

Embracing Small Habits for Inner Peace

Welcome to Peaceful Life Radio

David Lowry: Hello, and welcome to Peaceful Life Radio. I'm David Lowry, and with me today is Dr. Don Drew.

Don Drew: Hello, everyone. I hope you're having a great day.

David Lowry: Me too. And you know what, Don?

Don Drew: What's that?

David Lowry: I'm more and more convinced that the peaceful life is the way to go.

Don Drew: Well, there's no question about it, but it's sometimes pretty hard to get.

David Lowry: It's one of those things that you have to work at.

Don Drew: Yeah.

David Lowry: It's an artistic way of living. You are constantly tweaking this and that. And next thing you know, it's working pretty well, but there's always more to do.

Don Drew: Right, it's a day to day thing.

Introduction to Peaceful Habits

Don Drew: And one of the ways that we can help ourselves is to develop habits that help us move in that direction. And I think that's what we're talking about today, isn't it?

David Lowry: It is. We want to talk about some habits that will help you have a more peaceful life. We're going to treat you so many ways. You're bound to like one of them.

Don Drew: Sounds good. Before we get started, though, I want to remind everyone, please download, listen, share our podcast. We love to hear from you. So feel free to email us, contact us. We're interested in your ideas and what you want to hear on the program.

So, David, why don't you kick us off on some small habits that lead to a more peaceful life?

David Lowry: We want to start off with some things having to do with mental and emotional habits.

The NUNYA Principle

David Lowry: And one of the things that caused us to start this program in the first place was learning how to get drama out of our life. So our first piece of advice is keep working on how to avoid unnecessary conflicts and drama.

Don Drew: We don't always have control over that, right? Conflicts arise at times in our lives, but learning how to manage mentally and emotionally becomes increasingly important during those times.

David Lowry: I'm going to talk to you about a notion called the NUNYA principle.. Okay. You've heard of NUNYA before, haven't you?

Don Drew: No, I don't think I have. David and I don't always rehearse these exactly so sometimes we surprise each other.

David Lowry: NUNYA! NUNYA your business! If it's not really your business, keep your nose out. Remember when Julie Kellog was on the program, she made this profound statement. She says, *What is mine to do?* I remember that statement so clearly. And Julie is right about that. Sometimes we take on things that don't belong to us and getting caught in other people's drama, and it's not our drama to get involved with them.

Don Drew: So, folks, in all likelihood, you just heard that new principle here for the very first time called the NUNYA effect.

David Lowry: Yes, the NUNYA effect. Here are some times when you should get involved. If it directly affects you. Well sure, get involved. Is it a member of your family? Yeah, you might be careful about getting involved. Like if you've got grown kids, maybe you should stay out of it, right? Good Samaritan Act.

Help out if somebody's drowning and you can swim, go try to save them. But Generally speaking, if it's not really your business, keep your nose out. You may have a great idea and opinion you believe can save the day, but don't. NUNYA! NUNYA your business!

Practicing Gratitude

Don Drew: Another small habit we can develop is practicing gratitude in our lives and learning to say thank you to people regularly when they do things for us. Sometimes we get so busy that we don't let folks know when they have done something that means a lot to us.

David Lowry: Don, if your family or friend brings you something, say thank you. What do you lose by saying thank you?

Don Drew: Well, sometimes I'll do that with a complete stranger who does something kind to me, but somebody I know well, may do something for me, and I'm thankful for it, but I don't express that. And I think the expression is very important, and it's a really good habit to develop.

David Lowry: I say thank you to people who serve me in restaurants. They hand you a basket of chips or whatever. Say *thank you!* It takes only two seconds to do it. When people say, *how are you doing today?* Immediately answer, *I'm doing fine. How are you?* Turn the question back on them. We need to take time out of our day to say, *Hey, I care about you too.* It is one of those mental and emotional habits.

What's another one, Don?

Don Drew: So let me just list several of them I think are very helpful.

Avoiding Judgment and Focusing on the Present

Don Drew: One is to stop being judgmental of others. And that is really, that's hard, hard to do sometimes. We have this standard of how we think some people are supposed to act or supposed to be and so on. It's really easy to fall into the trap of being judgmental.

My wife Christy talks about catch yourself catching yourself. Well, this is one of those things. If you pay attention to how you mentally react to others and develop the habit of thinking about how you're responding and shut that down. Okay, when you feel like you're being judgmental to somebody, it doesn't serve you and it doesn't serve them well at all.

Of the ways we can do that is by focusing on the present moment. We talk a lot about being present in the moment and about mindfulness but a lot of that means just being aware. Being aware of what you're saying, what you're thinking, how you're responding. And then from that choosing to be happy over being right in your judgment. Choose happiness over being right.

David Lowry: I can remember in my family and we all love our families, right? I remember my dad would say, *Oh, you remember that wonderful trip we took in 1975*, and this beautiful moment would be wrecked by an argument over what year something took place. And I was thinking to myself what does it really matter? But we get caught up on being right.

Don Drew: Yeah, I know you're gonna find this hard to believe, but, years ago I used to be kind of a know it all. Of course, I'm not guilty of that at all anymore.

David Lowry: But Don, you really do know it all.

Don Drew: Yeah, right. But this idea of knowing it all, I would correct people. My friends or coworkers or whatever. And I kept catching myself doing that. And I kept thinking to myself, *I got to stop that*. Eventually I did, but it took being coming aware and developing the habit of not necessarily responding just because I know it was 1975 and not 1976 doesn't really change the story. And it doesn't add anything. It doesn't help the person that's telling the story. So I completely get that.

David Lowry: Here's another one, which is a hard one to do but I believe it's time to, if you can, implement a two-year moratorium. If anything is over two years old you have to stop complaining.

Don Drew: Well, let's just declare that law.

David Lowry: All right. Let's just make it a law. Peaceful Life Radio now enacts a law by Fiat.

Don Drew: That's right. Two year limitation on any kind of, what's the word here?

David Lowry: Any kind of grumpy complaint, mistreatment, unkindness. You have to let it go after two years. Or at least you can't bring it up.

Don Drew: Yeah, , this idea of forgiving goes along with expressing gratitude and avoiding unnecessary conflict. All these things require a certain amount of mental and emotional responsiveness in order to bring them under control. And that's what we're talking about is developing small habits.

Each one of these requires us to think and be aware of ourselves and increase our own awareness, which I think is really important. And just as we criticize others, sometimes we fall prey to self criticisms. That's another thing we need to be aware of is we've got this, thing in our head, right? Constantly telling us messages about ourselves. And those messages aren't very positive or very good, certainly not very helpful. So being aware of self criticism and trying to bring that also under control.

All these things, these little mentally emotional habits of avoiding unnecessary conflicts, practicing gratitude, managing our judgment of others, learning to focus on the present moment and so on, all of these little habits build up over time, but they take time. But they do produce results. I know that personally.

Lifestyle and Wellness Strategies

Don Drew: Let's talk about the next major area, which is lifestyle and wellness strategies.

David Lowry: You've got to decide to put yourself first a bit. When my wife retired from work, *she says, I'm going to put me first for a while.* And my wife is the most unselfish lady I know. And it was high time she did.

One day she had this epiphany. *I need to start taking time out for myself.* And so she started taking time out for her personal wellness by working out and paying more attention to what she ate and how she exercised and becoming more involved in taking good care of herself.

Don Drew: Yeah, let me just say this about Cary. This is David's wife. I've observed this transformation in her and I think it's just been tremendously positive and I've known her, gosh, what, about 10, 12 years and, I've never seen her happier. And this whole process has really worked for her well.

There's some other specific things that you can do. One of the things that's highly recommended, is to practice deep breathing techniques. Breathing exercises help bring our mental state under control where we can slow down and change those things that we want to change.

David Lowry: It's an amazing way of developing energy and some of those can be very transformational to our health and well being. Any of you who are interested, look up The word Pranayama, spelled just the way it sounds. And learn ancient ways of breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth and one nostril versus another. And all of them have subtle energetic channels they work on.

Here's one, Don, Eat whole natural foods. That's probably the thing that changed the most in when Cary retired. We stopped eating out as much. We've eaten food from the grocery store that we prepare ourselves. We've grown to love our own recipes, our own ways of cooking and doing things. It's much healthier and there really is a difference between highly processed food and more natural foods.

Don Drew: So about seven years ago, I believe it was Marie Kondo hit the world stage with a book on uncluttering your life and how important that is to mental health and wellness as well. I read the book when it came out, and I have always been a fairly organized person. But I find that useful. It helps a lot

David Lowry: Me too. I think everybody probably read that Marie Kondo book. I was even folding my underwear into thirds and stacking them a certain way. And you know what? I like it. I like my drawers organized. My drawers in my drawers organized.

Don Drew: Okay. So another area that impacts our lifestyle and wellness is technology. Learning how to develop habits of limiting our technology especially before bedtime can be a way of putting ourselves in a much better mental state, getting better sleep, more rest and, and so on.

David Lowry: We've got to grow up and be wiser in how we use media. Social media gets you angry and mad to keep you engaged with the media. And it's all a big game to the media companies because what they're trying to do is sell ads and make money to keep you on there as long as possible and looking at their stuff. But it's not necessarily good for you. And around bedtime, especially it's horrible for you.

Don Drew: So, David, I've fallen in the same trap probably most people have, which is when I'm doing things and I have a gap, I immediately pull out my phone and pull up the news or I pull up my emails or something like that.

One habit we can develop is to reacquaint ourselves with being silent and still. We don't necessarily have to be entertained or something going on all the time. That's the way life was for a long time. Cell phones have taken that away. So I think reacquainting ourselves with some silence and some downtime just to think or to observe and so on can be a small habit that is useful to develop.

David Lowry: Give yourself some peace and quiet. This filling it up is an addictive quality, right? It's like, *if I don't have something in my life, what am I going to have?* We can begin to create a little gap in life becoming more comfortable with silence and nothing going on. Why not a little silence? Just turn it off.

Practical Approaches to Daily Life

David Lowry: Well, let's look at a few practical approaches, we can take in our life, and one of them is do it now.

Don Drew: Yeah. Don't procrastinate.

David Lowry: Don't procrastinate. Get 'er done. There's a technique out there I'm hearing expressed more lately. It's called 5-4-3-2-1., Do it!

Don Drew: Tell me about that.

David Lowry: Basically it's when you have something that you've been putting off, tell yourself, 5-4-3-2-1. I'm going to start doing it. It's like blast off. It's the countdown. You're going to do it. Here I am doing it.

Don and I taught. But one of the things Don I've noticed between a successful college student and one that's not it's usually not about the ability to learn. It's more about the ability to manage yourself. And I would meet people who couldn't make themselves do stuff as simple as a five minute reflection assignment. They just would never do it because they just couldn't make themselves do it.

Don Drew: Well, the term self discipline is kind of fallen out of fashion, but really it's the idea of getting yourself organized and getting things done that you

need to do. And I absolutely agree with you. I think students that are not disciplined in their studies, not disciplined in their work and their time, struggle.

So that's absolutely important. Another really big area is managing finances. And I know a lot of our listeners probably have a struggle with this at some level. For Christie and I, I know the taxes every year is just a big deal. Part of the problem is that we don't get everything we need on time and we're forced into a procrastination there. But it also impacts other areas of our finances.

David Lowry: Yes, we need order. We need financial order. And even if it's like, okay, I just can't spend on this credit card. I can't afford to pay the 30 percent interest anymore. Or I've got to pay my bills on time. I meet some people that say, *well, I don't like to have Automatic pay what if the bank does it wrong?* Well, if you're not paying your bills on time, you got to figure out something.

It's really important that we pay attention to those finances. It can ruin us in so many ways. One of the things that's helped me is. You know, banks will set up every time you use your card, it'll ding your phone and say, *you just charged something*. And, I find that really helpful. I like to stay on top of, *What have I been spending? Where did it go?* Every now and then Cary will say, *Did you spend X amount of dollars on something?* And first I'll go, *no, I don't remember spending that*. Then I open up my phone and look at the car. *Oh, yeah, that's what that went for*. it's so easy to forget you've spent money on something and we've just got to pay attention to it.

Here's some practical mindfulness habits and that is we got to let go of trying to control everybody and everything. If you haven't read this book by Mel Robbins on her Let Them Theory, it's high time you did. And I wish we were big enough to have Mel Robbins on the program because she's amazing, isn't she? But the idea of when people do stuff. You're just going to have to say, *Let them*. They're going to be them and we can't control them.

Don Drew: Yes, that's so true. I'll tell you what, let's talk here for a minute about micro habits, small little things we can do that are practical and really drive at the idea that we can bring more peace to our lives by adding just a few small positive habits.

Number one would be smile more. Smiling makes you feel better about yourself and it sends positive messages to people around you that will elicit positive responses more than a frown will.

And then another thing this is one that I'm certainly guilty of slow down your speech. Sometimes, in the classroom when I was lecturing I would get really fired up because I knew the topic well, it was interesting to me. And so I'm just off on a tear speaking very quickly. And I could tell after a while that I was blowing past my listener's ability to keep up with what I was doing.

So slow down your speech and, and when you're, when you're talking to others or when you're working with others, or even in your own life, learn to set more realistic expectations about what it is you want or expect to be able to achieve from what you're doing.

David Lowry: Right. Slowing down, have a purpose for your speech, make sure you know what you're trying to accomplish. Be more intentional in the way you approach people.

Don Drew: Yeah, and speaking of approaching, people make the habit of trying to surround yourself with positive people who will support you, people who you feel comfortable and confident with. Give yourself time in an atmosphere where people who love and support you and care about you are present in your life.

David Lowry: Don, do you feel like making a new rule again? I mean, another Peaceful Life Radio decree, fiat, a rule that everybody must follow. We now hereby, by the powers invested in us by Peaceful Life Radio, as podcasters in the United States of America, give everybody the right to drop people who are toxic from their life and move on to happy people who support you.

Don Drew: I think that is such a great idea, David. I really do.

David Lowry: I think the world is going to be different now that we've made this rule.

Don Drew: Yeah. You know what? All these habits are designed to help individuals create more inner peace and reduce daily stress by making small, consistent changes in their mindset and lifestyle.

Implementing Small Habits for Big Changes

Don Drew: So let's talk how these small habits can transform our listeners lives when implemented strategically.

David Lowry: It's more important that you pick one or two things rather than a million things. Start small and be consistent with them. Find something you think *This would really help me*. Maybe it's the nunya principle and staying out of other people's business and minding your own affairs, Then every time that comes up, that's what you focus on.

Or if you're working on a health goal, just decide, , *I'm going to work on flexibility or I'm going to work on strength training, or I'm going to work on cardio* or something. Start small, but be consistent.

Don Drew: Yeah. That's really great. Take one at a time and really focus on that. Focus on daily repetition rather than perfection. Spend more time, as you said, working on our self development, some area that's important to us and then gradually we can increase the complexity of that habit over time, right?

David Lowry: Have you heard of the habit anchoring technique?

Don Drew: Tell us about it.

David Lowry: You take something you're doing really well and then you pair it with something that you're wanting to improve on. Let's say that you want to drink more water. You're not drinking enough water. Well, you know that each morning you're going to brush your teeth. Maybe before you brush your teeth, you have a bottle of water and drink half of this bottle. You guzzle it down and then you brush your teeth. Maybe at the end of the day, the same thing. You find little places to pair the new habit with the old habit.

Don Drew: So I think you've told us before that you do meditation after your coffee or with your coffee or something like that in the morning. Yes. Am I right about that?

David Lowry: I do my meditation before coffee, but it's so wonderful because one of the things Cary and I have started pairing is that after meditation we have coffee together. We created a little time of visitation with each other that we look forward to in the morning. We paired something I was doing carved out time for each other.

Don Drew: Okay, so what are some other practical mini habits we can adopt ?

David Lowry: Everybody's got to create their own routines, but I'm a believer of going to bed early and getting up early. I get up early for my meditation and I found that it won't happen unless I wake up a little bit before five, but at five

o'clock, that's when I do it. Going to bed at a regular time, these are little mini health habits.

Buying our food from the grocery instead of eating out, and buying, tasty food that we both really want to eat. Those are some of the habits we do. What are some of yours?

Don Drew: I am a habitual bed maker. That's one of the things that tells me that my morning is now over and I'm ready to I'm ready now to go to work.

And I'm also a list maker. I have a book like a journal, and I open that up, and I take a look at my list, and every week I sit down, usually on a Sunday, I'll sit down and I'll make a complete list of everything that I want to accomplish that week. I may add to it as the week goes on, because I sometimes forget things, but I get this list made. And then as I accomplish things, I mark through them.

The other thing I do, though, is every morning I look at that list and say, *Okay, what are the priorities for today? What has to get done today?* It keeps me very organized and it allows me to prioritize what I'm doing and how I'm doing it.

Again, all of these suggestions we're making here today, it's not like you have to do all of these things. to have a peaceful life. The idea here is as we're talking, we hopefully have spurred some ideas in your head of things that you might want to do or try and then try.

Final Thoughts and Farewell

David Lowry: Don, we said today that we were going to treat them so many ways they were bound to like one of them. And we've given a whole lot of helpful habits that you could do. We hope that these habits will help you out.

We want to thank you for joining us today on Peaceful Life Radio. Thank you so much for being here and tune in again next week on Peaceful Life Radio, your place on the internet for developing a more peaceful life.