



VICKIE MILAZZO

RN, MSN, JD *New York Times* Bestselling Author and *Inc.* Top 10 Entrepreneur

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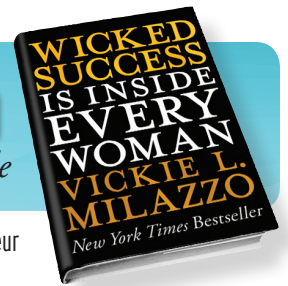
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Your Emotional Rescue Kit: 19 Stunningly Simple Strategies for Replenishing Your Emotional Energy

Taken from *Wicked Success Is Inside Every Woman* (Wiley, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-1181-0052-3, \$21.95, WickedSuccess.com) by Vickie Milazzo, here are 19 strategies, sprinkled with real-life stories from the author and her friends, that every woman can use to replenish her emotional energy.

BY **VICKIE MILAZZO**

- 1. GET AWAY.** Take one day off with no responsibilities like Melissa, who assigns Saturday child-care duty to her husband, sends him and the kids to the zoo or park, and enjoys a renewal day.
- 2. TAKE A VIRTUAL VACATION.** Women are sensual creatures. We enjoy rich fabrics, exotic fragrances, music, dance, and art. Yet, as we reach for wicked success and attainment, sometimes we leave these restorative sensory pleasures behind. Indulging in the occasional sensory banquet is second only to an actual getaway. Blanche enjoys vacations in her bathtub with candles, bath oil, a glass of wine, and her favorite CD. Maybe you'd prefer to lounge in your backyard or hammock with a favorite beverage or to curl up in bed with a deliciously light book.
- 3. HUG A TREE ... OR AN ICEBERG!** Getting off the grid is not always an easy thing to do. (You don't just hop onto the 5:15 train to Bhutan.) Still, make it a goal at least once a year to get far away, into something so different that it forces you out of your regular relaxation routine into one that entirely disconnects you from day-to-day life. Many people find that nature and wildlife provide two of the most powerful tools for relaxation in the world.



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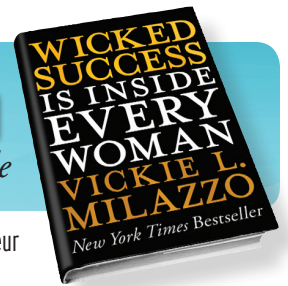
4. RENEW WITH MUSIC. Play music that energizes or relaxes you, depending upon what's called for. Choose classical pieces for intense projects and rock and roll for cooking, household chores, or packing suitcases. At night, play slow music to unwind and relax.

5. CHOOSE HAPPINESS. The fact is, happiness is not only contagious to others, it's contagious to ourselves. You may not always wake up happy, but wherever you are physically or emotionally, try to focus on the part of the experience that is good. Life will always throw us curveballs, fastballs, and, just when you think you know what's coming next, the occasional change-up. Being happy to the core helps us hit them back – no matter how fast they are or how many come our way. Think of the woman who refused to move out of the drama of a negative experience. For two weeks she dwelled on something that was easily solved in three minutes. How many opportunities did she miss during those two weeks because she chose to grouse? Remember, happiness is more important to wicked success than success to happiness. Decide every day that nothing will get in the way of choosing happiness.

6. MONITOR YOUR INTIMATE COMPANIONS. Nothing drains energy faster than negative thinking. Your thoughts do control your life; in fact, they are your most intimate companions. When you notice that you're wasting energy thinking negatively about someone or something, remind yourself that you're only attacking and harming yourself with such thoughts. This is not to say that you can – or should – ignore your feelings or reality. But when you learn to control your thoughts, you touch new places of feeling that are even more real.

7. TURN OFF THE CRITIC. Do you find that your inner "critical voice" rears its head way too often? For instance, you might wonder, *Is it me or was that secretary less friendly than usual? Did I do something?* Or perhaps you walk into your house and, in an instant, zero in on everything that's wrong: the messy kitchen, the scratched coffee table, the pile of bills waiting on the counter. However, allowing this inner critic to be your dominant communication style will negatively impact you, your family, and anyone else you encounter. Instead, try to intentionally notice and comment on the good things to fuel your success energy.

8. BE NICE AND WATCH HOW NICE PEOPLE WILL BE IN RETURN. There is an economy of emotion with niceness. Few things will give you more energy than the rewards of being nice. Likewise, nothing will drain your emotional energy faster than not playing nice with others.



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9. DUMP TOXIC CLUTTER. Because you have important familial, professional, and social commitments, it's important to eliminate toxic or emotionally draining relationships and other social clutter, just as you dump the mess that accumulates on your desk. This gives you time for relationships that matter – husband, family, and best friends. Likewise, guard what enters your mind. For example, it's important to be aware of the world around you, but there's no need to listen to negative news stories 24/7. Remember, each minute is a precious gift, so always strive to keep your energies within your "circle of influence."

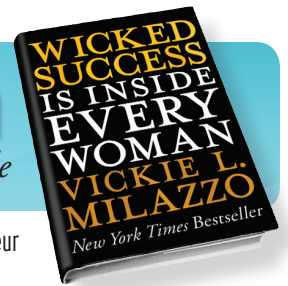
10. DETACH. Why put your own precious emotional energy into someone or something else that doesn't provide a positive return? Detach from emotional unrest that doesn't serve a purpose in your life and feel the increase in your own positive energy charge.

11. LIGHTEN UP. It's tempting to behave as though everything you do is intensely important. But unless you let go of some of that intensity, you'll be emotionally exhausted. When you find yourself making mountains out of molehills, ask yourself, "In one year, will this be significant?" Lighten up. If you push, you get resistance. Be less serious about the outcome of the little things.

12. LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE. As soon as you label something "bad," you limit your ability to have fun. Milazzo used to "hate" the cold, and then one day in Iceland a woman told her, "There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing." Since then she has explored the Canadian Rockies, the Antarctic, the Arctic, trekked the Everest and Annapurna sides of Nepal, and stood among prayer flags on a 13,000-foot high mountain pass looking across Bhutan's Haa Valley and the Himalayas into Tibet... and she loved it, because she brought the right gear. When you substitute the right mental gear for the word "hate," you will be amazed at how much emotional energy you gain. Take all such negative words down a notch in mind and voice, and notice how differently you feel.

13. LET IT GO. Do you suffer from dissatisfaction and frustration? Do you find yourself whining and complaining instead of acting on your passionate vision? Try letting it all go and see the difference that it makes in your day. Appreciate what you have. When frustration happens, take a breath and let it go.

14. ENJOY THE MOMENT. How often do you hear or say, "Thank God it's Friday"? Do we want to enjoy only two days out of seven? Why not "Thank God it's today"? If you are living for the weekend,



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you aren't living. You can't repeat a day or even an hour or minute. You'll never get that time back. Treat every moment as a precious gift.

15. PRACTICE GRATITUDE. For happy people, gratitude seems to outweigh desire. For unhappy people, it's about want, want, want, with little gratitude in return. Now, there's nothing wrong with desire, because desires fire your passionate vision. But gratitude must always be greater. Otherwise, you'll never be satisfied or happy. Acknowledge daily three things you're grateful for, small or large, and express gratitude to others as well.

16. ACCEPT YOURSELF AS YOU ARE. How often do we let the comparison game rob us of joy? If you're five-feet-two-inches tall, with sturdy ankles, you'll never grow into a lithe five-feet-seven-inches. The fact is, some things we can change and others we can't. Let the things you can't change about yourself go.

17. FIND THE FUN. Fun is healing, and laughter keeps us sane. Laughter raises T-cell counts, relaxes blood vessels, eases muscle tension, and reduces psychological stress, which enhances learning. Laughter can happen when you least expect it ... if you let it.

18. CREATE YOUR OWN PARTY. Growing up in New Orleans taught Milazzo that you can have a party anywhere – at your house, in your mind, or, as her father says while chowing down on a good muffaletta, in your mouth. Embrace life with energy and joy. Wherever you go physically, emotionally, or mentally, take the party with you.

19. EAT DESSERT FIRST. Sometimes we treat renewal like a dessert we have to earn by eating our vegetables. Mardi Gras taught Milazzo to celebrate *before* the hard work. Prior to the sacrifice of Lent, the city of New Orleans would party hearty for two weeks. So feast before you fast, and eat dessert first.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vickie Milazzo, RN, MSN, JD, is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Wicked Success Is Inside Every Woman* (Wiley, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-1181-0052-3, \$21.95, WickedSuccess.com). From a shotgun house in New Orleans to owner of a \$16-million business, *New York Times* best-selling author Milazzo shares the innovative success strategies that earned her a place on the *Inc.* list of Top 10 Entrepreneurs and *Inc.* Top 5000 Fastest-Growing Companies in America.