

# Smile

## & The Happiness Advantage

“When we are happy—when our mindset and mood are positive—we are smarter, more motivated, and thus more successful. Happiness is the center, and success revolves around it.”

– Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work*

Life’s quest for happiness often assumes a direct correlation between success and achieving that happiness. We typically think that joy is attained after a level of success is obtained. Author Shawn Achor in “The Happiness Advantage” theorizes that although a correlation exists, the equation is actually reversed. **Happier people are more likely to be successful.**

**Happiness = Success**

While many factors may influence our happiness, one factor stems from us and our ability to chose. Happiness is a choice. An important element in determining our joy beams from our faces —our smiles. **A smile is a not just a reflection of our level of contentment but so much more.**


The science of smiling has determined a positive feedback effect on the brain once we smile. We smile because we feel good or laugh but the positive feedback loop indicates that when we smile we continue to stimulate that part of our brain that senses happiness. In other words **when we smile promote a cascade of events in the nervous system that will continue to make us feel good.**

*Smile = Happiness*

**The 5 second smiling experiment.**

Analyze for a minute your mood, and then for 5 seconds smile. Do you notice a difference?



  
*Meadows*  
FAMILY DENTISTRY  
PRESTON H. POLSON, DDS

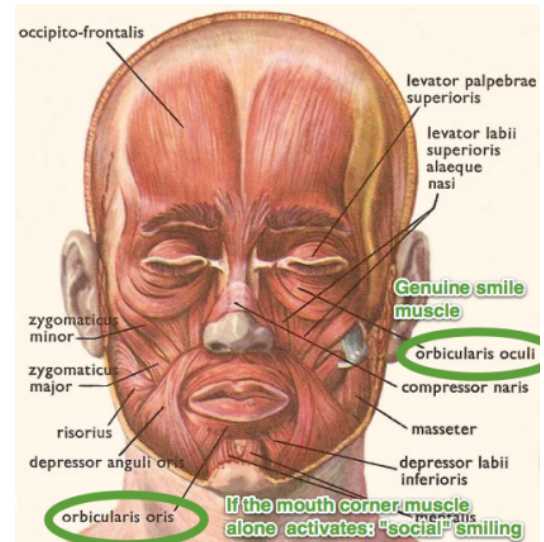
## The Science of a Smile

Let's say you undergo a positive experience. In order to feel the happiness that comes from this, neuron signals travel from the cortex (outer layer of your brain) into the brainstem; the neurons innervate the seventh cranial nerve (facial nerve), which triggers the Zygomaticus and Orbicularis Oculi muscles, or smiling muscles!

Sounds simple right?

However, this is only part of the process. **Once the smiling muscles in our face contract, a positive feedback loop** is triggered back to the brain and reinforces our feelings of joy.

To state it simply, "Smiling stimulates our brain's reward mechanisms similar to other pleasure inducers like chocolate." (Who said this? You need to cite it).



Through this powerful feedback loop, **smiling can change your brain**. The brain stores information regarding smiling and how often it happens, and because of this, smiling can affect our overall moods.

Comparable to getting a good night's rest, **smiling reduces stress** that our bodies and mind feel.

**Smiling leads to a decrease in the stress-induced hormones** that negatively affect our physical and mental health.

**Smiling helps generate positive emotions**. This is especially apparent in children. They smile over 400 times a day, and they are generally happier than adults.



**Happy people smile 40-50 times every 24 hours.**

(On average most people smile only 20 times a day.)

Charles Darwin described this “**science of smiling**” when he concluded that the cause, consequences, and **manifestations of smiling are universal**; whereas other forms of nonverbal body language differ between cultures. In other words, smiling is a universal language that can cross languages and cultural barriers.

Darwin also observed that smiling and laughter are frequently associated with one another, and therefore, they have similar origins. Happiness, he thought, was similar to amusement. Smiling is an outward manifestation of our inner joy. **Smiling also serves to connect us with others.** As social animals, we are prewired to connect with others, and a smile stimulates that connection. It has been proven that those who cannot smile struggle more with social relationships.

**“We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.”**

*Mother Teresa*

(Research indicates this is far more profound a statement and likely truer than we may ever understand. )

**“If you see a friend without a smile; give him one of yours.”** Proverb

**“Use your smile to change the world; don’t let the world change your smile.”**

Chinese Proverb

**“I just like to Smile. Smiling's my Favorite”** Buddy the Elf



# Ways to improve your Smile

1. **Whitening** - Options include Take Home Custom trays or **In-Office Zoom Whitening**. A whiter smile is the most basic and least invasive dental procedure to improve your smile.



2. **Composite Bonding** - Minor spaces or smaller smile concerns can be corrected with direct composite bonding. Now more than ever excellent bonding agents and a variety of cosmetic composite shades offer great long-lasting results.



3. **Orthodontics** - Straightening ones teeth to create a perfect smile is a comprehensive way to improve cosmetics and function for a lifetime.



4. **Cosmetic Veneers & Crowns** - Certain cases like excessive spaces, tooth malformations, discrepancies and or discolorations of may require veneers or crowns. Dental materials provide excellent cosmetic choices that allow perfect results and a beautiful smile



5. **Complete Cosmetic Make-Overs** Extensive full-mouth reconstruction can create a beautiful and cosmetic smile. Often this would include dental implants or bridges to replace missing teeth, restore function and improve cosmetics. There is almost nothing dentistry cannot replace or restore to create the ideal smile.



# 10 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Incredibly Happy

Try one. Try them all. They work. Science says so. (Jeff Haden, Dec. 18, 2013, Inc.)

1. **Exercise: 7 Minutes Could Be Enough** - Take a morning or evening walk and enjoy Colorado sunrises or sunsets.
2. **Sleep More: You'll Be Less Sensitive to Negative Emotions** – not as easy as it sounds but definitely helps promotes a state of happiness.
3. Spend More **Time With Friends/Family: Money Can't Buy You Happiness** – Develop Quality Connections.
4. **Get Outside More: Happiness is Maximized at 57°** - Living in Colorado Promotes Happiness.
5. **Help Others: 100 Hours a Year is the Magic Number** – Volunteer/Serve in the community, church, or other local organizations.
6. ***Practice Smiling***: Reduce Pain, Improve Mood, Think Better – Smile Experiment – try it!
7. **Plan a Trip: It Helps Even if You Don't Actually Take One** – If possible go on the trip as well.
8. **Meditate/Ponder: Rewire Your Brain for Happiness** – Take time to mediate/ponder.
9. **Move Closer to Work: A Short Commute is Worth More Than a Big House** – Castle Rock is a great place to live for convenient commutes
10. **Practice Gratitude: Increase Happiness and Satisfaction** – Be Grateful - Thanksgiving is a daily habit not just a yearly holiday



## **Works Cited**

**Achor, Shawn. *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work*. New York: Broadway, 2010. Print.**

**Black, John, MD. "Darwin in the World of Emotions." *Scientific American* 95.6 (2002): 31113. Print.**

**Haden, Jeff. "10 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Incredibly Happy." *Inc* 18 Dec. 2013: n. pag. *Inc.com*. Web.**

**Riggio, Ronald E., Ph.D. "There's Magic in Your Smile: How Smiling Affects Your Brain." *Psychology Today* 25 June 2012: n. pag. Web.**

**Wenner, Melinda. "Smile! It Could Make You Happier." *Scientific America* 1 Aug. 2009: n. pag. Print.**