

HOW SMILING CAN START YOUR YEAR OFF RIGHT

Januaries are filled with boundless opportunity as people vow to make the most of the new year with self-improvement goals. And while setting resolutions is a worthwhile endeavor, it's all too easy to bite off more than you can chew.

But not every goal requires Herculean strength or willpower.

Did you know the simple act of turning your frown upside down is one of the easiest ways you can make a difference in your day? Here are a few reasons to keep smiling throughout 2020—even (and especially!) when you're feeling stressed out or down.



IT'S UPLIFTING



"Each time you smile, you throw a little feel-good party in your brain." –Sarah Stevenson

A smile seems to affect mood. Though Charles Darwin first came up with the "facial feedback hypothesis" in the 1800s, science continues to provide evidence of a smile's value.

Recently, a team of psychologists looked at data from 138 studies and 50 years of testing to confirm facial expressions can impact feelings.¹ In fact, the biochemical reaction of a smile releases dopamine, endorphins, and serotonin. And when you're looking for a boost in your mood, those are exactly the chemicals you want.

¹Psychologists Find Smiling Really Can Make People Happier." *Science Daily*, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 12 April 2019.

IT'S HEALTHY



"Smile—it's free therapy." –Douglas Horton

Smiling boosts immunity and spreads happiness! That's right—it can lower our blood pressure, enhance our mood, and even help us live longer.²

In fact, a university study seems to indicate smile intensity in photos can predict a long life. When scientists looked at the smiles of professional baseball players on their official MLB cards, they could accurately predict their life span, based solely on how "beaming" their smiles were.³

²Jenkins, Beverly L. "The Hidden Power Of Smiling," 8 Mind-Blowing Facts About Your Smile." *Inspire More*, 8 April 2018.

³Abel, Ernest L., and Michael L. Kruger. "Smile Intensity in Photographs Predicts Longevity." *Sage Journals*, 26 February 2010.

IT'S CONTAGIOUS



"Smile, and the world smiles with you." –Stanley Gordon West

Just like laughter, a smile can create a chain reaction. Have you ever heard a quote on the importance of giving your smile away? There are a lot of them, to be sure. Basically, if you recognize someone else is having a bad day, you can make it better by giving them a

smile. Try it—smile and see if others smile back.

IT'S POWERFUL



"A smile costs nothing but creates much." –Dale Carnegie

Though smiling is free, it carries a lot of power. For example, British researchers discovered smiling stimulates our brains better than 2,000 bars of chocolate (it's calorie-free!) and as much as receiving up to \$25,000 in cash (how's that for influential?!)⁴

The next time you feel the blues creeping up on you, just remember: one of your best defenses has been under your nose the whole time.

⁴Curtin, Melanie. "Neuroscience Says Doing This 1 Thing Makes You Just as Happy as Eating 2,000 Chocolate Bars." *Inc.*, 29 August 2017.

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