

What is Joy?

By Laurie Boggs

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Joy is a treasure to the heart. It's what opens us to a universal wisdom that takes a treasure hunt to explore. Upon exploration there are many perils to be found. I don't think I would have ever experienced joy or found the perils if my son Preston had not passed.

Living with alcoholic parents' joy was not an emotion in my household. In fact I really don't think I knew what joy was until I gave birth to my son. He was a treasure that was finally born after seven years of infertility, four surgeries and three miscarriages. Perseverance never stopped my passion of having this little boy. I had dreamed about him when I was a child wanting to escape from my own childhood existence.

I know now why I had this dream of my precious child Preston, because he is the one that introduced joy to me. I thought I had experienced joy in the past but the truth is it was moments of happiness. Happiness is an emotion that has a conditions attached to it. Joy penetrates the heart it's a feeling of pure connection with insights that opens the spirit and dances with an understanding of a deeper meaning to life.

Motherhood brought me to the miracles in my life. Miracles are connections to joy. Naïve at twenty eight, I knew that Preston was a gift, especially after the infertility. But I had no idea that this gift was wrapped with unconditional love and joy to the extent that I lived. Being a mom was full of surprises from early morning until bedtime. I was caught off guard in some aspects of parenting. But the aspect I cherished everyday was the joy that Preston penetrated in my soul.

Every morning kissing his little checks before he would awaken to start the day was a gift that I looked forward to daily. A long with the numerous group hugs with my husband. We would close the day by packaging our little bundle of joy by tucking him in bed at night with bedtime stories. Relishing in this cycle of life for eight years was more than anything I had ever imagined. Those bonds of joy build a foundation that has connected us forever.

Preston was killed by a drunk driver, five people were killed my husband and I barely survived. Three precious children were killed that ugly day. The drunk driver had his children in his vehicle with him. The irony of this wreck is I understood the shear terror of the children because my father drove drunk with me when I was a child.

How will I go on? How will I live in this life without Preston? I would ask God over and over will I ever find joy and love again. What I have found out that once you're a mother you're always a mother. My refrigerator is a masterpiece of pictures of children that have come upon my path. Because of the connection with Preston, I feel I have an inner deeper connection that most people don't understand. Preston's life has taught me that he lives within all the children of this world. His wisdom has shown me on a deeper level that joy is in anything we touch on a soul level.

A homeless man I once had a conversation with had the same eyes as my son. With this connection I asked the man “How do you find joy in your life with no security and no home?” His reply was “I am like you. After so many losses we find the perils in the heart in all things ...if our children we’re raised with the golden thread of love there would be no homeless or no drunken driving deaths. Our children brings to us wisdom, they are closer to heaven then we are. We need to honor them, meet their needs, and give them a safe place to grow.”

My heart is always full with the memories of joy that dance within me and Preston’s depth of love has shown me joy in everything. His physical body may not be here, but I know his joyful soul lives forever in my heart. Motherhood is a priceless gift that should not be taken for granted.

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