

“JOY CHOOSES US!”
An AA/Alanon Workshop
January 20, 2022

(Presented by Tina H., Alanon and Bill H., AA, St. Louis, MO)

Joy comes to us—grows within us—as a vital part of our Spiritual Awakening.

We desire to *feel joy*. We desire to *be joyful*. We desire to sit quietly in the *serenity of our joy*. We desire to *share our joy* with all. We desire to *live a “happy, joyous and free” life!*

1. What is Joy?

Joy is “a feeling of extreme gladness, delight, our exultation of the spirit arising from a sense of well-being or satisfaction. The feeling of joy may take two forms: passive and active. **Passive joy** involves tranquility and a feeling of contentment with things as they are. **Active joy** involves a desire to share one’s feelings with others. It is associated with more engagement of the environment than is passive joy ... Both forms of joy are associated with an increase in energy and feelings of confidence and self-esteem.” (American Psychological Assn.)

The *will* directs the *mind*. The *mind* helps change how we *feel*. We learn to experience the feeling of joy as we seek and receive God’s will to re-direct our will, changing the way we think and changing the way we deal with how we feel. We may not feel joy when we first come into recovery. The Twelve Steps change us for the better in many ways. A most powerful and satisfying change we experience is to be able to feel joy, to be joyful and to live joyful lives.

2. Passive Joy (Serenity).

Feeling Joy.

“Let me not deprive myself of the many little joys that are mine ...” ODAT, p. 245

“... discover new joy ... essential to make room in our lives ...” HAW, p. 90

“I believe that God’s grace also means that God is doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He floods my life with His grace, doing things for me and through me that I could never do myself.” AWU, p.98

“... joy in escape from disaster ... having shared in a common peril ...” AA, p. 17

“Joy at our release from a lifetime of frustration knew no bounds.” AA, pp. 128

Being Joyful.

“... letting go ... feel all of our feelings ... those precious moments of joy ... CTC, p. 202

“Step Two reaffirms that we may be powerless, but we are not helpless.” PTR, p.18

“Instead of obsession or constant crisis, we find more inner peace.” PTR, p. 119

“The joy of living we really have, even under pressure and difficulty.” AA, p. 15

Serenity of Joy.

“... my heart filled with joy and hope. It always seemed like a miracle.” PTR p. 115

“New attitudes often evolve from a new way of seeing.” HAW, p.79

“We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous and free.” AA, p. 133

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3. Active Joy (Service).

Sharing our Joy.

“We who have lived in anguish for so long have discovered a way to live in serenity, one day at a time, and our greatest joy is to share this way of life with others.” AWU, p. 231

“It was Al-Anon that brought the joy of living ... out into the open, ready to be used to help others.” ODAT, p. 184

“What I can give is never as much as I get from the giving.” ODAT, p. 153

“... the joy of helping others to face life again ...” AA, p. 164

“... that where there is sadness, I may bring joy.” TT, p. 99

Living a “happy, joyous and free” life.

“...celebrate being alive. It is one way in which I touch my God.” CTC, p. 325

“Al-Anon became a joy for me.” PTR, p. 97

“If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence ...” AA, p. 132

“The joy of living is the theme of AA’s Twelfth Step ...” TT, p. 106

“Can we find a new joy of living in trying to do something ...” TT, p. 112

4. Other thoughts regarding Joy.

Joy “chooses us” when we choose God instead of ourselves to run our lives.

Joy is an in-filling and an out-pouring of God’s love and forgiveness for us and others.

When we are in “conscious contact” with God, we feel joy in ourselves—independent of outside circumstances and even along with other feelings.

The difference between happiness and joy is that happiness is temporary, based on “outside satisfactions”. Joy is an inside thing, a steady feeling as part of my conscious contact with the God of my understanding.

With “having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps”, joy is part of the package.

Joy is not just a hope of recovery. Joy is a promise of recovery.

“... the joy of good living is the theme of [our] Twelfth Step ...
God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.” T.T., p. 125

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Key: **ODAT** - One Day at a Time in Al-Anon **AA** - Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book)
HAW - How Al-Anon Works **TT** - Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (AA)
AWU - As We Understood ... **CTC** - Courage to Change **PTR** - Paths to Recovery