Article Series Mental Health

Giving Yourself Space For Joy

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Joy may not be high on the list of emotions you link with cancer. But as you navigate your journey, you may find it possible to have moments of joy.

For example, you may find joy in your own strength or resilience, or through the love and support of others. You may have a newfound appreciation for little things you once took for granted. Or you may find that you're reconnecting with pleasures or hobbies you haven't given your attention to in years — perhaps because you were

too busy.

Finding joy isn’t about forcing yourself to “look on the bright side” or seek a silver lining. It may mean different things to different people. Here, we share some **Microsteps** that may help you to think about what joy means to you and how you may be able to find joy in your own way. As always, consult with your care team for the management practices that are best for you.

Thinking back to a past joyful moment.

Start by thinking about moments in your life when you felt truly joyful. Where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with? Remembering these moments may provide clues to what brings you joy now.

Creating a joy journal.

Keep a daily or weekly journal where you jot down moments, no matter how small, that make you happy. This could be listening to a favorite piece of music, getting a phone call from a friend, or a successful treatment milestone. Writing these down may help you notice and appreciate these moments more.

Setting a joy goal at the start of your day.

When you wake up, consider setting an intention to find joy in just one part of your day. This might be during your morning coffee, while listening to music, or when reading a book. Before you begin your day, try giving yourself that moment to think about where you will find joy.

Telling someone about one thing that made you happy.

If something brings you joy, it might bring you more joy to share it. In a conversation or text, consider telling a friend or loved one about something that made you smile.

Rekindling an old hobby.

Take the opportunity to pick up an interest or hobby you've neglected over the years. Whether it's painting, gardening, or playing a musical instrument, trying these activities again may reignite passion and joy.

Celebrating your small wins.

No matter how big or small, celebrating wins may boost your spirits. Whether it's completing a treatment session, having a good appetite day, or feeling strong enough for a walk, acknowledging these as victories may bring a sense of achievement and joy.

Adjusting your environment with joy in mind.

Think about what changes you can make to your living space to uplift and inspire you. Can you bring a pop of color to your room with fresh flowers? Pillows? Artwork? Small changes may have a real impact on your mood.

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