

Personal Excellence

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Gay Hendricks
Consultant

**Project
Grateful**

The New You

**Five Wishes
Achieve Your Dreams**

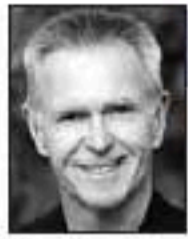


"Personal Excellence is the only reading you'll need to do for continual self-improvement both personally and professionally!"

—Sharlene Hawkes, Former Miss America, award-winning ESPN broadcaster

Five Wishes

A gift changed my life.



by Gay Hendricks

ONCE, WHEN I WAS IN THE early stages of my relationship with my wife Kathlyn, I had a conversation at a party that changed my life. I was very attracted to her, but I was already feeling an old familiar fear of commitment stirring within me. It was a fear that filled my mind with doubt and caused me to look for things to criticize about her.

I was achingly familiar with this pattern; it had caused the deterioration of several relationships. I'd get involved with someone, then after about six months I'd start to pull back, usually just about the time the woman wanted me to make a deeper commitment.

Kathlyn was relatively new in town and wanted to go to the party so she could meet people. I'd agreed to take her, and I didn't want to face her reaction if I changed my mind. That was another pattern of mine: To do something I didn't want to do in order to avoid the unpleasantness of the other person's disappointment or anger. Finally I decided to put aside my resistance and fulfill my obligation. I suited up, rehearsed my party-smile, and marched into the cold night. Little did I know I was about to have a conversation that would change my life forever.

After an hour or so I was tired of being convivial and participating in party-chatter. To get out of the fray, I sidled into a quiet den. There I found another escapee, a tall fellow with a shaven head, about 60 years of age. We greeted each other and exchanged names. He said he'd gotten tired of small-talk and was taking a breather.

I told him I felt the same way. That's when the conversation shifted. "Well, since we're here and we don't like small talk, let's not have any," he said.

"Done deal," I said, thinking our interaction was over. Instead, he said "Then let's either have some Big Talk or no talk at all."

I could feel the butterfly sensations of fear in my stomach, but I could also feel a heightened sense of excitement and alertness. "Yes," I said.

"Okay," he said, "Imagine you're on your deathbed—maybe 40 years from now—and imagine that I visit you and

ask: *Was your life a complete success?*

"If you say 'No,'" he continued, you'd have some reasons. For example, J. Paul Getty, the wealthiest man in the world, said on his deathbed, 'I'd gladly give up all my millions for one experience of marital happiness.' That's what he wished for."

I was fascinated by what he was saying, but I could also sense a growing anxiety. What did all this have to do with me?

"If you told me on your deathbed that your life had not been a success, *what things would you wish had happened that would have made it a success?*"

My mind went a tilt. What an amazing question! Right away I knew the main reason my life was not a success: *Because I never enjoyed a long and happy marriage with a woman I adored and who*



adored me—a lifelong blossoming of passion and creativity with a woman.

Ed asked me why that was important to me. The words seemed to tumble out. First, to have this kind of relationship would accomplish something I'd never seen in the world, and certainly not in my family of origin. Second, to enjoy lasting love with a woman would mean that my moment-to-moment experience would be rich and joyful. Third, I had a Ph.D. in counseling psychology and had counseled thousands of people on their issues and concerns. What good was all that training and practice if I couldn't figure out how to experience genuine, lasting love with one other human being?

"Okay," he said, "turn the wish into a goal, and put it in the present tense, as if it's happening right now."

I rearranged the words in my head. *My life is a total success because I enjoy a happy marriage with a woman I adore and*

who adores me. I'm enjoying a lifelong blossoming of passion and creativity with her.

"Is that something you really want?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And is that something you're willing to commit yourself to, *body and soul?*"

I immediately felt a gut-dropping sensation of fear, but in spite of the wave of terror I said, "Yes." Remarkably, as soon as I said yes the fear disappeared completely. I felt my whole body light up with an inner smile. I had no idea if I could accomplish this goal, but I knew I would die unsatisfied if I did not commit myself body and soul to the quest. Getting clear on this goal and its importance to me awakened a burst of energy and aliveness I could feel all over.

Fast Forward to Now

In my book, *Five Wishes*, I share the journey with you, all the ups and downs along the way to seeing my five greatest wishes come true. I'm grateful to Ed, the man I met at the party, for holding a space for me in which *all my dreams could come true*. Now, I'd like to hold that space for you, so that your deepest wishes and greatest dreams can come true. From my life and from working with people for the past 32 years, I've found that *we have a great deal more capacity for achieving our dreams than we usually give ourselves credit for*. I believe we can attain all the important wishes of our lifetimes—if we get our hearts and minds in harmony about what those wishes are.

To clarify your Five Wishes, ask yourself the deathbed question: *Was your life a complete success?* If you answer *No*, ask yourself the *main reason*—and write it down. Now write down *four other reasons*. Now, turn those five reasons into five wishes.

If you are one of the few who answer *Yes*, write *five experiences or achievements* that made your life a success.

Now, you don't have to wait until the end of your life to turn your wishes into reality! Start transforming your wishes into right-now, *present-tense affirmations* you can use to create *the life of your dreams*.

Your wishes are living, breathing expressions that can be changed, revised, and re-prioritized. Work with them, play with them, use them as navigational tools to guide your way, share them with your friends and family—and above all, enjoy the process! PE

Gay Hendricks is author of Five Wishes and with his wife, Dr. Kathlyn Hendricks, is author of Conscious Loving, Spirit-Centered Relationships and The Conscious Heart and creator of The Hendricks Institute (www.hendricks.com). www.5wishesbook.com and www.newworldlibrary.com

ACTION: *What would your five wishes be?*