



Opinion

Copyright © Dongfeng Wu

A Cheerful Heart is a Good Medicine

Dongfeng Wu*

Department of Bioinformatics and Biostatistics, University of Louisville, USA

*Corresponding author: Dongfeng Wu, Department of Bioinformatics and Biostatistics, School of Public Health and Information Sciences, University of Louisville, USA.

To Cite This Article: Dongfeng Wu*. A Cheerful Heart is a Good Medicine. *Am J Biomed Sci & Res.* 2023 20(6) AJBSR.MS.ID.002775, DOI: [10.34297/AJBSR.2023.20.002775](https://doi.org/10.34297/AJBSR.2023.20.002775)

Received: 📅 December 11, 2023; Published: 📅 December 20, 2023

Opinion

It's that time of the year again, Christmas time is the most wonderful time of the year. However, in all this hustle and bustle time, there is something not so wonderful. For example, I just got an unfair annual review with twisted facts. I thought I was doing a good job this year: finished a research book, helped my Ph.D. student pass her defense and graduate, and taught a few courses, some of which were challenging as that was not related to my research. However, the supervisor may not think so, he may deliberately give you a twisted review and that may make him feel better. You may feel this is unfair and ask why. Well, it is sinful human nature. Some people just cannot tolerate others to make some accomplishments better than themselves. My strategy? I have decided not to allow this to ruin my Christmas. I have chosen to maintain my cheerful spirit no matter what. I am telling myself that this is not the end of the world.

As I am getting older, I observed so many things in life that could mess up, no matter how careful or innocent you are. You may work under a mean and wicked boss, you may be cheated by your friends or relatives, you may face layoff, you may make a bad decision in investing, and in today's world, there is outrageous inflation in everything as well. It is just like the Bible says, "The length of our days is seventy years, or eighty if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away." (Psalm 90:10) [1]. So, don't be surprised when life is full of unfairness and troubles, and most time you cannot change the reality at all. You feel that everything is out of control. But one thing you could control is your attitude or your choice of how to face these unpleasant issues. And for the sake of your health and longevity, you'd better face it with some grace.

Let's face it. Your first reaction may be anger or resentment, but that won't help, and it is detrimental to your health. Have you heard the old saying that holding a grudge against someone is like drinking poison and hoping to kill the other person? That is so true. Some research showed that mood disorders or bad mood could

significantly increase the risk of hospitalization and death due to Covid-19 [2]. So set yourself free by forgiving your enemy. You don't need to worry about them, whether they get paid back for what they have done. As the Bible says, "An evil man is bent only on rebellion; a merciless official will be sent against him." (Proverbs 17:11) [1]. So, refrain from your anger and choose to forgive, which will bring you great benefit, and remember that "A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense." (Proverbs 19:11) [1], because "a cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones" (Proverbs 17:22) [1].

There is plenty of medical research to show how our mood has a great impact on our health. Most of the research focuses on how mood disorders could hurt our health and provide some possible early interventions [3-5]. I would suggest solving this problem from another point of view: it is a personal choice. When you choose to be joyful and grateful no matter what the circumstances are, your immune system works better, you sleep better, and your physical body works better in fighting all kinds of diseases, especially cancer. On the other hand, if you choose to be resentful, your blood pressure will increase, you will be more stressed, and that will hurt your sleep quality, and you might suffer from chronic fatigue, and in general, your physical body suffers. In the long run, it is more obvious as you are aging. Your attitude could be reflected in your face and your appearance. Have you noticed that someone may look younger as they are aging? That is usually because they choose to be thankful in hard times.

Now we come to the final point: what should I do to be able to remain grateful or cheerful when faced with a bully or a very negative environment? We do need some training to achieve this. The best way is to look up to someone bigger than ourselves. As a Christian, I believe that God is faithful and works out all things in the end, and we are commanded to be joyful in all circumstances. "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-



17) [1], and “Consider it pure joy my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2) [1]. So, prayer is part of my life to fight against negative feelings and thoughts. We can always cast our cares unto God’s hands and lay down our burden at his feet, so we don’t have to carry it by ourselves. On the other hand, even if you are an atheist or agnostic, for your health and benefit, you can still practice focusing on the positive side of all things, you can make it a habit to be thankful for what you already have and refuse to compare with others, as everyone is different. I know it is not easy. But I pray that God blesses your heart and you will be joyful in all situations and have a very merry Christmas.

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

References

1. The Holy Bible.
2. Felicia Ceban, Danica Nogo, Isidro P Carvalho, et al. (2021) Association Between Mood Disorders and Risk of COVID-19 Infection, Hospitalization, and Death: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *JAMA Psychiatry* 78(10): 1079-1091.
3. Ned H Kalin (2020) Advances in Understanding and Treating Mood Disorders. *Am J Psychiatry* 177(8): 647-650.
4. Nemeroff Charles B (2020) The state of our understanding of the pathophysiology and optimal treatment of depression: glass half full or half empty? *Am J Psychiatry* 177: 671-685.
5. Steven Marwaha, June SL Brown, Chris G Davey (2021) Editorial: Early Intervention in Mood Disorders. *Front Psychiatry* 12: 799941.