

# PMW Associates Quarterly Commentary

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## **SMILE**

***The free expression of an emotion by outward signs intensifies it.***  
**Charles Darwin**



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**There is a hypothesis that has been supported by decades of scientific research that if one shows a physical manifestation of an emotion such as happiness, fear or disgust, one will come to feel it---at least in mild form. Your face, body and voice send signals (feedback) informing your brain that you are experiencing a particular emotion, leading you to (surprise!) feel that emotion.**

**Thus, taking on the facial expressions and postures of happiness can go a long way toward stimulating actual feelings of joy and happiness. Admittedly, the effects are said to be modest.....okay, a smallish joy. But work the math: more smiles = more joy. As comedian Victor Borge said, “A smile is the shortest distance between two people.” Emotions are contagious. It’s a fact that not only does your smile cause you to feel good; it causes others to feel the same way. Can you discern a message on leadership here?**

**We tend to develop facial lines that match our personalities. A happy person usually has a happy face and a person who has felt sad or angry for much of his/her life is often stuck with a sad or angry appearance. This notion was tested a few years ago when ten clinically depressed women who had not responded to all manner of psychological/medical treatments were given Botox to remove their gloomy frown lines. Two months later, nine out of ten of the women were totally cured of their depression and the tenth showed significant improvement. This is a stunning finding....that the removal of the physical manifestations of unhappiness (frown lines) from a person can create an impression of happiness in the eyes of others which reflects happiness back to the person. As Marge Piercy said, “Live as if you like yourself and it may happen.”**

Of course there is a real world outside of the research laboratory in which, if you smile, the world may or may not smile back. But I maintain that in the face of stressful events, smiling can, to some extent, counteract negative emotions and bring about feelings of peace, contentment and even joy. Studies have confirmed that laughter can lower stress hormones and elevate beneficial hormones.

In a recent POST Police Management Class, I asked eighteen lieutenants from a variety of agencies to list five of their signature strengths. Sixteen of the eighteen listed “humor” as one of the five.

In summary, smiling and laughing – even the “I don’t really want to pose for this photograph” type of smile or the “This joke isn’t even funny” chuckle, gives rise to a mild feeling of positive well-being.

Can you think of a real leader who doesn’t smile? So, go for it.... if you are happy, tell your face, and generate a radiant smile. It’s likely to make you and those around you a lot happier and that’s part of your job as a leader.

*For every minute you are angry, you lose 60 seconds of happiness.  
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

We have two upcoming top quality POST Plan III Seminars:

- Internal Affairs, February 15-17, 2010, in La Quinta near Palm Springs.
- Gang Enforcement, March 8-10, 2010, in Dana Point

**Please keep in mind that we can bring any of our offerings to your area. Phone or e-mail us for details.**

*Paul*

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