

Dr. Miles Shares Advice on Finding Joy in Hard Times

Joy is an action rather than a state of being. It refers to the ability and choice to rejoice.

UNITED STATES, January 4, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Psychotherapist Dr. Linda Miles has practiced and guided her patients in using mindfulness for decades. As a firm believer that the ability to rejoice is something that can and should be cultivated regularly, she echoes the teachings of neuroscientists like Dr. Eric Kandel and gentle leaders like Desmond Tutu: it is possible to live a life brimming with joy despite the scariest impediments, ranging from fear and anger to grief and death. In her Change Your Story, Change Your Brain book series on mindfulness, one of her lessons discusses how the brain can be trained to resist harmful gut reactions and focus on positive aspects that pull people together to rejoice in a sense of community and purpose.

Dr. Miles points to the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu as an example. Desmond Tutu was born during apartheid in South Africa in 1931, and encountered fierce prejudice since childhood, battled tuberculosis and segregation, quit the biased school system, and eventually became one of the most prominent voices in the anti-apartheid movement despite violent oppression. While ministering to families damaged by apartheid, he deliberately chose to convey gratitude and lead by example, knowing that he would not be able



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to inspire the people around him to be joyful if he himself could not authentically rejoice in living. As a human rights and world peace activist, Tutu practiced optimism and continuous cultivation of gratitude and joy.

“Despite all of the ghastliness in the world, human beings are made for goodness. The ones that are held in high regard are not militarily powerful, nor even economically

prosperous. They have a commitment to try and make the world a better place.” –Desmond Tutu

Dr. Miles points out that happiness doesn't lead to gratitude; gratitude leads to happiness. She emphasizes the importance of concentrating on the present moment, where self-discovery and conscious decisions can be made. First, assess the situation; notice feelings and pinpoint what's toxic. Second, look for opportunities to transcend fear and pain by expressing joy; it's impossible to inspire others without igniting a personal inner light. Third, practice gratitude and joy. One method uses a visualization technique: imagine inhaling the surrounding suffering and exhaling sparks of goodness and healing, recycling toxicity like trees filter air. Deep breathing and mindfully reprogramming thoughts enable feelings of comfort and calm.

Pockets of light, Dr. Miles notes, can—and should—be found in all dark places. Her daughter-in-law, while pregnant and working as a nurse checking up on terminal cancer patients, was astounded when patients checked up on her and rejoiced in her progress. Despite their personal ordeals, they chose to focus on the blessing of friendship and the miracle of pregnancy. Practicing mindfulness and choosing gratitude come with the realization that joy does not imply never-ending happiness or optimal circumstances, Dr. Miles explains. Joy is an action rather than a state of being. It refers to the ability and choice to rejoice. And it is the capability to transcend suffering and retain a state of inner light that extends outward to illuminate others as well.

-Dr. Linda Miles (Ph.D., Counseling Psychology) has worked in the field of mental health for over thirty years as psychotherapist, consultant, mindfulness educator, and writer. Her publications include the award-winning book *The New Marriage, Transcending the Happily Ever After Myth*, written with her husband, Dr. Robert Miles; *Friendship on Fire*; and the *Change Your Story, Change Your Brain* series. Her writing has also appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Boston Globe*, *Reuters*, and *Miami Herald*. As a guest expert on national media, she has discussed issues ranging from sexuality and relationships to domestic violence and mental illness. Dr. Miles has also received several professional awards for her service, including the "Outstanding Educator in Business and Industry" award from Florida State University and the "Outstanding Contributions to Knowledge in the Practice of Marriage and Family Therapy" award from the Tallahassee Association of Marriage and Family Therapy. Dr. Miles has a continued passion for creating a better world through loving relationships.

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