

Secrets to a Joyful Life

10 Lessons About Life from a Life Coach

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For the past 20 years I have coached hundreds of people to live more purposeful, joyful, and fulfilling lives and consciously worked on improving my own. I've learned a few things along the way about what you can do to create more joy in your life and I want to share them with you.

Before I begin, I want to make one thing clear: *We are all capable of creating great joy in our lives.* Everyone. Without exception. I know not everyone believes joy is possible for them. Early in my career, I was discussing goals with a client and brought up the concept of joy. My client, with assuredness and clarity, declared that joy was not possible for her. I was completely dumbfounded. I had to admit that I had never come up against this mindset before. But as I got to know her, I realized the only thing that kept her from feeling that joy was her concept of what joy entailed. She felt it would only happen when everything in her life was perfect. I have discovered many people have that view.

Perfection is not possible, so stop seeing that as your goal. We are a “we’ll be happy when...” society. “I’ll feel relaxed when my exams are done.” “I’ll sit down when my list is done.” “I’ll feel complete when I am married.” “I’ll enjoy my evenings when I live in my perfect home.” You know what I am saying. We have all said it at one time or another. My client saw joy as a state that she could be in IF everything in her life was the way she felt they needed to be. Her children

happy and settled, home completely decluttered, debt paid off, her work life more satisfying, etc.

With this ebook I intend to share the basic tenets of consciously creating a joy that occurs without all the ducks being in a row. While the process for changing your life might take awhile, I find it is in the getting starting, the feeling as if you have the control over your destiny rather than being a victim to your circumstance, that you begin to experience the joy that may have eluded you for years.

But joy does not come from having all of your ducks in a row. There will always be a duck out of place, a challenge, something that has our attention. Our job is to find joy in our lives without everything aligning. Can we find joy in our everyday life? Resoundingly yes! And so, without further ado, may I present the 10 Secrets (and, most likely, not so secret secrets) to a Joyful Life.

The key to true joy is two things:

1. True gratitude for where you are in life.

Do you feel grateful for your life? Most of us would answer yes and yet how often do you find yourself focusing on the one person in your life who causes you angst rather than the myriad of others who love and support you? Or you find yourself focusing on the one thing your spouse does that frustrates you rather than the dozens of things he does that go unnoticed by you.

I had a fabulous reminder of this one awhile ago. I like to have my spices organized by alphabetical order and my husband does not agree. (You see where this is going, right?) Anyway, one night my husband and I are standing in the kitchen. He was working on cleaning out my travel toothbrush that had

become dirty in the dishwasher with a Q-tip. I opened the spice cupboard to yet again see my spices out of order. I blurted, "What kind of man can't alphabetize spices?" Now you understand, my husband has a very funny sense of humor, thank goodness. Because his reaction was to look at me out of the corner of his eye and say, "The kind of man who would seek out a Q-tip to clean your travel toothbrush. Remember for better or worse? This is worse, get used to it!" I have to admit I giggled. He was right! Better yet, ever since our exchange each time I look in the cupboard now to find my spices out of order, I smile and think "that's my man, the one who would clean my toothbrush with a Q-tip."

I encourage my clients to look for gratitude on three levels:

1. For life itself -- you woke up, not everyone did.
2. For all that comes easy to you, all the things you take for granted. You might have a lovely home, loving family, a job that pays well, satisfying career, supportive friends, good health. Be sure to pause and feel gratitude for everything.
3. Finally, and this is a bit of a stretch to stick with me, your challenges. Yep, I said it. For the things that are hard for you in your life. Challenges in life call us to be or do more. We learn and grow or we keep experiencing our challenge. Look back on any challenge in your life. You will see that as a result of that experience you are different, you grew in some way. You might be stronger, more resilient, more compassionate, kinder, more spontaneous or flexible. Can you see what a challenge you are currently experiencing might be teaching you?

But here's the key, true gratitude is from actually *feeling* the love and appreciation for everything. I know gratitude journals can become a rote exercise, listing 1, 2, 3 then slamming the book shut and rolling over in bed. The *feeling* of gratitude is what shifts our experience in life. Look around you. In any

one moment I dare you to find three things for which you can feel genuine, heart-felt gratitude. (I double-dog dare you to find three things when you are feeling irritated about something!)

Where in your life do you need to feel more gratitude?

2. Living up to your true potential.

Where in your life are you not living up to your capabilities? You know you are capable of doing more, being more, but you don't for some reason. It might be in your relationships such as with your husband or children or boss. Or maybe it is your career, you are in a job that doesn't fully utilize your skills or you are not doing what you wanted to do when you grew up. Perhaps it is in how you treat your body, or your home, or your finances.

Where are you not living up to your full capabilities? Until you are doing what you know you are capable of, you will not feel completely satisfied in your life. As Thomas Edison said: "If we did what we are capable of, we would astound ourselves." It is time to astound yourself. Choose one area in your life in which you want to step it up and take a step toward more fulfillment, purpose and joy. And set your aim HIGH! Think big. In fact, think just a bit beyond what you consider possible for you.

I am ready to commit to living up to my capabilities in the following area[s] of my life:

Beyond these two main points, here are a few more ideas about joy I have discovered:

3. You need to figure out what you want.

You need to figure out what you want, or at least have an idea. The very first question anyone who wants to coach with me receives is: What do you really, really, really, really want. Yes, there are really 4 reallys with the final being italicized. I want to know what is in your heart of hearts. That life that you have only dreamed about, told your journal, or haven't even allowed yourself to think about since you were a daydreaming child. You know how most of my clients respond? Either a very quiet, "I don't know" or an exuberant litany of all they do not want. ("I'll tell you what I want! I don't want my job. I don't want to live where I do. I don't want my marriage to feel the way it does.") You get the picture. But while knowing you are not happy is a starting place, you need to know what it is you DO want to move forward. Joy comes in moving toward something that feels good, not running away from a life that we do not enjoy.

What I want for my life...

4. You have got to get out of your head!

Stick with me here on this one. Your mind is an incredible gift. Our brains are so powerful and, at the same time, if there is one thing I have learned in all my years of coaching, it is that the mind can be both a fabulous gift and the greatest adversary you have ever known. I have heard clients analyze their situation, then analyze their analysis, then reanalyze their analysis until it becomes "anal-sis" not analysis. We have all been there and I know you have, too. We cannot think our way through everything and luckily we do not have to!

This one you probably use already and may not even know it. Ever find a stressful situation did not seem so stressful after a good night's sleep? Or a great workout? Or a great talk with a good friend? That is what I mean by getting out of your head. If the solutions is not coming, continuing to worry about it will not help. As Einstein said, "A problem cannot be solved in the same consciousness in which it was created." You need to get out of your head and do something with your body or heart to feel better. Then you will get a new perspective.

5. We won't change anything until the pain of not doing it exceeds the pain of doing it.

This piece of wisdom comes from Tony Robbins and it is fabulous! (And absolutely true.) You will not do something, "wake up" as I say, to a problem until it is intolerable to you. Until you are so uncomfortable you must act. Think about a relationship you stayed in for way too long, or a job, or a financial situation, or getting physically out of shape. Sometimes the bottom has to drop out before we do something about it.

I see one of my main goals as a Life Coach is to raise your threshold for discomfort so you expect more out of life and do not let things get too bad before you wake up and do something about it. The lower your threshold for pain is, the faster you will take action. You will begin to exercise when you have gained 2 pounds rather than 20 pounds. You will begin to handle your financial challenges with \$200 of debt rather than \$20,000. You get the picture.

Begin expecting more out of life.

6. If something is going to change, something has to change.

I once had a client who was incredibly unhappy in her life. At the same time, she was a local T.V. celebrity and enjoyed the spotlight, she enjoyed the fame she had and that fame constituted her entire identity. Unfortunately everything she needed to change in her life would effect that fame. Every idea and suggestion I had, she said no to. Yet she was unhappy with everything about her life.

While her story is certainly an extreme, a similar story arises in almost every client story. If there is something about your life that needs to change, something needs to change. You might need to go to bed earlier so you can get up early, give up an evening of T.V. to do more, go out less, finally take care of your financial situation, eat healthier, begin to exercise, you get the idea.

7. The greatest motivator is fear...but you can't stay scared if you are going to succeed.

While fear is one of the greatest motivators -- it is usually what gets us to do something and act in the first place -- it will not keep you going. You may start exercising because you feel disgust for your body or you may begin looking for a new job out of sheer desperation or you may finally leave a relationship that has expired because you are frustrated, but ultimately you need to figure out where you want to go and get excited about going there.

You want to move from motivation to inspiration.

8. We need to accept where we are.

You may be out of shape, deep in debt, in a marriage that has not felt right for years, but if we feel regret, judgment, and frustration about where we are, we will just remain even more stuck.

Yet again we get to happiness and true joy is *not* about going somewhere. It is about being happy right where you are, and opening yourself up to more. As I tell my clients, your dream life is born out of "I love where I am AND I am ready for more."

So, we are back to gratitude to start again.

9. Key to letting go is forgiveness.

Chances are if you have been alive for more than 5 years, you have some letting go to do. You are carrying baggage from past challenges, wrongs, you name it. This baggage weighs you down and keeps you from feeling truly filled up and complete. Interestingly, forgiveness of your self is often more important and more of an impediment to moving forward than forgiveness of others. Both are absolutely essential if you want to feel unfettered joy.

The key is forgiveness. But how does one forgive? I gotta fool proof process:

1. Learn your lesson. Is any of it for you to learn? Whether it is something someone else did to you or you did that you are carrying, do you have a lesson to learn? (Hint: Yep!) What would you do differently if you were faced the challenge again today? I have news for you, if you did something you regret,

something you could have done with more grace, you will have another chance. The Universe will bring it around for you again...guaranteed so you might as well figure out what you need to do to be the person you need to be to respond the way you want to respond.

2. Consider this question: How are you a better person for learning your lesson?

3. Give the rest to God/Divine/Universe whatever works for you. My very first client ever had what she called a "God Box". If she was carrying something that she no longer wanted, she visualized a beautiful box that she would take down from her closed shelf. She would place her challenge/worry into the box and then tuck it back up onto the shelf. The next time she brought it down, it would be empty.

I once heard that you know you have completely forgiven someone if you do not dread seeing them on the street. Until you could walk by them with a nod and no feelings attached, you are still holding onto your baggage and that baggage is keeping you from your full capacity to experience joy.

Forgiveness has occurred when you can say, "Thank you for-giving me that experience." Every experience we have is there to teach us something. Every one. Once we truly pick up our lesson, we get to move on.

10. It isn't about not having what you want, it's about no longer thinking you can't have what you want.

Our happiness does not reside in getting what you think you want, it is in no longer thinking that you cannot have it. Stick with me here. If there is something inside of you that wants something that you do not yet have, it is because somewhere in your mind, there is a belief that says you cannot have it. We all have beliefs about what we are capable of creating, doing, and what we deserve to have. When you don't feel you deserve to have something, you feel bad.

Waking up to the idea that you truly can have anything you want is incredibly powerful! (OK, I know there are limits — you probably can't be an astronaut at this point and growing a third arm is a bit of a stretch — but let's not split hairs! :-)) When I teach manifesting to my clients, my favorite part is when they finally truly GET that they can create anything. The light that comes into their being is priceless.

You CAN have anything. Let yourself. Feel your heart open.

Bonus: You need to Feel Good.

Here's a bonus one. I know it feels perhaps a bit silly, but it is so integral to our joy and living a life that is deeply satisfying and fulfilling. Frankly, its simplicity makes it one to be easily overlooked by my clients. You need to keep yourself filled up with good things. Do two things every day with the express purpose of feeling good. It could be as simple as a hot cup of tea, a call to a good friend, a bath, a good, sweaty workout, fresh air, a brief stretch in front of the computer, a Feel Good Moment video from me, anything.

Don't believe me? Try it. I dare you. Money-back guarantee!

Summary

That's it. That's my list. Before I let you go to create magic and incredibly join in your life, let me leave you with a few words:

You were born with potential.
You were born with goodness and trust.
You were born with ideals and dreams.
You were born with greatness.
You were born with wings.
You are not meant for crawling, so don't.
You have wings.
Learn to use them and fly.

--Rumi

When people work with me, their lives change.

Are you ready?

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