

# TO MAKE A LIFE FULL OF JOY

by Katharine Lark

Many years ago, I used to make decision lists to evaluate career moves, relationships, which car to buy and such. From the simple to the complex, I would very seriously compile long lists of the positive and the negative aspects in my life. While some insight certainly was gained, I found that the negative side of the lists had a profound influence on my feelings about the issues and about myself. And even though it would seem productive, working to eliminate the negative parts only served to feed them energy and disturb my focus.

Now I have developed a new method that I use and share with others to help with the decision-making process. With most either/or decisions, your instinct will serve you best. When seeking to change your life, to find your vision, your bliss or joy, there is a special way to make a list.

## Eliminate the Negatives

Forget the negatives. If you work to avoid something, you give it more value than it deserves. Just forget about and ignore the irritations and downers for the moment, and soon they no longer affect you because they no longer concern you.

Make your list a list of joys. Seriously start, on a large piece of paper, a list of everything that brings you real joy. You will add to the list for days, weeks, months without a specific goal beyond the recognition of your own happiness.

If you don't feel like there is much joy in your life, just wait until something makes you smile or feels good and write it down. You may really enjoy a cup of coffee in the morning before you even get out of bed; write it down. To add this joy to your life, you can tell a companion who might want to bring you that coffee or, if you live on your own, buy a coffee-maker that starts brewing on its own and set it up by your bed. The more seemingly insignificant, small things you can discover that make you happy, the more able you will become to chart a life course that adds joy instead of avoids pain. You strengthen what you concentrate upon.

Write down each joy, both small and large, the things you can do or feel right

now as well as the things you might have to wait for. As your list grows, it will begin to show you some things about yourself. Do not make it a "goal" list; don't put anything on your list that requires effort or becomes a distraction from simple pleasure. This is not a list of things to do but is a bit of insight into your own honest needs. Only things that harm no one can be joys on your list and that includes not harming yourself. When your list has some length to it, start to evaluate the influences in your life. Do they contribute to your joy? Do you seem to contribute to the joy of others? One thing that many people seem to find is that their work, their jobs, are not compatible with their joy.

When this happens, you might start thinking about a new job, a different job, and start trying to find it. You might want to think about "making" a job instead of "getting" a job. It is not as improbable as it might sound to you. Every vocation was created by someone. So much of what we hold dear in our belief systems are just made-up concepts accepted by the majority. Money, politics, the stock market, war (which has rules!), sports, are all concepts and were made up by people. I don't mean this as a putdown — except for war, which is definitely a concept worth dumping — but this whole experience of creating proves the power of concentrated, energetic thought. These things exist only because enough people believe in them to empower them. We use petrol-powered vehicles because we all believe in them. And we can change our beliefs to solar or anti-gravity or...? Consider the power of a concept.

So, you may want to make a job for yourself. Okay, look at your joy list. Does it expand into some tangible sphere of joyful undertakings that could become your way of living? If not, what sort of life could you imagine living that would support this list of bliss? This does not mean "afford your joys," because I'm sure you have realized that things don't make joy but that you make your joy from loving choices. To sup-

port your joys, your way of living must make that love a priority.

So maybe you have a huge house with a huge mortgage that requires you to earn that big salary by building bombs. Do you torture yourself with this kind of job because the house makes you happy? I doubt it. Has someone made you think that this is the lifestyle you want? Do you want to live a lifestyle or do you want to live a life? Don't let me dictate to you, either. You know where *your* joy lives and if it is in that huge house, stay there and be happy. If your job brings joy into your life, keep it!

But if you want to change things, start somewhere. Do things one at a time. If I have a riding student who is afraid to jump her horse over big fences, I ask her why the big jumps are important. Does she enjoy jumping small ones? If so, I tell her to just keep riding over small jumps to stop negating the stuff that actually brings her happiness and concentrate on doing what feels right. If the big jumps can bring her joy, she will be eager to face them when she has learned how to enjoy the riding *for its own sake*.

Now one true key to happiness is the ability to simplify. I'm sure that some people are surprised that their joy lists are filled with very simple things (sunrises, *Dr. Who* episodes, cheesecake, listening to children, cooking with their moms, a foot massage). And one way to look at a financial situation and simplify it is to make your lifestyle fit your income instead of trying to make your income fit your idea of the best lifestyle. I think that time is more valuable than money. If all of your time is spent making money so that you can move up the ladder of someone else's design — you have little time for joy. If you build your own "ladder" with each rung representing time for a specific joy, your money will become a means to an end, not the end itself.

Please yourself, harm no one, discover your joys and empower the positives in life.

Is not a day of recognition and simple, sublime pleasure, — fresh air, cold water, a cheese sandwich and a rainbow — worth a fortune? ✱

*Katharine Lark has been working with horses, crystals and herbs for over 30 years. In her "Horse Spirit" sessions, she helps people to explore the interdimensional equine/extraterrestrial connection. She may be reached at P.O. Box 46, Radium Springs, NM 88054.*