



HOW YOU ACT

IS HOW YOU FEEL

By The American Institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc.

Table Of Content

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1 | Introduction |
| 4 | What Does It Mean To Act How You Want to Feel? |
| 9 | The Benefits of Acting How You Want To Feel |
| 11 | Specific Examples of Acting How You Want to Feel |
| 14 | Conclusion |

Introduction

Why do we do the things that we do? Why do we act the way we act? What motivates us to take one direction instead of another? The answer to all of these questions is behavior. Yes, we are rational beings. However, that rationality is inextricably tied together with all of our other instincts and urges. These instincts are actually older than our rational mind, quite a bit older. Because of this, our decision making process can be affected by the conflict between reason and desire. This leads to potentially negative outcomes.

Our instincts are deeply rooted. They can, at times, override our reason. This leads us to do things that we know we shouldn't be doing. This process works like this. First, we experience emotion about something. That emotion causes us to act. Only after we act do we think about what we did. This type of behavior is sometimes called impulsive, because it is, in fact, based upon an impulse. The impulse itself is biological and very hard to resist. Millions of years of ingrained behavior can act as a powerful lever, motivating action.

You see, we evolved in a very different environment than the one we live in now. Millions of years ago it was a dog eat dog existence, literally. Darwin's maxim about survival of the fittest is grounded on a very brutal truth. In nature, you are either predator or prey. Everything, at one time or another is being hunted by something else. Everything is a food source for something else. There is only so much potential caloric energy in any environmental system and it's usually not sufficient to meet the needs of all the lifeforms in that system. It is this deficit that, in part, drives the engine of evolution.

When our species was developing, we lived under the constant threat of becoming something else's dinner. As a result, thinking about potential courses of action was not a luxury that we generally enjoyed. In order to survive in this type of environment, you had to react and react quickly. For example, when confronted by danger, you had to make an immediate choice to fight the danger, freeze until the danger passed or flee from the danger. Waiting too long to choose between the options often resulted in losing all the options. In this way, instinctually reacting to a dangerous situation became an ingrained behavior.

The motive force behind this instinctual reaction was the emotion fear. Fear of being eaten, therefore, became a trigger to act. Over time, other emotions also became ingrained triggering instinctual actions. The common element between all of them was the process of acting quickly when prompted by an emotional stimulus. In other words, nature had hired wired us to instantaneously act when confronted with certain situations.

Over the millennia, we continued to evolve. This meant that our brains continued to evolve as well. Our instinct to react was overlaid with the ability to rationally think. We now had the ability to think about a situation and decide what course of action to take. This meant that our instinct to react was in conflict with our ability to rationalize about a given situation. In other words, in any situation we were faced with a choice – act and then think or think and then act. Which course of action we chose could have a serious impact on how that situation turned out.

You see there are a group of situations where acting first and thinking later results in a favorable outcome. These situations tend to involve direct threats to our lives. For example, you see a bear and you move away from the bear without thinking. It's instinctual. You don't think "Hey, that's a bear. I wonder if I should go pet it. It is wild animal, but maybe it's friendly." No, there is no inner monologue about the best course of action. You see the bear and, without thinking you move away.

You may have heard of something called the "fight or flee" reaction. The fight or flee reaction is based on the same instinctual impulses that we've been discussing. Our ancient ancestors would be confronted with a life threatening situation and their bodies would automatically kick into high gear, preparing to either fight the danger or flee from it. When you see the bear, the flight or flee instinct causes your body to kick into high gear and react without thinking.

So, in certain situations, ones that mimic the ancient dangers our ancestors faced, our natural impulses serve the purpose they were designed to serve. Unfortunately, in our modern world, not every situation we face involves lions and tigers and bears. Instead, we are faced with a plethora of situations that pose absolutely no danger to us physically, but give rise to the same suite of emotions that a life threatening situation causes. These emotions trigger our instinctual reactions to act impulsively. However, in these modern non-life threatening situations, impulsive behavior does not serve to bring about positive results. Instead, by acting impulsively, we often cause ourselves damage and harm.

Think about a common stressful situation everybody faces every day. We've all been stuck in traffic, unable to move, while we grow later and later for work or an important appointment. We begin to get nervous about being late. We become fearful about the outcome of being late. Will we miss the opportunity that the appointment offered? Will we be disciplined at work because we are late? Nervousness and fear give rise to frustration. Why is the freeway so crowded? Why are all these people in my way, preventing me from getting to where I want to go? Frustration may even turn into anger. "Everything would be fine if all of these 'idiots' would just get out of my way."

The emotions that the stress of traffic causes begin to automatically trigger the fight or flee instinct within you. You aren't in any physical danger. However, the most ancient parts of your brain interpret those emotions in the only way that is possible for them. They perform their ancient function and raise your heart rate and respiration. They tighten your large muscle groups. They get you ready for a fight or a run for your life. In the throes of this reaction, you may have a vision of driving on the shoulder by passing all the other cars and getting to where you need to be on time. Your rational mind knows that driving on the shoulder is against the law. It also knows that calling ahead to your job or appointment and explaining that you're stuck in traffic and will be there as soon as possible is the most sensible action. However, the oldest and deepest parts of your brain are screaming that you need to MOVE! You need to get going NOW!

How you react to this entire suite of stimulus depends on whether you think and then act or you act and then think. If you impulsively react you have a small chance of getting to your destination on time. You have a much larger chance of getting pulled over by law enforcement for driving on the shoulder, thereby making you later than if you had waited in traffic. Nevertheless, a percentage of people will react impulsively. The small number of them that succeed will get a positive reinforcement of a negative behavior. The next time they are faced with an emotionally stressful situation, they will be far more likely to, once again, act impulsively.

This book is about channeling these natural impulses and using them in our favor. It's about taking the impulses, thinking about them and acting in a certain and determined way. You see, the impulse instinct that we all share is actually a two way street. The ancient parts of our brains use emotions as a trigger to control our action. Yet, we can use deliberate thoughts and actions as a trigger to control emotional behavior. We can act how we want to feel and it's an incredibly powerful tool to have in your arsenal. Imagine being able to act in a certain way and then, almost miraculously, internally feeling the way that you've acted. This power would allow you to positively control nearly every challenging situation that you face.

In the following pages, we're going to take a close look at what it means to act how you want to feel. We'll look at the process in detail, paying close attention to ways you can implement this technique in your own life. Next we'll look at the benefits of acting how you want to feel. You'll see the advantages that you gain by turning the power of millions of years of behavior around and using to reach your own personal goals. Finally, we'll look at specific examples of the "act as you want to feel" technique at work. In these examples, you'll not only get a clearer understanding of the process in action, you're also sure to find several examples that will work directly in your own life.

So, if you're ready, let's get started using the power of evolution in your life. Let's see how acting how you want to feel works and how it can change your life for the better.

What Does It Mean To Act How You Want to Feel?

We are creatures of thought and emotion. Our thoughts and emotions provide us a means to navigate through the world. Thoughts and emotions are how we process experience. They provide a give and take basis for our reactions to events. Because of this, these very same emotions and thoughts have a direct effect on how we feel.

There is a hierarchy of processing that occurs in the brain. In this hierarchy, thoughts rationally take precedence over feelings. However, feelings are generated in an older part of the brain than thoughts. Rational thoughts are relative newcomers to how we deal with the world we live in. This means that emotions and the feelings they generate can have the ability to overpower rationality. As a result, your feelings can trump thought when the brain processes information. When this happens, how you feel is then translated outward into the world as actions.

In simple terms, when this occurs, generally positive feelings result in positive actions. So, as long as you're feeling positive, there shouldn't be a problem with emotions preceding thought in brain processing. However, positive feelings, in most people, aren't dominant. We are creatures that evolved in a world where life was brutal, nasty and short. As a result, most situations we face today tend to generate negative feelings. Why? Because fear, anger, any of the traditional Deadly Sins really, were powerful goads that insured we took actions that increased the chances we would survive.

Back in the day, eating someone else's food, even if you weren't hungry, wasn't gluttony. It was a smart survival strategy. Taking a female from another wasn't lust, it insured that your genes got passed on instead of his. Letting anger control your behavior wasn't seen as bad, it was a way to make sure that you got the results that were optimum for you. What today are viewed as negative feelings actually helped to keep you alive a couple million years ago.

Today, the risk of being eaten by a sabre toothed tiger is slim. However, our evolutionary preference for what is now considered negative emotions continues. The behavior that once kept us alive is now largely considered social faux pas, mainly because circumstances have changed. This means that now when you experience negative emotions, those feelings result in negative actions. In other words, how you feel is how you act. Negative emotions produce negative actions and positive emotions produce positive actions.

Your actions are the primary way other people develop an opinion about you. So, negative feelings that produce negative actions results in a net negative opinion about you in the world at large. Likewise, positive feelings that produce positive actions results in a net positive opinion about you in the world at large. In short, your actions effect how others feel about you

So, it can be said that a predominantly negative outlook has a long term negative effect on your life, as well as your chances for success. Simply put, if people don't like you they won't trust you, want to be around you get in a relationship with you hire you, invest in you or simply want to be around you. When you act positively, the opposite result is obtained.

Think about that. Yes, your feelings have a strong biological predisposition to influence your actions. Yet, the opposite also holds true. Your actions have a strong biological predisposition to influence your feelings. When you make a conscious decision to act more positively, you begin to actually feel more positive.

You have the power to turn evolution on its head. You are a rational being. As such, you have the ability to program your brain any way you choose. You can choose to let your feelings control your actions. Alternatively, you can choose to let your actions control your feelings. In other words, your outward actions have a direct effect on your inner feelings just as much as your inner feelings effect your outward actions.

It's a two way street. The old parts of the brain can have a powerful influence on how you behave – but only if you let that occur. You can also have a powerful influence on those same parts of the brain by reversing the processing priority that guides how you interact with the world. When you rationally put action first, it has the same power to influence feeling that irrational feeling has to influence action.

Action seems to follow feeling, but the two actually go hand in hand. Either one can take precedence. It all depends on how you choose to react to the world. You can fall back on the ancient way of letting feeling guide action. Alternatively, you can let action guide feeling. Remember, we don't really act because of the way we feel. Instead, we really feel because of the way we act. This is provable phenomenon.

Think about doing a job that you really find onerous. Think about the one thing or task that you least enjoy performing. The odds are that your inner feelings about this job or task insure that you never really perform that task to the best of your abilities. Your feelings guide your actions and a mediocre performance, at best, is the result. Now, what would you say if I told you that a simple No.2 pencil is the key to getting better results each and every time you perform that task.

Studies have shown that you perform better at a task, as well as feel better about that task, if you hold a pencil in your teeth while you work. This, on its face, sounds kind of ridiculous. Just remember, we are an old species and there is a whole boatload of hard wiring in our brains that is more at home on the savannah than it is in the city.

So, back to the pencil. How can a common pencil allow you to perform better? Well, when you hold a pencil in your teeth, it forces the muscles in your face into a position that imitates a smile. Your brain interprets the position of your facial muscles as a sign that all is well. You begin to feel happier and perform better at the task as a result. The smile is a biological indicator that all is well, so your brain generates feelings that are congruent with that action.

Let's take a closer look at this phenomenon. There are a number of common behavioral habits that unhappy people share. Among these are likely fear, anger and frustration. These people aren't congenitally unhappy. No one is congenitally unhappy. They actually don't want to be unhappy. They want the same things in their lives that more outwardly happy people want. They share common goals.

Let's take one more pass at that concept because it's an important one to internalize. Unhappy people do not want to be unhappy. They desperately want to archive their goals. The problem is that they haven't reprogramed the way their brains process stressful information. Their reaction to stress is a one way street. The negative emotions associated with stress result in negative outward actions. They haven't yet realized that positive action eliminates negative feelings. The ingrained ways that they approach life conspire to make them unable to reach even the simplest of goals, time and time again.

Another way of looking at this is to imagine that you discovered actions have the power to influence emotions. Then, after that discovery, you purposely generate negative emotions. Would you be surprised that your overall outlook is negative? Would you be surprised to learn that your outward behavior influenced your inner feelings?

So, unhappy people tend to exhibit unhappy behaviors, so they feel unhappy. For example, many unhappy people aim for perfection in everything they do. They always miss the mark. As a result, they stay unhappy and reinforce their negative outlook.

This reinforcement of a negative outlook is the result of a mental habit, nothing more and nothing less. Habits are ingrained behaviors that re closely related to instincts. You act in a certain way because you always act that way. They exist largely because habitual behavior saves the brain processing time, as well as the energy that would have gone into that processing. From a biological point of view, this is a good thing. Using less brain power means using fewer calories. This kind of cost saving move makes sense for ancient humans who were always facing a caloric deficit. It doesn't make sense for today's humans who are much better fed. Again, our old behaviors are out of sync with our modern world and its needs.

The key to breaking a bad habit is twofold. First, you have to recognize the behavior that underlies the habit. Second, you have to think about that behavior each time the urge to act in a certain way arises. Knowing that a habit exists makes it a three hundred pound gorilla. It becomes impossible to ignore.

Remember, habitual, instinctual behavior occurs largely because we don't think about it. So, when you are aware of the behavior and think about it before you act, you reduce the power of the habit and bring it under your conscious control.

So, a habit that revolves around a negative emotion, such as unhappiness brought about by perfectionism, can be broken through the concerted use of several concerted steps. First, there is the recognition of the habit, as well as the ingrained negative response that the emotions involved in the habit cause. So, for perfectionism, you would recognize that this tendency exists and that it causes mental unhappiness which, in turn, causes negative behavior.

After recognizing the negative emotion that causes the negative behavior, you have to begin to consciously altering that behavior by changing the way you act. When you are faced with a new project or task, instead of allowing the negative feelings to control how you behave you begin accepting that good enough is good enough. You physically take actions in performing the task that reflects this new, conscious behavioral choice. In other words, when you act as if perfection isn't your goal, you begin to generate positive emotions that make you feel good about the work that you did on that particular project or task.

These positive emotions then begin to reinforce the positive behavior. In other words, you begin by consciously acting how you want to feel. These actions generate a positive emotional response. The positive emotional response then reinforces the utility of your actions. You act how you want to feel. As a result you begin to feel how you act. Finally, your feelings insure that that you continue to act in a way that generates those positive emotions. It is nothing short of a positive feedback loop.

For someone plagued by perfectionism, this change in behavior can be profound. A person who begins to act like perfect results do not matter not only begins feeling happier, they also begin exhibiting new positive behaviors. They start setting deadlines and boundaries when it comes to projects. They also begin internalizing the real costs of perfectionism and avoid that behavior because of the costs involved.

Take a moment to think about this phenomenon. We are, to a large extent, creatures of habit, but only if we let this occur. Our rationality gives us a way to break the bonds of biologically ingrained behaviors that no longer serve a purpose in our modern world. We have a choice. We can accept the negative actions that are caused by negative feelings. In some ways, this is an easier route. After all, bad habits are, by nature, effortless. On the other hand, we can make a conscious choice to reject ingrained behavior by taking the actions that will actually change the way we feel. We can recognize those ingrained behaviors for what they are – biological holdovers from another time in our species history. We can change those behaviors by taking the step to act like we want to feel. Our rational minds give us the ability to not only change our inner world – by acting how we want to feel we also gain the ability to change the physical world as well.

Takeaways for This Section

- Human beings are creatures of thought AND emotion;
- Thoughts and emotions are how we process experience – they help us navigate through the world;
- There is a hierarchy of processing that occurs in the brain;
- In this hierarchy, thoughts usually take precedence over feelings;
- However, feelings are generated in an older part of the brain than thoughts;
- This means that emotions and the feelings they generate can have the ability to overpower rationality;
- When this happens, how you feel is then translated outward into the world as actions;
- As long as you're feeling positive, there isn't a problem with emotions preceding thought in brain processing;
- However, positive feelings, in most people, aren't dominant;
- This is a direct result of evolution – negative emotions, like fear and anger, motivated us to take actions that led to continued survival;
- In the ancient world, what we see as negative reactions were actually beneficial;
- This means that we are biologically programmed to generate “negative” emotions when faced with stress;
- As a result how we feel is how we act;
- Negative emotions produce negative actions and positive emotions produce positive actions;
- You can have a powerful influence on this phenomenon by reversing the processing priority that guides how you interact with the world;
- When you rationally put action first, it has the same power to influence feeling that irrational feeling has to influence action;
- This means that how we act is how we feel.

The Benefits of Acting How You Want To Feel

We've seen how acting how you want to feel actually has the ability to feel the way you're acting. Acting in this way has the power to counter ingrained, negative behaviors that are impacting on your life and holding you back. This process, in and of itself, is an amazing power for positive change. However, in order to understand the process fully, and in order to implement the process fully, we have to take a quick look at the benefits of acting how you want to feel.

If you have negative habitual behaviors, these behaviors are caused by the way you are feeling. You react to situations in a way that generates negative feelings. These negative feelings, in turn, cause negative behaviors that reflect those feelings. So, if a situation causes fear, the behavior that results from that emotion is avoidance. It doesn't matter if the situation itself has the potential to bring about positive results. In some ways, the rational assessment of the pros and cons of the situation does not matter. The situation causes habitual fear and the fear causes avoidance of the situation. The result is a negative feedback loop.

Breaking the habit breaks the cycle of negative thinking. Forcing a behavior that is the opposite of the usual action the feeling causes allows for an exploration of the situation. This exploration allows for a discovery of the benefits inherent in the situation. These benefits reinforce the positivity of the forced behavior which, in turn, actually changes the initial feeling. Fear of the situation dissolves and is replaced by more positive emotions like happiness, contentment and accomplishment. This is the first benefit of acting how you want to feel.

When you break the cycle of negative thinking, you end up with a more positive outlook. This positive outlook results in positive actions which, in turn, reinforce the positive outlook. Instead of negative feelings generating negative behaviors that generate more negative feelings, you begin to experience a positive, upward cycle. Positive actions generate positive feelings which cause more positive actions. This is the second benefit of acting how you want to feel.

There are dozens of other examples of this phenomenon. For example, surrounding yourself with negative energy tends to result in negative feelings. Think about someone who is living in the past. All their thoughts and energy are directed to something that can't be changed. The opportunities of the present are rejected in favor of a pointless reexamination of the past. Regret causes sadness which causes inaction. By simply letting go of the past, regret is reduced, sadness decreases and more energy is available to take advantage of the positivity that exists in the now. The simple act of rejecting negative energy produces positive action.

By getting rid of the negative behavior, you begin to develop a more positive attitude and more positive actions. Acting positive actually make you feel positive. It's that simple and this is perhaps the true benefit of acting how you want to feel.

This seems counterintuitive to us. As a result, we're reluctant to let our actions direct our feelings. Yet, as unnatural as it seems, you can absolutely act your way out of negative feelings into positivity. For example, if you feel shy in a social gathering and you reject that shyness by acting confident you will begin to feel confident. Likewise, if you feel angry or irritated, you can act more compassionately, with more love, and you'll actually begin to feel the way your acting. Your anger will fade and you will not only feel compassion, you will begin to use that feeling and those actions to have a positive effect on yourself and the world you live in.

Takeaways for This Section

- If you have negative habitual behaviors, these behaviors are caused by the way you are feeling;
- You react to situations in a way that generates negative feelings;
- These negative feelings, in turn, cause negative behaviors that reflect those feelings;
- Forcing a behavior that is the opposite of the usual action the feeling causes allows for an exploration of the situation;
- This exploration allows for a discovery of the benefits inherent in the situation;
- These benefits reinforce the positivity of the forced behavior which, in turn, actually changes the initial feeling;
- This is the first benefit of acting how you want to feel;
- When you break the cycle of negative thinking, you end up with a more positive outlook;
- This positive outlook results in positive actions which, in turn, reinforce the positive outlook;
- Instead of negative feelings generating negative behaviors that generate more negative feelings, you begin to experience a positive, upward cycle;
- Positive actions generate positive feelings which cause more positive actions;
- This is the second benefit of acting how you want to feel.

Specific Examples of Acting How You Want to Feel

If you'd like to be more successful, act more successful. Carry yourself with more confidence, and exude the class that someone who has nary a worry would. Imagine how you'd feel, how you'd look and how you'd act. Then, feel, look and act like that! Success can mean many different things to different people, so choose what your version of success would be, and then act as if you already have everything you want and need to fulfill that vision. For some, it may mean traveling the world – if this is you, look inside travel magazines and imagine yourself in all those wonderful places. If success looks to you like living in a big city in a luxurious high-rise, act as if you're already there, tipping the doorman and looking out at the wonderful skyline views at sunset from the 42nd floor.

If you'd like to be healthier, act healthier. Make better choices in what you eat and the level of activity you get each day. Small changes equal big results, and they add up over time. First, decide what "healthier" means to you. Weight loss? Muscle gain? Better endurance? Once you know what it is to be healthier, it's easier to take those steps that will enable you to act healthier, too. Clean out your cabinets, get rid of the unhealthy foods, and restock with choices that will be easy to grab, yet still satisfying. Park your car blocks from your destination, and walk the distance. By enabling smarter choices that are also easy to implement, your actions have no choice but to follow! These seemingly small changes will set your mind up for success!

If you'd like to feel sexier, act sexier. Carry yourself with more poise, and expect that people will find you attractive. Sexy is very much a state of mind, so gather up all your confidence and project it to those you're around! Go buy yourself a new pair of sexy heels, or a pair of jeans that fits you like a glove – something that represents being sexy, to you. As you're shopping, spend some time people-watching. Find those who appear sexy to you, and study what exactly it is about them that makes you think that. Now you're armed with the information you need to act sexier yourself! It may not feel natural at first, but the point is that, after awhile, it will become second nature, and you'll finally be that sexy person you always knew you could be!

If you'd like to be rich, act rich. Consider what being wealthy means to you, personally. Study those who have the lifestyle you'd like to lead, have the material things you want to have, and have achieved the level of success that you desire. Emulate them in thought and action, and you'll soon find yourself reaching those financial goals that have previously eluded you. By engaging your subconscious in acting the part, you'll find that your actions will quickly follow, almost effortlessly. Consider the material things you'd obtain and the differences in lifestyle you'd maintain if you were as rich as you want to be. Visualize those things as already being true and concrete in your life. Window shop with the attitude that you have the means to purchase anything you'd like at any time. Actions follow thought patterns, and your thoughts are your road to riches!

If you want to be happier, act happier. Really think about what it is that truly makes you happy. What types of things would you like to do that would really fulfill you and give you true joy? Go out and do those things with the intent that greater happiness is your goal! Find music that makes you undeniably happy. Listen to it often. Maybe studying, or performing art really gives you joy. Go do it! Find time within your busy days to go out and do those things that bring you the happiness you want. Make it a priority, because no one else will do that for you! If it makes you happy, and it's not hurting you or anyone else, you deserve to add more of it to your life. So go out and find your happy!

If you want to be less stressed, act more calm. We all deal with unbelievable amounts of stress these days – and much of that stress comes from worrying about things we have no control over. If you can't change it, then stop worrying about it! And if you can change it, then adopt a calm, cool demeanor, and set about implementing those changes. Imagine what your life would be like with less stress – you'd have more energy to give to positive thoughts and activities. Internalize that there are some things you simply can't change, and let those worries go. Make a concerted effort to experience less stress in your life by making the decision to let those worries go. You'll be amazed at how much peace this brings you! And the more peace you have, the more you can begin working on those changes!

If you want to be more social and outgoing, do more social activities. Being shy and/or introverted can often stop people from enjoying themselves because they may feel isolated or socially inadequate. If this sounds like you, and you'd like more social interaction in your life, understand that all you have to do is...go be more social! Go out to places where there are people, and learn to be okay being by yourself around others. This will really give you a lot of confidence in social situations, as backwards as that may sound. When you're okay being by yourself in public, it's easier to be with others because you feel confident and adequate in your own skin. Realize and internalize how awesome you are, and then go be with people who know it! You'll have fun, add friends to your life, and possibly become the social butterfly you dream of being!

If you want to be thinner, act thinner. Correct your posture by standing up straight with your shoulders back. This can take 10 pounds off how you appear! Work on core exercises that will make your abdominal and back muscles strong enough to carry you properly. Get the proper amount of exercise to battle your bulge and make you stronger – even if you have to break it up into several small sessions daily. Alter your diet so that you're filling yourself with nutritious, healthy foods each and every day. Wear clothing that gives you confidence, and displays your personal style! Darker colors tend to make people appear thinner than bright colors, and horizontal stripes are a no-no! These are simply fashion guidelines that may or may not work for you. Wear what you feel the best in, and you'll look great no matter what that number on the scale says!

If you'd like to be less envious of others, act less envious. Think about what makes you happy, and aim for more of that in your life. Consider why you're envious of others and what they have, and then reach and expand to acquire those things for yourself. Most of the time, you see what others are bragging about, but you don't see all the hard work and dedication that went into getting those things. Realize that you, too, can have whatever you want if you're willing to put in the work involved to get those things. And if you're not willing to do what others do to have what they are able to have, stop feeling envious and be happy with what you've got. Feel more appreciation for what you do have, and make it a daily ritual to feel gratitude for those things. Love what you have while striving to obtain what you want!

If you'd like to be more giving, act less selfishly. Make it a point to give to and do for others without expecting anything in return. Allow yourself to internalize how awesome it feels to give your time, attention and resources to others that may not have those luxuries. Giving to others that are less fortunate than you are can be a deeply moving and life-changing experience. Small things like deciding to give a smile to each person you meet during your day can have big effects on your attitude. When you see how even tiny actions can positively affect others, you'll begin to feel the reward for acting in a less selfish manner. There are so many groups that need what you have to give – handicapped, elderly, homeless...the list goes on. To be more giving, just go out and give!

Conclusion

So there you have it. You've experienced the power of acting how you want to feel firsthand and what a power it is. We began by looking at the origins of impulsive, ingrained and habitual behaviors and how these instinctual reactions once served a very important purpose. We next took a close look at the phenomenon of acting how you want to feel. We concentrated on the specific meaning of the process and how it operates for better or for worse. Then we looked at some of the benefits that acting how you feel brings about. Finally, we looked at some examples of acting how you feel and how the process can positively affect real life. Now, it's your turn to take what you've learned and run with it. It's time to break those bad habits and ingrained behaviors, replacing them with positive actions that create the positive feelings you deserve. It's time to begin acting how you want to feel!