



A Happier You

There are all kinds of articles devoted to makeovers, do-overs and fresh starts. While you intend to achieve those lofty goals, history tells us that most people will fail. It's not that you would never try, only that moving from riding a bike in the neighborhood to joining the USA Cycling team will probably end in disappointment.

There are ways to make yourself over that don't require you to torture your body or sacrifice things you love. I recommend taking baby steps toward a better you that will give you confidence, peace and a good dose of happiness. Once you embrace these steps, just about anything else is possible. Here are a few baby steps to assist you on your journey toward a better you.

1. Laugh more. How much are you laughing every day? I'll make it even simpler: can you remember a time over the last week when something was so funny that you started to cry or fell down in a heap? In study after study,

psychologists have found that most of us aren't laughing enough. Did you know that laughter floods us with endorphins, relaxes our muscles and even helps us learn faster? Whether you sneak in some Laurel & Hardy watching, hear new jokes or sing on Karaoke night at the bowling alley, please laugh more this year.

2. Pet a paw. It's a proven fact that animal companionship makes us happier, lowers our blood pressure and gets us to be more social. Don't have a dog or cat? Find friends and neighbors who have them. Volunteer to walk a neighbor's dog or feed their cat if they go away. There are local animal shelters throughout the country that are begging for volunteers as such dog walkers. Don't deprive a sweet animal of your love.

3. Try new places. They say that change is hard. I disagree. Yes, it's hard to go from being an electrician to a thoracic surgeon. It is not hard to make a daily, conscious choice to try a new restaurant, travel to a new place or visit a new museum. Change is empowering and mind-expanding. The simple act of walking to work a different way may bring a unique life experience that ends in a whole new life path.

4. Invest in beauty. There is a piece of ancient Chinese wisdom I love to quote: "If you only have two pennies, buy a loaf of bread with one and a flower with the other." Obviously, you might want to adjust for inflation, but the point is to allow yourself more beauty no matter how small a gesture it may be. Beautiful things make us happy, and whether it is a flower or an inexpensive print, enjoy the beauty in simple things.

5. Choose positive energy. This is one of my favorites, and if you do nothing else to happily make yourself over this year, please choose this. I am often stumped by how many of us will choose a Gloomy Gus or Debbie Downer personality over a happy, vibrant and fun personality. Negative people must learn to change themselves; you can't do it for them. Negative people will drain your battery, so please step away from them this year.

6. Get out more. Have you been invited to a party, or to go out with friends, or to attend an event at your church, or to go for a walk in the park? We all too quickly say "no" these days. Say yes. While you don't have to do everything

that comes along, don't make your social life so small and restricted that no one can penetrate the wall you put around yourself.

7. Find the good. No matter your belief, clergy warn us against idle gossip. Finding fault with everyone is a road that will always lead a person to sadness. There is no perfect person on this earth. Accept that we are all flawed, but I like to think that beneath a rough stone there can be a beautiful diamond. Look for the diamond in others.

8. Be content. Another beautiful expression I've recently heard is that "the quickest way to happiness is to be content with what you have." Be content in what you have been given, who loves you, and be happy with the intangibles that more money, more fame and more prestige cannot buy.

Let go of what's gone, be grateful for what remains and look forward to what is coming next, a happier you!

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EVENT SPOTLIGHT



"I just wanted to write and say your presentation was one of the best I have ever seen. You truly have a gift. You made me laugh, and you made me cry. I so enjoyed every minute of your time with us."

**John Suessman, Transportation Director,
North Thurston Public Schools**

"Steve is a dynamic and effective speaker. His energy and optimism are contagious, and that is exactly what we wanted for our attendees. Steve is a speaker who captures the attention of the audience not only by his storytelling presentation style, but also with his message. Our attendees arrived early to Steve's sessions to get a seat and rated him nearly perfect in 2017 and 2018!"

Lori Byerly, ARA Director

LOOKING AHEAD...

Steve's March 2019 Schedule

- 1 - Indianapolis, IN
- 6 - Phoenix, AZ
- 7 - Battle Creek, MI
- 8 - Pittsburgh, PA
- 9 - Pittsburgh, PA
- 11 - Newport News, VA
- 12 - Bethlehem, PA
- 18 - Pinehurst, NC
- 20 - Nashport, OH
- 21 - Denver, CO

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