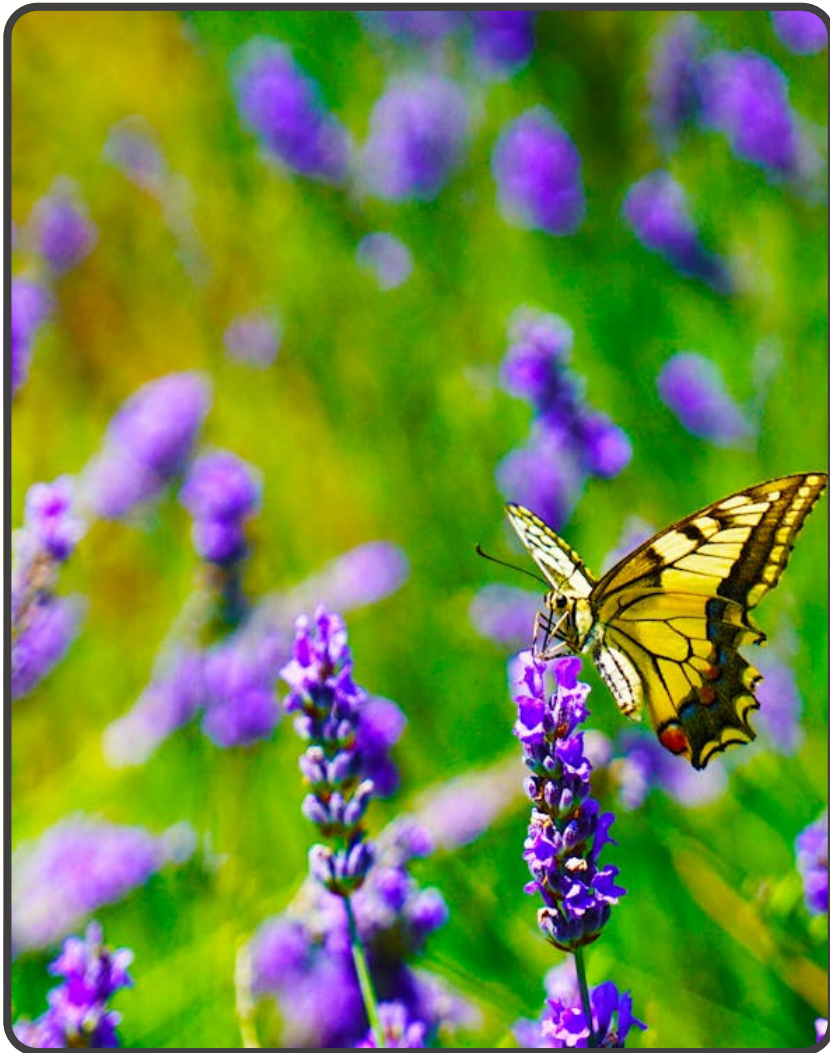


Joy

LESSON 4



LESSON 4

**“We cannot cure the world of sorrows, but we can chose
to live in joy.”**

~ Joseph Campbell

Have you noticed that when you chase joy, you end up being often disappointed? Joy is often a natural result of a life lived in gratitude, mindfulness, and self-nourishment. The joy we find through dopamine enhanced experiences (novelty and thrill seeking releases dopamine, a feel-good hormone) is beautiful, but often we need more and more stimulation to find the same sense of thrill and satisfaction, ending up feeling empty and confused. I am not saying that you should not enjoy the thrill of a new relationship, the excitement of zip lining, or the rush of exploring Paris in the spring. Those experiences make life magical. However, when you chase the thrill, you become a constant chaser, planing for the next rush, after you left the last one.

Our life can be compared to a flower meadow. The soil, plants and flowers grow under constant care, the butterfly's and birds that visit the garden are the “extra magical moments”.

What are things that create gratitude, delight, and calm in your life?

What are awesome “thrill” experiences that you would like to sprinkle in here and there to attract some extra magic?

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Take the Joy challenge. On our website you will see a worksheet that gives you the homework to do things for yourself every day and notice what creates joy in your life. This challenge can be even more meaningful if you do it with a friend and compare notes.

Is it easy for you to think of things to do that enhance your capacity to experience joy? Is it hard? Please remember not to judge yourself and to realize that all discovery can be initially humbling.

Some things that you might want to try to include in the weeklong joy challenge e.g.

find an hour to read. Take a walk. Drink coffee and eat chocolate (a favorite for both Sabine and Kathryn :).

Take a dance break. Your own ideas:

You will also see some joy collages on our website and perhaps you feel inspired to collect images of things and activities that inspire joy for you. Sometimes we need to play or make some art to release our inner restrictions. If you discover that creating time and prioritizing pleasing experiences for you is hard, notice what beliefs might come in the way.

Restricting beliefs might be: I'm just a gloomy person. Happy people are superficial. When you are happy you are not real. Life is difficult. It is more important to help others. Going for happiness is selfish.

Your own restricting beliefs about fostering happiness:

What I would rather believe:

Eg. I welcome all feelings and learn from them. Happiness is as important as other feelings in my life. It's ok to take care of myself and prioritize joyful experiences.

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In order to nourish your "soil" and take care of your "garden" it's important to create some good habits that will make it easier for you.

1. Start a daily gratitude practice. What are you grateful for today? Try to feel the gratitude with every statement you write:

2. Develop the habit to "play". Play is unstructured and pleasing. Play can be anything from dance, to video game, art, gardening, or swinging on the playground, or.... What does play mean to you? What gets you in a zone of it?

3. Practice Self-Compassion. Say something kind to you when you are tired or frustrated. E.g "your doing ok, this to will pass. I love you."

Your Self-compassion power statement:

4. Make time for you. When our schedule is overcrowded it's likely that we either prioritize other people over us, or we are deliberately busy to avoid our own feelings. Try to create more time for YOU. Joy needs some spaciousness in order to appear.

How could you create more time for yourself?

"When you do things from your soul, you feel a river moving in you, a joy." Rumi

"Life doesn't have to be perfect to be filled with joy." Anonymous