

Appendix I. Ten Lesson Plans by Theme with Quotes and Questions

From Joan Redding

Below are sample detailed lesson plans specific to each of the ten Awakening Joy steps. For these 2-hour sessions, copies of both the lesson plan and the Joy Reminder Cards from www.awakeningjoy.info are made available to all participants.

Lesson Plan for Step 1: Intention

Candle Lighting and Opening Words: (2 minutes)

"The purpose of life is to be happy". The Dalai Lama.

Centering (5 minutes)

Checking In (20 minutes)

1. Introduce yourself. How have you been connected to the Awakening Joy class?
What do you want to experience as a result of participating in the Awakening Joy Support Group?
2. Take five minutes to write down what nourishes you.
3. If you feel comfortable, please share with the group what you wrote on your list.
4. What have you done lately to nourish yourself?
5. Have you been exercising, singing, laughing or writing in a journal?

Shared Readings on Intention: (15 minutes)

Joan invites participants to take turns reading quotes.

The following quotes are from *Awakening Joy: 10 Steps That Will Put You On The Road to Real Happiness*, James Baraz and Shoshana Alexander, Random House, 2010 (Hardcover); *Awakening Joy: 10 Steps to Happiness*, James Baraz and Shoshana Alexander, Parallax Press, 2012 (Paperback):

"The journey of awakening joy/creating well-being begins with setting a clear intention. When we consciously intend to be happy, actually saying that intention aloud or to ourselves, we set in motion a radical transformation. Profound changes begin to take place inside us, in our body and mind. The momentum of positive change grows as we learn to choose actions and situations that align us with our intention."
Pg.4 (Hardcover), Pg.5 (Paperback).

"Because everything changes, no circumstance, experience, or object can give us lasting happiness. Our bodies change, our minds change, the seasons change. Everything is impermanent." Pg.7 (Hardcover), Pg.6 (Paperback).

"Awakening Joy isn't about fulfilling goals or changing particular circumstances. It's about training the mind and heart to live in a way that allows us to be truly happy with our life as it is right now. Not that we stop aspiring to grow and change in positive ways, or that we remain in harmful situations, but we begin to find the joy inside us right where we are. As you work with the practices, you will discover that happiness is not a place you arrive at but rather the result of training your mind to ride with ease and flexibility the roller coaster of life." Pg.7 (Hardcover), Pg.6-7 (Paperback).

"Doing an activity repetitively changes the structure of the brain. However, even just imagining the same activity has an impact on neural structure. By actively imagining feelings of happiness or recalling happy experiences, you can help to make those changes in your brain that can bring more joy into your life."
Pg.9 (Hardcover), Pg.9 (Paperback).

"The more often you remind yourself that you are actually intending to bring more feelings of joy and well-being into your life, the more you will be open to them when they arise. And when you remain aware of your intention to grow in happiness, you're more likely to make choices to support it." Pg.11 (Hardcover), Pg.10 (Paperback).

"Neuroscience tells us that setting an intention "primes" our nervous system to be on the lookout for whatever will support what we intend to create for ourselves. In his book, *The Mindful Brain*, Daniel Siegel talks about the effect paying "attention to intention" has on our brain and thus our experiences of our surroundings. He writes: 'Intentions create an integrated state of priming, a gearing up of our neural system to be in the mode of that specific intention: we can be readying to receive, to sense, to focus, to behave in a certain manner.' This suggests that when we pay attention to the intention to bring more happiness into our lives, we are more likely to notice the actions, opportunities, people, and things that can bring that about for us. It's sort of like recognizing which piece of a jigsaw puzzle will fit the picture."
Pg.18 (Hardcover), Pg. 18 (Paperback).

"The intention in our minds at the moment of any action determines whether we are planting seeds of future happiness or future suffering. If we want the seeds we plant to produce huge beautiful blossoms, our intention for greater well-being must be motivated by a big beautiful desire. So don't hold back. Let your intention be about fulfilling your highest potential, or letting your actions come from love, or bringing more happiness into the world." Pg.25 (Hardcover), Pg. 25 (Paperback).

"Aligning our intention with the goodness of our heart keeps us from getting swept up in fear, confusion or negativity. When our intention to be happy is based on our highest values, we can rely upon it to lead us in the right direction."
Pg. 26 (Hardcover), Pg. 26 (Paperback).

"The point cannot be overstated: Every desirable experience— passionate love, a spiritual high, the pleasure of a new possession, the exhilaration of success-is transitory." David Myers, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Discovering the Pathway to Fulfillment, Well-Being, and Enduring Personal Joy* (Paperback) 1992, Avon Books Inc., pg. 53.

Discussion Questions on Intention (50 minutes)

1. Did any of the readings resonate with you?
2. Do you have a phrase or statement that can remind you of your intention?
3. What do you think your life might look like six months from now if you stay connected with your intention? A year from now? Two years?
4. What gets in the way of your intention to live joyfully?
5. What are some of the inner voices that keep you from being happy?

Practices that Support Intention (10 minutes)

Joan reviews suggestions from the book *Awakening Joy*, by James Baraz and Shoshana Alexander, 2010 (Hardcover); 2012 (Paperback).

1. Hearing a New Voice.
Pg.16 (Hardcover), Pg. 17 (Paperback)
2. Focus on Success.
Pg.20 (Hardcover), Pg. 21 (Paperback)
3. Nourish Your Intention.
Pg.23 (Hardcover), Pg. 23(Paperback)
4. Following Your Heart's Desire.
Pg.25 (Hardcover), Pg. 25(Paperback)
5. Empowering Your Intention to Awaken Joy.
Pg. 27 (Hardcover), Pg. 28 (Paperback)

Set an Intention (5 minutes)

Choose a practice that will bring more joy and well-being into your life until we meet again.

Meditation: Patricia Ellsberg's Meditation on Intention (10 minutes)

James Baraz sends a practice letter on each Awakening Joy theme. He includes Patricia Ellsberg's meditation.

Extinguishing Candle and Closing Words (2 minutes)

"Whatever you think and ponder upon, that will become the inclination of the mind."
The Buddha

Invite the group to say the following phrases of loving kindness:

May I set a clear intention every day.

May I train my mind and heart to live in a way that allows me to be truly happy with my life as it is right now.

May I be aware of my intention to grow in happiness.

May my intention to be happy be based on my highest values.

Singing

"You can get it if you really want it" (Jimmy Cliff)

"Amazing Grace" sung with the words Amazing Joy.

"Go Now in Peace" Don Besig and Nancy Price.

<http://www.shawneepress.com/product/viewproduct.do?itemid=35008009&lid=0&keywords=Go%20Now%20in%20Peace&subsiteid=204&>

Supplemental Readings

Joan adds quotes from a variety of sources. For example, for the theme on Intention, she shared quotes from Dr. Andrew Weil's book, *Spontaneous Happiness: A New Path to Emotional Well-Being*, Little, Brown and Company, 2011.