



BOOK OF JOY



WOMEN
OF COLOR
IN THE
ACADEMY

AS WOMEN OF COLOR IN ACADEMIA, WE ARE CONTINUALLY CALLED TO NAVIGATE CHALLENGING SPACES. DURING THIS TIME OF MULTIPLE UNPRECEDENTED EVENTS THAT ARE STILL UNFOLDING, IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER THAT WE DEFINE JOY, INTENTIONALLY SEEK TO CREATE JOY IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR LIVES, AND CONTINUALLY MAINTAIN AND PROTECT OUR JOY.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESOURCE IS TO PROVIDE SPACE AND MOTIVATION TO FOCUS ON CREATING JOY. PLEASE CONSIDER THIS YOUR **TOOLKIT** FOR CULTIVATING JOY.

*"BECAUSE OUR JOY AND OUR LAUGHTER WERE NOT ONLY ALL RIGHT; THEY WERE NECESSARY."
- TONI MORRISON ABOUT JAMES BALDWIN*

WHAT IS JOY?

Joy - noun

1. an emotion that describes a deeper sense of delighted contentment that is defined differently for each person;
2. a source of a feeling of well-being that comes from within and can be created through specific activities done with intention;
3. a state that, opposed to happiness which can be ephemeral and dependent on the absence of hardship, can be constant if continually protected and maintained.

WHY JOY IS IMPORTANT

Resources that illuminate the importance of joy.

- Joy is an Act of Resistance, by Ingrid Fetell Lee
- Love as the Practice of Freedom, by bell hooks
- Listen: You Are Worthy of Sleep, interview with Tricia Hersey, founder of The Nap Ministry
- Listen: Activist Alice Wong On The Joys And Challenges Of Being Disabled
- Anaïs Nin on the Elusive Nature of Joy

*"BECAUSE JOY AND LIFE EXIST NOWHERE BUT THE PRESENT."
– MAXINE HONG KINGSTON*

HOW DO YOU DEFINE JOY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU?

ONCE WE BEGIN TO DEEPLY FEEL ALL ASPECTS OF OUR LIVES, WE BEGIN TO DEMAND FROM OURSELVES AND OUR LIFE PURSUITS THAT THEY FEEL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THAT JOY WHICH WE KNOW OURSELVES TO BE CAPABLE OF.
- AUDRE LORDE

DEFINING JOY

Each person has a different idea of what joy means to them and how joy makes them feel. Use this space to write down your definition of joy.

YOUR OWN “WHY” FOR HAVING JOY

Audre Lorde wrote of joy as providing fuel for action. Write down your reasons for creating and maintaining joy.

PLANNING FOR JOY

DEFINING WHAT JOY MEANS AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE IS THE FIRST STEP IN CREATING A JOY TOOLKIT.

THE SECOND STEP IS DETAILING ACTIVITIES THAT BRING YOU JOY.

SOME ACTIVITIES THAT MAKE ME FEEL JOYFUL ARE

Generate a list of activities that make you feel joy. Don't limit yourself - think both big and small.

- Dancing, Running, Cycling, other activities
- Cooking or enjoying a meal
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CREATING SPACE FOR JOY

THE THIRD STEP IN CREATING A **JOY TOOLKIT** IS TO MAKE TIME TO ACTUALLY DO THE ITEMS ON YOUR LIST OF JOYFUL ACTIVITIES. INSERT ITEMS FROM YOUR LIST INTO THE APPROPRIATE TIME-FRAMES BELOW.

SQUEEZE IN 15 TO 20 MINUTES OF JOY

Sometimes we find ourselves with a few free minutes.

If I have 15 or 20 minutes to create joy, I can:

- Listen (or dance) to music
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DEDICATE ONE HOUR TO JOY

If we're lucky, we may discover an hour of available time.

If I have one hour to create joy, I can:

- Take a walk or have a chat with a friend
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AND I THINK WE DON'T SEE ENOUGH JOY. I THINK ONE OF THE WAYS WE DO STAY ALIVE IS FINDING JOY IN ONE ANOTHER. I MEAN [THAT'S] WHAT'S HELPED ME: RELATIONSHIPS I HAVE WITH PEOPLE, TAKING TIME FOR MYSELF, EATING DESSERTS. BUT YEAH, WE HAVE TO MAKE SPACE FOR JOY AND WE HAVE TO TAKE PLEASURE IN WHAT WE CAN.

- ALICE WONG

CELEBRATE A FREE HALF-DAY WITH JOY

Intentionally or by chance, we may find a free half-day.

If I have a half-day to create joy, I can:

- Create a spa experience at home
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PLAN FOR AN ENTIRE DAY OR WEEKEND OF JOY

We can choose to reset expectations, ask for help, and do what we can to be able to spend a day, a weekend, or longer devoted to our own joy. With a weekend I can:

- Take a day trip
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MAINTAINING JOY

THE FINAL STEP IN CREATING YOUR JOY TOOLKIT IS MAINTAINING JOY BY ANTICIPATING SCENARIOS THAT MIGHT THREATEN YOUR JOY AND BRAINSTORMING IDEAS TO BRING JOY BACK

PROTECTING YOUR JOY

Our lives are full of uncertainty and circumstances beyond our control can endanger our joy. Therefore, it is helpful to anticipate potential scenarios and create a plan.

Likely or possible scenarios that have the potential to imperil my sense of joy:

- Unexpected professional setback
- Negative political outcome
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Ideas I have on protecting my joy are:

- Maintain a folder of my personal wins and accolades to remind myself of what I have done
- Limit social media or news intake
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“AUTOMATING” JOY

Leading very busy lives, we can forget to remember joy.

How can I enjoy a regularly scheduled “dose” of joy?

- Make an agreement with friends to check-in
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SUGGESTIONS FOR MAINTAINING JOY*

*Adapted from “Tweets for the Soul” by Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis

- Reclaim your joy. Laughter is healing.
- Choose gratitude. Choose joy. Choose peace. Do not be moved by the challenges of the day
- Decide now what kind of day you want to have tomorrow. Don't put your joy in other people's hands.
- Joy doesn't always come easily. There are times when you have to fight for it.

TO LOVE. TO BE LOVED. TO NEVER FORGET YOUR OWN INSIGNIFICANCE. TO SEEK JOY IN THE SADDEST PLACES. TO PURSUE BEAUTY TO ITS LAIR. TO NEVER SIMPLIFY WHAT IS COMPLICATED OR COMPLICATE WHAT IS SIMPLE. TO RESPECT STRENGTH, NEVER POWER. ABOVE ALL, TO WATCH. TO TRY AND UNDERSTAND. TO NEVER LOOK AWAY. AND NEVER, NEVER TO FORGET.

- ARUNDHATI ROY

RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES

- [Increasing Your Happiness](#), Dr. Thema Bryant
- [50 Ways to Add Joy to Your Day](#), Dr. Carolyn Rubenstein
- [How to Interject Joy into Meetings and Events](#), Michelle Russell
- Meshell Ndegeocello's [James Baldwin-inspired 21st century ritual tool kit for justice](#)

ART, DANCE, MUSIC, MOVEMENT

- [Google Arts and Culture](#)
- [All Arts TV](#)
- [Danspace Project](#)
- [NPR Tiny Desk Concerts](#)
- [The Metropolitan Opera](#)

ONCE YOU CAN OPEN YOURSELF TO JOY, YOU FEEL AS IF YOU'VE TRANSFORMED YOUR SADNESS INTO ILLUMINATION... ALL WE WANT TO DO IS TRANSFORM THE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS INTO LIGHT. WE WANT TO COMPOST THEM INTO LIGHT.

- SANDRA CISNEROS

BOOKS

- [Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good](#) ([Emergent Strategy](#)), by adrienne maree brown, 2019
- [Tweets for the Soul](#), by Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, Kindle
- [Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver](#), 2017

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

- [The Nap Ministry](#) (also on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#))
- [Girl Trek](#)
- [Women of Color in the Academy Network](#)

WORKING WITHIN COMMUNITY, WHETHER IT BE SHARING A PROJECT WITH ANOTHER PERSON, OR WITH A LARGER GROUP, WE ARE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE JOY IN STRUGGLE. THAT JOY NEEDS TO BE DOCUMENTED. FOR IF WE ONLY FOCUS ON THE PAIN, THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH ARE SURELY REAL IN ANY PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION, WE ONLY SHOW A PARTIAL PICTURE.

- BELL HOOKS, "LOVE AS THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM"

FINAL THOUGHTS ON JOY

“DON'T HESITATE” BY MARY OLIVER, DEVOTIONS

If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don't hesitate. Give in to it. There are plenty of lives and whole towns destroyed or about to be. We are not wise, and not very often kind. And much can never be redeemed. Still life has some possibility left. Perhaps this is its way of fighting back, that sometimes something happened better than all the riches or power in the world. It could be anything, but very likely you notice it in the instant when love begins. Anyway, that's often the case. Anyway, whatever it is, don't be afraid of its plenty. Joy is not made to be a crumb.