

Two ☹️

## Finding and Allowing Joy



### What Is Joy?

Joy is a very glad, happy feeling. It's a radiant human emotion you get as a result of receiving pleasure, satisfaction, and comfort. Joy is a blissful experience that happens when everything in your life is fine and you are all right no matter what comes your way.

Joy is also a spiritual condition. Joy happens when you are feeling blessed. It comes when you feel the presence of your Creator, assuring you that you belong and that you're not alone. Joy is when you know you are valued and important to this great universe.

I'm sure you've experienced joy, at least a little. But you deserve a whole lot of joy, on a regular basis. Don't wait until you lose weight in order to find joy. Find and accept it now, and you will lose weight in the process. But first, be aware that you may be holding yourself back.

The key for you is to *allow joy into your life*. Starting here and now, your finding and allowing joy is our mission together. The answer you've been longing for is in turning negative and sorrowful weight loss experiences into joyous ones. Do this with God's help and you will finally be able to manage your weight (and life) problems forever. It may seem hard at first, but don't worry. I will guide you through step by step in the easiest, most effective, and quickest possible ways.

## How Do You Find Joy?

- You find joy by making an effort to identify it in any given situation.
- You find joy by giving it to yourself: by doing something positive that will cause joy to happen.
- You find joy by allowing yourself to experience both joy and sorrow. To do this you surrender your blocks and fears to something bigger and more powerful than you are. (I call that something God.)

Each of us has a million different joys inside. It's simply a matter of tapping into them when you need them and creating new, positive habits of letting joy exist.

Starting now, make a constant effort to find joy in everything you do. When you work, see the positive and fruitful aspects of the job—such as the money you are paid, the help you are giving, the importance of your position. When you're taking care of personal business, find joy in getting it done as best you can. When it's time for a meal, take joy in only eating one portion. Feel the power and joy of having just enough (there's lots more on the joy of eating to come). Enjoy the good feeling of eating healthy, fresh, and nutritious food that's good for your body and mind. When you are active today, enjoy moving your body and freeing your muscles and joints. Breathe deeply the fresh air and let the rays of sunshine enter your entire being. Look at beautiful nature all around you: trees, flowers, grass, clouds, birds, and bugs—they're all gifts from God for us to enjoy.

Here are two “quick joy-starters” for you to try this moment. Pick one and do it right now:

- Close your eyes, and think of a time when you really had a good time: something like a special birthday party, a trip to a carnival or an amusement park, the moment when you just finished getting really dressed-up for a special occasion and were proud and happy with yourself. Take a moment to think of every sweet detail, all the good, joyful moments, and how wonderful you felt. If something sad comes up, fine! No problem! Let the tears flow, and go deeper and deeper into both the joy and the sorrow.

- Or think of a really special moment when you were with someone very special: a parent or family member you loved, a close friend, lover, a teacher or caregiver. It's a moment when someone really showed they loved you by something they did or gave you. Perhaps it was a time when you needed help or were in trouble; when someone reassured you or held your hand and told you everything was going to be OK. If you feel the joy mixing with sorrow and need to cry, go ahead. It's natural. Let this be a complete experience, full of emotion.

Here's a poem I wrote. It's how I find and allow joy into my life.

*Joy is in release, so thankfully received.  
 Joy is in sorrow, so sweetly mourned and grieved,  
 Joy is to be found, you find it through yearning,  
 Joy is in coming and going, waiting and watching, living and learning.*

.....  
*If it weren't for our  
 troubles we'd never  
 be able to appreciate  
 happiness.*

—An old saying  
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Notice that I mentioned “joy is in sorrow.” Notice, also, I mentioned sorrow in the instructions for joy and in the two jump-starts above, encouraging you to go ahead and feel it and cry if you want. This is for a reason. The secret is, that in order for joy to come in, sorrow usually has to come with it. Joy and sorrow are close friends. They are linked and cannot be separated. The same is true for pain and healing.

If you're like most of us, you've had a lot more pain and sorrow than healing and joy! It's high time you made use of those feelings. Let's now go a little deeper into the formula for joy by making good use of the sorrow and pain. After all they're there for a reason and, in that light, they may not really be so bad. Allow yourself to consider some new ideas about yourself.

## A Lack of Self-Esteem

Whatever causes overweight and obesity, be it combinations of genetic, brain or body chemical imbalances, habits or conditioning, psychological or developmental problems, I'm convinced that a lack of joy and happiness due to low-self esteem and

self-criticism have a lot to do with the condition. I've never met or worked with a person struggling with obesity who didn't have a rock-bottom low opinion of him- or herself somewhere in the recesses of their mind. Many have no idea they have it at all, because it's been deeply repressed for a long time.

Further, I've discovered that not only do people with substance problems (like overweight and obesity) have low self-esteem, there's often a magnified amount of sorrow and emotional pain in their lives.

## A Difficult Idea To Lose

It's strange, but for some reason many of us are heavily invested in feeling bad about ourselves. We may say we want joy and happiness, but we'll actually do anything we can to avoid it. We keep on feeling inferior deep down, no matter how good we really are. We allow ourselves to tolerate too much pain and discomfort, clothes that don't fit, hampered intimacy and love-making, furniture that breaks, and poor treatment from others, swallowing our negative self-esteem over and over again. We may hate our self-hatred, but we still hold on to it underneath.

So many of us overweight people are outrageously critical of ourselves. So many of us are grandiose perfectionists and, at the same time, our worst critics. Everything we do is too hard and not good enough. Many of us feel that we're fat because we're somehow lazy, weak-willed, or inferior. How critical can you get?

This self-depreciation keeps us committing a little slow suicide with every extra bite we take, knowing full well the side-effects of eating too much. We mean well, and want to eat less and more healthily, but we need the extra comfort and fleeting pleasure of "just a little more," or "just a little sweet or high-fat food," because we hurt so badly inside. At the moment of consumption, eating in moderation seems so impossibly hard and painful that we're "unable to do it."

We avoid exercising and moving even though we know it's going to make us feel better in the long run. It's just that we can't stand any more work or any more pain—we're full up with it. We're also way overworked and overscheduled. We absolutely don't have time to commit to a regular exercise routine, and, if we did, we're just too tired and too overwhelmed to do it anyway.

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*Most folks are about as  
happy as they make up their  
minds to be.*

—Abraham Lincoln  
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## Value in Misery

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*The most comprehensive  
formulation of therapeutic goals  
is the striving for  
wholeheartedness: to be without  
pretense, to be emotionally  
sincere, to be able to put the  
whole of oneself into one's  
feelings, one's work, one's beliefs.*

—Karen Horney  
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What would life be like if we actually did eat in moderation and get enough exercise? Would we really *like* to be healthy? What would happen if we put aside the negative thoughts and blocks? What would really happen to us if we were thinner and feeling really great?

Why can't we do what it takes to lose the weight forever? Why do we continue to eat too much and do too little physical exercise when we're unhappy? The solution seems easy enough; it just seems impossible to actually do it! It may be that the misery and suffering are actually *giving* us something. Could there be some hidden value in low self-esteem? Is there fruit in holding on to the weight?

One can spend years in therapy working on this topic. It's a big one. I do recommend therapy for people who want it and really need it—a good psychologist or pastoral care professional can be a real asset. That takes a lot of time and commitment, however. Therapy or counseling may be worth it, but there are some other, speedier ways I'd like you to consider right away.

## An Inkling As To Why

So many of us hate ourselves deep down, avoid making changes, and hold on to our problems because that's what we're used to. We have lifelong investments in misery and it's really hard to put them aside. Becoming something different may be threatening and scary to our inner, unconscious mind. The way we are works well enough to get by at the moment; becoming attractive and healthy may be too much to bear. It may be upsetting the emotional apple cart to truly lose weight.

The truth is, we feel we're supposed to be in constant need and to suffer. We're supposed to hate ourselves, supposed to be fat, supposed to overeat, supposed to be sick. We've been trained to be incomplete and needy from birth. Our culture dictates it. We're supposed to be constantly hungry so we'll buy food products; we're supposed to be sickly so we'll buy medicines; we have to be fat so we can constantly purchase diet

products; we're trained to feel ugly or esthetically inferior so we'll invest in fashion and cosmetics. Why do advertisers pick the most beautiful, perfect-looking people as models? So we'll feel inferior, dislike ourselves some more, and buy whatever they're selling in hopes of getting what we need. And on and on. That's one cause of low self-esteem. But there's an even deeper one.

Many parents, caregivers, and teachers inadvertently teach us to hate ourselves, in order for us to conform to society and be "normal." We were always supposed to be "good little children," the way others wanted us to be, and not the natural selves we were.

Our well-meaning adult role models may have been very critical of us. They did it in the form of "constructive criticism," so we would be more perfect and better than they are (because they felt inferior, too, perhaps). What happens when we're the target of a lot of criticism, being told we're imperfect and in need of correction over and over again? We begin to believe it. We begin to buy into the idea that we were not born normal and good, that we're grossly imperfect and need to be better, and we integrated this into our psyches at a very young age. Many well-meaning religious leaders do this too, mistakenly training us to believe we're "born sinners" or forever inferior to God. (Talk about sad!)

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*The unendurable is the  
beginning of the curve of joy.*

—Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*  
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When faced with big and powerful adult criticism, what does a little defenseless kid do? Kids haven't enough life experience yet to consider anything other than what they're told, so they believe they are inferior and need to change. They begin to make misery and inferiority their own, in order for the pain of criticism to go away. In other words, kids ultimately shut off any difficult feelings or emotional responses in order to be safe.

Some of us, from extreme cases of childhood criticism, abusive or dysfunctional families, got so much criticism and emotional pounding that we really shut down our whole personalities. We emotionally numbed ourselves, turned our uniqueness off, and became terrified of doing anything different. We learned to hate ourselves a lot, so that the adults around us would stop torturing us. It snowballed, and no matter how shut-off or deep into the shell we got, we still got hurt. Where was the relief? Where was the only easy comfort and safety? In food.

## A Fat Safety Cushion

Please understand... you're not alone, and you're going to be OK—because you actually are already OK. Nearly everyone alive has some degree of sorrow, self-depreciation, or feelings of inferiority. I believe that overweight people just have a lot more of it. My personal experience and research indicates that one of the main reasons people allow themselves to be overweight is to protect themselves from the pain of living. A layer of fat around every inch of the body can act as a buffer, a kind of force-field protection zone. A body that's not so attractive can also relieve you from having to go through the ordinary pain and strain of living. In extreme cases, making yourself obese can prevent you from having to deal with intimacy and emotional needs that may be too difficult to handle at that moment, because of the past. If you're sensitive, bruised, and wounded on the inside, you need a protective layer around you.

## The Bright Side

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*When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy.*

*When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.*

—Kahlil Gibran  
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If you're one of us who is hurting inside, who longs for some real joy, happiness and relief—congratulations. If what I've just been talking about rings a bell, please don't worry. You're going to be freed from this insidious predicament. There's a lot of hope and potential here. The trick is to use the pain and sorrow as motivation. The secret is to allow joy and lots of powerful love into your life, so you won't have to make yourself fat or protect yourself anymore.

Allow yourself to feel every emotion you have, but in a productive way, and then let go of its power over you through spiritual and emotional surrender. Don't just shove it down and ignore it any longer! Don't just stuff your body with food in order to feel better! Use the pain and sorrow for what they're worth. It's clear God gave you your experiences in life so you can grow and learn from them.

The more you hurt, the more you'll be able to rise above it.

The more you truly want joy, the more you'll do in order to get it.

Be willing to take a leap of faith to release the hidden benefits you're getting from bad habits: safety, protection, and survival.

## It's Mind Over Matter

Shift the focus. Train your mind to continually respond differently by actually acknowledging and learning to love your sorrow and emotional pain. Stop trying to banish or nullify it. You can't get rid of it—it's a part of you. Let it be there, but don't let it control you anymore. Allow that part of yourself to survive, but surrender its power over you. The next chapter is about just that.

Allow yourself to feel the joy of living, no matter what happens! Allow yourself joy in eating good foods in moderation and in becoming active. Allow yourself a spiritual connection and a purpose in life. Always remember that from pain and sorrow, hurt and suffering, joy springs eternal.

Find joy in the sorrow. Let joy come into your life by first accepting everything that's in you: good or bad, happy or sad. Then allow that joy to grow in you by slowly feeling the sadness and sorrow, accepting the self-criticism, doubt, shame, and worry as being a complete part of you and something you can deal with. It's now OK to try something new.

Here we go together into new frontiers of your life. You're ready to allow yourself some lasting joy and freedom, finally, and it is through God's grace that you'll now receive it.

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*Give me a dozen such  
heartbreaks, if that would help  
me to lose a couple of pounds!*

—Colette  
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*I found more joy in sorrow  
than you could find in joy.*

—Sara Teasdale  
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### PSALM 36

*7 How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*

*8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.*

*9 For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.*