

Should Chief Happiness Officer Be One of Your Titles?

Don't overlook the power of joy.

By Erika Oliver

When people feel free to express their optimism, they're better communicators, more patient, and more creative. They're also more productive, more emphatic, and healthier as they release endorphins and decrease stress hormones.

Successful organizations know that supporting and growing happiness (and the optimism that happiness comes from and generates) is important. Inspired leaders don't take the role of Chief Happiness Officer (CHO) lightly. They continually look for ways to tap into and support the happiness — optimism — of others.

Optimism is a personal responsibility that's individually generated, but it can be helped along. Here are some ideas you can put into practice immediately:

- **Plan fun into meetings**, chores, learning, and routine happenings.
- **Say “that’s great!”** when someone shares something that’s good or important for them.
- **Tell someone what’s working** before discussing what needs to be changed or fixed.
- **Allow spontaneous fun.** If fun breaks out, don't break it off — at least not until some optimism is supported.
- **Post signs about what people can do** instead of just what they can't do.
- **Use your power to make “recess” regularly available** to everyone in your organization.
- **Ask others, “What three good things** happened to you today?”
- **Share three good things** about your day.
- **Don't make people wait to play** until all the work is done — that would be never!
- **Laugh at yourself** so others see it's OK to take yourself lightly.
- **Avoid adding a “but”** when you or someone else shares something good.
- **Regularly talk to others about nothing in particular.** This helps increase a sense of sharing that's necessary for positive communication and trust.

“If fun breaks out, don't break it off.”

The Chief Happiness Officer isn't unproductive or goofy. In fact, a good CHO is the most productive and focused of the bunch, using the power of the positive to leverage happiness for more good.

Happiness and fun aren't ways of escaping responsibility and life (escapism actually decreases happiness and doesn't end up feeling good). Rather, they're ways to express your best self and help the world be a better place.

Your happiness leadership is needed no matter what your position. Help yourself and others find their “happy” by taking on the title of Chief Happiness Officer. 

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Resources to Lighten the Load

Bring joy into the lives of your colleagues and yourself, using the tactics in articles such as these at NonprofitWorld.org:

- Three Magic Questions for Your Board** (Vol. 27, No. 2)
- How to Create a Motivating Environment** (Vol. 28, No. 5)
- The Real Secret: Moving beyond the Law of Attraction** (Vol. 29, No. 4)
- Are You Offering the Right Perks?** (Vol. 35, No. 1)
- Three Top Tips to Attract, Energize, and Retain Winning Employees** (Vol. 31, No. 1)
- Think, Dream, and Do** (Vol. 29, No. 6)
- Want to Hire Top Talent? Create an Irresistible Culture** (Vol. 33, No. 4)