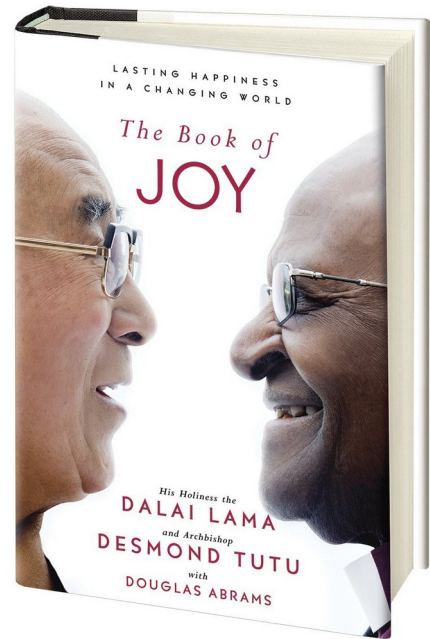


3.

Our Greatest Joy

Lunch: The Meeting of Two Mischievous People is Wonderful



p.59

question to the Archbishop: “[...] joy is a way of approaching the world. Many people are waiting for happiness or joy. When they get a job, when they fall in love, when they get rich, then they will be happy, then they will have joy. You are talking about something that is available right now, without waiting for anything.”

The Archbishop considered his response carefully. “I mean simply to say that ultimately our greatest joy is when we seek to do good for others.”

pp.59-60

We are wired to be caring for the other and generous to one another. We shrivel when we are not able to interact. [...] We depend on the other in order for us to be fully who we are.

I learned to be a human being from other human beings. We belong in this delicate network. It is actually quite profound.

Unfortunately, in our world we tend to be blind to our connection until times of great disaster.

p.61

“Nice guys finish last” is a phrase that speaks to our deep ambivalence about kindness and compassion in the West. Success in our society is measured by money, power, fame, and influence.

[...] Most people are not aspiring to spiritual greatness or enlightenment but to pay for their children’s education and make it through retirement without running out of money.

pp.61-62

One individual, no matter how powerful, how clever, cannot survive without other human beings. So the best way to fulfill your wishes, to reach your goals, is to help others, to make more friends.

“How do we create more friends?” he now asked rhetorically. “Trust. How do you develop trust? It’s simple: you show your genuine sense of concern for their well-being.”

p.62

When we become self-centered, turning in on ourselves, as sure as anything, we are going to find one day a deep, deep, *deep* frustration.

When we are able to move beyond our own pain and suffering, we are more available to others; pain causes us to be extremely self-focused. Whether the pain is physical or mental, it seems to consume all of our focus and leave very little attention for others.

p.63

What does our happiness have to do with addressing the suffering of the world? In short, the more we heal our own pain, the more we can turn to the pain of others. ...the way we heal our own pain is actually by turning to the pain of others. It is a virtuous cycle. The more we turn toward others, the more joy we experience, and the more joy we experience, the more we can bring joy to others.

p.68

compassion is a feature of strength, not weakness

Perhaps that is what it means to be fully present, available for each moment and each person we encounter, untethered by the ruminating memories of the past and not lured by the anticipatory worry about the future.

p.70

There's no other choice but for followers of the world's religions to accept the reality of other faiths. We have to live together. In order to live happily, we must respect each other's traditions.

p.71

I asked what we must do about intolerance and fanaticism, which was flaring all around the world.

"Education and wider contact are really the only solutions," the Dalai Lama replied. [...] This is really the practice at the core of all the world's religions – love. I didn't think to myself when I met this holy man: 'Unfortunately he's not a Buddhist,' or 'It's too bad he's a Christian.'"

pp.72-73

"I always consider myself personally one of the seven billion human beings. Nothing special. So, on that level, I have tried to make people aware that the ultimate source of happiness is simply a healthy body and a warm heart." [...]

"Everyone wants a happy life – and our individual happy life depends on a happy humanity. So we have to think about humanity, discover a sense of oneness of all seven billion human beings. [...]"

I really hate formality. When we are born, there is no formality. When we die, there is no formality. So formality is just artificial. It just creates additional barriers. So irrespective of our belief, we are all the same human beings. We all want a happy life.”

p.78

We need unbiased love toward entire humanity, entire sentient beings, irrespective of what their attitude is toward us. So your enemies are still human brothers and sisters, so they also deserve our love, our respect, our affection. That’s unbiased love. You might have to resist your enemies’ actions, but you can love them as brothers and sisters.

Question for reflection:

1. Can you describe a time when you have experienced joy or happiness when you have connected in some way with people you didn’t know (through prayer, or through support after disaster, or such)?

Pastor Tyler’s highlights and notes on the reading
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