

The Sometimes Hilarious Art of Self-Celebration

by *Dahlia Miller*

“Life is to be lived. If you have to support yourself, you had bloody well better find some way that is going to be interesting.”

Katherine Hepburn

Have you ever scored a touchdown in football? Did you do that little dance in the end-zone...you know the one...raise your arm and slam the football down (be it leather or be it nerf), point your toes together, wiggle your knees in and out, wiggle your butt, point those fingers to the sky and boogie down!

What is that about?

Celebration! Self-Celebration!

Doesn't that dance feel great? It almost doesn't matter if you battled the length of the field in the championship game or caught the ball on a fluke in a friendly game of touch football when the other guy tripped on his shoelaces. Whatever the circumstances, boogying in the end-zone feels good. And it makes you want more, doesn't it?

Celebrating our accomplishments can help us to become better people and better students. When we focus on how we are succeeding, we begin to attract more successes into our lives.

Celebrating is fun and can bring a sense of lightness to even the most serious of projects.

A friend of mine, a writer whom I consider very successful, has made a fool of herself more than once practicing the art of self-celebration. She has related to me the story of losing herself in some writing she was doing at her busy local library. Forgetting her surroundings, upon finishing the editing of a

particularly difficult article, she suddenly jumped up and shouted “Yes!” at the top of her lungs – one of those long-drawn out cries of victory. The quiet-seeking library patrons were not impressed, nor were the librarians. (My friend has not yet been evicted from a library, but she has been warned on more than one occasion.)

Another time, in a very posh restaurant, my friend sprang from her chair to give her companion a spirited high-five. Juice splashed; someone screamed; my friend laughed even louder. The opinions of others don't seem to faze this friend of mine. Her good opinion of herself seems to matter most to her. Feeling good about following through on her goals is a prime motivator for her. She builds success upon success and has fun doing it too.

Celebration feeds motivation. With high motivation, we have the energy to live our lives well. We also enjoy ourselves more. People who are highly motivated usually do and achieve more. Rewarding ourselves will have a cumulative effect, we will feel more motivated, and we will have the energy to build more positive habits.

Other Effects of Celebration

- ▶ Build on successes – feel a sense of achievement everyday
- ▶ Build self-confidence
- ▶ Have more fun
- ▶ Acknowledge what you've done
- ▶ Be happier
- ▶ Charge your batteries – looking for success puts a positive slant on the day
- ▶ Motivate others

News & Announcements

Exam Prep Workshops

On June 5th & 6th, 2004, we ran a very successful test prep workshop for high school students. Students learned how to:

- ▶ Overcome exam anxiety
- ▶ Organize for studying
- ▶ Approach different question types

For more information, check online, or contact us!

We Are Growing!

Smart Tutor Referrals is pleased to welcome Ruth McGhee, BA, B.Ed., M.Phil. as our new Director of Marketing & Program Development. Ruth brings years of experience teaching in international secondary schools, and a desire to have a positive impact on education in Victoria.

Summer Break

The Smart Connection will be back in September with more great tips for students and parents.

Final Exams

Smart Tutor Referrals wishes all students the best of luck on their finals!

York University, Tips on Test Taking

- ▶ <http://www.yorku.ca/cdc/lsp/eponline/exam.htm>

Cornell University, Tips for Tests

- ▶ <http://www.clt.cornell.edu/campus/learn/SSWorkshops/SKResources.html>
- ▶ <http://www.chemistrycoach.com/linksto.htm#Links%20to%20a%20Better%20Education>
- ▶ http://www.wlu.ca/~wwwcouns/ExamPreparation_HowToStudyForExamsAndTests.shtml
- ▶ <http://www.wlu.ca/~wwwcouns/HowToWriteExamsEffectively.shtml>

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents through:

In-home private tutoring matched specifically to each student's needs.

Stimulating workshops building skills in a practical and creative way.

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through one-on-one support that is truly individualized, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. They are carefully screened and chosen specially to match the needs and learning styles of each student.

We support families in education.

For more information and resources, visit us on-line at:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

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"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

When to Celebrate

One trick about this business of using positive reinforcements to build positive behaviours: the reward needs to happen quite soon after the behaviour. If the body receives a reward soon after performing a behaviour, it will associate the behaviour with the reward. (Yes we really are that simple to program.)

For students, many times the built-in rewards for studying (getting good grades, graduating, going on to a successful higher education and career) are very far off into the future. To use celebration as a way to improve your studies, you'll need to bring those rewards closer.

One way to bring far-off rewards closer is to build upon small rewards in reaching for a big one. For example, if you want to go out to a movie tomorrow night, but have to study for two tests, you could put two quarters into a jar for each 30 minutes that you focus. After each study period, put your quarters into that jar. You can watch the number of quarters in the movie fund jar grow as you study and feel good about your accomplishments at the same time.

Some Specific Times to Celebrate

- ▶ Everytime you do what you set out to do – small and large steps alike (remember immediacy is the key)
- ▶ When you make a plan
- ▶ When you take action on a plan
- ▶ When you stick to a plan
- ▶ When you do something nice - for yourself or someone else

- ▶ Everytime you try something in a new way
- ▶ When you catch yourself being judgemental - of yourself or someone else
- ▶ Everytime you do your household chores – who says you can't throw the dish towel on the counter and boogie every night?
- ▶ Anytime you want to celebrate!

How to Celebrate

Make a list of rewards to suit you. Here are some ideas for rewards and ways to celebrate your efforts and accomplishments:

- ▶ Give a high five – surprise your parents/kids
- ▶ Pat yourself on the shoulder – this really works!
- ▶ Say, "way to go," "hooray," or another phrase that feels good
- ▶ Put a quarter in a jar every time you study for 1 hour and save up for something you want
- ▶ Take some free time
- ▶ Read a book
- ▶ Listen to music
- ▶ Do art
- ▶ Sing
- ▶ Do the moon dance, the chicken walk or some other equally ridiculous dance
- ▶ Jump for joy
- ▶ Slam that towel down and boogie!
- ▶ Give or buy yourself a present or treat
- ▶ Relax
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Play a sport

Remember the key is to celebrate small tasks right away with small rewards as you move to complete a large task. So, get out there and act silly. There is no other life to live except the one you are living now.