The Book of Joy
(Nov. 2016)
Lasting Happiness
in a Changing World
“A Buddhist, A Christian, and a Jew walk into a bar...”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Wpw5DgQgKo
‘From the beginning, this book was envisioned as a three layer birthday cake.’
The Book of Joy

- Day 1: The Nature of True Joy
- Days 2 & 3: The Obstacles to Joy
- Days 4 & 5: The Eight Pillars of Joy

Joy Practices
The Three Layers

• The first layer is The Dalai Lama’s and Desmund Tutu’s teachings on **JOY**

• The second layer is the latest science on joy

• The third layer are stories (not only of the week)
Two men

Tenzin Gyatso
- 82 years old
- Born in rural Tibet
- The Dalai Lama (1940)
- In exile since 1959
- Taken from home @ age 3
- Nobel Peace Prize 1989

Desmund Tutu
- 86 years old
- Xhosa/Motswana, RSA
- Archbishop (1961 – Anglican)
- Polio as a child; prostate CA now
- Alcoholic father
- Nobel Peace Prize 1984
Douglas Abrams

- Author, editor, literary agent
- Of Jewish heritage; appears more Buddhist
- Founder of “Idea Architects”
- Has worked for many years with Archbishop Tutu
- Previously religious editor at Univ. Cal. Press
ARRIVAL

We Are Fragile Creatures
Dharamshala, India
(Pop. 19,500; Elev. 4,780 ft)
April, 2015

“I do not know why the South African government denied a visa to the DL when I invited him to my 80th birthday celebrations. I talked to him on the phone and enquired how many divisions of an army he had, because the Chinese government was afraid of him!”  DT
Foreshadowing

• What is the purpose of life?

• (TO FIND HAPPINESS)

• We create most of our own suffering, so we should be able to create our own joy

• Joy demands relationships
(The Meeting of Two Mischievous People is Wonderful)
Day 1

THE NATURE OF TRUE JOY
“I thought getting bigger rocks would make us happier, but I guess I was wrong.”
Day 1

- Why Are You Not Morose?
- Nothing Beautiful Comes Without Some Suffering
- Have You Renounced Pleasure?
- Our Greatest Joy
Joy and Happiness

“Joy is much bigger than happiness. While happiness is often seen as being dependent on external circumstance, joy is not.”

DESMUND TUTU
JOY IS ASSOCIATED WITH...

- Pleasure
- Amusement
- Contentment
- Relief
- Wonder
- Ecstasy / bliss

- Exultation
- Radiant pride
- Elevation
- Gratitude
- Delight / enchantment
- Spiritual radiance
Dalai Lama

• “Joy is different than happiness. Happiness is a sense of satisfaction.”

• **Perspective:** “The recognition that we are all connected is the birth of compassion, which results in joy.”

• “Pain is inevitable; suffering is optional.”
Desmund Tutu

• “Anguish and sadness are things you cannot control.”

• “The question is not ‘How can I escape?’ The question is ‘How can I use this as something positive?’”

• DT: “And through the tears, God begins to smile.” (... and Desmund whispered the word smile as if it were the holy name of God).
• A life without suffering does not exist
• Since we cannot control suffering, we must practice our response(s) to it
• Compassion helps us alleviate our troublesome responses (fear/anger) to suffering
• Sadness allows us to reflect upon and process bad events (to then take positive action)
Science: 4 independent brain circuits that influence our lasting well-being

• The ability to maintain positive states
• The ability to recover from negative states
• The ability to focus and avoid mind-wandering
• The ability to be generous
Our Greatest Joy

“The way to heal our own pain is by turning to the pain of others. It is a virtuous cycle. The more we turn toward others, the more joy we experience, and the more joy we experience, the more joy we can bring to others.”

DL
Day 2 & 3

THE OBSTACLES TO

JOY
“O.K., maybe I need to change my life, or maybe you could just change my medication.”
• You Are a Masterpiece in the Making
• Fear, Stress, and Anxiety: I Would Be Very Nervous
• Frustration and Anger: I Would Shout
• Sadness and Grief: The Hard Times Knit Us More Closely Together
• Despair: the World Is in Such Turmoil
• Loneliness: No Need for Introduction
• Envy: that Guy Goes Past Yet Again in His Mercedes-Benz
• Suffering and Adversity: Passing Through Difficulties
• Illness and Fear of Death: I Prefer to Go to Hell
• Mental immunity: *Learning to avoid the destructive emotions and to develop the positive ones* DL

• But growing older, I said, “Well, this is an opportunity for being quiet.” DT
Science: Telomeres

Constant strain from stress wears down our telomeres, the caps on our DNA that protect our cells from illness and aging. Our cells are actually “listening to our thoughts!”

BLACKBURN/EPEL
Develop **stress resilience** by turning “threat stress” (*it will harm us*) into “challenge stress” (*it will make us grow*).  

“Stress is dependent on seeing ourselves as separate from others.”  

BLACKBURN/EPEL  

DT
“Sadness may seem to be a direct challenge to joy, but it often leads us most directly to empathy and compassion and to recognizing our need for one another.”

DT
Science: SADNESS

Sadness is a very powerful and enduring emotion. It lasts longer than fear or anger. Study: sad people had better memory/judgment; were more motivated; were more sensitive to social norms; and were more generous than people in the “happier” control group. Pg. 110
Despair: The antidote is hope

“We must believe that we are a people of compassion. Human beings are basically good. You know that is where we have to start. That everything else is an aberration. Believe in hope. It is nurtured by relationship."

DT
Chapters on:

- Loneliness
- Envy
- Suffering/Adversity
- Illness and Fear of Death
“Now I’ll tell you a secret thing”

- Prayer
- Meditation

“Prayer is when we speak to God, and meditation is when God answers.”  DT
Day 4 & 5

THE EIGHT PILLARS OF JOY
Eight Pillars of Joy

MIND (BRAIN)
- PERSPECTIVE
- HUMILITY
- HUMOR
- ACCEPTANCE

HEART
- FORGIVENESS
- GRATITUDE
- COMPASSION
- GENEROSITY
Eight Pillars of Joy

• Each pillar is independent
• But each pillar is interconnected
• And.....each pillar leads to the next
PERSPECTIVE

There Are Many Different Angles
Perspective

• We suffer from perspective myopia

• Self-centeredness is our default perspective
  – Scientific studies of selfishness: People who more frequently say “I, me, mine” have a higher risk of heart attack and a higher risk of fatal heart attack!

• “For every event in life, there are many different angles.”  DL
Perspective

• We need a “wider perspective” and a “longer perspective”
• We ultimately must recognize that we do not control all aspects of any situation
• Our perspective toward life is our ultimate freedom
• Thought experiment: *Take something bad that happened in your past and then consider all the good that came out of it.*
Perspective

Today, I made a snow angle:
I Tried to Look Humble and Modest
Humility

• “Humility is not something that someone can claim to have.”

• Independence is a myth: We need others.

• Latin word for earth: humus. “Humility literally brings us back down to earth.”
Humility

• Arrogance comes from insecurity

• Do not confuse humility with timidity

• “When we have humility we can laugh at ourselves.” DL
The Beginning of Growing Up is when you see how funny you are.
HUMOR

Laughter, Joking Is Much Better
Humor

• Humor, like humility, comes from the same root word for humanity: humus

• “Humor that doesn’t demean is an invitation for everyone to join in.” (it is uniting)  DT
Humor

• “Life is hard, and laughing is how we come to terms with all the ironies and cruelties and uncertainties that we face.”

• Jokes help us to accept the unexpected

• Looking for humor is a skill and something that we should cultivate.
Humor

don't let reality
ruin your life!
ACCEPTANCE

The Only Place Where Change Can Begin
Acceptance

• “Why be unhappy about something if it can be remedied. And what is the use of being unhappy if it cannot be remedied?” — DL

• Acceptance is the opposite of resignation and defeat.
Acceptance

• Acceptance allows us to move into the fullness of joy.

• “Peace and equanimity come from letting go of our attachment to the goal and the method.”

• When we can accept what is happening now, we can be curious about what might happen next.
Acceptance

Who wants change?

Who wants to change?
FORGIVENESS

Freeing Ourselves From the Past
Forgiveness

• "Tonglen." The practice of taking another’s anger and fear into one’s self and then giving them love and forgiveness in return." — DL
Forgiveness

• “Forgiveness does not mean we forget.”

• Without forgiving we remain tethered to the person who harmed us.

• “Where the power of forgiveness lies is in not losing sight of the humanity of the person who wronged us while responding to the wrong with clarity and firmness.”
Forgiveness

• The cycle of revenge vs the cycle of forgiveness (we can choose to hurt back or to heal)

• Of all species, only domestic cats have failed to show behavior that reconciles relationships after conflict!
GRATITUDE

I Am Fortunate to Be Alive
Gratitude

• DL: “Every day, think as you wake up, ‘I am fortunate to be alive. I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it.’”

• DT: Greets almost every new experience with the world WONDERFUL.
Gratitude

• Recognizing the importance of gratefulness

• It is not joy that makes us grateful. It is gratefulness that make us joyful.

• Joy is the happiness that does not depend on what happens.
Is Gratitude Good for Your Health?

15 years research: Grateful people have better sleep, healthier hearts, and less pain.
COMPASSION

Something We Want to Become
Compassion

• Compassion is what connects the feeling of empathy to acts of kindness

• “The incredible thing is that when we think of alleviating other people’s suffering, our own suffering is reduced. This is the true secret of joy.”  DT
Compassion

• “We admire compassionate people. Very, very few of us admire a vengeful person.” DL

• “Compassion is essential. It is like oxygen.”

• Compassion is contagious
Compassion

• “Compassion is one of the most difficult and courageous of all our motivations, but it is also the most healing and elevating.”

• A core paradox of joy: We are most joyful when we focus on others, no on ourselves.
GENEROSITY

We Are Filled With Joy
Generosity

• Generosity expresses a fundamental aspect of our interdependence.

• One of the strongest predictors of well-being is the quality of our relationships.

  – The Grant Study: “The warmth of relationships throughout life has the greatest positive impact on life satisfaction.”  
    G. Valliant MD: TRIUMPHS OF EXPERIENCE
Generosity

• Three kinds of generosity
  – MATERIAL GIVING
  – GIVING FREEDOM FROM FEAR
  – SPIRITUAL GIVING

• “We must learn to live together as sisters and brothers or we will perish together as fools.”  MLK
Generosity

• “When we practice generosity of the spirit, we are in many ways practicing all the other pillars of joy.” — DT

• “In fact, taking care of others, helping others, ultimately is the way to discover your own joy and to have a happy life.” — DL
Actually, there is a reason....

Be good to people for no reason.
Joy Practices
DEVELOPING MENTAL IMMUNITY

Next year will be a great year. I can just FEEL IT!
Your optimism is noted, but it may require a lot of work to make it that way.

Then just... DO IT!
Okay then. Okay then!
Reviews - Positive

• 89% 5 stars on Amazon
  – “Powerful, exquisite, full of love and friendship”
  – “Life-changing for me”
  – “A book about the important things in life.”
Reviews - Critical

- “It could do with a good, strong edit.”
- “The book can, in some places, be long-winded.”
- “Scientific information would have been better introduced in the appendices”
- “It is full of trite platitudes…..”
• In conclusion, I will now repeat everything I just said in my Random Review
Myths

#1 - This is a self-help book
   (It is an us-help book)

#2 – Joy is happiness
   (Joy is greater than happiness)

#3 – Suffering and joy have no connection
   (We all suffer; it can lead to joy)

#4 – We can be independent
Take homes

• Look for joy; make joy; associate w/ joyful folk
• Practice ‘mudita’ : rejoice in others good fortune
• Best quote: “Wherever you have friends, that’s your country. Wherever you receive love, that’s your home.”
Take homes - (FOR ME)

• Read the book; re-read the book; then give it away

• Speaking of platitudes......

• ADOPT AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE
MAKE AMERICA Grateful AGAIN
Celebrate your life
We are too old to have a bad day
Life is short and we have not too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us....
Oh! Be swift to love; make haste to be kind.

HENRI AMIEL
“We create most of our suffering, so it should be logical that we also have the ability to create more joy. When it comes to personal happiness there is a lot that we as individuals can do.”