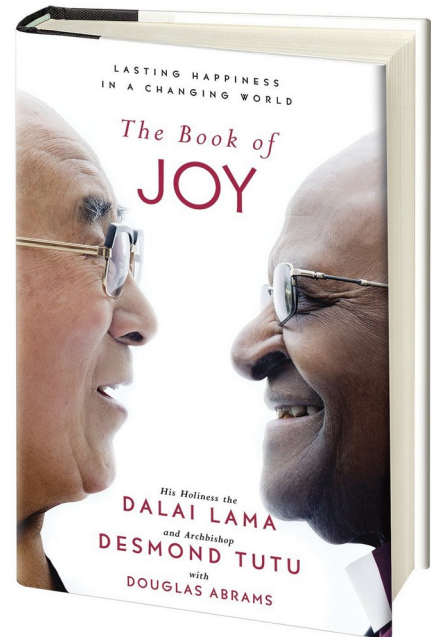


5.

Sadness and Grief: The Hard Times Knit Us
More Closely Together

Despair: The World Is in Such Turmoil
Loneliness: No Need for Introduction



pp.109-110

I'm a crybaby. I cry easily. . . . I suppose I love easily, too.

"And so I think we shouldn't think we are superwomen and supermen. To hold down emotions in a controlled environment, as it were, is not wise. I would say go ahead and even maybe shout out your sadness and pain. This can bring you back to normal. It's locking them up and pretending that they are not there that causes them to fester and become a wound. I've not read this in a book. It's just how I have handled them."

p.110

Sadness is a very powerful and enduring emotion.

brief sadness might generate more empathy or generosity.

pp.110-111

While depression certainly collapses our circle of concern inward, the periodic feeling of sadness might widen it. ...[psychology researcher Joseph Forgas] urges us to embrace all of our emotions, because they no doubt play a necessary role in our lives.

Sadness is in many ways the emotion that causes us to reach out to one another in support and solidarity.

p.111

We try so hard to separate joy and sorrow into their own boxes, but the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama tell us that they are inevitably fastened together. Neither advocate the kind of fleeting happiness, often called hedonic happiness, that requires only positive states and banishes feelings like sadness to emotional exile. The kind of happiness that they describe is often called eudemonic happiness and is characterized by self-understanding, meaning, growth, and acceptance, including life's inevitable suffering, sadness, and grief.

p.112

The way through the sadness and grief that comes from great loss is to use it as motivation and to generate a deeper sense of purpose.

p.113

when we feel our grief, uncomfortable and aching as it may be, it is actually a reminder of the beauty of that love, now lost.

p.115

'How do I find joy in the midst of such large world problems?'" [...]

"You show your humanity... by how you see yourself not as apart from others but from your connection to others."

p.116

What can you do to help change that situation? You might not be able to do a great deal, but start where you are and do what you can where you are. And yes, be appalled. It would be awful if we looked on all of that horrendousness and we said, Ah, it doesn't really matter. It's so wonderful that we can be distressed. ... It's incredible just how compassionate and generous people can be.

p.117

"Yes, we do have setbacks, but you must keep everything in perspective. The world is getting better. Think about the rights of women or how slavery was considered morally justified a few hundred years ago. It takes time. We are growing and learning how to be compassionate, how to be caring, how to be human."

p.118

[Tibetan Buddhist practice] *tonglen*, literally meaning 'giving and taking.' I tried to take on their fear, anger, suspicion, and to give them my love, my forgiveness.mentally, it was very, very helpful to keep a calm mind. It was a good opportunity to practice forgiveness and compassion.

p.120

We've always got to be recognizing that despite the aberrations, the fundamental thing about humanity, about humankind, about people, is that they are good, they were made good, and they really want to be good.

p.121

"When bad things happen they become news, and it is easy to feel like our basic human nature is to kill or to rape or to be corrupt. Then we can feel that there is not much hope for our future.

All these things happen, but they are unusual, which is why they become news.

p.121

"Hope," the Archbishop said, "is quite different from optimism, which is more superficial and liable to become pessimism when the circumstances change. Hope is something much deeper.

p.122

hope is different in that it is based not on the ephemerality of feelings but on the firm ground of conviction.

"Despair can come from deep grief, but it can also be a defense against the risks of bitter disappointment and shattering heartbreak. Resignation and cynicism are easier, more self-soothing postures that do not require the raw vulnerability and tragic risk of hope. To choose hope is to step firmly forward into the howling wind, baring one's chest to the elements, knowing that, in time, the storm will pass."

p.123

Hope is also nurtured by relationship, by community... Despair turns us inward. Hope sends us into the arms of others.

p.125

A study by sociologist Lynn Smith-Lovin had found that the number of close friends people report having has reduced from three to two. While we might have hundreds of Facebook friends, our true, close friends are decreasing. Perhaps most concerning of all, one in ten people said they had no close friendships at all.

p.126

"In rural areas, farmers have had a stronger sense of community," the Dalai Lama explained. "So, when someone or some family is facing a problem, you have the feeling that you can ask your neighbours for help. Even in big cities with millions of people, we still have the responsibility for each other whether we know each other or not."

p.127

"Our whole society has a materialistic culture," the Dalai Lama said. "In the materialistic way of life, there's no concept of friendship, no concept of love, just work, twenty-four hours a day, like a machine. So in modern society, we eventually also become part of that large moving machine."

If we stress secondary level of differences – my nation, my religion, my colour – then we notice the differences. Like this moment now in Africa, there is too much emphasis on this nation or that nation. They should think that we are same Africans. Furthermore, we are same human beings. [...] When we relate to others from the place of compassion it goes to the first level, the human level, not the secondary level of difference. Then you can even have compassion for your enemy.

p.128

"Perhaps our synagogues, our temples, and our churches," Archbishop Tutu added, "are not as welcoming as they should be. I really think that we do need for these fellowships to do a great deal more to have those who are lonely come and share. Not in an aggressive way, or in order, as it were, to increase their records or their ranks, but really just keenly interested in one person who comes and gets what they did not have before – warmth and fellowship. There are programs that set out to break down that loneliness."

the psychological experience of loneliness is quite different from the physical experience of being alone. We can feel joy when we are alone but not when we are lonely.

p.129

If you are filled with negative judgment and anger, then you will feel separate from other people. You will feel lonely. But if you have an open heart and are filled with trust and friendship, even if you are physically alone, even living a hermit's life, you will never feel lonely.

The only thing that will bring happiness is affection and warmheartedness. This really brings inner strength and self-confidence, reduces fear, develops trust, and trust brings friendship. We are social animals, and cooperation is necessary for our survival, but cooperation is entirely based on trust.

p.130

If you live with fear and consider yourself as something special, then automatically, emotionally, you are distanced from others. You then create the basis for feelings of alienation from others and loneliness.

p.131 Also, fear and distrust come from too much focus on yourself. This will cause you to always remain separate from your human brothers and sisters. This brings loneliness and difficulty communicating with other people. After all, you are part of the community, so you have to deal with them.

p.132

we can generate [warmth] simply by opening our hearts and turning our attention and our concern to other people

Questions for reflection:

1. Can you describe a time when sadness may have created a sense of empathy?
2. Describe a time when warmheartedness was magnetic, and/or a time when distrust lead to loneliness.

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