

The *Easier* Buttons

By Wally Adamchik



Push These 5 Buttons for a Better Life

OK, you have all seen the commercials, just press the Easy button and troubles go away. And you all know the reality, which is why the commercials work. There *is* no Easy button--never was, and never will be. However, that doesn't mean that life is all hard. It may be easy *sometimes*; it *will* be tough other times. But there are things we can do to make it easier. For positive changes in your life, press these Easier buttons:

Fitness – Life is easier when we're in shape. We need not be world class athletes, but we must be more than weekend warriors when it comes to fitness. I fully recognize that this takes time and you already have precious little of that these days. But, if you don't take the time to take care of yourself, you'll end up spending more time in the doctor's office, the hospital, or the cemetery.

Resources (gyms, softball leagues, community teams, online information) exist to help you with this one, but only you can get you off the couch or out of the office and into the gym. Americans are killing themselves with a hectic lifestyle that leaves little time for fitness and less time for healthful eating.

Family – For some, the word "family" evokes warm memories and feelings of comfort. For others, it calls up recollections of trauma, pain, and dysfunction. If you fall into the second situation, then move right on to the next part about friends. (There are people who, for valid reasons, have had to divorce themselves from their family and that, although a drastic step, has made their lives Easier.)

For the rest of you, family is a group of people we happen to be connected to, most often by genetics or marriage. As we age and our lives change, we may feel anxiety about spending time with relatives we seem to have less and less in common with. What will we talk about... how will I put up with So-

and-so this year.... Yet, when the time comes to see them--over the holidays or at a wedding or funeral--things go well, and we are reminded of our shared history. We feel a sense of collective identity, a part of something bigger than our individual selves. We feel acceptance.

Friends – As humans, we are part of tribal culture that, for centuries, has thrived on deep personal connections. We are naturally social beings. Relationships with one another energize our brains and improve our health. Yet, research shows we are more *disconnected* than ever. The average American only has two close friends. In 1985, people said they had approximately *three* “close confidants.” By 2004, that number had dropped to 2. Further, the number of people admitting to having no one in their lives to confide in has more than doubled, from 10 to 25 percent. How sad. How lonely.

My business and, in fact, my *life*, would not be successful without the close friends who serve on my personal Board of Directors. These folks offer support and candor, and hold me accountable to what I say I am going to do. They accept me for who I am, and do not pass judgment on me or my actions. Their feedback keeps me straight. Their humor keeps me in stitches. And their presence in my life keeps me going strong.

Faith – Does life start and end with you, or are you part of something bigger? This is not an argument for any particular religion. It is a statement that is intended to help you assess your place in the cosmos and your connection with all other things. Do you have a cause to believe in? Do you have a reason to exist, or are you just punching your time card every day, doing your duty as a solitary person? Studies have shown repeatedly that people who believe they are part of something and are making a contribution to a greater good are happier.

Fun – Fun doesn’t just appear in your life. You have to make opportunities for it, just like you need to schedule other important activities. Do you have a hobby that brings you enjoyment? A favorite pastime? How often do you laugh? I have always said that life is too long to go through being serious all the time. Humor and fun are healthy, and laughter truly *is* good medicine.

If any of these buttons needs pressing in your life, give yourself a chance and press it. I know people who have faced adversity in each of these areas. But they hung in there and they’re living a better life because they chose to push the button—and themselves. You can do it, too.

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