

## JOY LIVES

The word joy brings to mind many things: euphoric feelings, cheerfulness, smiling faces, laughter, effervescent energy, goodwill, connectedness and fulfillment to name a few.

People who are going through a process of healing may find that for long stretches of the journey, these things range from scarce to completely absent. Do not let that dishearten you even more. Joy lives.

Happiness is a feeling we want to have. We want it to be strong and continuous. Happiness is a state of being. We want it to define our lives.

But these days happiness is often spoken of as if it were a lost treasure. It is something we are looking for out there in the world. It is something we are trying to find in the things the world has to offer. It is something we pursue, as if it has run away and one day we will catch it again.

There is another way to think about joy.

Joy is a part of who you are.

Each of us manifests joy in our own unique ways, from practices of quiet contemplation to boisterous celebration, but it inhabits us all. It is a core piece of our human makeup. It is part of our nature, like a link in a string of emotional genetic code.

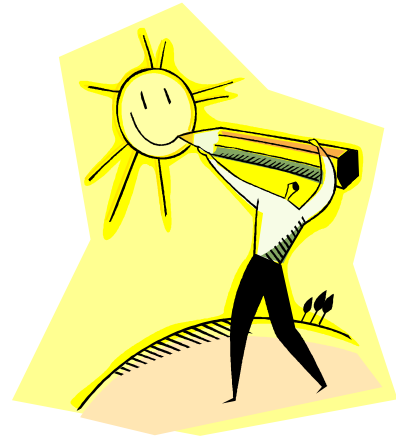
We are born with joy in us and it lives in us until we die. Life's trials may silence its expression, but they cannot extinguish its potential. In that way, joy lives.

If you feel unhappy, don't punish joy with disdain. Don't give up on it in favour of despair. Don't try to force it out into the open. Don't go out looking for it.

Just remember it. Remember that it lives in you. If you don't feel one spark of joy today, remember its potential is there. It will still be there tomorrow, and every day after that.

When joy has become lost, you do need to look for it, but make sure you look in the right place. Look inside yourself.

It has many hiding places. It is underneath your losses and disappointments. For these you must mourn. This is what dissolves the cover of grief and allows joy to once again shine through.



It is behind the wall of your fears. To take down the wall brick by brick, you must confront your fears one by one.

You will find joy hiding in the qualities and things you value. You will find it in your needs, your talents, your skills, your preferences. You will find it in your beliefs.

Be patient in your search. Explore with curiosity.

When you discover all these parts of you, when you honour them and begin to live in accordance with them, then you discover joy.

Because joy is part of who you are.

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