



5 Simple Strategies to Create Your Joy Filled Life®

By MarBeth Dunn, The Joy Strategist

1. **Appreciation** - Appreciate your life and be grateful for all your gifts. When you appreciate yourself and what is presenting in your life, you are aligning yourself with the pure energy of Source and joy. You are an extension of source, so appreciation aligns you with your deepest self and with your Creator. It's easy to appreciate what appears to be good, yet even what appears to be hurtful can be a blessing you may not yet understand.
2. **Forgiveness** - Release any hurts or slights. Holding on to blame, feeling justified, wronged, or victimized keeps YOU from experiencing joy. It doesn't affect the "perpetrator." It keeps you locked together with him in chains of guilt and blame. Any unforgiveness you're holding keeps you in the past, which keeps you from living in a joy filled present. You may feel if you let your hurts go, the perpetrator gets away scot free. Holding on to your victimhood can make you get to feel justified, exonerated, pure and right. Yet, people project the things they don't like in themselves onto others. As you forgive them, you forgive yourself.
3. **Breathe** - Breath is life. Take a few moments several times during the day to breathe deeply into your abdomen, you will reduce stress, slow down, and reenergize your body. Place your hands on your belly, a few inches below your navel. Inhale through your nose, slowly, and so deeply that you feel your belly rise with the breath. Exhale slowly, feeling your belly fall with the exhale. Practice for a few minutes and notice how relaxed you feel.
4. **Disengage** - Your thoughts are very powerful and can affect the way you feel. Your inner world affects your outer world. This exercise is a way of meditating, where you watch your thoughts float by, like clouds through the sky without engaging them. You stay detached, and you don't judge, or get hooked into anything emotionally charged. If you do get hooked, just notice that it happened, and disengage. Get a little distance from your thoughts. Watch yourself as though you are outside your body, watching a movie.
5. **Judgment free** - When you judge other people, you are judging yourself. Viewing others with compassion opens your heart to feel compassion for yourself? We project our thoughts and judgment on other people, especially if what we're feeling something that we think is wrong, or that we "shouldn't" be thinking or feeling. We don't want to see it in ourselves, but it has to go somewhere! So we project it onto other people and we get to see ourselves as spunkily clean. Then we get to judge THEM, and feel superior to them! Yet, when we look at other people with compassion, and without judgment, it frees us to see ourselves compassionately as well. As we accept other people without judgment, we are giving ourselves permission to be who we are and to accept ourselves.