

## **10 Secrets to Immediately Put More JOY in Your Life: A sneak preview from Bonnie St. John's new book "Live Your Joy" coming in May, 2009.**

*Life sometimes throws curve balls that threaten your job, your health, your retirement account, perhaps even unraveling your most valued relationships. It can be tempting to rely solely on hard work or dogged self-determination to turn things around when these challenges arise. Yet Bonnie St. John believes one additional life ingredient can dramatically transform life's tough situations: JOY. As an amputee, Paralympics silver medalist, Rhodes scholar, Harvard and Oxford graduate, and single mom, Bonnie has faced some of life's toughest challenges—and she doesn't speak of joy lightly. In this bonus gift you'll get:*

- ❖ Quick "Joy Boost" techniques that work anywhere, anytime
- ❖ Tricks to beat the "Joy Stealers"
- ❖ More habits and behaviors for living a joy-filled life

### **Introduction:**

In the process of writing my next book, *Live Your Joy* (April '09 from Hachette), I discovered something amazing. Feeling good--feeling joy--is something you can change in an instant!

As we grow up, we take on more and more responsibility for solving problems. We have to. Problems demand our attention. But we get so good at "handling" our woes that we can sometimes go too far - even become magnets for problems. Our attention is always piqued: "Is there a problem? Where is the problem? What kind of problem is coming next?" Especially once you have children, you are always looking to solve, maneuver around, or even prevent the next catastrophe.

Joy, on the other hand, never demands our attention. As an adult, our brains are so filled up with joyless demands (groceries, taxes, bills, phone calls to return...you know what I mean!) that all the space for joy gets crowded out. And joy leaves quickly, easily, without a whimper of complaint.

As kids we experience joy because we have room for it. Remember what it was like to have hours and hours with nothing to do? Johnnetta Cole, a former college president, told me in an interview how, when she was a child, she wished for chocolate ice cream every night on the first star she saw. Kids think about new toys, playing baseball or whatever the next fun thing will be. They fill their heads with joy-inducing thoughts. So what happens to us older folks? It's so easy to forget about joy. Especially when you smell bad in the morning.

The good news is that it is simple to get back to that focus on joy! It's not gone, it just may be hiding. All you have to do is decide joy is important and make it a

priority. In addition to writing my next book about joy, I am providing video clips, podcasts and other freebies on my web site, [www.bonniestjohn.com](http://www.bonniestjohn.com), to help anyone and everyone get more joy into their life starting today! Or, feel free to click here to order the entire book on Amazon: [http://www.amazon.com/Live-Your-Joy-Bonnie-John/dp/0446579254/ref=pd\\_bbs\\_sr\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1236022582&sr=8](http://www.amazon.com/Live-Your-Joy-Bonnie-John/dp/0446579254/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1236022582&sr=8)  
-1

***Secret #1: JOY JOLTS – in only a minute!***

Try this simple exercise. Sit still. Close your eyes and think about something that makes you smile or feel good. It could be a memory of dancing, being proud of someone, or feeling unconditionally loved by your kids, parents, friends or spouse. You could reflect on enjoying your home, your last vacation, or being recognized for your accomplishments.

Notice how your whole body changes? Your energy increases. All you have to do is stop and take the time to feel the joy wherever you are. Repeat as often as needed. You can do this ten times a day if you like!

***Secret #2: JOY isn't the same as positive thinking.***

Positive thinking is often about affirming goals for yourself in the future or traits about yourself you'd like to develop. Positive thinking is usually about pushing yourself harder to get something you don't have yet. A Joy Jolt is about feeling good in the moment, enjoying something that has already happened, and being satisfied right now. Joy Jolts are more about feeling than thinking. Forget about where you're going for a moment, and focus on where you are and what you already have all around you.

***Secret #3: The health benefits of doing this are tremendous.***

Research has shown that stopping to feel joy for a few moments actually makes all of your physiological systems work better together! (Check out [www.heartmath.org](http://www.heartmath.org)) We know that stress causes our immune system to be less efficient and can lead to disease, muscle tension and many other health problems. So, doesn't it make sense that the reverse is also true? Simply taking more time to focus on joyful thoughts actually improves your immune system, makes your heart and lungs work more efficiently together, and has other healthful impacts on all of your body's functions. This actually makes you feel better. Which produces more joy moments, which... Get the picture?

***Secret #4: Banish the Excuses!***

Now, just because it is fast, simple and a stunningly good health idea, doesn't mean it is easy. I know I have so many reasons not to give myself permission to take the time to feel joy. Being too busy is my favorite excuse.

Am I really too busy to take one minute? No way. I can have a Joy Jolt while brushing my teeth, riding in the elevator, waiting for an appointment, or even driving to work. There is plenty of time.

Another powerful excuse is that I feel guilty about feeling joy. For example, if someone I love is seriously ill, I would feel guilty taking out time for a joy moment. My instinct would be to worry myself sick...literally.

The important thing to remember is that avoiding joy—even in the most difficult situations—doesn't help anyone else. If you were in the waiting room while your spouse was being operated on, stopping to feel a joy moment would be the best thing you could do. Keeping up your own health and immune system in a crisis is more helpful than stressing out, and possibly getting sick yourself. Of course, you may not be able to stop yourself from worrying completely, but stopping, even for a moment, to absorb some joy is as helpful as taking vitamins and exercising.

Isn't this great news? You don't have to take a fancy vacation, buy something, or otherwise escape to feel joy. All it takes is a moment of your time and the willingness to feel that joy that's already all around you.

### ***Secret #5: Supercharge your "To Do" List.***

One day while I was drafting my usual "To Do" list—I am big on lists—I suddenly realized that my feelings never make the list. *Am I a human "doing" or a human "being"?* Why not make a "TO FEEL" list?

Items like:

- ❖ Feel sunshine on my face
- ❖ Express appreciation for my clients
- ❖ Tell someone I love them
- ❖ Know that I am blessed
- ❖ Be thankful for my life

Just putting these things on the list already begins to lift my spirits. Sometimes there are easy ways to mix them into my other, more conventional "to do" items. For example, deciding to have a networking meeting outdoors if the weather is nice, or walking a little around the office just to clear my head. You'll be surprised how much these "little" things make a difference.

Giving joy actual space on your calendar is so important. We make time for problems—and problems force us to make time for them. Joy doesn't demand our attention. If you are reading this, you have a computer, indoor plumbing, and probably are among the wealthiest tenth of the population on the planet. Yet we can easily forget to appreciate what we have and who we are. Put it on your schedule!

### **Secret #6: Get REAL!**

A big joy killer is buying into other people's dreams instead of your own. What do you really love to do or be? What makes you truly happy?

This year, if you can't afford the vacation you usually take, ask yourself *what is it about that vacation that makes me really happy?* Can you plan a "stay at home vacation"? Have someone come and clean your house every day if you like hotel maid service. Go out to eat---don't cook at home---if that's what you would do on vacation. Read books and lounge around or go dancing....*whatever it is that you love to do*. Connect to that. Forget the airfare and the big hotel bill, but keep the feelings and activities you truly enjoy. Need a change of scenery? Maybe you can swap houses with a friend in another city.

### **Secret #7: Invest in Your Circle of Friends.**

A recent Harvard Medical School study showed that having friendships had a positive impact on your health equivalent to quitting smoking, losing weight or starting an exercise program. We also know that friendships can have a positive impact on your mental health. But your friendships must be real and authentic to have this positive impact. People who we call "friends" despite abuse or manipulation are not contributing to our health much less our joy. Weed out the friendships that don't work, invest in the ones that do.

### **Secret #8: Be Helpable.**

In his book, *Life is a Contact Sport*, Ken Kragen, an agent for many famous singers and actors, argued that it isn't talent, hard work, focus, or attitude that guarantees success. Many people with all of that going for them achieve a certain level and then plateau.

What is the one thing superstars have that others don't? **More help.** Kragen recommended to his emerging talent that they learn how to be more helpable. Send more thank you notes. Be more humble. Ask for help.

I was stunned when I learned this nugget of wisdom. I could see in my own life that I was used to being a high achiever, being strong and independent, and even being stubbornly single minded and persistent. I was not necessarily the easiest person in the world to help. Similarly, when I speak to groups of high-performing sales teams, women on Wall Street, and other go-getters, I find that "being helpable" is not usually on their list of the attributes they respect.

What are three things you can do right now to be a more helpable person? Take a look at Secret #9...

### ***Secret #9. Connect – Connect – Connect.***

How can you be helpable if you keep your nose to the grindstone and never look up? You can make your load easier and your life more joyful when you are out meeting other people at work, in your community, and even in your family.

Cultivate a network of people who you can ask for advice, referrals, or even just a shoulder to lean on. In tough times, it's so easy to shut down. You may not want to call other people because you don't feel positive about yourself or your job. But going it alone is not the answer. Stay in circulation. Meet new people. You never know who is going to be the source of a new job, new contract, or even just a new, great friendship.

Nowadays with social networking online you can find old friends you have lost touch with, find other people who share your interests, and quickly and easily expand your sphere of connectivity. Go for it!

### ***Secret #10: Prepare to Fall Down.***

We all have ups and downs. With the economy and stock market the way it is, our moods can feel like a rollercoaster with huge peaks and valleys in a single day.

Knowing that you will have times when it feels like everything is against you, prepare for that. Choose a time when you are feeling good to make a ***JOY First Aid Kit***. Mine contains bubble bath and a scented candle, a gift certificate for a pedicure, and a list of emergency things to do:

- ❖ Go to the gym and sweat out the anxiety
- ❖ Call one of four best friends
- ❖ Go to Starbucks with a pad of paper and envision my future (love this one)
- ❖ Curl up with a good movie and popcorn
- ❖ Get more sleep (things always look better)
- ❖ Ask myself whether it's just that time of the month

Of course, what pulls *you* back up from the bottom is different from what works for me. What is in your ***JOY First Aid Kit***? Write it down. You never know when you'll have to reach for it.

Well that was ten quick tips...if you found this helpful, you'll enjoy the whole LIVE YOUR JOY book packed with stories that will make you laugh and cry as well as give you lots more insights into joyful living.

[http://www.amazon.com/Live-Your-Joy-Bonnie-](http://www.amazon.com/Live-Your-Joy-Bonnie-John/dp/0446579254/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1236022582&sr=8)

[John/dp/0446579254/ref=pd\\_bbs\\_sr\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1236022582&sr=8](http://www.amazon.com/Live-Your-Joy-Bonnie-John/dp/0446579254/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1236022582&sr=8)

-1