

The Journey to Joy: A Guide to the 5 Pillars of Lasting Joy

A companion guide to
Joy Unleashed: The Ultimate Guide for Living Your Best Life



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Welcome, Joy Seeker

First, thank you. You said yes to exploring joy more deeply — not just as an idea, but as a way of being. I know firsthand that joy isn't always easy to access. There are seasons when it feels far away. Yet even in the hardest moments, it's still there, quietly waiting for us to notice.

When my publisher first approached me about doing another book, my immediate thought was, *"Now? In this season?"* It didn't seem like the time to write about joy. My heart was still tender, my spirit a little weary. But then, something whispered back, yes.

That yes reminded me of where this all began.

The Origin of the Pillars

My curiosity about joy started years ago after a life-changing trip to Haiti following the devastating 2010 earthquake. Amid destruction and loss, I witnessed people singing, dancing, sharing, and loving with such depth that it changed everything I thought I knew about happiness.

They had something most of us in the Western world had lost — a grounded, soul-level joy that had nothing to do with circumstance and everything to do with connection.

That experience planted a seed. I began years of studying, interviewing, researching, and exploring my own inner landscape. Through it all, five consistent truths revealed themselves. These became what I now call *The 5 Pillars of Joy*— self-awareness, nature, creativity, purpose, and community.

These pillars are not lofty concepts. They are rooms within you — living, breathing spaces that hold your joy. The key that opens each one is *presence*.

Now, I want to invite you to walk with me through these rooms and rediscover what's already inside you.

The Journey Begins

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine standing in front of a beautiful hallway. Five doors. Five rooms. Five ways home to yourself.

Each door glows with its own color and energy — a soft reminder that joy is not one-size-fits-all. It meets you where you are.

Take a breath.
You're about to step inside.

The Five Rooms of Joy

1. Self-Awareness: The Mirror Room

This is where it all begins — with you. Before you can touch joy, you must meet yourself honestly. No judgment, no fixing, just presence.

Try this:

Put your hand over your heart. Take three slow breaths.

Ask yourself: *How am I feeling right now? Where do I feel it in my body?*

Name it out loud. "I feel anxious." "I feel hopeful." "I feel tired."

Don't try to change it. Just meet it. That's enough.

Bonus: Make a funny face while you do it. It might sound silly, but your brain relaxes when you smile. Sometimes the fastest way to joy is through a smirk.

Affirmation: *I am safe to meet myself exactly where I am.*

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2. Nature: The Sanctuary Room

Step outside — or even to your nearest window. Look. Really look.

There's something wildly healing about remembering that the same energy running through the trees runs through you. Nature doesn't rush or compare. It just is.

Try this:

Take sixty seconds. Choose one thing — a leaf, a cloud, the shadow of a branch — and study it with full attention. Notice its details, colors, imperfections. Feel how time slows down when you truly see.

Affirmation: *I am part of something vast, and I am never separate.*

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3. Creativity: The Playroom

This is where your inner child lives — messy, bright, and beautifully unfiltered.

Joy loves to play. It doesn't care how good you are at something. It only cares that you show up.

Try this:

Grab a pen, a brush, or a spatula. Doodle. Sing. Dance your hands like I did with Dad. Write a haiku about your breakfast. Paint with ketchup if you have to. Play is how your spirit breathes.

Bonus: Sing out loud, even if it's "Twinkle, Twinkle" in the grocery aisle. Especially if it's in the grocery aisle.

Affirmation: *I am a vessel of joyful creation.*

4. Purpose: The Light Room

This is the room that glows from within. Purpose doesn't always shout. Sometimes it whispers. It's not about grand achievements or waiting for "someday." It's about aligning your choices — right now — with what truly matters to you.

Try this:

Ask yourself: *What gives me energy instead of taking it?*

Write one small action you can take today that feels aligned. It can be as simple as sending a kind message, applying for something that excites you, or finally making that uncomfortable call that's been nudging you.

Affirmation: *Every small act of purpose fuels my joy.*

5. Community: The Connection Room

This room hums with laughter, conversation, and shared energy. It's where your joy expands. When you are present with others — really present — you don't just connect; you multiply joy.

Try this:

During your next conversation, notice one tiny thing about the person — maybe the way their eyes light up when they talk, or the inflection in their voice. That simple awareness deepens your connection instantly.

Affirmation: *My joy grows when it is shared.*

Bringing It All Home

Presence does not require perfection. You'll drift. You'll forget. You'll get caught up in the noise. That's okay. The goal isn't to stay present all the time. It's to return when you notice you've left.

Over time, these rooms will begin to feel like home.
You'll realize that joy isn't something you chase — it's something you remember.

So which room called to you most today?
Start there.

Because joy isn't found in perfection. It's found in presence.
And presence is always one breath away.

Smiles,

SHARI



America's Joy Magnet

FOLLOW FOR MORE JOY

