

Timeless Transformations

Sizzle with Zeal

In many of the leadership development courses that I've had over the years, the training often starts out by taking a leadership personality test. My results are always the same. Zeal is one of my greatest strengths. The word zeal isn't used much in our vocabulary. We rarely hear anyone described as being zealous. I see it as an old timey word. If you look it up it, zeal is an intense emotion with compelling action. It implies energetic and unflagging pursuit of an aim or devotion to a cause. I think of it as an inward fire in the soul. It is a power of intensity, exuberance and enthusiasm. I consider zeal as a step up from being enthusiastic. Zeal is enthusiasm on steroids! When I observe all three of you striving to meet your goals and being energetic, I know you have a lot of zeal too. I bet if you were to analyze your personality, zeal would come to the top of the list. You have that *je ne sais quoi* that others don't. It's that undefinable quality that charms everyone!

I ran across some of [Charles Fillmore's](#) writings this week. He and his wife are the co-founders of Unity. Off the subject, he met his wife, Myrtle Page, in Denison, Texas in the mid-1870s. I've often wondered if we have a genetic lineage with her in some way. I dream of a day that I can spend time in Denison and do some genetic history and research. That's another topic for another day.

Charles Fillmore wrote about [spiritual tools for an abundant life](#). I like this [diagram](#) where he tied each power to a month of the year. When I saw the power of [zeal](#) represented in the month of October, it caught my attention. I then ran across an affirmation by Charles Fillmore, "*I sizzle with zeal and enthusiasm and spring forth with a mighty faith to do the things that ought to be done by me.*" I thought about this in the context of why we do the things we do. For example, why do I put all that I have into my work? Or why do I focus on the important relationships in my life that are a priority? And, why do I work so hard to support you by inspiring you and offering you guidance? I believe it is because these are the things that ought to be done by me. Doing these things with enthusiasm adds that sizzle that makes life more exciting! Today I am guided to talk about zeal as a source of inspiration in hopes that you will think about what makes you sizzle. Without sizzle, not much seems to be worthwhile.

When I think about zeal at a deeper level, I believe it is to be deeply motivated *intrinsically* from within. It is that knowingness that we have the power and desire to do what is ours to do while we are here on earth. We all have special gifts. These are the things that we love to do. These are the things that we are really really good at. These are the things that come natural and effortless. These things make us happy, joyful, and enthusiastic when we do them. [Norman Vincent Peale](#) called enthusiasm one of the greatest words in the English language. The word enthusiasm is derived from two Greek words: en and theos, the Greek word for God. It is translated to the god inside or full of god. Enthusiasm means full of love. So think about work. Work is love made visible. Do you love what you do and are you enthusiastic about it? I believe you are. Why is that? Is it because you enjoy it? Is it because it is a stepping stone along your path? Is it because you are good at it? Or is it because you are doing what is yours to do? It is probably a combination of all of those things.

Think about the opposite. To be without zeal is to be without zest for living. Zeal alone is not enough. It has to be balanced with our wisdom. Zeal and wisdom work together. Charles Fillmore talks about what it takes to be a genius. A genius is when we have accumulated zeal in a particular field where there is enthusiasm that prevails over everything else. Here are some well-known examples. Jesus would be thought of as a genius. He developed an extraordinary ability in spiritual wisdom. Mozart composed and played the organ brilliantly. Or Albert Einstein, Bill Gates, or Steve Jobs. There are so many examples. We all have a genius inside of us. It's up to us to tap into that.

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You've read about the importance of having a great attitude. Harvard Research Center reports that 15% of a person's success is determined by knowledge compared to 85% determined by attitude. Attitude is way more important than our aptitude. Being proud of what you are called to do and being enthusiastic about it is a recipe for success. Howard Thurman said, "Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive? Then go and do that." What the world needs is people that have come alive!

I'm starting to observe those that are older in age. One of the things I notice is their level of enthusiasm. There's a quote, "The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm" by Aldous Huxley. I believe wholeheartedly that people that are full of enthusiasm create a better world and have a better life. That more than anything else may be the secret to success over the course of a lifetime. In many different surveys taken about successful living, it is often determined that enthusiasm predicts general life satisfaction. From a work perspective, those that view their work as a calling, guided by a strong urge toward a particular career, are more successful. When we have more enthusiasm about our work, we see challenges as a doorway to finding a solution. Think about your work. Kendall, you are passionate about serving unprivileged students in need. Kevyn, you are called to help and heal patients that need urgent care. Karsyn, you are committed to educating students with special needs. These are all challenges that you three face and you do so better than anyone else because you **sizzle with zeal** for what you do. You are doing the things that ought to be done by you.

I am the worst about taking on too much work. You three will probably be the same way as your careers develop and your family expands. I've often made a commitment or volunteered to lead a project. I'll say, I'll do it! Then I get home and I say oh no, why did I do that. I have too much on my plate already. Then I have to stop and think, I raised my hand for a reason. It fired up my heart and filled it with passion. It's that feeling you get when you know it is the right thing to do. It is when you feel like nothing can stand in your way. It doesn't matter what anyone else says. The work you are called to do can't be ignored. I've learned over the years to trust my enthusiasm. It's when I feel a surge of endorphins that buzzes in my head that makes me **sizzle with zeal**. This is when I feel the most optimistic and my attitude is the best. Of course there is a downside of taking on too much. Sometimes we have to pick and choose. That is when the art of balance must come in to play. As I have said before, this will be your life's greatest challenge. Also, throughout a lifetime, the levels of enthusiasm fluctuate. That's probably the greatest challenge: keep sizzling with zeal over time. Here are my suggestions.

- 1st, we have to choose to live enthusiastically. We have to find something to look forward to every day. We have to be grateful in advance. Count your blessings for the little things like taking a hot shower, drinking that first great cup of coffee in the morning. Or the best, a little snuggle of a doodle or the purring of a cat.
- 2nd, we have to choose our joy. We have to see ourselves as enthusiastic. If there is a challenging task waiting for you, see it rightly. See it already done. Think about how grateful we will be when it is over and we can call it done. Think about how you chose to place yourself in a given situation. You did it for a reason. For example, I'm involved with teaching over 20 students online every Monday from 1:00 – 2:00. It's stressful because the expectation is so high. The students are Chief Technology Officers from all over the nation. I'm in my 5th week of

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instruction. This past Monday, I chose to see it differently. When I did, everything changed. I was 10 times more successful. When I think about Kendall going into labor. I remember when I was being wheeled in to the labor room, I passed Alyssa Bradford's mom being wheeled out. She already had her baby. I remember thinking to myself, I will be so grateful when this is over. I was so afraid. Sure enough later that evening, I was being wheeled out to a private room and I was filled with gratitude. There are so many examples where we can choose to be enthusiastic and everything gets better.

- 3rd, extend your high level of enthusiasm to others. Nothing inspires people to achieve higher and reach further than to be encouraged. Lend a hand to others in need or just share a smile. When we focus on giving what we can, everything seems a little more possible in the world. The real bonus is that we attract other likeminded people doing the same things so enthusiastic people surround us.
- 4th, motivate yourself to be filled with zeal. Smile and laugh. Enthusiasm is highly contagious. Our first step in achieving anything is to be enthusiastic about it. If you are not enthusiastic, no one else will be either. It starts with us. Neuroscientists say it is fairly simple to train our brain. You can raise your awareness about how enthusiastic you are and pair it with your emotional state.

In closing, the Bible's New Testament second Corinthians 8:11 says, "Now finish the work, so that you may complete it just as eagerly as you began, according to your means." I interpret that to mean, commit to doing the things that ought to be done and do it with great enthusiasm. **Sizzle with zeal.** Cells that fire together, wire together. This is a fortunate time in our lives. Savor every minute!

My love for you sizzles with enthusiasm every second of every day! – Love Mom