



## Small Joys

I am focusing on “small joys” these days. Not as a balancing act as in “this terrible thing happened but I shouldn’t complain or feel bad because, look at this good thing over here.” No, tough things are tough! They don’t go away by ignoring them; they need to be dealt with. In fact, more often than not, some sort of action is required for things to change or for us to see a different perspective.

My purpose isn’t to gloss over the enormous challenges we all face at one time or another, it is rather to be realistic and to pay attention to more than just the difficulties. If we are alive, then as day follows night, problems and disappointments will always get our attention, but **I want to make sure my view takes in the entire scene of my day** and ultimately my life.

In other words, what else happened? What went right; what and who helped; did I notice the beauty; did I recognize the gifts; did I open my eyes to the wonder of waking up in the morning? Did I hear the music or see the sunset? **Can I accept the bad news as part of being a human being yet not make it my entire life’s story?**

My Mother had her share of life’s challenging moments. She was once asked if she ever felt defeated or got discouraged. She answered, “not really because I always think there is something better coming around the corner.” And it did, because she looked for it.

She also gave reality a helping hand by doing her part to nudge that “something better” whether it was taking a course, making a move, learning new things and being active physically and mentally. Saying “YES” to life’s invitations. She chose not to complain and she noticed all the small joys in her life. As one of my friends said,

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**“Your Mother has got the gratitude thing going.”**  
And so she does.

And it is a good practice for us all. There is ALWAYS something to be grateful for. This starts, first and foremost by shifting our attention from all the thorny issues in our lives to all the things which are helping us, noticing what is beautiful, inspiring, helpful and what makes a positive and/or meaningful difference in our lives. You may have experienced that an over-focus on all the things which are not right, all the dilemmas we must face day in and day out, brings along the extra stress and can render us helpless.

**We can invite peace into our lives** through many avenues but one way that is ever-present, costs nothing, and reduces suffering, is through cultivating the joy of small things. Sometimes we take the good things, and especially the small things, for granted, even considering them our due because of the effort we have exerted to achieve them. Then when the tough things come, it is equally as easy to be offended and think these are mistakes that we don’t deserve.

Looking for beauty, kindnesses, help received and opportunities to give something back in both the obvious and less than obvious places – creates chances to bring peace and joy into our daily lives, no matter what else is going on. Finding things bigger than ourselves to contribute our life’s energy to, energizes us. Reflecting on what we love, our interests, hobbies, people, and taking the time to become engaged in these activities, changes us.

Life is short. We know that is true for others but we find it hard to see ourselves in that light. It’s easy to miss the small things. **Life’s moments are strung like pearls across the days of our lives. They shine and so do we, when we pay attention to the whole picture.**

*Trudy Boyle keeps on DOing as small joys inspire her to triumph over the tough times and she invites you to observe closely and do the same.*



**Dr. Doug Kuramoto**  
Naturopathic Physician  
Pacific Holistic Center

595 Campbell St.  
Nanaimo, BC V9R 3G9  
Ph: (250) 753-0280

525 Pioneer Crescent  
Parksville, BC V9P 1V1  
Ph: (250) 954-1955  
Fax: (250) 753-0277 (Nanaimo)



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For all of my dreams I am what I do.

-Dr. David K. Reynolds

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