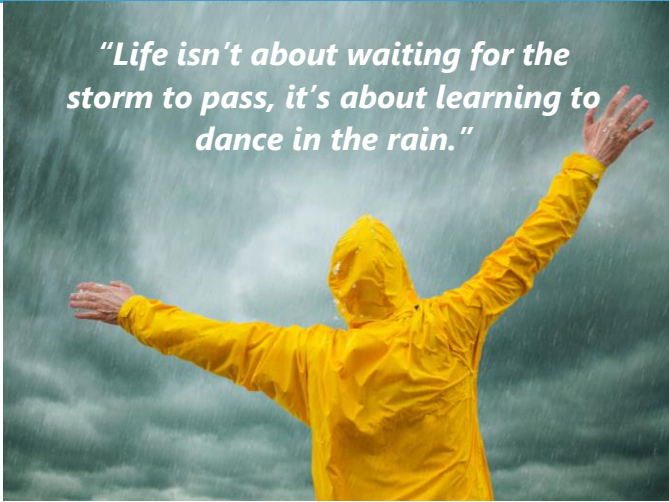


FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

FINDING JOY IN UNJOYFUL SITUATIONS

Finding joy in the challenges that life throws our way isn't easy, especially in the midst of emotional pain and trauma. Joy is not a state of happiness, but an inner journey we can choose, thinking beyond ourselves and our circumstances, understanding that our trials have a purpose.

It takes effort, thoughtfulness, and some planning to think through how to get there because our brains are so conditioned to focus on the negative emotions in front of us. Changing your pattern of thinking can be one of the best coping mechanisms you have in life in whatever situation you find yourself in. It's important to know that we may not be able to see through our circumstances on our own. Rely on a trusted friend, relative, or spouse to help get a sense of the real, and avoid over or under reaction in a time of crisis. They can help you to gain perspective and a voice of reason to help identify when professional help might be a better route to coping while you work on building skills and identifying solutions.



"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning to dance in the rain."

Everyday Gratitude – The Gateway to Finding Joy

It's important to connect with life's little pleasures, even when life is hard. How can we move out of the unpleasant feelings of challenging situations and discover joy in the everyday?



- 1) Understand What Fear Is** – False Evidence Appearing Real. Our brain and body naturally treat threats as extreme as a form of protection. Recognize fear when it arises, be with it, face it. Denying or ignoring fear keeps us from moving forward.
- 2) Do Something Small** – Find gratitude in the small things and create more opportunity for gratitude in your life. Breathe deeply, extend a kind gesture to someone, watch a funny movie. Gratitude is a gateway to joy and can lighten up the heavy load.
- 3) Find Optimism** – A crisis forces us to zoom in on what's in front of us and we can miss the bigger picture. Is what you are dealing with really important in the grand scheme of things? Try to focus on the good, the growth, and let go of the thoughts that aren't moving you forward.
- 4) Take Action** – Actions can make you feel empowered. While change may feel uncomfortable, actions work toward solutions. Try to embrace change and recognize the growth that comes with it.

Sources: <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/how-to-find-joy-when-life-is-hard>
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