

# LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS

With Gail Lowney Alofsin

## “GET TO” VS. “HAVE TO”

*The New Year offers the opportunity to recharge and renew your mindset towards living your life. You have the chance to approach your life, personally and professionally, with a “beginners mind.”*



“LIVE Every Heartbeat!”

Photo credit: Rob Kalaidjian

There is always new information to learn about your career path, new passions to pursue, new books to read and conferences to attend. Lifelong learning will serve to further your career while creating an active and fulfilling life for you.

One of my clients, who recently turned fifty, professed she “gets to” turn fifty. With full appreciation for life, she produced a birthday party for herself complete with a band, great food and her favorite people.

Let’s be honest, we use the vernacular “have to.” For example, “I have to go to work, I have to attend the board meeting, I have to go to the gym, I have to have lunch with my client, I have to go to the conference, I have to attend my niece’s play.” When you change the two words to “get to,” for instance; “I get to go to work, I get to attend the board meeting, I get to go to the gym, I get to have lunch with my client, I get to attend the conference, I get to attend my niece’s play,” your mindset becomes one of privilege versus obligation. Are

you healthy enough to go to the gym? Be thankful! Do you have a job, clients, and conferences to attend? Are you on a board or committee assisting others? Be thankful! Gratitude is powerful and the more you say thank you and live in a state of appreciation, the happier you will be.

“Get to” are two powerful words that will serve to reframe your mindset. As this New Year commences, you “get to” spend time with family, eat healthy, join a new committee, go to work and oh yes – exercise!

Sonja Lyubomirsky, a professor and author of *The How of Happiness*, has studied human happiness for over two decades, concluding that approximately 50% of our happiness is determined by genetics, 40% by our habits, thoughts, and intentional activities (the things we control), and 10% our circumstances (career, home, life situations). While this may be counterintuitive as we feel that money, things, a great job, and a beautiful home will make us happy, happiness initially comes from within.

How to get happier? Focus on that 40%. What are you filling your time with? What are you filling your head with? With 40% of happiness under your control, you can be intentional. What are the “simple” things that make you happy? Smell of the ocean? Mountains? Exercise? Baking? Reading a book?

The happiest people reach out to *others* in an attempt to make *their* day better. Put your cellphone away when ordering your morning coffee, purchasing groceries, having lunch with a friend. Be present. Notice. In your community, who can you help? You do not have to join a board to help people or travel to Haiti, you can assist people in your own back yard. For 2016, make this a weekly practice. Volunteer at a local shelter. Contribute to food drives. Join a non-profit committee. Assist a non-profit with their social media or website development. What are your gifts? You will be happier when you “get to” share them.

So as we embrace the New Year, why not practice gratitude every day? It will become a most positive habit. As one of my lifelong mentors, Sister Ernestine Krupa has always shared, “*Every day that I get up and know my name, I realize it will be a great day!*” Being appreciative of the small things is crucial. Let’s go forward as we “get to” live this life to the fullest. Happy New Year!

**Gail Lowney Alofsin** is an author, speaker, adjunct professor and business executive. Her new book, *Your Someday is NOW – What are you Waiting For?* has raised over \$25,000 for non-profit organizations since it was launched in April 2014.

A lifelong student and humanitarian, Gail believes that we all have the capability to be a leader in our own lives, influencing the lives of others to positive peak performance and success. She can be reached at 401-640-4418, [gail@gailspeaks.com](mailto:gail@gailspeaks.com), twitter: @gailalofsin and [gailspeaks.com](http://gailspeaks.com).