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## **Uncovering Your Joy: Using a Personal Journal to Discover a Life Filled with Happiness**

**By Patti Testerman**

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Author Tristine Rainer wrote "Happiness within a diary has less to do with the events you encounter in life than with the way you experience the process of living." Because a diary mirrors how you perceive and deal with events, it can be used for developing the capacity to more fully experience joy.

Do you use your journal only for problem-solving, dark days, sorrowful feelings, or depressive thoughts? If so, why not start recording the happiness's as well. In fact, why not keep a special Joy Journal? That way, when you're having a bad day, just pull out your Joy Journal and re-experience the small happiness's.

Will keeping a journal actually bring you joy? No. However, many diarists have used their journals to alter their perceptions and in the process achieve a joy filled life. For example, Rainer cites one woman's first attempt at writing positive emotions, after years of negative entries:

"As we walked to the fruit stand at twilight, I was overcome with ecstasy. Each house had a new charm and a story to tell. Colors seemed to have been applied with a brush. At the stand each orange demanded a caress. . . "

Do you see how an everyday walk to the store became a sensory delight? All because the writer began to alter her perception of the experience.

To begin your Joy Journal, we suggest a Rainer-inspired technique called a List of Joys. Use this technique to collect the joyful moments of your life. You can list things that make you happy on a routine basis (like watching a sunset), or extraordinary events that put a smile on your face. Your list might look something like this:

1. I really, really, really felt the grass between my toes and it made me feel like one living creature (me) was intimately communicating with another (the grass).
2. Listening to of Lorena McKinnett's Dante's Prayer filled my body with an intense rush of love. How

could anyone write something so unearthly beautiful?

3. I rode my bicycle today and the feeling of the breeze rushing through my hair made me feel like I was 10 years old. What joy!

Help balance those serious, difficult days by re-reading your Joy Journal, and remembering that life IS filled with moments of pure happiness.

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Patti Testerman is content manager at [JournalGenie.com](http://JournalGenie.com), the only online site that analyzes your writing and then gives you instant feedback. Discover self-defeating patterns, find better ways to communicate in relationships. Contact her at <mailto:patti@journalgenie.com>

**Choose To Be Happy...NOW!**

**By Teri Worten**

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The older I get, the more I realize that ninety percent of life is about choices. Both the choice to be happy or unhappy is mine. Sure, unforeseeable circumstances come and rattle our cages from time to time but it's our decision how we choose to cope with them. We can resolve to allow the situations to defeat us or we can simply count it all joy.

Counting it all joy is not basically grinning through a rough circumstance. It's much more. When we count it all joy, we recognize and seek God's hand in the quandary. We accept that whatever happens in our lives that God is somehow working it out for our good. We remember folks like Joseph who went through insurmountable obstacles only to be immensely, deliriously blessed. This perspective brings joy unspeakable!

Let's be frank. Happiness is not always going to "find" you. Therefore, you've got to passionately, intentionally, seek, chase and pursue it on your own. As you well know, there will always be people, systems and personalities trying to rob you of your joy and purpose. But once you find your joy, it's up to you not to let it elude you.

Whether you are recovering from heartbreak or coming to terms with a recent disappointment, resolve to maintain your joy in spite of it all. Don't succumb to the innate urge to fold up into a ball and withdraw from your world. This is not an option for the single mother. Our children need us too much. Instead, embrace your faith and rely on God to comfort you and bring peace while He restores your emotional equilibrium. Discover fresh interests by trying new things, meeting new people, reading some new books or embarking on a new hobby.

Choose to be happy, joyful and content at this very moment in your life. Take solace in knowing that your current position doesn't predict your potential. You're on your way some place wonderful! Make your plans, map your goals and continue on your happy, fun-filled course! Choose to be happy, today!

Teri Worten is webmaster of two popular websites designed to inspire, uplift and encourage any woman who chooses to overcome life's barriers to success and happiness.

Visit her sites today at:

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