

enjoy

the.lion inside

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We all hold the key to unlocking the joy we too often bury deep down inside.
Often all it takes is the ability to let go.

It took some time to notice that joy was missing in my life. I was doing it right - keeping house, doing the chores, keeping up my mortgage payments, meeting clients' expectations. Life was busy. Yet deep down, I felt sad.

My husband tried to compensate with ideas of adventure, selling up and floating off to a faraway land where the sun shone, house staff looked after you and the people were gentle and kind.

I never believed him! Life was here in our home, among the trees with the darling animals, the sweeping views and our fun neighbours whom we loved.

Then it happened. We sold the house, moved to Bali and I now live in a large, multi-building villa with huge gardens, pool, staff, cats and the ever-shining sun.

Do I now have joy in my life?

This is the million-dollar question...

WHAT IS JOY?

Joy, it could be said, is a state of mind - or a state of heart, not a location. Sure, the people here in Bali are joyous, caring, gentle and heartfelt. They win the contest for 'heart' when measured against any Western culture.

However, I've discovered that joy for me is something much more profound than who I'm with or where I live.

JOY IS HOPE

Have you ever noticed that 'hope', when it finds its way into your heart, creates a flush of love, joy and a feeling of potential? And hope, I have found, is kind of sneaky. It doesn't announce itself, advertise itself or promote itself. It seems to slide in the back door when we're not looking.

On the other side, when we're not looking, we can stumble, fall, hurt ourselves, cry and fall into a well of sadness. After recovering a wee bit, we may begin to long for calm, joy and happiness.

It's when we shut down our antennae - our guidance system - that we stop looking where we are going and rely on the opinions, ideas and agendas of others.

I believe that is where we lose hope and joy: when we give up our own sense of inner knowing and self-trust as

a guidance system. Taking cues from others is great, but only if we have first made sure it fits our own sense of who we are. Hope is an amazing feeling. It holds within it joy, as well as happiness. And the miracle is that even if we have lost everything - house, security or loved ones - it can find its way to us.

NEW DIRECTION GIVES HOPE

Joy and hope, as a closely knit pair, come when we feel we are given a sparkling, brand new direction that fits our deepest inner self.

That new direction could come from a sentence in a book, a word from a friend, a thought out of the blue, a realisation of a new way.

We become who we want to become, not from following others, but from following our own star. Others have their own directions, their own paths that fit them perfectly. Each of us has a deep knowing of our true preferences, of what matches our vast, crazy, out-of-the-box soul, of what fulfils our unique passions.

Even if we have family responsibilities and very little time to think about ourselves in the rush to care for our loved ones, we can still take time quietly at night as we fall asleep or wake up to observe what our deepest passions are. Following up on these passions is the key: to take time somewhere in the routine to pick up the passion and discover its limitless power for us. When we hit that deep vein of gold in the ground, the power surge is worth our full attention.

Suddenly our stresses, cares, fears, uncertainties, disappointments, low self-esteem, relationship crises, you name it, pale into the background.

AND JOY EMERGES

The reason is that we felt our true selves stir, like a caged lion ready to be let out.

That lion in us understands it has responsibilities and fulfils them well. However, it has enormous, explosive, joy-filled potential waiting to be explored. This potential - when allowed to open, be fully recognised and enjoyed - becomes our star that guides us into our deepest joy.



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