

Joy in the Moment

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The ability to enjoy simple pleasures is probably one of the most accurate indicators of self-worth. People who don't value themselves invariably struggle to enjoy life. Or else they require a lot of external stimulation, such as alcohol, drugs, attention, or shopping. On the other hand, when you feel good about yourself, even watching the rain on the window can be pleasurable. The sunlight through the trees becomes your art gallery. Even the most mundane task in a daily routine can be a joy.

“Because
I'm worth it.”



If we allow it, our days can be filled with hundreds of pleasurable moments. But what gets in the way of enjoying them? The usual answer is our stresses and preoccupations. If I don't notice the sunlight or don't taste the coffee, it's usually because my attention is elsewhere. Perhaps I'm worried about a presentation or how to respond to an email.

We're often preoccupied by what we don't have and blind to what is there. We don't have the perfect shape, and we fail to enjoy the robust health we do have. We think about the absence of that perfect partner and take for granted our many friends. We may be frustrated that our career is not at another level and we're blind to the kindness of supportive colleagues. It's so easy to think about what is not there and completely miss what is.

When we focus on pleasure in the moment, our attention is brought back to reality. This is its beauty and power. We are not thinking about tomorrow or yesterday. We can release ourselves to the enjoyment of what is, today. This includes our experience of ourselves in that moment—in other words, our self-worth.

Practice: Joy in the Moment

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This practice is particularly valuable when life is stressful, when there is an avalanche of things to do, or your brain is hijacked by worry. It's also effective in times of sadness or loss.

While this practice works with any pleasurable activity over any duration, it's designed to be done in ten minutes. Obviously, some sources of pleasure—such as swimming, cooking, and (hopefully) sex—will take longer. You may need to adapt the instructions below depending on what you are going to do.

Ideas for brief joy-in-the-moment activities include listening to music, walking, dancing, watching a comedy clip, consuming your favorite coffee or ice cream, petting a dog or a cat, taking a shower, doing some stretches or meditation, reading (not

work-related), calling a friend, brushing your teeth, watching kids at play, or just lying down.

1. Deal with the Pleasure Saboteurs: those voices in your head that may deny you the pleasure of the next ten minutes. Examples: "I'm too busy for this," "I'm not entitled," "Adults don't do this in daytime," "This is not the moment," and so on. Whatever these voices are, they need to be shown the door. Even if you are in the middle of the most complex negotiation of your life, you are entitled to a ten-minute break. Do something physical and decisive to brush off the voices (take thirty seconds for this). Perhaps walk outside or turn off your phone. Boundaries are important for pleasure.
2. Assert your right to these ten minutes and set your intention to express your self-worth in whatever activity you are going to do. (Shift #1 and #2 together.) A good quality coffee is pleasurable. When sipped with self-worth, it's even more powerful. For thirty seconds, as you begin, repeat your mantra.
3. For the following ten minutes, try to suspend all mental activity as much as you can. According to Ovid, "A field that is rested gives a beautiful crop." Your mind probably works very hard. Why not give it the gift of rest for just ten minutes? Instead of thinking, can you turn your whole attention to the joy of your activity. As David Whyte notes, "The antidote to exhaustion is not rest . . . but wholeheartedness."
4. When distractions happen, no judgment. Just repeat your mantra and resume the activity.
5. If you wish to prolong the pleasure, please do so.
6. As you conclude, notice how you feel, particularly your energy level and mental sharpness. Remember this for next time. When can you do this again?

Some Safari participants have found it helpful to give their Joy in the Moment activity a name, such as the "Power of Now Walk," the "From John to John Gift of Coffee" or the "Pinou Time" with their pet cat.

Everything is waiting for you

*Your great mistake is to act the drama
as if you were alone. As if life
were a progressive and cunning crime
with no witness to the tiny hidden
transgressions. To feel abandoned is to deny
the intimacy of your surroundings. Surely,
even you, at times, have felt the grand array;
the swelling presence, and the chorus, crowding
out your solo voice. You must note
the way the soap dish enables you,
or the window latch grants you freedom.
Alertness is the hidden discipline of familiarity.
The stairs are your mentor of things
to come, the doors have always been there
to frighten you and invite you,
and the tiny speaker in the phone
is your dream-ladder to divinity.*

*Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into
the conversation. The kettle is singing
even as it pours you a drink, the cooking pots
have left their arrogant aloofness and
seen the good in you at last. All the birds
and creatures of the world are unutterably
themselves. Everything is waiting for you.*

DAVID WHYTE

“It’s the simple things
in life that are the most
extraordinary.”

PAULO COELHO

Exercises for the Terrain of Environment and Leisure

1. How do you feel about going to the gym? Or running or yoga, whatever your “must get to . . .” activity is. Is it a true source of pleasure for you?
2. Write your own list of ten to twenty pleasures, ideally those in which you can indulge regularly.
3. Make a self-worth playlist of music that makes your heart sing and that reinforces an unconditional relationship with yourself.
4. What gets in the way of enjoying your job? Could you have more pleasure at work, even if your present work is not ideal?
5. What minor changes could you make to your daily environment that would bring you joy and remind you of who you are?
6. What would be a useful mantra to support you making these changes as an expression of self-worth?
7. Where do you experience beauty in your life?
8. When you walk through your door upon coming home, what is the first thought that goes through your head? What does that tell you about your self-worth?

At the beginning of the book, you may have downloaded the Self-Worth Stocktake. It might be interesting to do it again now. See the Resources page on SelfWorthAcademy.com.

“A man who stands on
a hill with his mouth
wide open waits a long time
for a roast duck to fly in.”

PROVERB OF
DUBIOUS ORIGIN

