

That Joyful Feeling

By Barbara Ashcroft

Dr. M. Colgrove states that, **"Joy is the Feeling of Grinning on the Inside."** Do you have that feeling? It's the most pleasing and comforting feeling in the world. It's peace. It's excitement. It's contentment. It's hopeful and it's always present. When you wake up in the morning, is this how you feel? Pay attention to those first morning thoughts; they are very revealing. They will tell you if you are experiencing joy in your life. Are you excited to greet the day? Do you look forward to all of its opportunities and experiences? Are you wondering where you will get the time to complete all your interesting projects and connect with your dearest friends? Or, do you view the day as another long, boring, heavy, unfulfilling burden? Listen carefully to those early rising thoughts; they tell us so much about our current state of mind.

Many people are living their lives in a dull, monotonous, and joyless zone. They find their days long and empty; they feel their lives are without purpose and their only conversation is about the past. They are consumed by life's hurts and hold on to their deep seated resentments and anger. They have no passion for the day or hope for the future.

So where do you see yourself in this scenario? Would you like to greet the day with energy and enthusiasm? Would you like that quiet sense of inner satisfaction and peace at the end of the day? Would you like to experience more joy in your life?

If we look at how these optimistic and happy folks do it, we may be surprised to find out that their joyful spirit comes from within. It is mostly a matter of attitude and a particular way of looking at all of life's experiences that makes the great difference.

Joyful people love and respect themselves. They delight in simply being who they are right now. They feel worthy of all the good things that life has to offer. They know that we are all born with a full cup of joy and with a sense of self love. They rise above all the external attacks on their self esteem and hold on tightly to their authentic selves.

Joyful people let go of the past. They free themselves from pent-up resentment, pain, anger and guilt. They forgive themselves and others. They know that holding on to anger and dwelling on past hurts only holds them back and prevents them from moving on. They allow themselves a grieving period and get on with life. They know that all that happens to them is part of life's journey and they look forward to newer and more pleasant experiences.

Joyful people keep their thoughts positive. When they find their minds drifting into negative thinking, they pay attention to their uncomfortable emotional response and put a fast stop to these thoughts. They view all of life's miserable moments as lessons to be learned and are constantly asking themselves, "What did I learn from this?" They know there is often very little one can do about a tragic or negative life happening, but they realize they have a choice when it comes to how they respond to each event. They make a conscious decision to learn the lesson and move forward.

Joyful people discover their true passions in life and find ways to live them out. They know what inspires them and what makes their hearts sing. They recognize the feeling of elation that springs forth when they are all-consumed in an activity where they are using their special gifts. They know instinctively that they need to do more of this and they find a way to let their unique talents shine.

Joyful people are risk takers and are not afraid of failure. They move out of their comfort zones, get excited and get going. They acknowledge their fears, reach out for support, take a deep breath and embark on the first step to a new venture. They know that staying stuck in the past will not bring fulfillment. They are very aware that life is short and they want to make sure that they take hold of all opportunities sent their way.

Joyful people believe in a Power greater than themselves. They trust and have faith in this Power to guide and support them through unexpected crises. They know they do not walk alone. They take time for quiet reflection and listen closely to this inner source of Power. Their faith brings them peace and tranquility. They express gratitude every day for all their blessings. They always see their cup half full.

Finally, joyful people do not look externally for anyone or anything to bring them happiness. They do this for themselves. When was the last time someone knocked at your door to bring you a box of joy? How long will you keep waiting for this delivery? Only **you** have the power to make your life more joyful. It's right there waiting for you. Look within...it's an inside job.

*Barb Ashcroft offers a six week small group **Journey to Joy Program** which helps those who want to discover their hidden passions, to feel fully alive and to live their best life. Barb is available as well for individual consultation and speaking engagements. She can be reached at 905 814-6434 or barb@barbashcroft.com. Check out her website www.barbashcroft.com.*