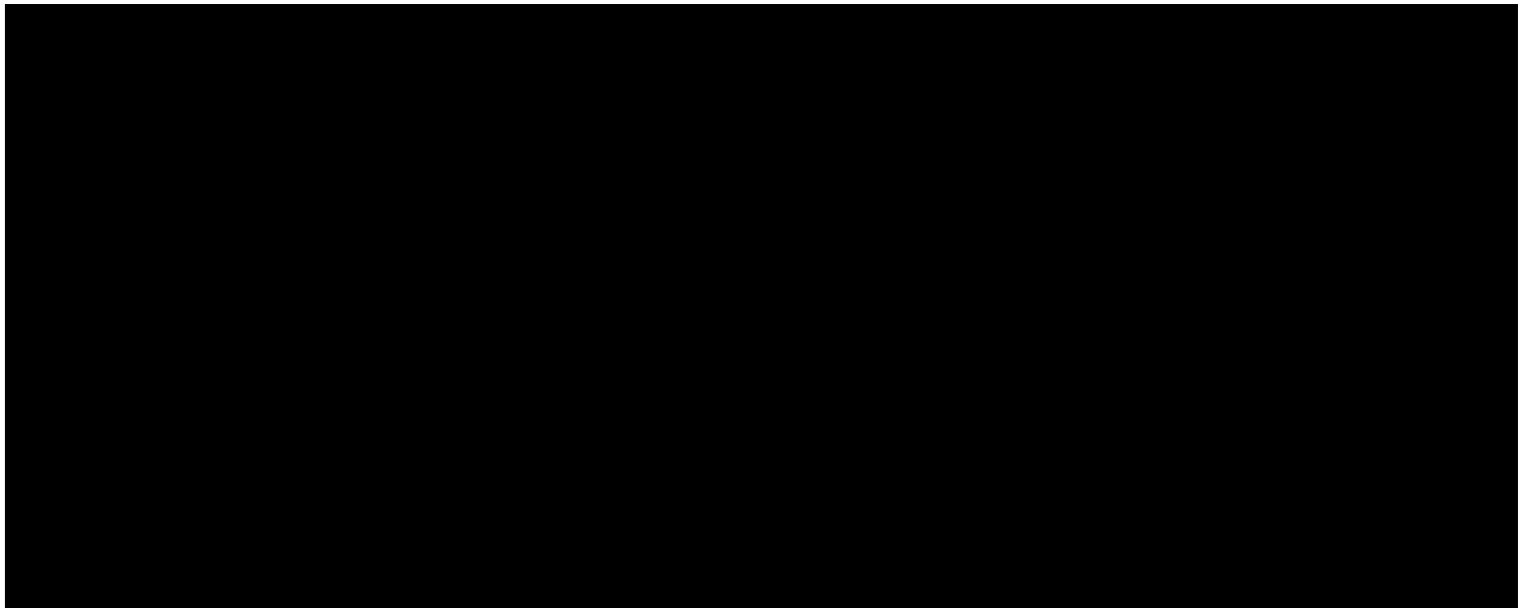


finding your smile



# ezine



## Simple solutions for closing the smile gap in mid-life by Colin Hiles

### **Solution 4. Ticking the box marked fulfilment**

*I was part of that strange race of people aptly described as spending their lives doing things they detest, to make money they don't want, to buy things they don't need, to impress people they dislike.*

- Emily Gauvreau

Whilst taking my year out I had a mini epiphany, a moment of truth that helped me in re-defining my own definition of success. It came from an article I was reading in one of my wife's magazines. The article was on health, fitness and diet. In one of the paragraphs it quoted, "The body can never get enough of what it doesn't really want." When I first read it I wasn't sure I understood quite what it meant. It went on to say, "Sometimes we crave chocolate or something sugary, so we eat it and find that we're temporarily satisfied, but then the same craving for something sweet comes up again and so it becomes an addictive endless cycle. The body can never get enough of these empty calorie foods. For optimum health and energy we need to eat the foods our body really wants." It immediately struck me that this is not only true for the body, but also life. In life we can never get enough of what we don't really want. Often mid-life wakes us up to this fact.

I, like many, spent the majority of my time in the first half of life chasing after the things on my goal list. I was stressed, constantly busy, and always in a rush. But when I ticked off what I'd been chasing there would be the immediate pleasure hit followed by an empty feeling. Each time I was left thinking, "Is that it...NEXT!" Increasingly I had a gnawing feeling that there was still something missing. Like a lot of mid-lifers I found, "having it all" was not all it was cracked up to be. This is because we can never get enough of what we don't really want!!

The "things we chase list" often includes money, power, possessions, status, position, fame, prestige, physical beauty and achievement.

The "things we really want list" often looks like this: fun, inspiration, trust, love, giving, caring, honesty, integrity, compassion, abundance, peace, joy, playfulness, spontaneity, passion, happiness, personal growth, adventure, tenderness, openness, creative expression, freedom, making a difference.

"But wait...hold on a minute."

You might object. You may argue, but I do want something off that first list. That may be so but let me ask you a question, "When you get your promotion /house /car /money/job what do you believe it will do for you or give you?" Think about it, what sits under the chasing? If you think about it deeply enough you'll probably find the answer to the question in the second list.

## Neglecting the heart

I ask the guests on the Finding Your Smile Retreat, “Why don’t we go straight for what we *really* want? Why do we spend some much of our attention and energy on the first list and neglect the second? There are many answers but the two that consistently show up are laziness (It’s easier to accept the pre-packaged definitions of what success is than create our own) and a belief (culturally conditioned) that if we get the things we are chasing - money, power, beauty possessions etc – then we’ll have the peace, love, freedom, security etc that we really want.

But is that true, does it always work that way?

In my experience, if you constantly chase what’s on the first list you may achieve success but it will always feel like something’s missing. And you would be right. What missing is that you’ve not achieved YOUR vision of success that’s driven from your core values, the things that are really important to you. You’ll achieve a definition of success that’s been thrust upon you. In a nutshell you have successfully achieved someone else’s vision for you.

## Ticking the boxes marked contentment, satisfaction and fulfilment

Look at the second list again, how many of those words pull on your heartstrings? This is everything in our “heart of hearts” you would like to experience. This list is the intangible measures of success. It’s what gives your life it’s intrinsic worth. The by-product of living your life from this list is a life of contentment, satisfaction and fulfilment.

## Bottom line

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You can’t get enough of what you don’t really want

**AUTHENTIC SELF REFLECTION TIME** - It’s time to re-assess and go straight for the good stuff

**Step 1** – Pull out your journal and write this question at the top of a clean page, “What ONE thing do I want more of in my life?” Over the next few days write down all the words that bubble up in your journal. Once you have an extended list pick the one thing that you want the most. For an extended list of values click on the link <http://www.findingyoursmile.co.uk/default.aspx?p=resourcesfree>

**Step 2** – Now that you know what you really want, how are you going to bring more of what you really want into your life? Make a list of the specific actions could you start taking from today?

**Step 3** – Start taking small manageable steps to bring more of what you really want into your life.

Please feel free to forward this article to your family, friends and colleagues or contact Colin by clicking [here](#)

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