

Life's 2% Solution Seasons Life

- Marcia Hughes, President, Collaborative Growth

A strong spice comprising only 2% of a recipe can provide full flavor to 100% of the meal. That's a given in gourmet cultures, but the same 2% concept has only recently been tried to flavor all of life with better satisfaction and productivity. Learn how to gain great value with a focused 30 minutes a day in [Life's 2% Solution](#).

Armed with the human resource program du jour, professional growth gurus pile on complex, convoluted solutions to the woes of unhappy, overwhelmed workforces. Too often, the solutions themselves feel so overwhelming that they add to, rather than relieve, the malaise. They wind up on the scrap heap, along with the morale of the workers they were designed to help.

That morale is rapidly deteriorating. The Gallup Organization reports that approximately 70% of workers—about 91 million full-time employees—are disengaged from their work. They're checked out and are just going through the motions. The difficult economic times are adding even more stress which can quickly lead to reduced productivity.

Enter Life's 2% Solution, a simple technology to improve outlook and performance the other 98% of the time. It's not airy-fairy. In fact, Emotional Intelligence (EQ instead of IQ) is backed up by considerable empirical evidence. It is based, in part, on the premise by Dr. Candace Pert, author of *Molecules of Emotion*, that people process emotions in every cell of their bodies, making the acts of thinking and emotion inseparable. EQ is enhanced through the pragmatic application of 2% Solution principles

Twelve hours of EQ training led American Express advisors to a 2% sales increase. EQ helped the U.S. Air Force save \$2.7 million because of the way they were able to select their recruiters.

Basically, the 2% Solution requires just half an hour a day (3 ½ hours a week if it works better to cluster your time). Spend that time doing something that's deeply nurturing, meaningful, fulfilling to you. It may be what you've vowed to do later when you are free to explore long-delayed purposeful pursuits.

This seemingly small expenditure of time is becoming even more critical in today's harried world, where work deadlines loom, the carpool to soccer awaits, the dry cleaning is piling up, and a dinner party fills up whatever free time is left. We get it all done, yet feel incomplete. This stress-filled existence leaches away our creativity, passion and sense of fulfillment. We sacrifice the long-view of our lives for short-term results, to check something off a list. No doubt, that scenario leads to burnout.

Optimism, productivity, happiness actually result from the 2% Solution. A little optimism—much like that strong spice—can flavor a person's entire outlook indefinitely, making a dramatic difference in quality of life for the individual and co-workers. A study done by Multi Health Systems in Toronto found that one of the top five leadership skills for successful professionals is optimism. And NPR recently reported on another excellent study published in the *British Medical Journal* showing that happiness is contagious.

There is a catch. The 2% Solution requires ongoing investment. You can't do it for three weeks, then stop and gain optimum results. It takes six months to gain the profound results, and a lifelong commitment to maintain them. However, unlike some self-improvement efforts, no one has to give up family or chocolate to get there.



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Let's look at the experience of Sara to view an application of the 2% process. As an information technology expert Sara devoted 2% of her time to making the world a better place for future generations by engaging with children and adults. She first worked with Big Sisters and now sings for community dances and is a volunteer teacher for the Small Business Administration. Sara reports that, "As a result of my 2% Solution, I feel more agile and more stable, I now have a strong sense of my capacities and what I need to do in order to give form to my ideas."

Individual personal improvement quickly leads to workplace benefits. The 2% Solution is a concrete, well-thought out process for assisting employees or motivated individuals in finding their best strategies for becoming fully engaged with life. As a result, they become happier, much more effective employees. We become happier citizens of the planet. This morale booster can make a big difference for teams as it helps them deepen their trust, become more authentic and expand their abilities to communicate effectively. The 2% Solution expands creativity in the workplace, breaks down barriers and sets our best thinking free.

It's all about allowing the spices that exist within us to season our complete lives—both personal and professional.