

Wisdom Circle – Joy
June 2016
PREPARATION

Words of Wisdom

“I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.”

~ Rabindranath Tagore

“The best way to choose what to keep and what to throw away is to take each item in one’s hand and ask: “Does this spark joy?” If it does, keep it. If not, dispose of it. This is not only the simplest but also the most accurate yardstick by which to judge.”

~ Marie Kondō

“God save us from gloomy saints!”

~ Teresa of Ávila

“When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.”

~ Khalil Gibran

“Fearlessness is not only possible, it is the ultimate joy. When you touch nonfear, you are free.”

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

“Joy's smile is much closer to tears than laughter.”

~ Victor Hugo

“The secret source of humor is not joy but sorrow; there is no humor in Heaven.”

~ Mark Twain

“All who joy would win must share it. Happiness was born a Twin.”

~ Lord Byron

Readings:

Here is some poetry to reflect on the theme of joy:

Joy and Sorrow by Khalil Gibran

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.
And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was often times filled with your tears.
And how else can it be?
The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.
Is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven?
And is not the lute that soothes your spirit, the very wood that was hollowed with knives?
When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy.
When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.
Some of you say, "Joy is greater than sorrow," and others say, "Nay, sorrow is the greater."
But I say unto you, they are inseparable.
Together they come, and when one sits, alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed.
Verily you are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy.
Only when you are empty are you at standstill and balanced.
When the treasure-keeper lifts you to weigh his gold and his silver, needs must your joy or your sorrow rise or fall.

Mindful by Mary Oliver

Every Day
 I see or hear
 something
 that more or less
kills me
 with delight,
 that leaves me
 like a needle
in the haystack
 of light.
 It is what I was born for—
 to look, to listen,
to lose myself
 inside this soft world—
 to instruct myself
 over and over

in joy,
 and acclamation.
 Nor am I talking
 about the exceptional,
the fearful, the dreadful,
 the very extravagant—
 but of the ordinary,
 the common, the very drab
the daily presentations.
 Oh, good scholar,
 I say to myself,
 how can you help
but grow wise
 with such teachings
 as these—
 the untrimmable light
of the world,
 the ocean's shine,
 the prayers that are made
 out of grass?

Psalm 98

A psalm.

1

Sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things;
his right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.

2

The Lord has made his salvation known
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

3

He has remembered his love
and his faithfulness to Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.

4

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;

5

make music to the Lord with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,

6

with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—
shout for joy before the Lord, the King.

7

Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.

8

Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;

9

let them sing before the Lord,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

Questions for Reflection:

- What, in your life now, gives you joy?
- What is your capacity for feeling joy? Does joy come easily to you?
- What is your most joyful memory?

Spiritual Exercise:

Joy, like any emotion, is influenced by factors in our lives that are not always in our control. However, like other emotions, our *capacity* for experiencing joy can be cultivated, stretched, and exercised like a muscle. An easy way to exercise our joy muscles is through music and movement. As a spiritual exercise this month, I encourage you to create a joyful playlist of music (like a mixtape). You get bonus points if you also *dance* to it! My preferred method is to dance to joyful music while doing household chores. Pick whatever music makes you joyful, but if you need some suggestions, the following songs are all joy-inducing. I've put them (and others) together on a *Spotify* playlist (Spotify is an App for free on your computer or smartphone and use it to share musical playlists).

<https://open.spotify.com/user/jennifer.channin/playlist/5dBKFguVTJy2AlwbfAerL1>

Shiny Happy People - REM
Love Shack - the B-52s
Happy - Pharrell
Feeling Good - Nina Simone
(What a) Wonderful World - Louis Armstrong
Good Vibrations - The Beach Boys

Aint No Mountain High Enough - Marvin Gaye
Hey Ya! - Outkast
Joy to the World - 3 Dog Night
Celebrate - Madonna
Three Little Birds - Bob Marley

Wisdom Circle – Joy Session Plan

This session plan is a suggested guide, not a rigid set of rules. You may adjust this plan as you feel is appropriate in your group.

Gathering & Welcome (~5 min)

Chalice Lighting (~2 min)

Optional Chalice Lighting Song:

*There is more love somewhere
There is more love somewhere
I'm gonna keep on
'til I find it
There is more love somewhere*

(Singing the Living Tradition #95)

Check-In (20-30 minutes)

As you feel comfortable, take 2-3 minutes to share one thing that is lifting your spirits, and one thing that is weighing you down. This is a time for sharing, but not for discussion.

Business (10 minutes)

Use this time for any new business: Welcoming new members; Scheduling future meetings; Revisiting the Covenant; Answering questions about Wisdom Circle processes; Etc...

Discussion (60 minutes)

Introduce Topic. Take Turns Reading aloud the “Words of Wisdom.”

- *What, in your life now, gives you joy?*
- *What is your capacity for feeling joy? Does joy come easily to you?*
- *What is your most joyful memory?*

Silent Reflection (~2 minutes)

First Responses (Share in the order you feel moved)

Cross-Conversation (Ask questions that invite deeper reflection; Speak from personal experience, and use “I statements”; Avoid explaining or judging)

Final Thoughts (Share in the order you feel moved)

Gratitude (5-10 minutes)

Share 1-2 things that have been meaningful to you from this session.

Closing

Optional Chalice Extinguishing Reading:

By Ma Theresa Gustilo Gallardo

We cast not our eyes below,
we say to ourselves we are how we came,
wounded from struggles, triumphant in our survival, entitled by birthright to belong
to this the only humankind there is,
saying I am included, I belong, I am here, and I will be and do.
I will breathe joy into a desolation, I will breathe peace into conflict, I will breathe
life into destruction.
I will be the earth I wish to see.
I am growth, and hope, and glee.

95 There Is More Love Somewhere

1. There is more love some - where. There is
 2. There is more hope some - where. There is
 3. There is more peace some - where. There is
 4. There is more joy some - where. There is

more love some - where. I'm gon-na keep on 'til I
 more hope some - where. I'm gon-na keep on 'til I
 more peace some - where. I'm gon-na keep on 'til I
 more joy some - where. I'm gon-na keep on 'til I

find it. There is more love some - where.
 find it. There is more hope some - where.
 find it. There is more peace some - where.
 find it. There is more joy some - where.

© & music: African American hymns