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EMOTIONAL • JOY

Find Peace & Joy

And start showing it today.

by Lauren Moses

ABRAHAM LINCOLN SAID, "MOST FOLKS ARE about as happy as they make up their mind to be." Our experience of life is all about *interpretation*, not about the specific obstacles we face.

The current economic climate and political bickering makes it a *tough time*. Since sliding into despair seems almost imminent, I launched an effort to find out *what keeps us from that dark place*—what provides *hope* amid hardship. To develop impactful campaigns, *marketers* invest much resource into finding what makes us happy. From *positive psychology* to *happiness research*, they've aspired to quantify peace of mind. Looking for real, substantive answers, I needed more than just secondary research to discover what kept people positive; I had to sit down, talk to them and get a tangible sense of their search for joy.

I compiled my findings into *Inspiration Kit 1*, a collection of spoken-word interviews, affirmations, and readings that explore and reveal several ways everyday people access peace and joy.

As I reviewed interviews from the album, I learned *people derive much of their sense of well-being from the love of their family and friends*. These interpersonal connections keep us vital, optimistic and happy into old age. More than a dozen of my subjects talked about the emotional support of his

or her family and friends and how they cherish time together. If you are seeking joy in these tumultuous times, *show your family and friends how much you appreciate them*.

Some of us are more vocal and affectionate than others, but consider this: when your spouse got off the phone with you just now, or your friend turned as you parted, were they uplifted by interacting with you? Or, did you—caught up in your own drama—pull them down a peg or two?

As we learn in the song *Make Someone Happy*, ensure there is at least "one face that lights when it nears you." You might go hug your daughter, ask about her day and listen while she answers. You might wake up and ask, "What can I do for my wife today to demonstrate how much I love her?" There are *countless ways* to spread the message, "What you say, do, and feel matters to me."

Remember: the best way to find joy is not always to seek it; give it away, and joy will find its way back to you.

Another unmistakable theme across interviews was that *acts of kindness linger on*. People have *remarkable recall* for generosity experienced years ago! *Never underestimate the impact of a kind word or a smile*. You never know how badly the other person needed to be acknowledged and encouraged in that moment. You do not have to endow a professorship at your local university or



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bring an end to childhood hunger. You can start with a handful of people. We all love our friends and family, we want to feel appreciated, and few things impact us more positively than love expressed from someone we care about. That's the key to finding peace and joy: *realizing that we are all in this together*. It's not just your quest. Learn to connect: ask more introspective questions of your friends, record an oral history of your family, and be more atten-

tive to one another.

As we learn in *The Wizard of Oz*, *you've always had the power*. Peace and joy can be yours at any moment—just choose it. **PE**



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ACTION: *Seek joy and then spread it around.*

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