

Living with Joy

By **Rev. Basia Christ, Ph.D.**



Living with joy is something you can do, even in the darkest, most difficult times. In fact, these are the times when it will do the most good.

It's easy to be joyful when things are going well. The real challenge is to feel joy when you feel alone, or depressed, or sad.

Joy is what makes life beautiful. It's what gets us through challenges and allows light in to illuminate the shadows. Joy heals our wounds, inspires us to greatness, and fills our souls with goodness.

When was the last time you hugged yourself and said: "I am the luckiest person in the world!"

Most of us have had an experience like this; some have these moments often.

Joy is that WOW experience of being alive. We experience it during intense moments, like when we fulfill a goal, achieve success, feel connected and a part of something special, and see beauty in our world and in those we love. You deserve to have this kind of feeling and emotion.

If you are saying, "What is she writing about?" it is time to listen to spirit and find JOY!

When we speak about joy, we often use the term "bliss," which is being absorbed in what we love doing. We take a break from our worries and trust all is right with the world.

Researcher and author Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania, wrote *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*. In this book, he writes about feeling gratification and being engaged as well as absorbed in whatever you are doing.

Happy People Are More Likely to Feel Joy

Seligman wrote we all have the capacity to experience these feelings and emotions, but happy people are more likely to feel joy more frequently. He believes happiness is a habit we can learn. It is determined by what we do and how we do it.

However, at least half of our happiness comes from how we perceive our world and what we expect to happen. Have you ever heard someone say, "I am going to be happy today." That person is developing a "happiness high" and has a greater chance to have joy. She expects to be happy and probably will get her wish.

What do people do to find joy?

Put your perceptions in high gear and read these 40 simple ways for accessing joy daily

1. Play with kids.
2. Play like a kid.
3. Learn something new (a new sport or game, a new recipe).
4. Stroll in nature.
5. Help someone (like carrying their groceries or paying their toll on the highway).
6. Be grateful for what you have.
7. Play with your pet.
8. Travel (even if it's to the next town).
9. Be romantic (kiss your partner, buy someone a gift for no reason, write a love letter).
10. Put on a costume.
11. Read a great book.
12. Laugh and smile, no matter how you're feeling.
13. Sing out loud (I do this in the car or the shower only).
14. Connect authentically with friends and family and

share your vulnerabilities.

15. Dance. (If you can't dance, hop)
16. Pay someone a compliment.
17. Listen to uplifting music.
18. Volunteer.
19. Exercise.
20. Set a goal, then reach it (run a marathon, ace a test, lose five pounds).
21. Meditate.
22. Write a "thank you" letter or on Facebook post "I appreciate you" to someone.
23. Walk barefoot in the sand or on grass.
24. Slowly eat a healthy meal.
25. Teach someone a new skill.
26. Memorize a poem.
27. Turn errands into an adventure (make a game out of finding items at the store like a treasure hunt).
28. Take a nap.
29. Ask someone for help and express appreciation).
30. Watch a favorite movie for the hundredth time.
31. Discover a new smell (a candle, flower, or massage oil).
32. Snuggle.
33. Get rid of stuff; donate it to a homeless shelter.
34. Watch a sunrise or sunset.
35. Make a commitment to change a bad habit, then do it.
36. Create something.
37. Eat an ice cream cone.
38. Have dinner by candlelight.
39. Walk in the rain.
40. Surrender (give it up to God).

Following are three things you can begin practicing today to bring joy immediately to your life.

1. Savor every moment

I had a friend who had cancer. She is in remission, but says she is glad she did because she now looks at life as a gift and savors every moment she is alive.

2. Pursue your goals

Don't give up your goals or dreams. Set goals for yourself, work toward them, and you will be happy and feel satisfied.

3. Find your calling

Do not take up space in this world and give nothing back. Share your talents and skills. Don't worry, you'll find you have many things to share if you pay attention.

We all need a reason to get up each day. Start today and find your "happiness high."

Remember, Spirit is always with you. All you have to do is ask for help, open your heart to God's word, listen, and act.



Rev. Basia Christ, M.Div. has a Ph.D. in Transformational Counseling. She has written for *Today's Woman*, *Beach Cities Style*, *Radiance*, and *Empowering Women* magazines, and, of course, *Amazing Women*, and the *OC Register*.

She donated her kidney anonymously on November 3, 2010.

Basia advocates for human trafficking victims through presentations and fundraising. She is available for presentations on human trafficking, gender equality, being a living kidney donor, and Reaching Your Greatness.

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