

Personal Excellence

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Author of
"If You Ever Need Me,
I Won't Be Far Away"**

Finding Joy
Amid Life's Lessons

**Four
Virtues**



Finding Joy

Amid life's lessons.



by Bruce F. Rosen

NOT FAR BENEATH THE SURFACE of busy days—filled with traffic congestion, tense motorists, loud sirens, and the cluttering of our minds with ceaseless e-mails and voice mails, that demand our attention and response—lies real people who are trying to cope with the demands of life, despite the stress.

We hope to satisfy the demands of our jobs, spouses, friends, children, parents, relatives—and to help others in need. Even as we struggle to move beyond necessity, we can *feel happiness*—and allow that happiness to emerge into a *sense of abiding joy*.

Six Ways to Find More Joy

How can you find more joy amid all the obstacles? Here are six ways:

1. Let joy in. Ultimately, happiness isn't a goal to be met—*happiness finds you*, if you let it in. You can't obtain it like a material possession, or find it in any external object. It washes over you when you recognize that *you are doing the best you can to live an honest life and make wise choices*, when you *allow yourself to love yourself*. In so doing, you belong to something much bigger. By *letting go*, you discover truths about your nature. An appreciation for life's wonders happens *naturally*, and comes *replete with joy*. You see that beneath all of this noise is a *self* that is passionate about many things—sports, music, serenity, drama, food, nature, God, life. You see that *there are many things in life to treasure*, in your own way.

2. Give and receive, gracefully. You may not know where the next job or opportunity will come from, but when you *let go of your own control of the situation*, when you *stop trying to manipulate everything in your power*—it somehow arrives just in time. Everything is always *just in time*. However, this does take some work on your part. You must be prepared to give and receive, gracefully, trying to limit your pride and need to control. The simple act of giving is peaceful for the soul. Selfless giving



brings peacefulness, resulting in joy. I've known skeptics who doubt the existence of anything spiritual in life, having rejected God, but then recognize something beyond themselves when they accept a gift, or perhaps are loved in an important way. Gratitude allows you to accept the blessings of life, and then offer them in return. So, a key to allowing happiness and joy into your life is to be *grateful* for your life, the lives of those you love, to appreciate that you walk this earth a short time, that life at its core is *joy*, and that this joy is your inheritance, and you are the beneficiary. *When you encounter your true nature through gratitude, you find joy.*

3. Repent, learn, let go of regret and guilt, and move on. Clearly life is hard; and you must experience the consequences of your actions. Often you do not choose well, and regret the effects of these actions. Perhaps an affair wreaked havoc on a marriage. And for this all parties are suffering. There is regret and guilt over the action that did the damage. You now recognize that you should have held yourself to a higher standard. Now you face the consequences. If the marriage is worth saving, show the humility to save it. Communicate until the magic takes over, and the joy returns. If the marriage can't be saved—if the broken promise has caused it to end—then move on and learn. You are an imperfect being with an eternal soul—there is so much to learn.

Perhaps the time has come for a relationship to end; perhaps there was suffering of the soul, and now there is liberation. The transition will be hard, and you will face self-doubt. So, try to heal the wounds, admit the mistakes, live consciously, and recognize that you can't know everything that will come from your actions. This is not to say that you shouldn't regret. *Regret is necessary to educate your actions, to realize that you have made mistakes, to acknowledge failures.* However, it can destroy your health, rob you of self-worth, deprive a life of the blessings of happiness and joy if not mitigated. Let go of regret and guilt, when it is time to do so! In this way you allow a love for oneself to wash over you, and feel the gift of a higher power.

4. Do what you love, even in small ways—in any way possible. Music is magical. People create with voice and instrument sounds that sooth the Gods,

as well as themselves. The Greeks played their music for the Gods. It is easy to take for granted that great music is available to you. So often you don't take time to turn on your favorite songs, become transported to the special place in time and space, but ultimately within yourself where this music evokes the sense of who you were, and who you are. You can't separate yourself from the sights, sounds, feelings, places you've been in your life; and so much of this is associated with music! You can *become yourself*, experience joy, and create yourself anew through music. Listen to old music, listen to new music, carve new memories into our brain's pathways through music. Enjoy theater, politics, and sports or recreation. Enjoy that you have a body that magically follows your commands and gets up and does what you want it to do. Enjoy that incredible mystery that action follows intention. That you get up from your chair and go for a walk. There is joy in being human; and being passionate about what you love brings joy—despite obstacles! So, do what you love.

5. Laugh more. You are a child when you are young. But you are also a child when you are in your twenties and thirties, seventies and eighties and beyond. And your inner child wants to laugh. When my mom was alive, her laughter amazed me. In her sixties, she laughed with the infectious, joyful, contagious sound—dimples deepening within her cheeks—of a little kid. She brought joy wherever she went, and especially when she laughed. The joy I often feel in life is brought into deeper focus when I laugh, and my laughter is an inheritance from my mom. We all inherit so much from those we love who have passed on—allow yourself to recognize, appreciate, and be joyful over the good that you have inherited—it is who you are. Let yourself *laugh, in spite of the obstacles*. You are never more who you are than when you laugh—laughter is the *ultimate letting go*.

6. Let go of your cares and worries. You take your cares and worries seriously, but you also take yourself lightly enough to be kind and gentle enough with yourself to let them go. To accept that we are human, fallible, ultimately we need to be kind to ourselves. All things must pass, including your life. You are here a short time. So, find more joy in your journey! PE

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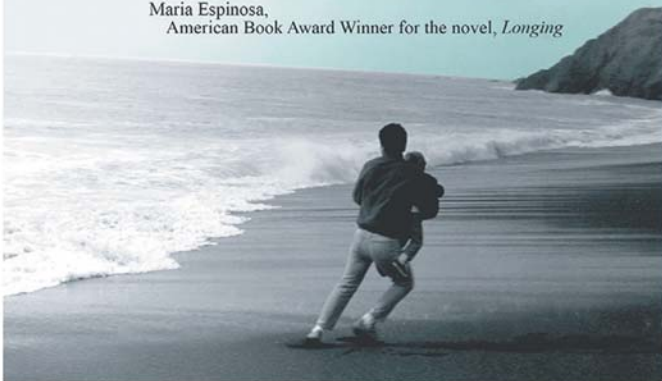
ACTION: Add more joy to your life.

If You Ever Need Me, *I Won't Be Far Away*

Bruce Farrell Rosen

"A fascinating memoir told with the immediacy of an intimate diary. Rosen reflects upon his life, the loss of his mother, and the subsequent unraveling of his marriage with rare honesty. A rich and spellbinding story."

Maria Espinosa,
American Book Award Winner for the novel, *Longing*



Alma Rose

P u b l i s h i n g



"I'm totally amazed at the beauty and quality of the writing..."

It's like Ulysses, only easier to read... Every sentence counts and the author has an excellent recall of details. The flow of the thought, the depth, the humor, the vignettes are entertaining; the book is a page-turner."

MERLA ZELLERBACH,
AUTHOR OF *LOVE TO DIE FOR*

"Each memory from Rosen's life comes alive in these pages.

We smell the smells, walk the ground, experience the emotions. We follow the logic that lies behind each decision made, and feel the pain of the hard decisions."

BONNIE CEHOVET, EDITOR OF *Soul Chronicle*

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