

Embracing the Rollercoaster of Life & its *Seasons of Joy*

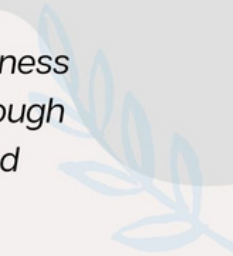
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*Prioritizing the holistic wellness
of our next generation through
mindset, community and
resilience.*



Joy - an experience defined by “an intense feeling of deep spiritual connection, pleasure, and appreciation”. There’s simply nothing that can compare to the surrendering delight that joy brings. The unfortunate side, however, is that there are situations that distract us from those powerful, blissful moments of life. As mental health continues to take the forefront of the nation, it is no secret that each one of us has endured struggle over the past few years. As it relates to the arts, well there isn’t a single person within the arts sector that was untouched by the remanence of COVID-19. Ironically, those struggles revealed just how precious and joyful dance truly is, in all its aspects and avenues.

It’s not that our joy for dance necessarily left us during the pandemic, we were just thrown a loop on the roller coaster of life. And that’s what it’s all about; joy is the elation and freedom we feel as we rush down the rollercoaster *after* having to call upon our deepest courage and strength. For some, it may take some time to re-calibrate a joyful relationship with dance, and that is okay. Just know that it is already deeply embedded within you and is waiting for its opportunity to shine through.

Since joy revels in simplicity, we are going to discuss simple mental strategies to guide those re-connecting with joy or those continuing to foster lifestyle choices and mindsets that reap joy.

Just Have Fun

The first step in welcoming joy into our life is releasing judgment, shame, and guilt and replacing those mindsets with child-like wonder and play. Within that mental shift, we don't lose ourselves or become juvenile, but rather we become our most authentic and true selves.

Omit Expectations

We've all probably stumbled upon the quote that reads, "Comparison is the thief of joy". Research has shown that focusing on what we don't have takes us away from recognizing and embracing joyful moments. Within our mental framework, we must release any expectations, jealousy, envy, and comparison and instead invite gratitude. Think about it this way – if you are constantly looking forward to that promotion, buying your dream home, etc., you will completely lose sight of potential joy within the journey. In fact, the most sustainable form of mental health encourages us to find joy within the process, as opposed to grudgingly waiting for those desired goals and outcomes.

You Have a Choice

Here's the reality about mental health and wellness, we do, to some degree, have a choice in the life we build, the habits we create, and the mindsets we nurture. It's our job to reflect and take note of those fleeting moments of joy so that we can structure our lives to include more room for them. This will be especially helpful as we re-enter the inevitable uphill battles of life.

