**The Book of Joy**

Lasting happiness in a changing world (a summary by Pat Evert)

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**Introduction**

Each chapter of this book is written to remind you why joy is essential. It is like the air that you breathe or the water that nourishes your being. Joy can be found amidst the difficulties of life. There is beauty behind ugly situations. Learn the greatest joy which can make your life more amazing. Everyone is God’s masterpieces and problems are instruments to reveal your sterling qualities. Four sources of joy can be cultivated in the mind and the rest are nourished in the heart.

Their painful experiences taught them not to be bitter but better, more compassionate, accepting and humane. Everyone is, in fact, a joy to others since their birth. You do not need to be perfect. You just need to be a better version of yourself. There is always something good in every difficulty. There is an unseen benefit in every problem. There is a major lesson hiding inside it. If you learn not to be morose, bitter, and angry during difficult moments, you will be gaining more in life. Believe that you are strong and capable of overcoming obstacles by learning how to use your inner strength. Learn to accept the situation with an open heart and mind. Joy is found within the deep recesses of your mind and your heart. It is a personal thing. It is triggered by positive actions and positive responses of people. **You become joyful when you bring joy to other people.** When you become unselfish, generous, considerate, kind and compassionate, you discover yourself. You learn to become a better person. You need people to sustain your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. People that you meet are not accidents. They play minor and major roles to mold you, promote you and change you. **Every person is essential to your existence. You are essential to other people.**

**The Essence of True Joy**

People need to focus more on developing inner values, which are the essences of true humanity. Problems can either come from the mind or the heart. Dalai Lama emphasized the importance of mind development by looking deep inside the heart and not from the outside. Dalai Lama gently squeezed his pal’s hand and said that joy for him means satisfaction. When he looked at the whole world beset with greater problems, he stopped worrying. He realized that there were others facing the same condition. **shifting the mindset—from oneself to others, from pains to compassion.** Once you practice this technique, you feel your pain lessens, know that you are not alone in the misery and recognize the reality that **everybody is connected** somehow. It gives rise
by Dalai Lama

to compassion and empathy. Experiencing the “lows” of life made him more useful. They both wanted to convey an important message to the world - that everybody is God’s children and they are loved. Suffering, especially intense suffering is a vital spice of life to develop people’s sense of compassion. **Great adversity produces excellent creations.** The real source of suffering is thinking constantly about self. **The real source of happiness is shifting from this thought and becoming more understanding of others’ plight,** to lessen self-absorption. The context of this teaching is learning not to focus on what you want and obsessing on something. “Trying to seek happiness through sensory gratification is like trying to quench your thirst by drinking saltwater.” This is one of the famous Tibetan sayings which shows the connection between pleasure and joy. As a monk, Dalai Lama renounced enjoyment and pleasure including sex. When people experience more pleasures, they become numb to the effects and take joy for granted.

An Ubuntu concept believes that “A person is a person through other persons.” It needed two people to be born. God says in the Bible - “It is not good for Adam to be alone.” It is the natural course of life. People are meant to complement another. The sad thing is most people are blinded to this connection until great mishaps happen. He answered that ultimate joy is achieved when people strive to be good and compassionate. Happy people forgive and love more compared to unhappy ones. The Dalai Lama stressed that **the only cure to pain is not to dwell on it but focus on others’ pains.**

**- The obstacles of joy**

Learning how to develop mental immunity and facing life with an open heart and mind will help you overcome the obstacles to joy. Mental immunity can be achieved by avoiding destructive emotions, fear, worry, anger and despair, and developing positive ones. Cultivating a sound, healthy mind takes patience, determination, will and commitment. Archbishop Tutu added that **it is important for people to accept their true nature** then begin cultivating a healthy body, mind, and spirit. dealing with the obstacles of joy require an adjustment of attitude. **Also acceptance of what life brings us is the first step.** It is important to understand why people attack you, once you realize that your own attitude triggers adverse reactions from others, your intense anger will dissipate. You learn to forgive, be compassionate and be kind to others. The trials, difficulties and everything that happens in life are meant to mold you into perfection. You are a masterpiece in the making. The Archbishop who has insomnia said that whenever he could not sleep, he would think of other people in the world with the same condition and pray. This lessened his distress and worry. **It helps to see oneself as one piece of the whole.** Dalai Lama reminded everyone to take care of their health especially their mind. A **healthy mind is calm.** Both anger and fear destroy a calm mind. Tiredness also brings these emotions so learn to relax. Sadness is the opposite of joy. It is a powerful yet torturing emotion. It lasts longer than anger and fear. However, it often makes people compassionate to the need of others.

**- The eight pillars of joy**

#1 Perspective - A healthy, sound perspective is the strong foundation of joy. It is also important to view every situation from different angles. By doing this, you see the world in a wider
perspective and **realize that you are more fortunate compared to others.** Once you understand this truth, your anxiety and worry begin to dissipate. You start to be thankful and feel joy in your heart. The bigger picture helps you move away from self-limiting perceptions.

#2 Humility - reincarnation is to remind man that worldly roles are just temporary. **Watch a bug** or other small creatures around you and ponder the realization that it is living a better, easier, and more independent life than you. It reminded him that these creatures are God’s children and have intrinsic values so there is no need to feel superior or inferior.

# 3 Humor - “Laughter is the best medicine,” accepting everything without stressing yourself if it is too much. Show that you can **laugh at yourself.** The ability to make yourself a subject to make people laugh shows others that you are humble.

#4 Acceptance - He learned to accept that suffering was part of his journey to become a better teacher, preacher, and spiritual leader. A **joyful life begins when you learn to accept your conditions** and the simple pleasures that come your way. Adverse reaction and resistance keep you in the state of despair, criticism, denial and even addiction. It keeps you away from joy. The only way to cut the chain of resistance is to accept situations with an open mind and heart. See everything as a divine gift.

#5 Forgiveness - The heart is the center of human emotions. When it is full of negative emotions –anger, hate, sadness, pain or grief, life is uncomfortable and unsatisfying. Fill it with positive emotions –love, compassion, generosity and gratitude, life becomes easy and full of joy. You can forgive and yet, the scars remain in the heart. When you forgive, you liberate yourself and get back the power to live with joy again.

#6 Gratitude - every day, it is important to be thankful –for the gift of life. Let’s rejoice and celebrate what is good in life which leads to joyful existence. They become more compassionate and generous.

#7 Compassion - It is a genuine concern about other’s happiness and comfort. **When you begin thinking of how can alleviate others’ suffering and less of your own condition, you start nurturing your inner joy.** Another thing to consider is self-compassion. Most people often neglect it. It is connected to the concept of self-acceptance. It means recognizing your own vulnerabilities, frailties and weaknesses. Accepting them is important, it shows self-love. When you love and accept yourself as you are, it isn’t hard to extend compassion to others. **The shortest path to feeling joy is to bring joy to other people.**

#8 Generosity - compassion with generosity makes life more joyful. You can be generous with your money, time or deeds. Be happy that you have the capacity to help others and not the other way around.