

JENNIFER DAWN

JOY
the
GUIDE

FINDING YOUR JOY
IN A WORLD
OF CRAP

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This book is dedicated to love, light, happiness, peace, ease, flow, and joy. May you have more of it in your daily life.

ARE YOU HAPPY?

WHEN I ASKED that question an answer popped into your mind without any thought or hesitation.

Be honest, what was it?

No.

Not really.

Sometimes.

I want to be.

I wish.

Yes of course (which is total crap because I'm burying the truth).

Most of the time.

Often but not enough.

Absolutely (because I know that's the "right" answer but it's not really so).

Yes.

Regardless of your answer. This book is for you.

If you seek to live each day feeling more joy, you're in the right place.

If you struggle to find your joy, I want to help.

MAKE THE CHOICE

“Success is not an accident. It is the result of your attitude and your attitude is a choice. Hence success is a matter of choice and not chance.”

—Shiv Kherra

I WAS FOUR, maybe five years old. We were living in the green house in Las Vegas. I had the white bike with tassels and a yellow banana seat. I loved that bike. I tried to jump it over the ramp the neighborhood boys had set up in the street. Instead of flying off the edge and becoming airborne like I'd seen them do a hundred times, I flopped over the edge and smacked face first into the pavement. I was so angry those boys had figured out how to do something I couldn't do. My father had seen my blunder through the living room window and laughed at me when I shambled back into the house. I never tried it again.

This was the same father who had been getting in the shower with me. I was too young to understand why he was doing it; I just knew I didn't like it. I told my mother. A fight ensued. I stood quietly in the kitchen corner of the green

house watching them yell and scream at each other. He said I was a liar. She chose to believe him. He kept getting in the shower with me. I knew it was now my problem and I was on my own.

But here's the kicker: I was still a happy kid. Despite what was going on in my life at home I still laughed. I still felt love in my heart. I still believed life was good and worth living. I chose to be happy, in spite of the circumstances of my life. It just seemed like the most logical option.

I had a choice: I could let my father kill my joy, or not. I chose not.

You have a choice, too.

Whatever crap is going on or has gone on in your life, right now the only thing you can control is whether you let that crap steal your joy, or you don't.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." The first one here is to choose joy. It doesn't matter if you don't know how to get there. All the obstacles that might be standing in the way don't matter either. Decide what you want. Not because it's what you "should" do or someone is pressuring you to do it, but because in your heart it's what you truly want.

This book is about finding your joy. It's not lost, I promise. It's inside you, just waiting to be let out of whatever cage you've locked it into. Some of you have not only sealed it away, you've buried it deep in the earth, poured concrete over it and parked a semitrailer on top to make sure it will never escape. For others you let it out of the cage sometimes, but you can't quite figure out how to fully release it for good.

That begins to change today.

GETTING STARTED

“Joy is what happens to us when we allow ourselves to recognize how good things really are.”

—Marianne Williamson

WE SET GOALS because we believe the end result will make us happier.

When I lose these last twenty pounds, I'll finally be happy with my body. Until then I'm not going out in public.

If I can just make more money, it will solve everything, and things will be purr-fect.

If I can just get my business to the next level, I'll finally be able to relax and take a real vacation with my family and have some fun, but please excuse me I need to get back to the grind now.

I'm so tired of being alone and just want to be happy and in love already. I'm eating ice cream. I hate my life.

Sound familiar?

It should, because there's some variation of this auto-play going on in each of our lives day to day—like a bad song we can't get out of our head.

Do you have a dream you've been trying to achieve without success and it's robbing you of daily joy? Maybe it's the weight that just won't come off or the money you so desperately want to make or the love you feel you deserve but can't seem to find.

You are not alone. In fact, 93% of people never achieve their goals and according to the 2017 Gallup-Sharecare Well-being Index, Americans are more unhappy than they've been in a decade (Gallup.com, 2018). It's the largest decline in the index's ten-year history. People are not connected to their purpose, move through the day stressed out and worried, are less likely to achieve their goals, and are finding little satisfaction from their work and personal lives.

That's disappointing. If you're part of the 93%, it's even sadder (cue the trombone *wah-wah*).

The good news is you *can* join the 7% who *do* achieve their desires each year and live daily with more peace, ease, flow, and joy. That's why I wrote this book. To give you the practical, tactical, rubber meets the road, tangible tools you'll need to start succeeding today.

Have you ever read a great book, attended a seminar, or watched a documentary and been super motivated to change your life? Maybe that's why you picked up this book. It feels like your dreams are totally within reach. Then a few days, maybe weeks go by and you get back into the day-to-day of "life as it is" and very little—or nothing—really changes.

It's such a bummer and so frustrating. Then you beat yourself up, eat a bag of potato chips, and feel worse.

With this guide I wanted to answer the question, "*How do I actually feel more joy in my daily life?*" so after you get all motivated and inspired it won't fall flat because you don't know what to do next.

My purpose here is to provide simple but powerful steps you can take to:

- Shift your mindset out of a crappy place and start living more joyfully.
- Stop feeling overwhelmed, stressed out, spread thin, and connect to the quiet already inside you.
- Quit the busy and start living life on your terms.

This is not a book you read and forget about. It's designed to be a practical guide to set yourself up for more happiness and joy in your daily life, despite all the crap going on in your world.

Too many of us are rushing through life busy and distracted. The trap of working harder and harder, expecting results that never seem to come, is an easy one to fall into. To be truly successful it's necessary to slow down, address what's going on, and build a healthy system for growth and insight you can easily repeat with predictable results.

To get the most from our time together there are three things you'll need:

1. An open mindset to receive the information.
2. A willingness to look at the tough stuff.
3. The energy and determination to do the work.

That's it!

When these conditions are met, you will triumph.

When these conditions are *not* met to some degree you will not see the results your heart desires.

If you have been struggling, you already know this is true. Let's make this time different.

There's information in this book you may have heard before, but studies prove we need to hear something several times in order to get it into our heads. If you are seeing it "yet again" take note. There's a lesson to be learned.

Take in the contents with an open mind, and the results will speak for themselves. If you approach it with a closed mindset such as "*I already know all this, and it won't work for me*" or "*I've tried everything, but nothing ever works for me,*" then guess what? It won't.

Instead, set aside the ego mind for now and forget having something to prove. Set aside whatever crap is going on in your world you can't control. Set aside the negative self-talk keeping you stuck. Set aside what you already know. Set aside any limiting beliefs or stories you've created on why you can't. Let today be a fresh start.

Your open mindset will enable you to absorb and assimilate this information in a productive way that motivates you to *act*.

When you're motivated to act, the next ingredient for success is being willing to change. Let's cut to the chase and address the place where results really come from. They'll come from making changes in your life, habits, routines, thought processes, emotional reactions, and perspectives. You may

even find yourself changing your relationships to the toxic people or places hindering your joy.

Change is *not* a bad thing. Think about it. Whatever reality you are living today, you probably desire an improved version of it. To get what you want requires things to change. Resist the change, stay stuck. Embrace the change and move forward.

To make change happen, we take small steps. Consistent small steps lead to success in action.

Pace yourself through the information and do the exercises. Really give them your all. Master each step before moving on to the next.

You may be tempted to dive in and go gangbusters, but instead if you lower the bar just a bit and ease into these exercises gently, you will greatly increase your chances of success and see much better results than rushing through.

Otherwise it's easy to get overwhelmed and just quit. Like most of us today, you're already a busy person with too much on your plate. Take it at your own pace. If you stick with it, your results will be incredible.

I suggest finding a good accountability partner, group, coach, or mentor in your life to help you work through the tough stuff. Do not always try and go it alone. When you surround yourself with people invested in your success, you'll increase your results dramatically.

When we have a goal and nobody knows about it, it's easy to quit. But when you show up each week and have to report progress, you certainly are going to be motivated to do better.

Let's do this...

Summary

You *can* achieve your goals and live each day filled with joy.

Change is *not* a bad thing and required
to get you what you want.

Embrace change and move forward. Resist it and stay stuck.

Pace yourself and do the work 100%.

YOU MAKE TIME

“You will never find the time for anything, if you want time you must make it.”

—Charles Buxton

YOU MIGHT BE chomping at the bit to devour the information in this book but there is probably a niggling little voice inside your head also saying you don't have the time for this. *Oh Lord... in the intro she mentioned exercises and I don't have time for exercises... I don't have time to pee without being interrupted... how will I find the time for worksheets and tools and personal growth bologna...?*

If you are like most people, rushing through the day, surviving and not thriving, you almost certainly have a time problem. That's not to say you don't have enough time (you do) but there's a problem in how we're programmed to think about time. We've been conditioned to think of it as a limited resource. There are only so many hours in the day. Time is wasting. We're not getting any younger. Get busy. Hurry up.

This is poo-poo.

When we talk about finding your joy in a world of crap, our thinking around time is perhaps the biggest load of crap there is.

Here's the deal-e-o:

Time Is Yours To Master—It Does Not Master You

You are *not* a victim to time. You are *not* at the mercy of it. It is *not* outside your control.

If you find yourself running through the day saying things like...

- *There are never enough hours in the day.*
- *I can never get it all done.*
- *I just don't have the time to _____ (fill in the blank with something you really want to do but don't make the time to do).*

This is a *choice* you are making.

Be honest. Are you choosing to be at the mercy of time?

Because to get more of it back in your day, you simply need to make a *different* choice. I'm sharing this golden nugget early because you'll need to begin reprogramming your thinking around time to do the work in this guide. Otherwise it will be soooooo easy to procrastinate until later. The time to stop playing that game is today.

To change your relationship with time, the easiest thing to do is replace whatever excuse or self-talk you're giving yourself with a positive time affirmation. For example:

Instead of saying: *I never have enough time.*

Replace this with: *I always have all the time I need.*

When you start putting out a different story around time, almost like magic, you'll get more of it.

Think about it... when you say the words "there is never enough time to get it all done," how does that feel in your body? Kind of small, and hopeless. Instead, if you say to yourself, "time is mine to control today," it opens everything up. It feels lighter, more joyful, and like all things are possible. That's the power of reprogramming your thinking. Because when you believe you have all the time you need, you do.

If you have no idea how to start telling a different story, here are a few affirmations to get you started.

- Because my day is organized, I have plenty of time for everything.
- Being in control of my time energizes me.
- I have the power to complete everything I want to do today.
- I always do the right things at the right time.
- I control how I spend my time.
- I give myself time to do each task at perfect speed.
- I am making time in my life to _____
- I have plenty of time to improve my life.
- I manage my time effectively.
- I identify my priorities and plan time to complete them.
- I make sure the most important tasks are done first.
- I seize every moment in every day.

You don't have to use them all. Pick one that feels good in your bones then repeat it often like a daily mantra. As you read through the options, you'll know which one is best.

Whenever you're feeling pressed for time use time affirmations to reprogram your thinking. This takes intention. When you want to put off reading the next step in this book or doing the exercises, instead, *make time* to improve your life. Even if it's just for five or ten minutes, that's time spent moving in the right direction.

This gets easier with practice, as you successfully reprogram your thinking around time. Write your affirmations down where you can see them often. Put them on a sticky note on your bathroom mirror, in your car, or inside your daily planner. Think them. Speak them. Live them.

Then, watch more time appear in your life. It's not magic, but it sure can feel that way!

There is joy feeling in control of your time.

Summary

You control time, it does not control you.

Make the time to do the work.

Use a time affirmation to begin reprogramming your thinking on time.

FEEL BETTER NOW!

“Now and then it’s good to pause in our pursuit of happiness and just be happy.”

—Guillaume Apollinaire

LET’S TAKE A look at how you wake up each day.

Joyful?

Eager?

Excited?

Or do you wake up feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, and praying for the weekend to get here already. Does the thought of another day of your life leave you feeling deflated or elated?

The time to feel better is *now*. Not tomorrow or next week or next year when you *finally* lose the weight or *finally* make the money or *finally* find love or whatever “finally” you are attaching to your own happiness.

This is so important I'm going to say it again in all caps...

THE TIME TO FEEL BETTER IS NOW!

If you don't already know me, my name is Jennifer Dawn. I'm a business and mindset coach plus the creator of the *Best Planner Ever* and *Best Journal Ever*. I've grown two multi-million dollar businesses and I'm on track for my third now. I'm happily married with three beautiful children, and I have a horse named Hockey. I love taking motorcycle trips with my husband, doing yoga, hiking in the red rocks of Sedona, Arizona and sitting near the ocean as often as possible.

I live a pretty amazing life, but if you are tempted to think I've never had anything bad happen to me or I don't understand pain and heartache, you would be mistaken. The concepts I'm sharing in this guide are hard won. I live a joy-filled life because I made the choice to do so despite the cards I was dealt.

I don't have a Ph.D. or degrees up the wazoo. In fact, I attended college but never graduated. I dropped out when my grandfather passed away and I funded the trip for my family to attend the funeral. I bankrupted myself and had to take a second job. I lost my momentum and never got it back. I don't regret the choice. My grandfather was worth it.

I believe in education and learning but for me it often didn't come in a classroom setting. I don't use big fancy "intellectual" words and I prefer to keep my ego checked at the door where it belongs. I like things to be simple. Easy to understand. Life is hard enough without all the other B.S. we pile on ourselves.

Growing up I never knew my biological father. Even as an adult, when my husband managed to locate him, he wanted nothing to do with me. The man my mother married when she was pregnant with me and who raised me from birth was a sexual predator. I was abused from a young age and my mother knew about it and did nothing.

My parents' relationship was tumultuous at best and we moved so often I had been in thirteen different schools by the time I hit seventh grade. I stopped making friends because it was pointless. I left home at seventeen and never looked back. As an adult, I went through not one, but two divorces. The second one abusive. I was stalked and terrorized trying to break free from it. I went through a functional depression for over a year and was on food stamps because I had no other way to feed my kids.

The *only* good thing about being at your lowest? You have nowhere else to go. For me, it was the catalyst to reinvent myself, to finally heal the wounds of my past instead of avoiding them and pretending I was okay, to begin changing my mindset and believing there was a better life out there for me. This belief led to different choices, which included taking care of myself and not putting everyone else in my life first. I stopped playing silly roles and trying to be "perfect."

I started to get clear on who I was and my purpose in this life. It didn't happen overnight, but it did happen. And it's still happening every day as I continue to learn, grow, progress, and heal.

I learned *the purpose of life is to be happy*. That's it. To be so filled with light and love that it pours out and all around

those around us. The gift is we get to choose what makes us happy. Whatever that is, do more of it.

The great part is that if I can do this, you can too. One of the most valuable lessons I learned through the painful trials of my life is that the time to be happy (and live our true purpose) is *now*. It cannot wait until we are skinnier, richer, or loved by another.

It means if you want to be living the best life you can imagine, you'll need to stop making excuses and start getting into the habit of living that life, *right now*. Otherwise, you'll stay behind the curve. Even if your conditions improve, you'll still be stuck in your comfort zone.

But, don't let the word "comfort" fool you. For so many this is a place racked with pain and grief. Daily stress, living in a constant state of reaction, never taking care of ourselves or having enough money, not being able to remember the last time we belly-laughed... This becomes the norm. What we're used to. Our "comfort zone"—even though it sucks.

To improve our current conditions, we must increase the happiness we *allow* into our lives. Ever heard of someone winning the lottery? Sure, they have some fun for a while. But then they end up right back where they started and maybe even worse off financially. That's because they didn't up-level their comfort zone, create new, healthy habits, or change their core belief system. They made bad decisions, sometimes on a subconscious level, which put them right back to where they started because that's where they believed they should be.

To make better choices for our lives, it's important to expand our joy, change our core beliefs, and stop buying into

the lies or we'll wind up right back where we started—back in the old comfort zone of never having enough, surviving each day, and wondering what's the point.

Clients I work with start to see amazing results in their businesses. Then, within a short time, they'll revert back to old bad habits. Why? Because that's what they're used to. They're literally accustomed to feeling like crap every day so when some joy creeps in it totally freaks them out. I'm not judging. I've experienced this in my own life many times, but now, because I can easily recognize what's happening, I'm prepared to handle it—and you can be, too.

That's why I'm diligent about teaching awareness of our comfort zones. Being able to tell the difference between where we are, where we want to be, and recognizing when we start to get what we want it's not a bad thing. It doesn't mean you'll never have a bad day again, but when you do it's much easier to get back on track.

The process of up leveling your comfort zone can be... well... *uncomfortable* at first! The idea is to embrace the improved feeling. Allow it to become your new normal.

Have you ever had anyone say to you, “Why can't you just be happy?” Or maybe you've even said this to yourself... like a million times. I know people who have said this to me. I want to punch them in the face. You cannot just snap your fingers and be happy. There are a myriad of thoughts and beliefs swirling around inside you that manifest as emotions. But what you *can* do is become more aware of how you're feeling, take steps to acknowledge it, and release it so you can then more easily shift to a better feeling, a more positive emotion.

That is within your power. Over time and with practice you can learn how to do this swiftly.

I promised you the “how” behind this stuff, so let’s talk about the tangible, practical steps behind starting to feel better now. Let’s begin now so you *can* snap your fingers and be happy!

Changing old habits is a process. It requires time and effort. To know you are succeeding, pay attention to how you feel. If you feel just a tiny bit better, you are on the right track. If you feel worse, something’s off. Course-correct until you feel better. This might include shifting self-talk, letting yourself off the hook a bit, or telling a joke. It’s okay to lighten up.

It’s all about setting yourself up to succeed, no matter what, without so much pressure and obligation.

Here’s a tool to help you do this:

The Well-Being Assessment

Step 1: Assess Where You Are Right Now—No BS.

Simply move through the major areas of your life and give each a score from 1 to 10. This tool will help you become more aware of what’s really going on in your life now.

On the scale:

1 = I hate it, and it can’t possibly get worse—put me out of my misery, please.

10 = It’s so perfect I can’t see any room for improvement—life is beautiful. *Yippee!*

Step 2: Identify Where You Want To Be

Once you've scored each section, for any area scoring below 10, ask yourself: What would it take to get this area of my life to a 10?

Write down everything that needs to change for you to get there. This requires you to *think* about where you want to be. Allow yourself to dream big here. Don't worry about how you'll get there, just focus on getting crystal clear about what's in your heart.

Step 3: Start Taking Action

With awareness comes change. After you've completed each section, you'll have a much better idea of what your best life looks like. Then (and we'll dive deeper into this later) you can take clear, focused action to get there.

Now, for those overachievers out there (I can recognize you because I am you) it might be tempting to jump in and start changing everything about your life *right now dammit!* Please don't. Do that and you'll wind up in overwhelm and burnout after a few days... feeling like a failure.

This is a time to slow down, not speed up. When you pass an accident on the street, everyone slows down to get a good look. It's no different here. It's important to take an honest assessment of the good, bad, and ugly going on in our lives and not rush past it.

The point of this exercise is about *awareness* and becoming conscious of what's happening, so we know what's causing us to feel joy or sadness, frustration or bliss. That's how we gain clarity on what needs to change so we can live an "all 10" life.

Take your time with this and really mull it over for a few days. You can complete and use this assessment as often as you like. I'd also suggest completing it away from distractions. Go to a place where it's quiet and you won't be interrupted.

A word of caution: *do not judge yourself* while going through this practice. It will only make you feel like crap. That would really defeat the purpose since the title of this chapter is "Feel *Better* Now!" You are where you are and that's okay. Accept it. Breathe through it. Surrender to it.

I encourage you to take an honest look, because we won't be here for long. With your open mindset and willingness to change, we just need to set our base point to track your progress as we up-level your comfort and happiness zones. There is joy in awareness.

WELL-BEING ASSESSMENT

Well-Being Scale 1-10 (Rate Each Area Where You Land On The Scale)

1 = I hate it. Couldn't be worse.

10 = I love it. Cannot see any way to improve the perfection it already is.

BUSINESS / CAREER score: _____

Doing the work you love. Being fully engaged in your career of choice.

What I love about my work now:

How can I feel happier about my work?

What needs to change to make this a perfect “10” for me:

RELATIONSHIPS / LOVE / SOCIAL score: _____

Having strong relationships with your partner, family, and friends. Love in your life.

What I love about my relationships now:

How can I feel more love in my relationships?

What needs to change to make this a perfect “10” for me?

MONEY / FINANCIAL score: _____

Having enough money and effectively managing it with confidence.

What I love about my money situation now:

How can I feel happier about the money I have in my life?

What needs to change to make this a perfect “10” for me?

PHYSICAL BODY score: _____

Good physical health & endless energy.

What I love about my body now:

How can I feel happier in the body I have?

What needs to change to make this a perfect “10” for me?

COMMUNITY / GIVE BACK score: _____

Being engaged in your community. Doing charitable works and helping others step into greatness.

What I love about helping others step into their greatness:

How can I feel happier with my role in the community?

What needs to change to make this a perfect “10” for me?

ENVIRONMENT score: _____

How do you love the areas where you spend the most time, such as your home, office, or car?

What I love about my “spaces” now:

How can I feel happier in my spaces?

What needs to change to make this a perfect “10” for me?

ME TIME score: _____

Spending quality time to refresh and renew yourself.

What I love about the time I spend to refresh and renew myself now:

How can I make better use of my me time?

What needs to change to make this a perfect “10” for me?

PERSONAL GROWTH score: _____

Developing your own skills, abilities, and purpose.

What I love about myself now:

How would I like to further develop my skills and abilities?

What needs to change to make this a perfect “10” for me?

MIND / SPIRIT score: _____

Sustaining a strong mind and spirit. Feeling connected and living your purpose.

How connected do I feel to myself and my higher purpose?

Am I feeding my mind and spirit each day? Am I feeding it the right stuff?

What needs to change to make this a perfect “10” for me?

YOUR TOP 3

If you could only pick three items to focus on improving, what would they be? Aim to have at least one or two of these in the low scoring areas. Set your intention to feel better each day as you work to improve these areas. Brainstorm two or three small steps you could take each day to begin feeling better—do not overwhelm yourself!

1. _____

Small daily steps I could begin taking:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2. _____

Small daily steps I could begin taking:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. _____

Small daily steps I could begin taking:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Summary

Take an honest inventory of where you are now. Acknowledge it. Accept it.

Make the time to get clarity on where you truly want to be.

Begin taking small daily steps toward your dream.

If you get overwhelmed, back off. If it feels good, keep going.

Set your intention to allow more joy into your life today—despite current circumstances.

