



Healthy & Resilient You

Cultivate Joy

It goes deeper than happiness—and it's good for your mental health



We all have those days when things go perfectly. Maybe you nailed a presentation or got that long-sought-after promotion. The rush that comes over you in those moments is happiness. It feels great, but it doesn't last long.

Trying to hold onto those happiness highs can leave us feeling tired and searching for more. But cultivating joy? That's a different, and more sustainable, story.

Happiness and joy: same ride, different experience

Think of life as a rollercoaster. Happiness is the thrill of the climb: the rush you get from a treat-yourself moment like buying a new pair of shoes or turning in a big project. It's exciting, but it usually comes from the outside, like someone else designed that part of the ride. And those highs? They don't last long.

Joy, on the other hand, is like the steady parts of the ride—the moments when you take a breath and soak it all in. It's less about wild excitement and more about calm acceptance. Joy comes from within, rooted in your values and sense of purpose. Even when the track gets bumpy, joy can help you feel grounded and know you'll make it through just fine.

Let joy do its thing



IT LIGHTS YOU UP.

Joy warms your heart when you do something kind or meaningful.



IT KEEPS YOU STEADY.

Joy builds resilience and helps you bounce back when life gets tough.



IT BRINGS PEOPLE CLOSER.

Joy is contagious and strengthens relationships and connections.

Joy isn't tied to a single event or achievement. It's something with deeper roots. When we learn how to grow it, it can support our mental health and wellbeing in powerful, lasting ways.

Let's be real

There are many ways to cultivate joy, like practicing gratitude and connecting with others, but one of the most powerful is being true to yourself.

Carl Rogers, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, believed that living authentically (aligning your actions with your true self instead of society's expectations) is key to real fulfillment. When we live out of sync with who we are, it can lead to stress, anxiety, or a sense that something's just...off.

But when we stop pretending to be someone we're not, or pushing away how we really feel, it's like a heavy weight is lifted. Getting there takes self-acceptance, which can feel unfamiliar or even scary. Embracing our full selves—including quirks, feelings, values, and dreams—opens the door to something deeper. That's where real joy begins.

Building resilience, one step at a time

You don't have to overhaul your life to grow more joy. Small, intentional choices can shift your outlook and strengthen your mental health and wellbeing. Here are a few everyday ways to plant those seeds—little by little—to help you cultivate a steadier, more joyful life.



Know your values – Living by your values is hard if they're unclear. Imagine yourself as the star of your own film: What would living a life you're proud of look like? Name what matters most to you—like kindness, honesty, bravery, or connection—and write those personal truths down.



Live authentically – Living with integrity, even in small ways, keeps you aligned with what matters and on the path to joy. Review your list of personal truths and notice where you tend to compromise. How can you stay true to yourself, even when it's hard? For instance, if one of your values is kindness but you often find yourself short-tempered with others, try pausing before you respond—or [applying these techniques](#) to help you reset and stay calm in the moment.



Be kind – Kind words and actions spark gratitude, and gratitude feeds joy. Generosity often [boomerangs back to lift your own mood](#), especially when it's given freely. Want to put more kindness into the world? You might find inspiration in articles like this one on [cultivating compassion](#), and this one about being [kind instead of nice](#).



Connect with others – Joy thrives in connection. Even simple things—like exercising, cooking, or reading—can feel more meaningful when shared. Spending time with others helps you build relationships that go deeper, and those relationships are one of the strongest sources of lasting joy. Invite others to share in what you love and say yes enthusiastically when they invite you to do the same.



Stay present – When we rush through life, we can miss out on simple pleasures. Slowing down helps us experience the joy in everyday moments. This piece on [The Wonder of a Wandering Mind](#) offers a surprising way to practice being present.

Joy isn't a destination. It's something you grow into, day by day. Start small, stay true to yourself, and let the wellbeing flow.



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