

Smile!

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Adapted from the author's new book, *Smile! – Secrets of the Healing Power of Your Smile*, available from sunstarphoto.com

Photos by Elan Sun Star

“Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.” -Thich Nhat Hanh

The inner smile is a simple yet profound meditation, based on Taoist and Chinese meditation practices, that can ease emotional or physical tension, and fits in with anyone's philosophy of life. A powerful relaxation technique, it utilizes the expanding energy of happiness and joy and the good feelings associated with smiling. The inner smile communicates with the internal organs of the body, with the “second brain” in the abdomen, known as the hara, and with the universe.

With the inner smile, we transmit internally the benevolence of a genuine outer smile that normally is directed at others; it is an opportunity to offer this smile and, thus, joy and healing, to



our inner being.

As you redirect the energy of a smile inward, visualize the individual organs, yin/yang organ pairs, or your whole body, smiling. This will generate endorphins, nitric oxide, growth hormones, DHEA and other biochemicals that benefit the immune system and other systems within the body.

Find a quiet place. Sit in a comfortable chair or in a seated meditation posture, or lie down on your back with your arms at your sides—whatever position is most comfortable. Many people integrate the inner smile into Hatha yoga practice. Focus inwardly, closing your mind to outer distractions, and visualize a smile in your body, your lungs and large intestine, your heart and small intestine, your stomach and spleen, your kidneys and urinary bladder, your liver and gall bladder, your brain, your eyes and your other sense organs. Scan your body

and release any tension you may be holding. Let your spine rise from your pelvis as if a balloon is drawing you up. Draw



your chin slightly in and keep your spine straight, allowing the energy to flow.

Sense a feeling of natural happiness and joy emanating from behind your eyes or from another place within, such as your solar plexus. Some people like to focus on the inner smile first in the heart, but use whatever feeling or visualization you prefer.

As you continue, visualize your inner smile cascading like a waterfall throughout your body, flowing down your spine into your heart and lungs, then your stomach and spleen, through your ribs, into your liver, kidneys, colon and intestines, your lower belly, down to your legs and out through your feet.

The inner smile can be a complete meditation in itself, or a prayerful contemplation. When you feel you are done, bring your hands together in prayer, salutation or meditative mudra, and conclude with a moment of gratitude, reflection or prayer to seal the energy. Transmit the energy of that inner smile through your outer smile to everyone you meet.

Your own inner smile will be reflected back to you. The inner



smile and outer smile are contagious. You can cultivate the inner smile anytime throughout the day, filling your heart with compassion and love, and you can smile an inner smile for the hearts of everyone around you.



The inner smile makes you very aware of and sensitive to your internal body and your inner self. Inner energy awareness is increased with the inner smile. It is vital to your progress in all practices and activities in life. Make the inner smile the foundation of your prayer life or your meditation, or take simple

inner smile breaks during the day. It's important to take your attention inward, away from the world of sensory bombardment, while attuning to your body.

As we smile inwardly to the organs and glands, the whole body will feel loved and appreciated. Stress and tension will be released, and the flow of energy, or Qi, will be increased from within and from the universe.

"Smiles are contagious, be a carrier!"

A smile is the breath of the soul and the spirit revealed, painted upon the face for all to see, transcending space and time. A smile has a very rich and deeply empowering value that speaks the language of eternity and unity. A smile will enhance your life, body, mind and spirit, and will do the same for those around you. You can inspire everyone with a smile. It is truly the spirit of GOD in action, the spirit of your own soul saying, "Give to yourself and give to others, and you will immediately receive in return the gratitude from your own heart and from those around you."

"A good world starts with nothing less than a smile!"

The face is a window to the emotions. Physiologists learned from philosophers the concept of mind-body separation, a dualism that persists to this day. But as Aristotle said: "Mental character is... conditioned by the state of the body, and the body is influenced by the affections of the soul." Your mental and emotional state is affected by the state of your body, and vice-versa. So, if you make a change in one, you make a change in the other because there is a mind-body-spirit continuum.

You cannot underestimate the value of smiling. It helps you get to a state of authentic happiness, characterized by playful, smiling, sharing, caring energy, hugging, joking and humor. All of these things, along with the company of naturally happy people, contribute to natural smiles. Learn how to transmute and transform situations through your own biochemistry and response. Transmute every situation into a happy one. French neurologist Guillaume Duchenne mapped one hundred facial muscles in 1862. His work gave him insight into smiling. He pointed out that false or even half-hearted smiles involve only muscles of the mouth, but the "sweet emotions of the soul" activate the pars lateralis muscles around the eyes.

In other words, authentic smiles activate muscles that crinkle the skin around the eyes. Since Duchenne's work, physiologists have noted the Duchenne marker in a smile—the crinkling crow's feet, a slight squint of the eyelids, along with a lift of the cheeks and the corners of your mouth. You know the signs. You recognize true delight in a friend's face.

A spontaneous Duchenne smile is authentic, potent and biochemically powerful in therapy and healing work. It is liberating and transformational. Conscious breathing and a genuine smile can heal you on many levels.

"The act of smiling is a gift of a little piece of joy and sunshine to brighten another's day." ✓

About the Author

Elan Sun Star is a preeminent professional photographer, with over 10,000 covers and ad layouts appearing worldwide, in top international publications and commercials. His work is the first choice of many agencies in London, Tokyo, Honolulu, New York, Munich, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Montreal, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, Dallas and other cities.



A raw fooder of 40 years' duration, Sun is a well-known fine artist, classical keyboard performer, and a pioneer in alternative approaches to self-improvement of mind, body and spirit. In his global travels over the last 35 years, he has researched optimum states of physiology and psychology, while continuing his photo documentation of people and events, interviewing and studying with many of the top pioneers in health, wellness and personal growth.

Sun has worked with such eminent personages as Ann Wigmore of the Hippocrates Health Institute, Dr. Bernard Jensen and many others, as well as with top motivational and peak-performance coaches and authors. From these rich experiences, Sun has synthesized a philosophy and teaching of simple and yet profound integration which is reflected in his photography, his writings, and speaking appearances.

Sun's writings reveal his comprehensive perspective, his deep caring and Renaissance style of contemporary wisdom and messages of health, hope and a world of unfolding possibilities.