

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

January 27, 2009

This Week's Message:

Have A Great Day.

Paths Forward

**Tired of boring
meetings??**

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Have A Great Day.

Perhaps you have noticed that the cheery salutation "Have A Nice Day" has been largely replaced with "Have A *Great* Day". I do try to fight my inner cynic but when I heard this comment early this afternoon on someone's voicemail it occurred to me this person wasn't content for me to merely enjoy a "nice" day but was exhorting me to go out and make it a "great" day. Gee thanks, I'll get right on that.

By the time I heard this message I had already addressed

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and mostly solved two major problems for a couple of client organizations. I was planning on returning a few phone calls, writing a couple of quick emails and calling it a day. Maybe I could even whittle my reading pile down a few inches. But no, now I imagined this voice cheering me on to ever greater accomplishments the way one does to an exhausted long distance runner - with mindless enthusiasm and no knowledge of what is really best for the specific human being involved. Then I took my Mr. Grumpy hat off.

This expression is just an attempt (if not an especially creative one) at being cheerful and soon it too will be replaced. And, after all, who doesn't want to have a great day. And, further, it got me thinking about what makes a day great; how can we make a great day. Obviously this is a huge, multi-faceted topic but for me one way to have a great day is to start the day off on the right foot - with activities that help us control and manage the stress in our busy lives. We all have our morning rituals - some of them helpful, some of them healthful and perhaps some of them are neither. Research into this topic has revealed that there are some proven ways to start off a great day. Here are a few for you to consider.

Paths Forward

• **Get Enough Sleep.** Getting a good night's sleep can help you avoid memory lapses, bouts of depression, and compromising your immune system. Sleep deprivation is a major cause of industrial accidents, highway accidents and is estimated to cost employers in \$150 billion a year in costs related to higher stress and reduced worker productivity. On the other hand, starting the day refreshed after a satisfying night's sleep improves your energy level, your attitude, your adaptability and your creativity. Now that's a way to start a great day! If sleep is problem for you, here is where you can find some helpful ideas. Go to www.drpaulpowers.com, click on LifeMap Archive, open 5/15/07, *Getting Your Zzzzzz's*.

• **Stretch.** Have you ever watched a cat or dog wake up? One of the first things either will do is to give themselves a good overall stretch. Here we're not talking about a rigorous exercise routine meant to build strength and muscle mass. We are talking about gently waking up your body by warming up your muscles to meet the challenges of a new day. In 2 or 3 minutes of stretching you will find yourself with more vigor while increasing your stamina and flexibility. Joint flexibility has long been correlated with less back pain, better balance, having fewer falls, making it easier to climb stairs and finding it easier to walk longer distances. Remember this isn't marathon training; many stretching exercises can be done in a hot shower which also helps loosen up muscles. Before starting a new morning stretching routine be sure to ask your physician for some low-impact

stretches of which he or she approves.

- **Mom Was Right.** You need breakfast just as any engine needs fuel. Much research has been done on the correlation between breakfast and school performance for students of all ages: all of it in favor of a healthy breakfast. It has been shown that breakfast provides not only raw biological fuel; it also balances your blood sugar levels giving you more physical and mental resilience. For those of us who prefer coffee and a bagel, it should be noted that a healthy breakfast includes healthy grains, fruit and plenty of protein.

- **And Warmth.** There is something about warm foods and beverages that make us feel nurtured and soothed. Oatmeal and other warm grain cereals have long been a part of healthy breakfasts. If that is not to your liking coffee or cocoa (both in moderation) can give you that feeling of physical and emotional warmth. There are many current articles touting the benefits of green tea, not only for its taste but also for a generous helping of antioxidants, which many believe helps maintain health and prevent disease. (Not withstanding the placebo effect I didn't find any results from clinical trials confirming the health benefit of antioxidants but neither did I find any suggesting they hurt in any way. So if you love your green tea let's keep our fingers crossed.)

- **Reduce The Hectic, Minimize The Noise.** Which day is going to go better: one that eases you into the day or one that launches you into it from a catapult, one that soothes your senses or one that assaults them? The answer is fairly obvious. But many of us awaken to a loud, buzzing alarm clock or blaring music and immediately click on the overnight bad news from around the world interspersed with mindless celebrity chatter and the traffic report. Then, in the time we have available, we start rushing around to get twice as much done before leaving for work as these tasks would normally take at another time of day. This is no the way to have a great day. Why not try waking to soothing music, leaving the TV off and tackling only those few morning tasks that are absolutely mandatory (i.e. awakening children, breakfast, bathing, dressing and pet chores). Even little children can be taught to cooperate in the morning and later taught to attend to their own age-appropriate morning tasks and even later to use their own alarm clocks. Lunches, homework and clothes (for you *and* them) can be laid out the night before. But it will take a concerted effort to achieve a less hectic and a less noisy morning.

- **Exercise.** There is an ongoing debate by experts in the field about the benefits of exercising in the morning versus later in the day. I have no informed opinion on this. But if your goal is to enjoy your day more by easing into your

morning (and you realistically have the time for it) then I would suggest something low-impact like yoga or walking.

Life Map is about creating a great life. Starting each day in a way that nurtures and soothes is one way to help make that happen.

Tired of boring meetings??

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<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/speakingschedule.html>

Resources

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Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

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Sincerely,

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