

cohesion

accountability

belonging

trust

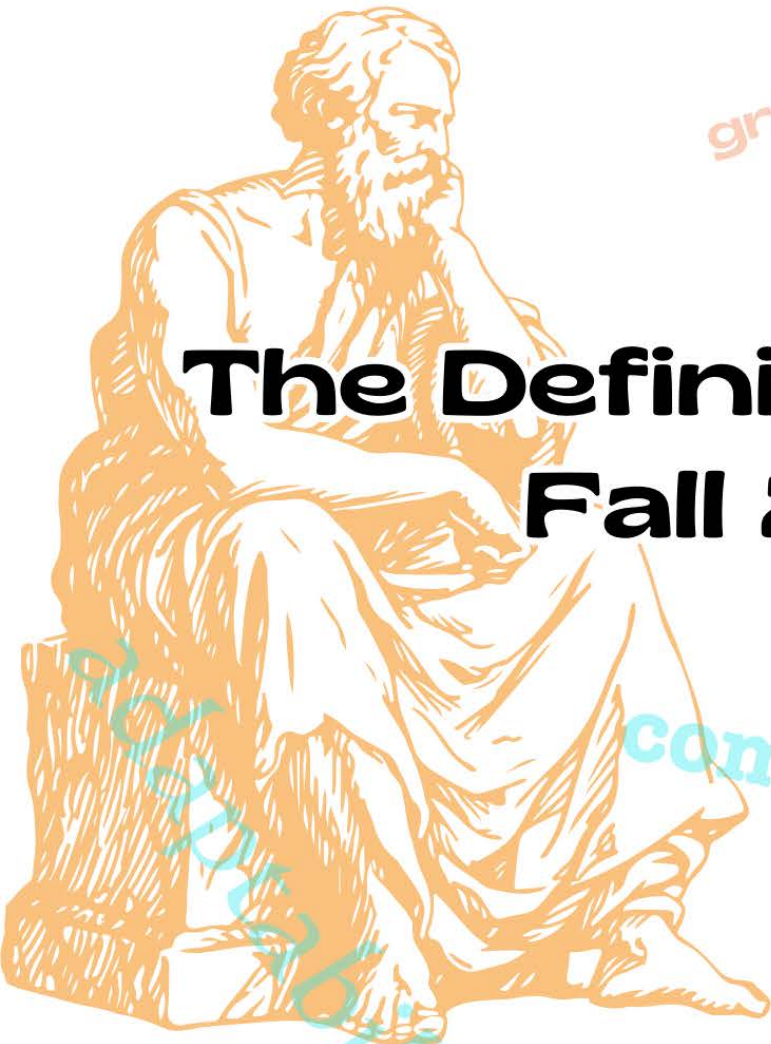
integrity

respect

growth

The Definition of Joy

Fall 2024



commitment

participation

The Definition of Joy

A compilation of youth writing all about joy.

Work will become a significant part of each of your lives. Why not make it part of a life well lived? That thought inspired us to think about how to grow Joy at Work for ourselves and for others. When we were young, the idea of Joy at Work was not something that was talked about. Mostly the talk was about separating your life into two parts: Work and Everything Else. It was only in the "everything else" part where something as ethereal as Joy could happen. We know now that what we were told then was wrong. Not because people were naturally mean or naturally cynical, but because they didn't see a way to have Joy at Work. They had not experienced it. We want all of you to experience it.

The first step in making a change is to believe the change is possible. The second step is to know that Joy at Work will not be given to you. You have to make it. When first starting, Joy at Work may come from being with the others at the job (who also may wish for Joy at Work). Just the support you give, like when someone says "What's going on?" and then you truly listen to what they say can be the spark to grow Joy at Work. We have found that people who grow Joy at Work do it no matter what the job is about or how difficult the circumstances are. Joy at Work is about the people at work. As you move along in your time at work, you may find that Joy at Work grows for you because you can create the possibility for others to grow Joy at Work. Imagine a life where work, the activity you will devote so many of your waking hours, becomes a source of Joy. You can make that happen because you can grow Joy at Work.

- **Ed and Roxanne Cook**



Learn more at www.thechangedecision.com

Podium RVA thanks The Change Decision for partnering with us to showcase youth writing, to challenge us to think critically about joy, and for sponsoring our programs throughout October 2024.

**Write about a moment that brings you pure happiness.
What happens, and how does it make you feel? What
makes that moment special?**

Darian Williams
Henderson Middle School

You see, when people are happy or feeling joy, you can see them smiling. For example, on my 5th birthday, we went outside and popped balloons, and I got money. That day made me smile and feel joy. Playing games, eating, and sleeping all make me feel joy.

Kennedy Greene
Henderson Middle School

One winter day in 2018, it snowed about 5-inches in Richmond. Since it was uncommon for it to snow, my family and I decided to go outside and play. I remember being stuffed into my snow coat, hat, and gloves by my mom. I could barely walk. It felt hot and stuffy until I stepped outside into the winter wonderland. It was one of the coldest days I had ever experienced in my life. Scooping up a ball of snow, I felt the freezing spell through my glove. I was thankful my mom gave me all those layers of clothing. My dad and little sister then came outside to play with me.

Andre Seward
Armstrong High School

Mostly when I'm with the people that love me most, like my mom, sisters, and brothers, is when I feel happiest. Also when I go outside, like the time when we were outside and were being chased by a dog, and I fell in a pothole! These are some of the things that bring me joy.

Bits O' Joy

Ma'Kayden Moore
Fairfield Middle School

To feel joy means to be happy and in a good mood. When you are smiling and actively talking to others, you experience joy. When you are being social with everybody, instead of being antisocial, that is joy.

Kourtnet Brotherson
Henderson Middle School

The sunset, just the way it shines on my face, brings me joy. I gaze up at the sun, inhaling the beautiful view. It makes me smile. Joy, the emotion that I feel, is good, and the warmth of the sun just keeps on making me smile.

Jaya Daniel
Fairfield Middle School

You know you're feeling joy when you're happy, excited, and joyful. When I hang out with friends, it makes me feel happy. A fun time I had with my friends was when we went to the skating rink. When I am around my family, I also feel joy. Fun times I have with my family are always on holidays and mostly on Christmas and Halloween.

Alexis Caldwell
Henderson Middle School

It makes me joyous when I'm with my friends. I love playing with my friends, and I make my friends laugh. Seeing my friends happy makes me happy. I love it when I can be inspired by my friends.

My Future Partner
Zion Lundy
Armstrong HS

Your eyes wide in their oval-like shape every time we meet.
The brown gets lighter and then you smile.
When I see you smile it brings me joy,
As your smile grows wider and your eyes get smaller.
The process repeats itself the closer I get.
Each time I think of you,
I think of your eyes, and it brings me to a place
That cannot be reached by anyone but you.
That's when I realized how you make me feel.

Aniyah Alston
Henderson Middle School

It makes me joyous when I'm included. Also, when we are telling jokes. I love it when my friends and I are laughing and playing, but when I'm not included, it still kind-of makes me happy because I see my friends happy. Finally, I am happy when my peers and teachers are proud of me.

Joshua Miller
Armstrong High School

Joshua M. here. Today, I want to enlighten you on what joy means, not only to me, but what it means to most high school students with a positive outlook on life. To be happy at school is to be around people who make you enjoy learning. This could be in the form of one of your favorite teachers. Even hanging out with all your friends at lunch can bring you great joy and can be seen as a positive outcome of going to school every day! Even though school may not be the most exciting place to be, being around the ones you love the most, such as friends or your favorite teachers can bring you tons of joy and make you want to go to school a lot more!

Do you feel like your school or your workplace allows you to contribute joy to it? If yes, how do you contribute joy? If not, why?

Autumn Christian
Oak Avenue Complex

My school allows us to contribute joy. It gives us activities and events to participate in, like pep rallies, school dances, sports, field days, and so much more! Last year, my school gave out donuts every quarter for getting on the A-B honor roll. The donuts WERE so good! I love donuts OR maybe I just like to eat.

Also, field trips and small groups and clubs that are offered can also bring joy. Challenges and competitions are included, like when they got us that delicious food at lunch when they made our classes compete - AYE, DON'T FORGET ABOUT PIZZA PARTIES OR SPIRIT WEEK! My school always tries to throw in some fun activities for us to enjoy ourselves.

I'm not sure about other people, but my 8th grade year was fun. I was with my friends, and my favorite classes in order were math, science, English, health / PE, social studies, and then tech. I LOVED my math teacher so much. She was so sweet, and my science teacher was funny too. My English teacher could be annoying sometimes, but she was nice overall. I SWEAR, my PE teacher was so sassy. It was actually too funny, but anyway, I love school, and I love food, sleep, music, my bed, my mom, dad, older brother, etc., and it will stay that way. Oh my lord, this was too much writing, but also, I love writing!

Caryonna Lewis
Armstrong High School

If it's a subject that I really like, like art, because I like to draw, and something I'm passionate about, then yes, I'm going to go for it and contribute joy. Halfway through the day I get more energy, so then, I'll really start to focus more. What gives me joy is getting energy from the people I hang around in class. Being with them makes me feel happier and more active.

Ka'Mya Christian
Fairfield Middle School

I feel joy a lot in band class because we laugh and mess around. We also play our songs and do fun things. Other times in band, I don't really feel joy because my teacher gets mad at us.

I also feel joy in Spanish. In Spanish, we get work done, but we also get to enjoy ourselves. In Spanish, I don't feel joy when my classmates are too loud and get into trouble.

Micayla Thompkins
Richmond High School of The Arts

Do I feel that my school brings me joy? Yes and no. Sometimes, it brings me joy because I'm with my friends, and they make me happy. Some of my teachers are my favorites, so they make me happy too. Other times, the environment can be toxic, so it gets overwhelming to be around people. People bring drama, and I like to stay to myself. That keeps me out of the way. All in all, school brings me mixed emotions.

Karisma Neal
Richmond High School of The Arts

School has the potential to bring joy, but I feel like nobody really wants to put in the effort to make it a truly joyful environment. Some kids want to actually celebrate at school and go to parties like homecomings, but where we're from, and with how people act, we can't have that. Instead, it's funerals and lockdowns, back to back. It honestly makes me sad.

When do you feel most motivated and inspired at school or at work? What's happening to cause those feelings?

Aaron Gordon

Oak Avenue Complex

When I'm most motivated is whenever I'm around what causes those feelings in me. School life makes me happy. When I get good grades and good test scores as well as high quiz scores, that's what motivates me at school.

Syon Wainwright

Dogwood Middle School

I feel motivated when I think of my mom because she has always been there for me when I needed her. When I play basketball, I get motivated when I watch old plays by Kobe Bryant because he inspired me to play basketball in the first place. The final thing that motivates me to be on the boy's basketball team is my dad. He always made me practice every day for it.

Daniyah

Armstrong High School

I feel really motivated when my mind is everywhere, which is weird, but a lot of the time, my mind is really empty, and I can't focus. When it gets really bad, I don't get a lot of my work done. Sometimes, I panic when my grades are dropping because I get in these moods, and I just don't feel the need to care about anything. It's a bad habit I'm trying to break myself out of.

I get really bad when it comes to keeping my grades up. I'll get really focused and stressed trying to get everything done. Sometimes, my teachers act like they don't know we have other classes. I usually just listen to music or watch something. Sometimes, I work really slowly. I just need a quiet environment and some music to get my work done.

What is one small thing that you can either start or stop doing that could bring you more joy?

Tyleia Carter

Armstrong High School

One thing I can start doing to bring me more joy is work. If I start working and getting out of the house more, whether it's to work or not, it will bring me more joy. Even though my room brings me joy, I would still like to get out of my room. Something else that I can do that would bring me joy is getting off of my phone more. What I mean is that the internet tends to mess with people mentally, so sometimes, a month-long break from the internet is needed. I also need to stop settling for less and hanging out with the wrong people.

Nakia Abel

Armstrong High School

Some small things that I can start doing that can bring me more joy is to be more active by going outside, have fun with my friends, or to just take in the nice breezy outside air by myself.

Taleah Williams

Armstrong High School

One thing I can stop doing to bring myself more joy is overthinking as much. Instead, I can go outside, enjoy life more, work on myself, and continue to progress, try new things, and to make time to relax and for self-care. Also, I want to try living in the moment and just being aware of current thoughts and emotions. These changes can overall help me create more joy.

Andrea Seward
Armstrong High School

Taking care of animals, hanging out with my friends, and eating brings me joy. If I could start taking nursing classes, that would bring me more joy. I also would like to complete college under a human physiology major.

Eli Fuentes
Dogwood Middle School

I feel motivated when I listen to music. Music motivates me and brings me joy. It helps me concentrate, so I listen to music when I work and play. That's why I like music.

Curron Wynn
Armstrong High School

One thing that I can stop doing
that will bring me joy is to
stop letting my emotions
get out of control.
This will bring me joy,
stop the stress,
and help me be better.

Kahlen Cohill
Armstrong High School

One small thing that I can start doing to bring me more joy is doing the most I can for my education. What I mean by that is I'm only doing like half of what I can actually do. I can be more active in sports, programs, and just be more into extracurricular activities in general.

What does it mean to feel joy? How do you know when you're feeling it, and how do you recognize it in others?

Sierra Morrow
Oak Avenue Complex

When you feel joy, you feel happy. When you feel happy, you feel love, and when you feel love, you feel something special inside you. Joy is about feeling happiness and love inside you.

Savannah Ford
Dogwood Middle School

To feel joy is being home or with friends. When I am asleep, I am happy. I feel so much joy when I'm not at school and when I'm sleeping instead. When I am happy, I am not angry or sad.

Jasira Mccaskill
Dogwood Middle School

To feel joy means that something or someone lifts you up or brings you happiness. I know when I'm happy because there will be a smile on my face. Also, when I'm with my friends, listening to music or eating good food. My friends and I like to hang out a lot. We go to fun places like amusement parks, fairs, bowling, skating, escape rooms, etc. We also go out to eat at a restaurant, fast food place, or we just chill at each other's houses listening to music. I can recognize that others are feeling joy when they are laughing, smiling, or when they are hanging out with the people they love and having a good time.

Grace Elliott
Henderson Middle School

Joy is the happiest emotion you could ever experience. Joy is pleasure, delight, and a good feeling in general. When you look at someone's body language, you can 100% tell what emotion they are experiencing.

Delenis Rhodes
Fairfield Middle School

Feeling joy is when you are laughing and having a good time. It also means when you are enjoying the fun you're having. It could be when you're hanging out with your friends or when you're out playing.

Janiya Daniel
Fairfield Middle School

All kids should be kind because it's not nice to take out your anger on someone. Always treat others how you want to be treated.

Ryan Hogan
Henderson Middle School

Joy feels good. I can see it in people when they are making jokes, laughing, smiling, playing around, and running around, and with physical changes like facial expressions.

Jouan Balcer
Armstrong High School

"Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls." That is a quote from Malcom Muggeridge. Joy is something beautiful for God.

Jo Mari Davis-Hicks
Armstrong High School

Every time I hit the basketball court, the noise of the sneakers squeaking and the ball going through the net brings me so much happiness.

There's nothing like the rush of making a buzzer-beater shot while my teammates are going wild with excitement; it's such an amazing feeling.

The adrenaline of a fast break, sprinting down the court, and nailing a flawless layup is unbeatable and really pumps up the whole team.

Jada Mickens
Dogwood Middle School

I feel happy or joy when I see my crush. Every time I see him, I feel joyful or blush when he's near or close. I like to be goofy when I'm with my friends most of the time, but sometimes we're serious. I get very excited when I see my best friends. I feel joy when my best friends say my name early in the morning. It makes me happy we are still friends.

Kayla Joseph
Henderson Middle School

Joy is something that comes to some but not to all.
It comes and goes like the time in the wind.
You smile and laugh for a second or two,
But it never lasts.
Our world is a joyless place.
It may be sad but true.
But you can try to live in the moment, to
Hold onto your joy.

Amirah Grant
Armstrong High School

I feel inspired by my family and friends. They influence me to move forward and keep going every day. My family loves and cares for me, and they show that daily, so I represent them by how I act when they're not around. They inspire me to continue to move forward and do right by myself and by them.

What makes me feel joy is that when we are talking about funny situations. Everyone is laughing and in a great mood, and then everyone has a positive mindset.

Jakobe Allen
Oak Avenue Complex

When you feel really good about something, you know you're feeling joy when you can't stop smiling. I am joyful the most when I play baseball.

Podium Parent Night Thoughts on Feeling Joy

“I feel joy when I spend time with my family, watching movies and comedy shows, cooking, picking flowers. All these things make me happy.” -Kristen

“Joy is waking up every morning.” - Joseph

***“I feel joy when I arrive home after a long day's work and am greeted and loved by my bunny Dexter.”
- Michael***

“I feel joy when taking care of my patients at work.” - Tierra

**This publication is a
collaborative effort between:**

