone else's opinion of you as if it fit? So they said you were “slow”, or “too emotional”. If it doesn't fit right, don't put it on. Hand it back with a wink and a thanks, saying, “Sorry, not my size.”

34 Take a break. Everyone and everything needs a time to rest. Match your “up” time with an equal amount of down time. It's guaranteed your attitude, energy, and effectiveness will all suffer if you don't have a period of true rest & relaxation. “To everything there is a season” holds true for our daily cycles. Allow your down time to really be a time to recharge, and not “numb out” with alcohol, drugs, or mindless TV.

35 Try loving what you hate. Pick something you hate doing, but “have” to do, and say how much you love it at least 25 times a day. I know this sounds ridiculous, but it really works. You'll begin acting as if you like it, almost in spite of yourself. Over time, you'll come to like it even more, and if you keep saying you love it, your whole attitude around it will shift. Pretty soon, you may even become known as the “expert” at the same thing you used to hate.

36 Remind yourself of what you love. Make sure you have something personal in your office area. Look at it right now, and maybe even move it to a different space so you'll notice it again tomorrow.

37 **Count your blessings now.** Stop, and count your blessings, including family, friends, work, health, where you live, your cat, and that bush outside your front door that never seems to stop growing, even though you don't water it. These are all blessings – things in your life that are working for you, and give you a sense of being alive, maybe even a sense of joy or peace. Then, write these in your spiral notebook.

38 **Every problem or challenge has multiple possibilities.** Remember this next time you feel stuck. Just knowing there are multiple possibilities will open you to new ideas, and allow you to see several ways to accomplish what you need. There is always more than one option, so look at several and choose the one that feels best. What are six possibilities for that “problem” you're currently facing? Tell your team they have to come up with ten possibilities before proceeding.

39 **Smile, even if you don't feel like it.** Smiling actually causes a shift in your body chemistry. Try holding a pencil between your clenched lips for a minute. Now, hold the pencil between your clenched teeth. Feel a difference? The first causes a “frown”, and the second a smile.

40 **All you ever have to do is the next step.** Even though your list of emails, voice mails, and in-box are overflowing, all you ever have to do is whatever is *next*. First, ask yourself what accomplishment will make you feel the best today. Then, ask “What is the very next action that I want to take so that I will meet, and even exceed this accomplishment.” Then simply, easily, and joyfully take that one next step.

41 **Choose to be around positive people.** This is your first choice. If you have negative people in your life, then remind yourself that you don't have to agree or think like them. Effective empathy is when you're in tune with that person's well-being, not with their disease. Help them to experience well-being by choosing to be positive yourself. This is true compassion. Be empathic to their well-being, and you'll know exactly what to do.

42 **Visualize a positive outcome.** Professional athletes see themselves performing flawlessly before entering the game. Choose to go into your day, meeting, sales call, or appointment expecting a positive outcome. How would you behave if you believed everyone you encountered had *your* best interest in mind? Visualize positive results, and you'll be more likely to receive them.

43 **Teach something you know.** If there's something you know better than anyone in your office, offer to teach it to them. Start a precedent of shared knowledge in which everyone learns and everyone wins.

44 **Use a timer for tasks.** When you have a lot on your plate, and you know you need to stay focused, use a timer to limit the amount of time you spend on any one task. This helps you focus, and helps you to feel much better about your accomplishments.

45 **Be totally satisfied with what is while you're reaching for something more.** Being satisfied and happy with what is currently in your life doesn't mean you can't reach for something more. At work, bless and celebrate what is, while as a team you reach for something more – a bigger goal, or a better environment. Agree that what you have is simply what you have, then ask “how can we make it better?” Forget about asking “what's wrong” – it doesn't get you anywhere. This takes practice, but the more you ask yourself what's working instead of what's not, the easier it becomes to realize how everything is perfect now, and how much better it can be.

46 **Who's stood where you're standing?** Perhaps you're involved in something you've never done. Fear of failure sets in.

Think about who's stood where you're standing now and came out of it successfully. Imagine yourself following closely in their footsteps. What did they think, or not think? What was their perspective and belief about the situation? How did they behave and act? What steps did they take. You're never completely alone because you've always got your imagination! Realization of possibility brings solutions much more quickly than fear of failure.

47 **Ceremoniously toss the old stuff.** Clothes, magazines, files, boyfriends/girlfriends – whatever happens to be laying around gathering

dust and taking up vital physical, emotional, or psychic energy. Ask yourself if tossing this would make any real difference in your business. If not, get rid of it. Make it a big deal, and have some fun. You're clearing space for something better to come in.

48 **What's the one thing, that if you did it right now, would make you feel really, really good?** Before you jump right in

and do it, take a moment to feel *as if* you've already done it. Doesn't it feel great? Bask in that feeling for a minute or so. Now, even if it's not possible to do that one thing, you'll be able to take this positive feeling into your next action. Then, perhaps later you can bask in the real activity. We work much better when pulled forward by something that feels good than by being pushed from behind by something we want to avoid.

49 **Don't make there be a reason.** Sometimes we spend so much time asking "why" something happened (or didn't) that we end up recreating the same thing

again. Instead of trying to find the reason for something, focus on what you want instead. This applies equally to the questions "Why did I...?" and "Why didn't I...?". These questions typically make you feel worse, and rarely offer solutions. Ask instead "What do I NOW want to do differently?"

50 **Keep an eye open for anything that makes you feel good. If you can't find something, make it up.** The goal here is

to feel good. Feeling good allows you to work more efficiently, have better relationships, and get more done with less effort. Even if you have to make something up to feel good, do it. The Buddhist monk who was been imprisoned in China for a several years was asked why he always smiled and laughed, even though he was far from his family. He replied, "Because it makes me feel good."

51 **If you're not getting what you want, try asking a different question.** Let's

say every time you go to your boss, employee, or close relation for help, you get something other than what you expected or wanted – no help at all, or a dissertation on how to do it right. Neither is helpful. Ask a different question, such as "I'd like to review my analysis with you. First, I'd like to hear what you like best about it, and then get your thoughts on how we can improve it. (Emphasize the "we"). Set the stage for getting what you want by **asking** for what you want in different ways. It's kind of like "test marketing" a new communication style.

52 **Enjoy the ride.** You wouldn't plan a trip with ten destination spots, the final being home, then not go because you're already at your final destination! The joy is in the

journey. Remember this several times throughout your day. Maybe it's raining on your trip to the park. So what! Would you stay in your hotel room? Make the decision to just enjoy the ride of life today. Now that you've done this, what do you most enjoy about it?

53 **Identify what you don't want.** If you're not feeling very good, there's probably something you don't want that's present in your life. Name it. Get clear about

what it is. Don't explain it, justify it, or argue about it. Just name it. Now, pivot 180 degrees, and answer this question: "If this is what you don't want, then what (precisely) is it that you DO want?" Once you've identified what you do want, put the focus of your attention on attaining it, while you leave what you don't want behind you.

QUICK REFERENCE

54 **Follow your own rhythms.** Learn when you have your highest and your lowest energy points. Then, adjust your schedule and activities to match your personal rhythm as closely as possible. If you have higher energy in the AM, then choose activities that will make the best use of your high energy. If you have low energy in the PM, take on activities that require less energy, but are in themselves stimulating enough to keep you awake! Even then, maybe your activity is a 10 minute nap.

55 **Finally. You're here.** Right where you are. You've got things to do and places to go. Make a promise to yourself that through it all you will have fun and feel good. It's your choice. Imagine that things were easy and relaxed. What steps would you be taking and what would you be thinking?

This isn't your life waiting to happen. Your life *is* the pleasant and unpleasant situations that arise. Why wait for better times when what you've got everything you need right here? All it really takes is a subtle shift in your attitude. It's possible right here, right now.

At the end of each day, stop to say a prayer of gratitude for all that you have right now. Look to where you are experiencing wealth and abundance. Then, please, get it done and have fun!

1. Could things be worse?
2. What's your personal challenge?
3. Take a 30 second commercial break
4. What do you want here?
5. Choose another thought.
6. Celebrate your mistakes
7. Choose to be where you are now.
8. Ask what's working right now.
9. What's the best that can happen?
10. Smell a flower.
11. Take a walk.
12. Eat a bowl of cherries.
13. Get lucky today.
14. STOP... any negative thoughts.
15. Avoid the news for 30 days.
16. Keep a record of what's good.
17. Read an inspiring book.
18. Listen to "feel good" music.
19. Watch a good movie.
20. Do something unexpected & fun.
21. Do some housecleaning
22. Take a small (and fun) risk.
23. Let go of the past.
24. Do a favor for someone.
25. Keep a jar of Fairy dust handy.
26. Say no to something you don't want to do
27. What do you *want* to do today?
28. Say yes to something you *DO* want to do.
29. Compliment someone today.
30. Compliment yourself today!
31. Move your reminders... and play.
32. Respectfully ask for what you want.
33. Don't wear it if it doesn't fit!
34. Take a rest break. Do it now.
35. Try loving what you hate... daily.
36. Remind yourself of what you love.
37. Count your blessings.
38. What are 10 possibilities in this situation?
39. Smile, even if you don't feel like it.
40. All you have to do is the next step.
41. Choose to be around positive people.
42. Pre-pave a path to a positive outcome.
43. Teach something you know.
44. Use a timer to stay focused.
45. Enjoy what is & reach for more.
46. Who's stood where you're standing?
47. Ceremoniously toss the old stuff.
48. Feel as if... how you want to feel.
49. Don't make there be a reason.
50. Look for what feels good.
51. Try asking a different question.
52. Enjoy the ride.
53. Know what you don't want.
54. Follow your own rhythms.
55. Finally. You're here. It's perfect.

How you can make this booklet YOUR very own

1. I will customize this booklet with your agency, organization or company name and logo.
2. Send this booklet to your clients, employees, friends, or relatives as a special gift.
3. Give copies of this booklet to all your employees to help create a positive environment.
4. Give this booklet as an incentive for completing a questionnaire or survey.
5. Package this booklet with a product or service you sell.
6. Use this booklet to thank a prospect or client for their time and energy.
7. Send this booklet to staff with your monthly newsletter.
8. Provide copies of this booklet to people and organizations who can refer business to you.

WHY 55 IDEAS?

I like the number 5. It's my favorite number, and it makes me feel good. I don't know why, but it just is. I could have easily come up with another 46 ideas to make it 101, but that number doesn't feel as good to me. Silly? Sure. But I achieved my goal and had fun, and that's what really matters. Why not add your own ideas to the back page before you send it?

What are you waiting for?

For more information about quantity purchases of this booklet, other publications, presentations, seminars, or positive attitude coaching for yourself or your teams, please contact me via any method below

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Your Ideas

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