

What Makes Your Heart Sing?

Awakening the Power of Inspiration



Essential Catalysts for Inspired Performance

By Bruce Cryer and Gary Malkin

“You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough.” – Mae West

1. The Power of Willingness

“What we call the secret to happiness is no more a secret than the willingness to choose life.” – Leo Buscaglia

The first essential quality for an inspired life is being open to what life brings us. *Willingness* gives us the power to get out of our heads, open our hearts, and access an intuitive wisdom. The power of willingness blesses us with curiosity, humility, flexibility, and receptivity. We are shown a way forward that we might never have devised by ourselves. This is the inspirational power of willingness.

2. The Power of Playfulness

*“Don’t ever let your mind keep you from having a good time.”
– Jason Mraz*

The second catalyst for awakening inspiration is *Playfulness*. Being playful arises naturally from the childlike innocence and awesome wonder of willingness. Playfulness brings flexibility and the ability to flow with life, instead of resisting, collapsing, or retreating. Playfulness is the kinetic energy that ignites creativity. When we remember not to take life too seriously, we avoid needless dramas when a situation requires calm. Laughing at ourselves over our limitations and our humanness — these are hallmarks of playfulness.

3. The Power of Presence

*“Your true home is in the here and the now.”
– Thich Nath Hanh*

A quality that reflects the best of what it means to be human is “presence.” Presence is an energy that radiates from a person who is fully being themselves, integrating their heart, mind, body and soul. This presence inspires us, engages us, and awakens us with a realization of what matters most in life. When we bring our presence to something or someone, we are aligning ourselves wholly and completely. When we receive this presence, we are nourished in ways we may never forget.

4. The Power of Compassion

*“Be kind whenever possible.
It is always possible.”
– Dalai Lama*

Is there a human quality more transformative in times of sadness or tragedy than compassion? Through compassion we quietly align to the universal principle; there is only love. Through compassion, we can see everyone as reflections of ourselves. So, we care. When we live from this essential quality, we become a living expression of love, a quiet inspiration to ourselves and others every day. This is the power of Compassion, the heart center of humanity.

5. The Power of Authenticity

*“Be yourself —
everyone else is already taken.”
– Oscar Wilde*

The ability to be oneself deeply, transparently and unashamedly expresses our *Authenticity*. Authenticity magnetizes the liberating power to re-create ourselves in the face of crises and challenges. Being authentic empowers us to say what needs to be said, and to do what needs to be done. Without authenticity, we rarely sense a person’s intentions and motivations. But with authenticity, it doesn’t even occur to us to wonder. Living authentically brings a refreshing breeze to stale relationships and worn-out attitudes, a new freedom to be who we really are.

6. The Power of Wisdom

“Turn your wounds into wisdom.”
– Oprah Winfrey

Learning and expanding one’s awareness through each life experience develops wisdom, one of the most prized and rare of human qualities. A wise person has the grace and perspective to avoid defensiveness, reactivity, and judgment while embracing wholeness, inclusion, compassion and gratitude. Wisdom is a powerful catalyst for balance and maturity in all of our relationships. Wisdom asks us to step into our most loving selves, providing us with the resilience, tolerance, and self-responsibility needed at any given moment. Wisdom humbly avoids praise or undo attention, knowing how quickly life can change.

7. The Power of Oneness

“You and I are all as much continuous with the physical universe as a wave is continuous with the ocean.”
– Alan Watts

Feeling at one with everything often seems like the stuff of spiritual legend, but it is a feeling that can come at any time, for any reason. When we remember the unity of all things and genuinely feel a connectedness to that unity, a quiet power and deep sense of wholeness comes to our life. Being in a state of oneness awakens our capacity to collaborate, co-create, and interrelate — demonstrating the power of “We” instead of just “Me.” When we are in oneness, we embody the next phase for humanity. When we release the belief that we are alone, we see how the world really works and how each of us fits in.

8. The Power of Inspiration

“Enthusiasm is the mother of effort, and without it nothing great was ever achieved.”
– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Humanity thrives on inspiration. Researcher Jonathan Haidt, Ph.D. revealed that we are most alive and healthy when we allow ourselves to feel inspired and moved. Inspiration ignites dynamic vitality and revitalizes a tired spirit. Inspiration fortifies our ability to do things with commitment, grace and brilliance. Inspiration is the fuel for a thriving life.

9. The Power of Embodiment

“Great ideas originate in the muscles.”
– Thomas Edison

We bring our bodies with us wherever we go. Do we befriend our bodies as the sacred hosts that they truly are? Being embodied is the final key that unlocks our capacity to be effective, and impactful. A continuous process of awakening, embodiment is a practice that ensures that we are inhabiting this living “vehicle” that offers us feedback through the senses, and provides many cues to advance, withdraw, persevere, or leap at any given moment. Being embodied, we engage in the dance of life in the fullest possible way.

10. The Power of Gratitude

“If the only prayer you said was thank you, that would be enough.”
– Meister Eckhart

The integration of these catalysts into every day life magnifies gratitude and births it anew. To emerge seeing life gratefully means everything is a gift, a source of reflection, information, and clarity, reminding us who we truly are and what matters most. Looking through the eyes of gratitude allows us to see life more fully, more completely, with greater appreciation for the preciousness of life itself. When we engage life with willingness, playfulness, presence, compassion, authenticity, wisdom, a feeling of an interconnectivity, embodiment and gratitude, we build a fire that inspires us to thrive for ourselves, for each other, and for the planet.

Bruce Cryer & Gary Malkin



Bruce Cryer has been dedicated to the evolution of humanity for the past 40 years. For eleven years, he served as CEO at HeartMath (USA), an innovative research-based firm offering unique products and award-winning technology to boost performance, productivity and health while reducing stress. He is co-author of the book *From Chaos to Coherence: The Power to Change Performance* and the *Harvard Business Review* article “Pull the Plug on Stress”. Bruce has been a faculty member of the Stanford Executive Program since 1997 and has worked on four continents with organizations as diverse as Kaiser Permanente, Mayo Clinic, The World Bank, Stanford Business School, and the UK’s National Health Service. Bruce’s current passion is helping individuals and groups discover “What Makes Your Heart Sing?” through the heart’s capacity for inspiration, purpose and beauty. He was recently named one of the Top 50 Thought Leaders in Personal Excellence. He can be reached at www.brucecryer.com.

Gary Malkin is an Emmy® award-winning composer and public speaker dedicated to making a difference in the world by creating music-driven events and products that inspire the heart and catalyze healing. He is passionate about the role music can serve as a resource to reduce stress and deepen our sense of meaning in an increasingly complex world. Gary is the co-creator of the internationally acclaimed *Graceful Passages*, a CD/Book that guides patients, caregivers, and family members to face major life transitions with greater mindfulness, presence, and compassion. Gary has presented at many conferences and institutions globally, and has been featured on the PBS TV program, “Healing Quest.” His writing recently appeared in *The Huffington Post*. He is frequently interviewed on radio talk shows promoting a greater understanding of the power of music as an resource for meaning and a connection to what matters most.

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