

Unlocking Joy

(Part 1)

I want to propose to you that your destiny, the direction which your life takes, will be determined by what you choose to be your primary source of joy.

25% of job success is predicted by IQ and 75% by your optimism, social support and ability to see stress as a challenge instead of a threat.

Happy hormones generally refer to endorphins, serotonin (lingers in your system after exercise and can be released by maintaining a positive mood.), dopamine (Released when you move toward a goal), and oxytocin(Released through physical contact, intercourse, childbirth. These are actually neurotransmitters and your body's natural pain killers.

What is Joy?

Levels of happiness:

1. **Pleasure of the moment** eg .enjoying an ice-cream. Then its gone. Momentary. **Yet some of the most extreme expressions.**
2. **Success by winning or achieving.** Feeding into self worth. Eg scoring a goal. Feeling like the training paid off. But you can still have buyer's remorse. You look back and are satisfied/happy with your work.
3. **Contribution to your community** feeling connected and significant
4. **Fulfilment of a cause or purpose bigger than ourselves.** A sense of Meaning.

Chara - "extend favor, lean towards, be favorably disposed" – properly, the awareness (of God's) grace, favor; joy ("grace recognized"). "Enter the joy of your master", "They returned with joy". "Hear the word with joy" "More joy in heaven for the sinner who repents..."

Chadah - Rejoice

Joy is a state of mind and an orientation of the heart. It is a settled state of contentment, confidence and hope. It is something or someone that provides a source of happiness.

Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control. The quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in every circumstance. Rick Warren.

Ancient Greek – joy is something you feel moving towards your potential cf modern thinking of joy merely as pleasure.

Long run or child birth. Painful but joyful. Joy makes us want to invest as deeply as possible into our loved ones.

A common myth is that happiness comes from being blind to the negative.

“If you sugar-coat the present you make poor decisions for your future”. Shawn Achor

1. Joy is an internal state

It's not based on external circumstances

Phil 4:11-12

11I am not saying this out of need, for I have learned to be content regardless of my circumstances. 12I know how to live humbly, and I know how to abound. I am accustomed to any and every situation—to being filled and being hungry, to having plenty and having need....

James 1:2-3

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

This is why when people ask how life is treating me, I say “I am treating life well”. This is the ability to see opportunity in calamity.

1 Peter 1:8-9

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Joy is essentially more to do with the unseen than the seen. When you are delighted by circumstances then you just experience the lower levels of pleasure.

Joy is primarily a heart condition. Joyful heart.

Prov 17:22

A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Endorphins are released naturally through the pituitary gland and these serve as “feel good chemicals” and natural analgesics. Smiling helps too. Once you smile, the facial muscles are automatically stretched. The movement of these muscles then triggers the brain to produce endorphins. Research shows that people who laugh more often release higher levels of endorphins in a day. In fact, statistics depict that children who laugh approximately 300 times per day are shown to release more endorphins relative to adults who only laugh about 5 times per day. Some people dispute these figures but the point is that children laugh a lot more than adults.

One of Norman Cousins’s (Political journalist) most famous quotes is: *Hearty laughter is a good way to jog internally without having to go outdoors.*

2. God is our source of Joy

Isaiah 9:2-3

2The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. 3You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Joy and peace produce hope. Hope is a by-product of joy and peace. Our role is to trust Him. That's our work. It's to believe. His work is to fill us with joy and peace. Joy is a by-product of trust.

Philippians 4:4

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"

The degree to which you make Jesus the source and centre of your joy is the degree to which you will experience supernatural inexpressible joy. You will always rejoice in something but when you rejoice in God it produces true joy.

3. Joy is a central aspect of the Kingdom of God

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Luke 2:10

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

What news are you listening to?

1 Chronicles 16:27

Splendour and majesty are before Him; strength and joy are in His dwelling place.

Rom 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

The King of the Kingdom is full of joy so joy is part of being Christ-like.

Isaiah 53:3

He was despised and rejected--a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.

If we can't feel sorrow then we won't feel joy. Numbing is not selective.

Ps 45:6-7

6Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 7You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows.

Ps 45:7 NIV

You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Ps 45:7 New Living Translation

You love justice and hate evil. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.