

Being Joyful

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By now, many of us have heard about the benefits of keeping a gratitude journal. But have you thought about keeping a joy journal instead? Taking the time to acknowledge what we are grateful for every day allows us to get present to what we have rather than what we do not.

After all, many of us wake up in the morning already in a state of feeling behind or focusing on what didn't get done yesterday. "I didn't get to bed early enough," "I am behind on my calls to clients," "I didn't finish studying for my CFP test," "I have a late appointment again that will mean I will miss another soccer game." What if instead of focusing on what we don't have, we focus on what we do have ... things that bring us joy?

I admit that I never really thought about keeping a joy journal until I read "Option B" by Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant. In this book, Sheryl discusses how she began to work through the loss of her husband. She mentions that she would ask her kids every day to share what moment of the day they experienced joy.

Similar to a gratitude journal, this allowed her and her children to reflect on times of the day where joy occurred, which helped them focus on those times rather than the times they were sad. Sheryl talks about how this simple practice actually turned into something that became intentional. As she and her children got into practice doing this, they found that they would go through the day looking for opportunities to experience joy. They started to create joy rather than just experience it.

When we are working with clients, there can be times of stress, anxiety and uncertainty. We are often dealing with some major issues and those can be heavy at times. But there is an opportunity to have moments of joy throughout your day, such as when a client makes a decision to protect their family and buy that life insurance policy. Or when the client realizes they understand why they made the investments they did, and even though the market went down, they know they are in a long-term strategy and there is nothing to be overly concerned about. These amazing moments when we make the connection with clients and provide them with peace of mind, clarity or calm are what brings us joy.

After hearing this, I started to do this for myself and I experienced similar results. And often the joyful moments occurred when I was engaging in simple things. Very often we get focused on big, extraordinary moments and are not even aware of the little things.

Joy isn't necessarily something that is consistent. It gets sprinkled throughout our lives. The little moments like the smell of a great cup of coffee or hearing a woodpecker off in the distance. Or smiling at someone on the street and then feeling that brief minute when they smiled back and we had a connection as human beings. Those types of joys. By noticing these moments of joy every day, we have an opportunity to not miss them.