


++Finding Joy + Happiness Within Ourselves


Aspects of Happiness | Lama Rod Owens | [Love & Rage pgs 142 - 147](#)


“Happiness doesn’t exist outside of ourselves”

“Happiness doesn’t mean we are forcing anything away. It is this profound and revolutionary practice of allowing and accepting. When I say “allow,” it doesn’t mean condoning or celebrating what’s in your mind. It means there is already material there, and how can I do the work of allowing it to be there? And when I do the work of allowing something to be there, then I begin to enter into a relationship with what is. I don’t have to like what I am allowing either. But I have to let it be there. Happiness can abide with other things. We can be happy and struggle at the same time.”

 **Space** - Mental spaciousness is the heart of happiness. We do not need to create space, space is already there if we can notice it. When we notice the space, the other material doesn’t go away, but you realize you can hold everything without fixating on it. Living is dancing with all of the bullshit that arises for us. The dance is the expression of adapting, and we can’t do the dance of adapting without space. Happiness is the space in which we dance with even the toughest shit of our lives.


Exercise: For two minutes, take long slow deep breaths, doodle, and locate the space within yourself.

 **Trust** - I take refuge in my basic experience of myself. I trust myself. I trust that I can discern the positive and constructive things the world can offer me as feedback that can help me grow through my suffering. I also trust that I can discern through the bullshit that the world is trying to tell me about myself that has nothing to do with my benefit. This trust in myself doesn’t mean that I’m okay all the time, but it does mean that when I am not okay, I can let myself not be okay and I can take care of the not-okayness.

 **Connectedness** - Happiness is an expression of connectedness. This means that I feel a part of things and people around me because I have the mental space to relax and open. When I am feeling disconnected, I begin to experience fear and isolation, and these are experiences that can lead us to commit all kinds of violence. When I am feeling connected, I am also engaging in empathy for my basic experience, as well as for the experiences of others.

How do I feel when I am in connection with others? How do I feel when I am disconnected from others?

During my sabbatical, how will I make space to be in connection?

 **Accepting** - Acceptance is the energy of happiness. It is our work of allowing what is already present to be right where it is. Happiness isn’t about bypassing anything. It is about

acknowledging what is present and leaning into it. When I let go of the constant pushing away of things that are not comfortable, then I find myself reinvesting that energy of aversion into giving space to the material that is uncomfortable.

What (situations/emotions/ideas/relationships) am I struggling to accept that is getting in the way of my happiness?

Take-Home Exercise: Love and Rage Mindfulness Practice Pgs 148 - 151

Lessons from Baby Max | Characteristics of Joy:

Presence

- + What does presence mean to you? What does it feel like in your body when you are fully in the present moment?

Curiosity

- + What does curiosity feel like in your body?

Fearlessness

- + Where is fear stopping you from experiencing joy?

Take-Home Exercise - To Be Like a Baby:

For one hour, try engaging the world like a baby. Visit a sensory stimulating place where you feel safe to explore (park, bathtub, concert, etc.) Without using any words, explore your surroundings, tapping into how you feel. Stay as present and as curious as possible about what your surroundings are and what kind of sensory joy they have to offer you. Engage your sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste (safely).

Imagination ~ *Let your mind wander and be free~*

Imagination can unlock new portals and give us access to new realities. When playing in imaginary realms, remember that there's no wrong way to do it. Try not to police yourself.

Take-Home Exercises

- + **Storytelling + Writing Prompts** (can be fun to write, or daydream, or dream with a friend)
 - + You have a magic wand. What do you do with it?
 - + There's a light switch in your home. Nobody knows what it's for. One day, you discover what it does. What does it do?

- + Suddenly ducks love you and won't leave you alone. How do you get them to let you be?

- + **Try gathering old materials to make some art.** Could be a sculpture, some jewelry, some clothing, anything!

- + **Take on the identity of another person or creature.** Play in this space alone or with a friend.

- + **Write down your dreams and see how you can expand upon them in this dimension.**

- + **Keep playing with food + imagining all of the infinite yummy possibilities.**

Herbs that are supportive for the Imagination:

- + *Cannabis Sativa*
- + *Mugwort*
- + *Passionflower*
- + *Damiana*
- + *Lobelia*