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JOY

'Tis the season we think about, hear about joy. Often we can find ourselves thinking that experiencing joy would be wonderful, yet it is often elusive.

LET'S ASK A FEW QUESTIONS...

When you wake up in the morning, what thought gives you joy?

What about your day do you find purposeful?

By your own definition, what brings you delight?

Along with being helpful to ourselves in this season, maybe our pursuit of understanding joy in our own lives can help us understand it better in our residents lives.

Both its presence and its absence.

Joy can seem elusive. But even if we struggle, we can find a path to joy and then be able to help others find their own paths.

So how do we find our paths? Live them out? Choose a path of joy daily?

Here are a few suggestions:

Gratitude

Nothing paves the way for joy like gratitude...and there's always something to be grateful for. Always. We have to shift our thoughts here and be mindful. Which leads us to...

Find the good

Author Nancy Fox of "Leadership Pathways" (highly recommended read) tells a wonderful story entitled "Find the Shiny". Here's a brief telling of her beautiful story.

She tells of a day she went out to a local quarry to enjoy being outdoors and searching for valuable minerals and shiny pieces on heaps of rocks and debris. In the quiet of the morning, she heard a loud rumbling and up pulls school buses full of excited children. They take over the heaps of rocks and sediment. Quiet is gone, peace is disrupted. As she listened to all the activity of the children, she heard a child repeatedly asking the teacher "what do I do?" The teacher replied "look for the shiny, just look for the shiny."

As a leader she received this as a good word. We can as well. We can heighten our own joy and that of others by looking for and finding the good which is always present, and choosing to focus there.

We can recognize the good, the shiny as in the story, in moments. True for our residents, including and especially those living with dementia, and true for us as well.

Accept what you can do

What you can influence and impact, and what you can't. This includes embracing our own strengths and weaknesses and those of others.

Choose to breathe...

...deeply in awareness. Take 5 minutes to be still and be aware of and mindful of your breath and relaxing your muscles throughout your body.

Once in a staff training a cook shared her story of taking 5 minutes during her shift each day to step out to the courtyard, away from the stove, into fresh air, and just breathe. She found this simple daily practice to be lifegiving to her.

Watch for joy

Undoubtedly during the holiday weeks you'll witness at least one or even several moments of spontaneous, authentic joy in your building. A resident re-united with a family member, joy expressed by a staff member.

Think of it as an unwrapped gift---watch for it---assume it will show up. Expect to bear witness to joy. And then don't rush past it. Don't miss the joy amidst all the urgent.

The happiest of holidays to all!



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lanette Williams brings an array of leadership services to the HRS team. Her role as Manager of Risk Services combines her gifts of education and operations to our insureds. Throughout her leadership roles, her career consistently focuses on investment in people. Through coaching and team building she provides tools for excellence and best outcomes with service leadership.

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