

Welcome

"I get very pulled into or caught up in the routines of life -- I want to feel happier and enjoy things more. I want to focus on the things in my life that I really like!"

"I feel lost and lonely. I need to rediscover joy in my life."

"I'm pretty happy right now, but I don't know why and I'm a little worried that it won't last."

"I consider my life 'happy' in most respects, but moments that I recognize as 'joy' occur only rarely."

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Be honest. Do you secretly think it's a little...*pathetic* to need a book to help you feel more joyful?

Maybe this will help: the above statements were all written by people who signed up for a joyfulness class and were asked to write, anonymously, their reasons for taking it.

And you know what? They're not pathetic at all. They're nice, well-educated, competent, outwardly successful men and women. Pleasant to be around, smart, kind, generous folks. Just wanting some more joy. Maybe a little bit like you -- and certainly like me.

As a spiritual director and joyfulness consultant, I've had the great privilege of seeing beneath the outward masks of success worn by so many folks, to that tender place in the heart where loneliness and yearning live. But in that same place, the seeds of joy also lie dormant, longing to be planted in fertile soil, to grow and flourish.

Let's say you have an innate talent -- for example, a talent for music. When you were a kid, you took oboe lessons, developed musical skills, and actually got pretty good. But life got more complicated and you put your oboe away for a long time, to the point that your skills got rusty. If you decide to take it up again now, you're going to need to dust off your oboe, dig out your music books, develop a regular practicing schedule, polish up your skills.

Joy's like that. All of us are born with an innate talent for joy. Somewhere along the line, many of us have let our joyfulness skills get rusty, that's all.

I developed the "Full-Spectrum Joyfulness" classes to help myself and others develop and practice our joyfulness skills. Many people in the classes demanded *more*. Hence, this little handbook.

What "Full-Spectrum Joyfulness" practices do is give your busy, busy brain a joy-seeking game to play -- something interesting and fun to do instead of ruminating or worrying. If you engage

in some of these joyfulness practices on a more or less regular basis, your general happiness level is going to rise.

And I guarantee, you will be nicer to be around.

I know, I know, all kinds of meditation techniques are designed to bring you into the present moment. But let me ask you -- honestly, do you *do* them? And *are they fun*?

Thought not.

This isn't a big complicated project. It's easy, fun, and playful. You can get started right away. And it works. It's based on current scientific studies of happiness -- hedonics -- and my own observations and experiences.

By the way, the spectrum part is not a New Age-y thing. It's simply a convenient way to remember the wide variety of joyfulness practices.

The best pace for this program is to do a chapter a week, devoting about 5 or 10 minutes a day to consciously cultivating joy.

If you practice some of the Joyfulness Games in each chapter, you'll also be gaining habits in all seven Joyfulness categories that you can simply draw on any time you need them, for years and decades to come.

You are encouraged to do a little journaling about the themes, and to make a covenant with yourself every week to reinforce your intention to practice the Joyfulness Game you've chosen.

Please -- come on in.

