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**MAKE
SOMEONE
SMILE
TODAY**

Has a stranger ever done something that **made your whole day look brighter**? Perhaps they opened the door at the bank for you or let you go ahead of them in the queue? Remember how good it made you feel? Making someone smile and brightening their day is one of the most generous things you can do. It has a ripple effect that touches the whole community; if you are nice to someone it is likely they will be nice to someone as well.

Why bother trying to make people smile?

Try to think back to when someone last did something that made you smile or brightened your day. A simple smile or friendly gesture by that stranger had an effect on your whole world, even if only for a few hours. It rippled through the people in your life. Quite amazing when you think about it.

So we know that making someone smile can change the whole community. But what else can it do? Why else should we bother trying to make people smile? Well there are a lot of reasons actually.

Firstly, it makes you feel good about yourself. When you make someone happy you really feel like you have done something good. So making other people happy makes you happier.

Secondly, it is healthy. If you smile at someone and make them smile you are

actively causing chemicals to be released in to your body that battle stress and cause feelings of joy. This is good. Making other people smile benefits both yourself and others.

Making someone else smile or brightening their day is all about putting them before you. When you engage in this type or practice (and it is a practice) you also develop positive qualities in your mind like patience and kindness. But the main quality that you will develop is generosity. If you go out everyday and try to make the people around you smile you will develop the inner qualities of a very generous person. This is one of the most respectable and admirable qualities a person can possess.

Ways to make someone smile and brighten their whole day

Here are some simple and easy ways to make the people around you smile or brighten their day. They are small acts that have big effects.

1. **Smile first** - The easiest and possibly the most effective way to get someone to smile is to smile at them first. People don't seem to do this anymore. I remember when I was a kid walking through the park with my family and everyone would smile at each other and say hello. Now people sort of just power walk through the park and avert their eyes when they get near you. Perhaps it is because we have so much more fear now. I don't know. But what I do know is that if you smile at someone first they will almost always smile back and walk away feeling happier.
2. **Be chivalrous** - Chivalry is a term dating back to the medieval knights and their values of honor, courtesy and good manners. It is a very simple practice where you endeavor to behave in a kind and courteous way to the people around you and especially to members of the opposite sex. A typical example would be holding the door open for someone or standing up to greet someone when they meet you for lunch. Again, it is easy to do but makes people feel really good.
3. **Listen** - When someone is talking to you

listen to them. Don't just sit there waiting for your turn to talk. Actually listen. This is one of the best ways to make people feel good about themselves.

4. **Surprise someone** - Have you ever brought flowers home for your wife or girlfriend because it was a Wednesday? Not Valentine's Day that fell on a Wednesday, just because it was Wednesday? Surprising someone for no particular reason other than to make the person smile is a fantastic way to brighten someone's day.
5. **Be humble** - I am always shocked at how much a truly humble person can improve my day. Their inner warmth seems to radiate outwards and makes you feel protected and comfortable. Humility is truly a great quality.
6. **Make eye contact** - Looking people in the eyes is a good habit to develop. It shows trust and demonstrates that you are truly trying to engage the person. When you show someone that you are trustworthy you make them feel good. This is particularly true of business related meetings. People want to know that they are dealing with a trustworthy person and as such looking someone in the eyes will improve their day.
7. **Offer a random compliment** - This seems like a pretty obvious thing to do but it actually takes a lot more guts than people think. Compliments are a sure-fire way to make someone smile but quite often they are hard to deliver. It takes bravery.

A big "thank you" to anyone who is out there in the world making people smile. It is a truly admirable thing to do.



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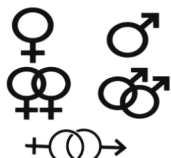


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TIPS FOR A BETTER WALK WITH YOUR DOG

Danielle Cooper

Taking your pooch for a walk can be a struggle. He pulls your arm out of its socket and then abruptly stops to smell and sprinkle every bush and tree as you trip over him. In my 31 years of veterinary practice and as a dog owner, I have found that using a little dog psychology and some practical techniques will help you during your next walk around the block.

Always use a leash or you may discover your pooch following the glorious world of smell from one interesting place to another and by the time he raises his head to check his bearings, he is clueless.

Use ID tags with your current phone number on your dog's collar and/or a high-tech chip ID that is implanted un-

der the skin. That's without a doubt, the quickest way to get your buddy back if he gets off the leash and makes a run for it. The implanted chip is back-up in case the collar slips off.

Try to remember that dogs are like kids. If they get off the leash, and run for it and you chase them, they'll think it's a game. So don't chase. He is likely to return on his own. If he doesn't, act like you have his favorite treat or toy. Use any trick you can think of to get him to return short of "the chase." Once he has returned and you praised him for returning, try this: Tie a 15 foot nylon line to your dog's collar. Securely fasten the other end to yourself or something nearby that will not give. Just before your pup reaches the end of the line, say "Whoa" or "Stop." Be consistent using one or the other. Never switch back and forth as that will confuse him. When the line brings him to an abrupt stop tell him to sit and praise him for being such a good dog.

Using whistles, voice patterns, intonations and body language are much better than specific words. If you want to train your dog to respond reliably, be consistent and firm in how you command him, and never be abusive.

Carry "poop bags." Cleaning up

after your dog will ensure you don't step in it on your next trip around the block and your neighbors will appreciate your common courtesy. Those bags the paper boy uses to cover your paper in bad weather make great clean up bags. Considering the content of most of the papers, you might leave the paper in the bag with the newly acquired fertilizer.

Know that your dog is territorial and every tree, bush and post needs a sprinkle.

**“When I go out,
I just have to see
If another dog
has been at my tree
I sniff it up
and I sniff it down
Gotta get a read
on the dogs around”**

Brush or bathe your dog before coming back into the house to get the pollen out of his coat if you have allergies.

Barking at a passerby can be handled by only allowing two or three barks, and then say "Quiet." Immediately interrupt his barking by surprising him. You can shake a can of pennies or use a squirt bottle or squirt gun filled with [water or] Listerine and squirt it at his mouth. Then, while he's quiet, say "good quiet" and pop a tasty treat into his mouth.

Your dog is not human, which means he really does want to please you. Your job is to figure out what his actions mean, to understand that his behavior is just typical of dogs, and offer gentle but firm guidance toward good behavior.

Now get going. Grab a leash and enjoy the benefits of exercise and the pleasure of your pooch's companionship.



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Easter is on its way! Along with Peter Cottontail, you and your kids will encounter more than your share of sugar-packed jellybeans, malted milk balls, cream-filled chocolate eggs and life-size chocolate bunnies. The common Easter basket is filled to the brim with pastel-colored candy eggs, bunnies, lambs and more, but while celebrating with sweets is fine in moderation, eating a pound of chocolate eggs in a matter of days doesn't fall under that definition.

This year, why not load your baskets and office candy jars with some alternative treats? Teach your children, grandkids, friends and co-workers that you *can* enjoy this spring holiday, basket and all, without overindulging in sugar. And when you do choose to treat yourself, be conscious of your choices. Instead of eating on a whim from a bottomless basket, plan your treats each day and track your calories. Don't throw away your wrappers when you're finished; keeping them in sight will become a visual reminder of how much you've already eaten, and you'll be less likely to keep reaching into that basket without thinking first.

Here are some more ideas that will inspire you to think outside the basket and still have fun this Easter!

Egg-xactly!

Those hard-boiled, decorated Easter eggs are a healthful addition to any basket. Don't let all that protein go to waste! Peel and eat your dyed eggs plain, with or without the yolk. Consider slicing them onto a salad, including them in a wrap or pita, or making them into egg salad with light mayonnaise for a tasty springtime sandwich.

Plastic eggs are a great way to add a celebratory twist to your basket, but be careful how you stuff them. Tuck sugar-free gum, small boxes of raisins, or miniature packets of peanuts into the

colorful eggs for a healthy twist. For kids, fill the eggs with age-appropriate prizes, such as beaded jewelry, lip balm, small toys or other fun tokens. Coins and small bills make for exciting treasure as well!

Beyond Bunny Carrots

For a festive look, pack orange crackers (like cheddar Goldfish made with whole grains) or dried apricots into a triangle pastry bag. Tie some green ribbon or raffia to the top and you have a healthy carrot-shaped goodie. You can even take a black permanent marker and draw a carrot onto the outside of the plastic bag to create a more distinguished look.

Create cute and tasty carrot-shaped homemade granola bars by baking your recipe in a pan and then cutting your masterpiece into lengthy triangles. Wrap them in baggies to pop into baskets. You can even add a few drops of orange food dye to make your "carrots" more colorful! Vegetables aren't the only thing your little bunnies should be eating this Easter! Dried fruit is a great way to meet your daily fruit quota. For ease, purchase it at the store, but be sure to read ingredients labels and avoid items with added sugar. You can also use a dehydrator at home to make your own dried fruit. Try apricots, mangos, apples, banana slices, cherries, and pear slices. When you dry your fruit at home, you don't have to add any sugar and it tastes great! It can also be a fun project for kids to do with you.

Hop to Health

Who says an Easter basket should only contain edible surprises? You can include creative items that promote movement and aerobic activity, too. A jump rope packs easily into a grass-filled basket and can be used year-round. Hop to heart health with this great calorie burning, muscle-building, and fun activity. Get a rope long enough and three or four people can partake, double-dutch

style.

Rev up a game of hopscotch outside by packing a box of sidewalk chalk into your child's basket. It's a simple way to get them outside and active, and to teach them to play games without cords and controllers. Enrich their minds and bodies with this idea! In addition, don't forget about balls, which are inexpensive and can entice kids of all ages to play outdoors.

Brain Treats

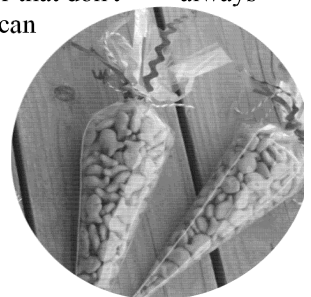
Books are a great non-food gift for a loved one of any age. Slip the latest teen fiction series, a copy of the traditional Easter Bunny tales, or the most recent non-fiction best seller.

Other ways to pop some fun into your gifts baskets are to add playing cards and a small book of card games. This addition can provide good old-fashioned family fun. Small and portable travel games are always useful, as are packets of crossword or math puzzles. Pair these gifts with sets of colored pens or pencils and it'll be a sure hit.

Reach your 10,000 Steps

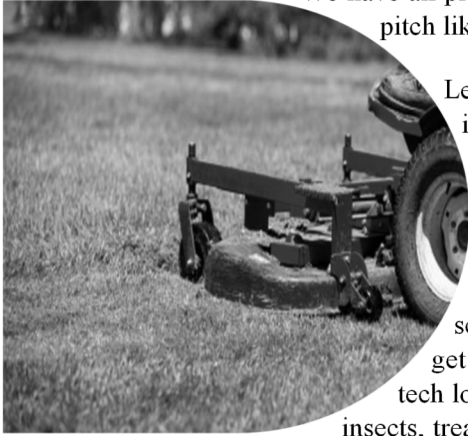
Increase your activity on Easter morning and help your family reach the recommended goal of 10,000 steps a day by encouraging additional activity to help offset some of the candy and sweets you'll be eating. Hide your healthy Easter baskets in a discrete spot in the house or yard and put together a scavenger hunt to lead your kids and friends to them with multiple clues and stops. At each station, leave a physical activity assignment (have your scavengers perform jumping jacks, frog leaps, push-ups or other silly tasks) along with the clue for the next location on the hunt. Make sure to follow the group around as they search to help get your steps in, too!

Enjoy your sweet treats in moderation and get creative to include some healthier items in your celebration! Encouraging your children, friends and family members to find alternate ways to celebrate Easter that don't always involve candy can keep your traditions alive and set a positive example for health living. Happy Easter!



Hiring A Lawn Company

We have all picked up the phone to hear a lawn service pitch from time to time. Often they start out with a pitch like, “we were in your neighborhood and notice that your lawn needs some care”.



Let's face it we know our lawns might need upkeep like re-sodding, weed control, fertilizing or insect control. It's just a fact of life when you have a lawn. It always needs something. I fell for that routine recently and hired a lawn service company. Maybe you can benefit from what I learned.

The person that called me told me he had been in the neighborhood and had seen my yard first hand. He promised they would inspect my trees. I mentioned periodic problems with scale on my sago and the fact that I am considering removing it so that no other trees in the area get affected. I also told him I keep a close eye on it as I am treating it. He promised to have his tech look at the tree and treat it, if necessary. They would also check the lawn for fire ants and other insects, treating for them as required. All this in addition to putting down weed control and fertilizer for one price! I walked around the yard identifying two large fire ant mounds and several patches of weed growth that I knew he would see and treat. Yippee my yard problems were going to be solved!

As it happens, I was out of town when the tech came over to do the initial application on my yard. When I got home there was a nice sign on my grass warning people to stay off until it was dry, etc. The next day I walked around my yard. Fire ants, I thought bah! I kicked the mound and immediately saw that the fire ant issue had NOT been addressed. I moved on very quickly. Looked at the sago, no it didn't appear that anything had been done. Hmmmm, I looked at the nice report from the company. They didn't do weed control because I have rye grass in my yard. If they checked the yard and were “at” my house before hand wouldn't they know the rye grass was there? OK, so no weed control. Surely the insect control was done? No, that wasn't checked either. Nothing was identified as done other than applying potash to my yard and applying pre-emergent weed control. Hard to prove as there is no visible signs. So for my money I got a nice little sign and all the same problems I had before. Oh yeah, and a bill for services rendered.

Lucky for me this company didn't require a contract and I cancelled the service. But you can learn from my mistakes. So here goes.

If they call to say they have been to your house and have seen your lawn, ask for particulars. What did they see that needs to be done? If you know what kind of grass you have, ask them if they deal with that type. If they seem surprised you have Bahia, Rye, or another grass. You know they haven't been anywhere near your property and are fishing for business. They may be legitimate, but it's not good business to start out with a lie to potential customers.

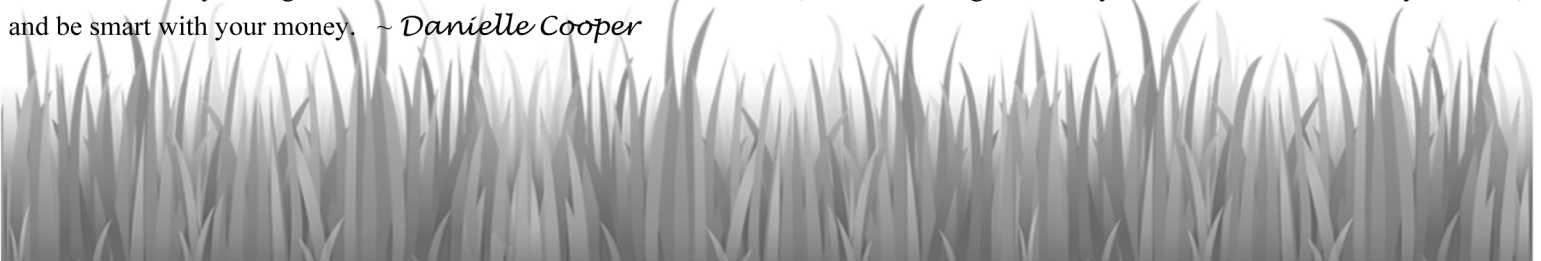
Second, check references and the Better Business Bureau (“BBB”). I did do this. This company is reputable. But for me they weren't the right company.

Third, make sure you and they agree on what needs to be done and what you receive for your payment. Be home for the first visit so you know what has been done.

Finally, ask your neighbors for a referral. All the lawn service companies put little signs in yards. If the yard looks great stop and ask if they are happy with the service. If so, set up a trial with the company. If not, knock them off your list of potential service providers.

If you live on a lake, be sure you address this with the company. I specifically instructed them not to put any fertilizer outside the fence line to protect the lakefront. Ask them about their experience in dealing with lakes, if it sounds fishy don't bite.

The point is... be informed and smart. Know your yard and what needs to be done. Don't buy the generic “you have a weed problem and it looks like you might have an insect issue too”. This is Florida, weeds and bugs are always around. Be smart with your lawn, and be smart with your money. ~ *Danielle Cooper*





How to say NO!!

*Content provided by
MayoClinic.com*

Be honest with yourself. Is your plate piled too high with deadlines and obligations that you're trying to squeeze in between meetings? Are you trying to cram too many activities into too little time? If so, stress relief can be as straightforward as just saying no - or no more.

Why say no?

There are countless worthy requests out there just waiting to decrease the amount of free time you have, and increase your level of stress. So, it's easy to create stressful situations in your life, if you don't turn down requests for your time and talents.

Who will make costumes for the school play or coach your children's Little League team if you don't? The answer may not be simple, but you should still consider these reasons for making sure it's not you.

- Saying no can be good for you. Saying no is not a selfish act. In fact, it may be the most beneficial thing that you can do for your family and your other commitments. When you say no, you'll be able to spend quality time on the things you've already said yes to.
- Saying no can allow you to try new things. Just because you've always helped plan the company softball tournament doesn't mean that you have to keep doing it forever: Saying no will free up time to pursue other hobbies or interests.
- Yes isn't always the best answer. If you're overcommitted and under a lot of stress, you've got a much better chance of becoming sick, tired or just plain old crabby, which doesn't benefit you or anyone else.
- It's important to recognize the power of other people. Let those a round you come through. Although others may not do things exactly the same way you would, you can learn a valuable lesson by allowing others to help, while gaining treasured free time.

When to say no

Sometimes it's tough to determine which activities deserve your time and attention. Use these strategies to evaluate obligations - and opportunities - that come your way.

- Find yourself. Saying no helps you prioritize the things that are important to you. You'll gain time that you can commit to the things that you really want to do, such as leaving work at a reasonable hour to make time for a mind clearing run at the end of the day. Examine your current obligations and overall priorities before making any new commitments. Ask yourself if the new commitment is important to you. If it's something that you feel strongly about, by all means do it.
- Weigh the yes-to-stress ratio. Is the new activity that you're considering a short- or long-term commitment? Taking an afternoon to bake a batch of cookies for the school bake sale will take far less of your precious time than heading up the school fundraising committee for an entire year. If an activity is going to end up being another source of stress in your life - especially for the long term - take a pass.
- Let go of guilt. If friends want to get together for an impromptu evening out on the town when you've already scheduled a quiet evening at home with your partner, it is okay to decline their offer. Do what you've set out to do and don't veer off that path because of feelings of guilt or obligation. It will only lead to additional stress in your life
- Keep your current commitments in check. If you have relatives coming over for dinner, don't go overboard. Maybe order a pizza or ask everyone to bring a dish to share.
- Sleep on it. Are you tempted by a friend's invitation to volunteer at your old alma mater or join a weekly golf league? Take a day to think over the request and respond after you've been able to assess your current commitments as well as the new opportunity.

How to say no

No. Nope. No thank you. See how simple it is to say one little word that will allow you to take a pass on the things that aren't a priority? Of course, there are always instances when it's just not that easy. Here are some things to keep in mind when you need to say no:

- Practice full disclosure. Don't fabricate reasons to get out of an obligation. The truth is always the best way to turn
- Let them down gently. Many good causes land at your door, and it can be tough to turn them down. Complementing the person or group's effort while saying that you're unable to commit at this time helps to soften the blow and keep you in good graces.

Saying no won't be easy if you're used to saying yes all the time. But learning to say no is an important part of simplifying your way to a better, less stressful life for both you and your family.

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