



Joyful: The Surprising Power of Ordinary Things to Create Extraordinary Happiness

Ingrid Fetell Lee

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Have you ever wondered why we stop to watch the orange glow that arrives before sunset or why we flock to see cherry blossoms bloom in spring? Is there a reason that people--regardless of gender, age, culture, or ethnicity--are mesmerized by baby animals and can't help but smile when they see a burst of confetti or a cluster of colorful balloons?

We are often made to feel that the physical world has little or no impact on our inner joy. Increasingly, experts urge us to find balance and calm by looking inward--through mindfulness or meditation--and muting the outside world. But what if the natural vibrancy of our surroundings is actually our most renewable and easily accessible source of joy?

In *Joyful*, designer Ingrid Fetell Lee explores how the seemingly mundane spaces and objects we interact with every day have surprising and powerful effects on our mood. Drawing on insights from neuroscience and psychology, she explains why one setting makes us feel anxious or competitive while another fosters acceptance and delight--and, most importantly, she reveals how we can harness the power of our surroundings to live fuller, healthier, and truly joyful lives.

Joyful: The Surprising Power of Ordinary Things to Create Extraordinary Happiness **Details**

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From Reader Review Joyful: The Surprising Power of Ordinary Things to Create Extraordinary Happiness for online ebook

♠ Tabi ♠ says

buddy read with Ignacia!!

Meghan says

I received this book as an advanced reader's copy and we are always on the search for books that express positive energy. Everyone needs positive energy most times and we are a library that lives to provide these kind of resources that help people live their best life possible. We receive a donation once a year and the donor specifically requests us to purchase books such as this because of the power they can do for the community and I have seen some fantastic results in our collection because of this. A wonderful book that we are giving 5 stars!

Rhonda Lomazow says

Love Loved this Joyful book. The cover the book sleeve the hardback cover works of art. In the at times dark world this book brings idea for finding joy. The idea to keep fresh flowers in your home I do and I agree brings a smile not my face. Colors painted walls with lovely colors bring happiness. I won first prize in the Little Brown giveaway a lovely gift a book I will dip into and share with friends. Thanks again @ little brown sparks,

Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

4 positive stars to Joyful! ?? ?? ?? ??

From time-to-time, I need to hit the reset button on life and have a little refresh. I find self-reflective books focused on positivity tend to do the trick, and I like to share these types of reads occasionally in case they uplift someone else, too. I was invited to read Joyful by Little, Brown, and it publishes on September 4, 2018. I'm excited to share some of my thoughts with you!

My Thoughts:

There is no dearth of books out there teaching us that positivity comes from within, and that we need to work on ourselves first in order to feel happy. But what if you could find joy from your external surroundings, too, and how do these two work hand-in-hand? It completely makes sense that a cozy reading spot would bring us joy, right? Even just looking at it? And what about a wonderful sunset, or an amazing view of the mountains?

The author, Ingrid Fetell Lee, is a designer offering a unique perspective on joy. Using research from

psychology and neuroscience, she explores how various settings can promote different types of feelings (e.g., competitiveness, comfort, acceptance, sharing). These are interesting ideas and gave me much to think about.

Overall, I appreciated Fetell Lee's theories, and I found the book user-friendly and invitingly-written. The best thing she offers- most aspects of joy can be found in the simple and easy. It's not far out of reach, and we can obtain it. That message is simple but always empowering. I think this book would be remarkable for anyone to read, but especially employers, as they could set up workplaces for success via joyful employees.

Thank you to Little, Brown for the complimentary ARC. All opinions are my own.

My reviews can also be found on my blog: www.jennifertarheelreader.com

Tara O'sullivan says

In this warmly written book, the author explores the idea of joy - what it means to us as humans, and how and why it can be brought into our lives. The good news is that the answer seems to be that joy can be found in small, simple things. She explores the effects of different colours, shapes and experiences on our minds, and how joy can be found in the new and the familiar, in comfort and adventure.

It's an uplifting little book that can help you to take a look around and take pleasure in the simple things, but there is also so really interesting science exploring the why as well as the what.

Ruth says

Please note, my e-book copy had formatting errors that made it very difficult to read, so I have only partially read the book. What I managed to read I enjoyed - I liked the idea of colours & aesthetics having a big effect on how we feel, so making simple changes to our environment can have a big impact on our happiness and state of mind.

I certainly enjoy having small, pretty things, and I feel vindicated for lining up pretty postcards on my wall at work, and sticking cute pictures to my fridge. It's a shame I couldn't manage to read all of the book, but I'm sure there were further interesting points made in the story.

Thanks to Netgalley for the copy for review.

??Iggy says

When did you last feel joy?

First off, I have never thought of picking up a book like this before. If it wasn't for @Tabi this book would have not been touched. So! Thank you for the recommendation + buddy read!! xD

I had some doubts, some concerns with reading this. So before, diving into the book, I sat down and watched Ingrid Fetell Lee's Ted talks. The way she spoke, her ideas and philosophy...the feeling of self-conscience was replaced with curiosity and hopefulness. I hoped that way of expression would carry out in writing. And it did.

Lee has categorised the ways we feel joy and the power that each has that transforms our day, and influences our lives. Her examples of school classrooms made me reflect on my experience in school and maybe if we had a quirky orange and neon yellow in the walls, I could've passed maths!

First, second and last chapters I enjoyed tremendously. From the writing and the exploration of ideas, with a dash of scientific research. However sometimes during the middle there was some repetition of examples, cliches....

I, myself, can sometimes be pessimistic, a downer and I have struggled with issues that haven't allowed me to fully embrace contentment in life. But after reading this book, I know for a fact (and it has been scientifically proven) that the possibility of joy is limitless. You just have to allow yourself see, hear, smell and FEEL it! The world wasn't created for loneliness, sadness or isolation (though sometimes it feels that way). If it was we wouldn't have lush jungles, blue oceans and magnificent creatures that roam.

So thank you Lee and Tabi for giving me the opportunity to read this and help myself <3

Joy is what makes life worth living...And yet for some reason, we have decided that it is superfluous - the icing on the cake, rather than an integral part of the cake itself

Alaina says

RTC IN THE MORNING <3

Joy Lenton says

If your home, life and circumstances are far from joyful, then look no further. In reading this book, you will embark on a journey of discovery that will alter your perspective and fully equip you to live with a greater degree of joy and peace, once you have put its principles into practice.

In this joy filled book you will find a detailed exploration of ten significant elements, including their defining characteristics and which one(s) might speak to you most at a personal level. The closing pages provide a helpful, downloadable 'Joyful Toolkit', which offers great tips, with examples and suggestions on how to incorporate them into your life.

By investigating energy, abundance, freedom, harmony, play, surprise, transcendence, magic, celebration and renewal, backed up by intensive scientific research and personal experience, the author succeeds in opening our eyes to the possibility of introducing more joy into our daily existence. This alone makes it a worthwhile read.

I certainly had my eyes open to aspects of joy I hadn't considered before. I was also inspired to view my home in terms of what sparked joy for me or not. It's not just about clearing the clutter and gaining breathing space, important as those things can be.

It's also about adding life and joy enhancing aspects to make it more harmonious and increase our contentment with an environment we all want to chill out, relax and be happy in. Do yourself a favour and

buy this book. You won't regret it. I can highly recommend it as a valuable self-help resource. Grateful thanks to Ebury Publishing and NetGalley for the ARC.

Will Byrnes says

I'm standing next to my table, everything neatly lined up, and I'm just hoping that my professors can see how much effort I've put into making my designs practical and ergonomic and sustainable. And I'm starting to get really nervous, because for a long time, no one says anything. It's just completely silent. And then one of the professors starts to speak, and he says, "Your work gives me a feeling of joy."...I asked the professors, "How do things make us feel joy? How do tangible things make us feel intangible joy?" They hemmed and hawed and gestured a lot with their hands. "They just do," they said... So this got me thinking: Where does joy come from? I started asking everyone I knew, and even people I just met on the street, about the things that brought them joy. On the subway, in a café, on an airplane, it was, "Hi, nice to meet you. What brings you joy?" I felt like a detective. I was like, "When did you last see it? Who were you with? What color was it? Did anyone else see it?" I was the Nancy Drew of joy. - from the author's TED talk

Joyful is what she found out.

Ingrid Fetell Lee - image from her FB page

The answers are directed at the immediate senses, and how external elements, form, color, shape, texture, scent, or sound can offer joyful sensate experience.

Seeing it all laid out, it was clear that joy was not a mysterious, intuitive force; it emanated directly from the physical properties of the objects. Specifically, it was what designers called aesthetics—the attributes that define the way an object looks and feels—that gave rise to the feeling of joy.

She notes commonality in the joyful things she found in the world, and breaks that down to ten subject areas she labels the *Aesthetics of Joy*; Energy, Abundance, Freedom, Harmony, Play, Surprise, Transcendence, Magic, Celebration, and Renewal, looking at how each can be applied to improving our lives. She offers diverse, interesting, and enlightening examples from the real world of how each has been approached. While her focus is on our living and working spaces, selecting how to shape and what to put on our walls, desks, coffee tables, and mantles, to create more enriched environments, she also looks a bit at where and how you might find joy in the outside world.

Jihan Zencirli has made an uplifting business out a familiar joyous object – reflecting points about the joy of celebration and the impact of large objects in our festivities

If you are trying to engineer more joy into peoples' lives, that is a form of psychological practice, whether board certified or not. (IFL does consult with several psychologists in trying to get a handle on joy.) But is this really so much different from any other artform that attempts to help us feel? Painting,

writing/performing music, dance, writing poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, all seek to evoke a response.

A body of research is emerging that demonstrates a clear link between our surroundings and our mental health. For example, studies show that workers with sunny desks are happier and more productive than their peers in dimly lit offices.

She finds in the dominant modernist minimalism architecture and internal décor of contemporary life, the places we work, the buildings in which we live, the places where we learn, or secure needed services, a soul-sucking drain on our need for joy. She sees joy as a form of sustenance, no less than food, water, light, clothing, and shelter. We need at least some joy to keep going on.

We all have an inclination to seek joy in our surroundings, yet we have been taught to ignore it. What might happen if we were to reawaken this instinct for finding joy?

Pierre Cardin's iconic Bubble Palace designed By Antti Lovag – image from nine.com.au – the author writes on the impact on creativity of curvy shapes in one's environment

IFL offers some concrete examples of the impact of design on behavior. A non-profit took on the task of repainting schools, to make them more stimulating and inviting. The results were eye-opening, both in attendance and performance metrics. I suppose it is possible that the schools thus impacted might have been self-selected, and might have improved anyway. I did not dig deeply into the report, but it does at least *seem* like a wonderful idea, and their results were encouraging.

Even aprons designed for professional use can make restaurant workers feel a bit better - Image from Hedley and Bennett

I was talking about this book with a dear friend who was a chef, had owned and run a restaurant or three in her time, but is out of the business now. She said that one of the things that was very important to her was that the plates on which a meal was served complemented the food, drew the eye, made for a presentation that was about more than just aroma and flavor, but built anticipation. IFL is doing that here, on a much larger table.

The repeating joy in *my* experience, outside of things interpersonal, is the visual stimulation of the natural world. During a period of several years, my wife and I managed to visit many National Parks, and each experience was most assuredly joyous, seeing so much rare and exquisite beauty in American landscapes. But those days ended and I had to find something else to fill that need. When I got out of work on Sunday morning, I took to driving to different NYC parks and shooting what I could of local visual delights. The combination of natural light and man-made elements was no less joyous and filling than seeing the Grand Canyon or Death Valley. My park tour days are also a fond memory now, but there is singular joy to be had spotting a late afternoon cumulo-nimbus in glowing white, while its neighbor clouds are in shadow. Or the god-light rays of a setting sun visible from the upstairs deck in the back of our house. No, the visions do not pay the bills, but they do provide significant moments of feeling at one with the world. One thing IFL looks at is how to incorporate into one's personal and/or work spaces ways to reproduce such natural salves, ways to remind ourselves of things that are natural. Turns out there are many ways to fill that bill.

Are we going that high? - my shot from a joyous ride over the Willamette Valley in 2008 – (It is clickable, if you want a higher rez) IFL writes about the joy of transcendent feelings, and the correlation of upward

movement with joy

One of the joys of this book is trailing along with the author as she talks with experts on design across the planet. I added some (ok, many) links in EXTRA STUFF. You will really enjoy checking out the linked designers and their work.

Work by Eva Zeisel – image from the British Museum – reflecting the Renewal aesthetic, as Zeisel's design shapes suggest nature and growth

Here's a bad idea for design. Yes, a newborn's first cry is a source of joy. Replaying it over and over is something less than joyful. Small repeating elements can, however, evince joyful feelings, as in confetti, sprinkles, or glitter. But I suppose they can also become distracting and intrusive, not to mention no fun for the cleaning staff.

A "Reversible Destiny Loft" in Tokyo – The author tried it for a few days - Can enough physical stimulation in a living space reverse aging?

One may wonder, does the aesthetic IFL espouses reflect anything more than her own personal preferences? There is certainly a danger that confirmation bias might play a role here. By offering thoughtful discussion, and the assistance of professional practitioners, she made me feel pretty comfortable with there being a minimum of such sample soiling here.

There might be real issues with the values espoused and the degree to which one might take the recommended strategies. For example, IFL looks for examples of order as joyful. The notion is reminiscent of the broken-window theory that projected an increase in crime in places where unrepaired, publicly viewable damage was left untended. There was a basis for that and the policy was effective in the real world. But on a personal level, it is also possible that one man's mess is another man's nirvana. This is not hard science, with firm edges, but scientifically informed advice for directions that may lead you to a place you want to go.

Starburst lights at the Metropolitan Opera illuminate the Sparkle and Flare element of F-L's Celebration aesthetic

The Brain Candy Corner

Here is a list of some notions from the book that provide food for thought, or, you know, brain candy. They are legion here

- The impact of variable rather than uniform light
- Preferred human landscape – both to live in and see in paintings on our walls – there appears to be one in particular that is favored almost universally
- Can a living space that is stimulating enough slow aging?
- Consider the diversity of our senses – thought you had five? Nah, many more.
- A sparse environment numbs our senses
- On minimalism as anti-sensory
- On the shifting baseline syndrome – what seems wild today is less wild than what seemed wild a generation ago
- On the relationship of joy to play
- Association between play and circles
- Yarn bombing

-----Ways to see the unseen
-----Fear of loss of personal interaction resulting from on-line life
-----On the roots of Carnevale
-----The appeal of balloons
-----Seasonality brings the promise of joy, while a simple one-way time flow makes the future always uncertain
-----On anticipation as an enhancement to joy

Yarn bombing in action – an element of the Surprise aesthetic – image from wiki – Bet this photo made you smile

One aspect that kept me wondering was a question of definition. Where does joy leave off and pleasure begin? Amusement? Enjoyment? Where do fun and happiness fit into this spectrum? How is joy different? Need joy be a purely positive thing? Can one have fun doing something awful? Sure, if one is psychologically damaged. But can one take joy in dark doings? Did Charles Manson experience joy when he was killing people? Maybe fun is less substantive. Like having had a fun time at a party, the beach, or a baseball game. Fun is ephemeral. It tickles our senses and then abates. How is this different from pleasure? Can pleasure be an ephemeral experience too? Joy, somehow, seems richer. I do not defend this notion at all. Going on feelz here. *Joyful* does not really address all this, and I guess it does not really need to. It seems perfectly ok to accept the presenting notion that joy is an absolute good thing, and that we human sorts have a need for joy in our lives, in the same way that we need more readily defined physical inputs. Is joy a sustaining experience? Can it become ecstatic, transcendental even? I think it can, based on personal experience. I once said to my son that the joy I experience from the beauty of the world was like a religion for me. His response was, “why *like*?” The lines between the sundry joy-like feelings remain squishy for me. But then, IFL is a designer, not a researcher in psychology, and it would be wrong to hold her to a requirement that she explain everything that goes on in our tiny minds.

In short, (yeah, I know, too late), Ingrid Fetell Lee has done an amazing job of explaining the impact of design on our lives, while offering a wide array of potential correctives. In doing so, she has accomplished that major victory of combining the imparting of information with delivering that intel in a manner that is engaging, entertaining, energetic and fun. Your brain may explode with all the possibilities on display in this book, but I expect I am not alone in reporting that *Joyful* is a thing of beauty, a classic of its kind, and will, I expect, be a joy forever.

Wonders never cease, as long as we are willing to look for them.

Review posted – September 7, 2018

Publication date – September 4, 2018

=====EXTRA STUFF

Links to the author’s personal, Twitter, Instagram, and FB pages

The author’s TED Talk, Where Joy Hides and How To Find It

Some of the People (mostly designers) mentioned in the book (there are more, really)

-----Ruth Lande Shuman - founder of the non-profit Publicolor, which offers a group of design-based

programs aimed at helping high-risk students in their education.

-----Ellen Bennett, while working as a line cook, decided to upgrade the aprons that kitchen staff wear, so designed a line of more interesting apparel and got her business started

-----Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins started The Reversible Destiny Foundation to design and promote “procedural architecture,” claiming that certain sorts of living spaces could reverse human aging. Color me skeptical, but their work is worth checking out.

-----Dorothy Draper (no relation to Don) is noted in *Joyful* for her attention to texture, vibrancy, and richness of interior environment, particularly in the resort hotel The Greenbrier in West Virginia

-----Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, Russian emigres, devised a test to determine a universally favored painting. Turns out their “Most Wanted” project found its way into Darwinian Aesthetics

-----British geographer Jay Appleton devised the “prospect-refuge theory” of human aesthetics.

-----Landscape architect James Corner designed the High-Line park in Manhattan

-----Summer Rayne Oakes works in ecologically-minded design

-----Piet Oudolf is a world renown expert in horticultural design

-----George Van Tassel’s Integratron Dome has a mind-blowing origin story, and peculiar qualities that may be out of this world. Of all the links provided here, this one may be the most fun. You might also want to check this site, and this video and its sequel.

----- The Quilts of Gees Bend

-----Architect and designer Gaetano Pesce is the creator of bubble housing, what he calls habitologie.

-----Leanne Prain, Yarn bomber extraordinaire

-----Gavin Pretor-Pinney is the founder of The Cloud Appreciation Society

-----Psych professors Dacher Keltner and Jonathan Haidt write about awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion

-----Conceptual artist Olafur Eliasson delights in the inexplicable

Music

-----from Ludwig Van - Ode to Joy, via Lenny B

-----Joy to the World - Three Dog Night

-----You Bring Me Joy - Anita Baker

-----Joy to the World - The MT Choir

My editor was worn out from all the joy

Miranda Reads says

We should manage joy in the exact opposite way that we manage money. We should spend it all, at every chance we get.

Ever look around a doctor's office, a school hallway, the dentist lobby, and think, **something is missing here?**

Spoiler alert: *It's the joy.*

Ingrid Fetell Lee takes a close look at how **the simple pleasures in life** (such as bringing joy to a room) ultimately transform lives.

We rediscover their joy again and again, and we fall a bit more in love each time.

But, that begs the question, **what makes a room joyful?**

Everyone can tell at an instant what things make them happy, but how do you take that and add it to a room?

...something clicked. I saw lollipops, pompoms, and polka dots, and it dawned on me: they were all round in shape.

Lee identified ten delightful categories of joy: **Energy, Abundance, Freedom, Harmony, Play, Surprise, Transcendence, Magic, Celebration and Renewal** - each of which has the power to transform rooms and lives.

This book gave me SO much to think about - so many little things that I always would notice but never understood their impact. **Now I do.**

For example, Lee talks about energy and its influence (through color) in the school classroom.

Many (many) schools across the United States look like **standard state penitentiaries** - minimal furniture, lack of personality and **beige, lots and lots of beige.**

But as Lee points out:

Beige is a desaturated yellow - a yellow with all the joy sucked out of it!

She goes on to describe Publicolor, a nonprofit with a goal of **repainting schools fun, vibrant colors.**

While you may scoff at the idea of repainting a room to bring joy, I want to point out that if a horror movie can design a room to make it unsettling, unnerving and absolutely terrifying, then surely **we would want to do the exact opposite** in school settings.

After a visit from Publicolor, **Harlem school officials were absolutely shocked** when graffiti declined, attendance increased and both student and teachers reported feeling safer in their cheery new classrooms.

Lee has many, many more examples - each one as delightful and surprising as the next. I absolutely adored reading every little anecdote and cannot wait to start transforming my house to make it a place of joy.

You have a whole world of joy right at your fingertips.

Blog | Instagram | Twitter

Jayne Catherine pinkett says

I received a copy of this book for my independent honest review. As I work in the Health, Wellbeing and Spiritual field I am very choosy in how this type of book is written and it needs to be workable. This was spot on. I liked the fact that each chapter was named so that different ideas can be read individually to provoke thought and also to use with individual clients. Each chapter was very insightful and written from a well researched position by someone whose experience in the field shows in the writing. I especially loved that after the theory, came work activities which was the biggest bonus for me. Many books of this kind fall short in this area. There are useful workable exercises that everyone can practise to become more Joyful, not just practitioners. Overall the best book in this genre I've read this year

Marina says

‘Snowdrops and daffodils, butterflies and bees...’

It seems that Dana was onto something when she sang these words in the 1970 Eurovision Song Contest. In ‘Joyful’ Ingrid Fetell Lee looks at how certain things – like rainbows, polka dots and round objects – can cross demographic groups and bring joy. It’s clear that Lee has spent many hours researching this subject. She discusses many people – designers, architects etc who have incorporated joy into their work – there are no photos, so it’s best to keep Google available if you want to see what she’s writing about. She includes many personal stories of herself (and frequent mentions of her husband, Albert) as she travels far and wide experiencing joy. She really is thorough.

I loved so much about this book but I did find it all too much in one go. Maybe I should have paced myself more. I suspect there’s something of the dark in my nature because I started to find the joyfulness a bit cloying at times.

In her introduction, Lee tells of a woman who found that buying cut flowers lifted her mood for days, yet she restricted herself to buying them for special occasions. Lee notes that if she were to buy them weekly, they’d cost far less than her therapy sessions. Good point!

A few days ago, my son and his friend were sneaking bright balloons out of a restaurant display. The other boy’s mum expressed surprise that they still got so excited by balloons at the age of eleven...so I told her about this book. It may not be the easiest book to read, but it really is worth talking about.

Thanks to Netgalley and the publishers for this ARC.

Katherine Center says

GET THIS BOOK!!!!!!!!!! Loved, loved, loved it. So much wisdom here about how to bring joy into your life. This is one of those non-fiction reads that I will re-read over and over to try to absorb its wisdom. SO grateful I found this book. RUN to grab a copy!

Tiffany says

I really enjoyed this book and have been talking about it and quoting it to just about anyone who will listen- which is always a sign of a good book!

I loved the anecdotes and will be incorporating the advice that I have learnt into my daily routines.

I really recommend this book and encourage everyone to read it.

Thank you to netgakkey for providing me with an arc in exchange for an honest review.
