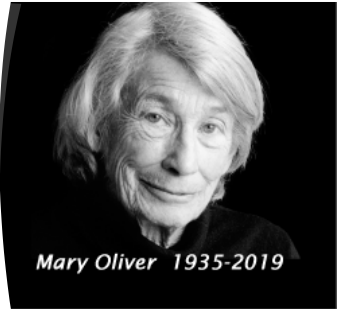


Cultivating, Celebrating,
and Instigating Joy in
Difficult Times
KELLY JOHNSON, MSW, CPCC, ACC

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*“Instructions for
living a life:
Pay Attention.
Be Astonished.
Tell About It.”*
EXCERPT FROM MARY OLIVER'S
POEM "SOMETIMES"

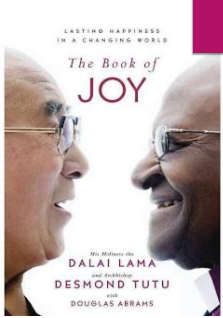


Mary Oliver 1935-2019

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The Eight Pillars of Joy
from "The Book of Joy"

- ▶ Perspective
- ▶ Humility
- ▶ Humor
- ▶ Acceptance
- ▶ Forgiveness
- ▶ Gratitude
- ▶ Compassion
- ▶ Generosity



LASTING HAPPINESS
IN A CHANGING WORLD
The Book of
JOY
WITH THE DALAI LAMA
and Archbishop
DESMOND TUTU
with DOUGLAS ABRAMS

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**Pay Attention:
CULTIVATE Joy**

"Discovering more joy does not save us from the inevitability of hardship and heartbreak. In fact, we may cry more easily, but we will laugh more easily, too. Perhaps we are just more alive. Yet as we discover more joy, we can face suffering in a way that ennobles rather than embitters. We have hardship without becoming hard. We have heartbreak without becoming broken."

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu in "The Book of Joy"

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HOW do we pay attention?

- ❖ **Be PRESENT**
 - ❖ Allow the world to impact us with BOTH its beauty AND its brokenness.
 - ❖ Mindfulness- Grounding exercise
 - ❖ 5 things we can see
 - ❖ 4 things we can touch
 - ❖ 3 things we can hear
 - ❖ 2 things we can smell
 - ❖ 1 thing we can taste
 - ❖ "I notice..." walks.
 - ❖ Check in with head, heart, body.
 - ❖ Avoid numbing for extended periods of time.
- ❖ **Be GRATEFUL**
 - ❖ Research shows a regular gratitude practice is the number one thing you can do to have a greater experience of happiness.
 - ❖ Gratitude is good for you! It is scientific AND biblical.

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Presence + Gratitude= Savoring

Savoring is the act of stepping outside of an experience to review and appreciate it. Often we fail to stay in the moment and really enjoy what we're experiencing. We are reluctant to "celebrate the win!" **Savoring** intensifies and lengthens the positive emotions that come with a moment of joy. Savoring techniques include:

- sharing the moment with another person.
- thinking about how lucky you are to enjoy such an amazing moment.
- keeping a souvenir or photo to remember it or share later.
- making sure you stay in the present moment the entire time.
- We can also help others "savor" by asking questions and helping them relive the moment and "celebrate the win."
 - "What are you celebrating today? What are you proud of? What was good about that?"

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Questions for Group Discussion

- What is hard about paying attention?
- What is important about paying attention?
- Which comes easiest for me: presence, gratitude or savoring?
- How might I practice presence, gratitude or savoring more intentionally? If I had to pick one to focus on this week, which would it be?

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Be Astonished: CELEBRATE Joy

"I LIKE THE KIND OF PEOPLE WHO GET EXCITED OVER THE STARS AT NIGHT."

Are we willing to be amazed, astounded, startled, stunned, confounded, dazed, shaken up, unnerved, gobsmacked, awed?

- Are we willing to be surprised?
- Are we willing to be delighted?
- Are we willing to be curious about something new?
- Are we willing to experience joy like little kids?

If the answer is yes, we must be willing to suspend CYNICISM.


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Cynicism is a form of "self-protection."

"Don't be afraid to be a fool...Cynicism masquerades as wisdom, but it is the farthest thing from it. Because cynics don't learn anything. Because cynicism is a self-imposed blindness, a rejection of the world because we are afraid it will hurt us or disappoint us. Cynics always say no, but saying "yes" begins things. Saying "yes" is how things grow. Saying "yes" leads to knowledge, so far as long as you have the strength to say "yes!" -Stephen Colbert

"Cynicism is cheap and lazy- an escape hatch from both life and learning. If patience leads to endurance and then on to hope, cynicism leads to, well, not much of anything except more cynicism. Cynicism is an existential cul de sac." -Milton Brasher

"Resignation and cynicism are easier, more self-soothing postures that do not require the raw vulnerability and huge risk of hope. To choose hope is to step firmly forward into the howling wind, baring one's chest to the elements, knowing that, in time, the storm will pass." -Archbishop Tulu




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> Recognize nothing good comes from cynicism.
 > Become aware of your influence on others.
 > Receive healing where you have been wounded.
 > Accept your current reality while also looking beyond it.
 > Experience and celebrate small victories.

<http://www.stanthonyshouse.com/your-journey-to-hope>

The Journey from Cynicism to Hope



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Hope is the opposite of cynicism.

Romans 15:13 (MSG)

Oh! May the God of green hope fill you up with joy, fill you up with peace, so that your believing lives, filled with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit, will brim over with hope!

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Questions for Group Discussion

- > What does the word "wander" mean to you? And what does it have to do with experiencing joy?
- > Tell a story to your group about a time you were "astounded" or "surprised" or "delighted" by an experience of joy.
- > How do you guard against cynicism in your life? Or do you?
- > As a person of faith, how does hope keep you going when cynicism wants to take over?

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Tell about it: INSTIGATE Joy

The University of Notre Dame's Science of Generosity Project defines generosity as "the virtue of giving good things to others freely and abundantly." When we think deeply about this definition, three parts stand out clearly. Generosity is giving "good things", giving "freely", and giving "abundantly."

- ◆ **Good things:** can take many forms; money or stuff, but also time, talents, presence, attention, a kind word, a smile.
- ◆ **Give freely:** open-hearted, with no expectation and no agenda.
- ◆ **Give abundantly:** from a place of gratitude and abundance, knowing you have an unlimited supply of love and compassion. There is enough of me and you to go around.

One of my favorite scriptures about our generous God: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God. 1 John 3:1

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Generosity leads to Compassion

- ▶ Definition: "Compassion is a sense of concern that arises when we are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to see that suffering relieved. Compassion is what connects the FEELING of empathy with the ACTIONs of kindness, generosity and other expressions of altruistic tendencies."
- ▶ Compassion is good for us, including self-compassion. The warm feeling we get from the act of "nurturing" comes from the release of the hormone oxytocin. Compassion literally makes our heart healthy and happy.
- ▶ Compassion is contagious.
- ▶ We are most joyful when we focus on others, not ourselves. In short, bringing joy to others is the fastest way to experience joy oneself. When we close our heart, we cannot be joyful.
- ▶ BE A JOY INSTIGATOR!

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Questions for Discussion

- ▶ Talk with your group about 2-3 ways you could integrate more generosity and compassion into your life.
- ▶ Who would you need to BE and what would you need to DO to be a "joy instigator" in your sphere of influence?

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Coaching with Kelly

Kelly Johnson is an empowerment and leadership coach, published author, and popular speaker and retreat leader. Prior to her work as a coach, Kelly worked in the mental health and addictions fields as a counselor, clinical social worker, and trainer in inpatient, outpatient and private practice settings. Her credentials include:


- ▶ Coaching certification from the Co-Active Training Institute (CTI)
- ▶ Active and certified member of the International Coach Federation (ICF)
- ▶ Certified in IEQ9 Assessment from Integrative Enneagram Solutions
- ▶ Certified Neurotransformational Coach (CNTC) in progress, expected May 2021
- ▶ Author of "Being Brave: A 40 Day Journey to the Life God Dreams for You."
- ▶ B.S. in Psychology from University of Texas at Arlington
- ▶ Masters in Social Work (MSW) from Virginia Commonwealth University

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