

## ***Staying in the Joy Zone***

*a well defined region, an encircling band of distinctive character, a belt*

### **I. God's Gift to us in an Exceptional Life**

**John 10:10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.  
I came that they may have **life** and have it **abundantly**.<sup>1</sup>

#### **A. Abundant Life is RELATIONAL.**

Relational Skills are learned in the presence of Love

We are born wired as **PREDATORS** but can learn to be GENTLE  
**PROTECTORS** (Good Shepherd)

**"learn from me**, for I am gentle and lowly in heart"

#### **B. Joy is Foundational**

**Ps 16.11** You make **known** to me the path of **life**;  
in your **presence** (**face**) there is fullness (**abundance**) of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures **forevermore**.

#### **Perception of Love – Shared Joy**

Humans are hard-wired for UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

1. First thing baby recognizes is the **FACE**

**"I'm glad you are here in my presence"**

Requires a HUMAN, not a SCREEN

2. **Fullness** of Joy - necessary for life skill development

Chemical response develops **JOY CENTER**

We **ATTACH** to JOY - **TRANSFORMATION**

We acquire LIFE SKILLS in a high-joy environment. This  
allows a **MUTUAL MIND** to exist - shared mental/  
emotional state between two people. Synchronizes brain  
activity & chemistry.

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<sup>1</sup> exceptional, outstanding, remarkable, unusual – more than expected!

[John 15.11](#) These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

**High Joy** family - thriving v. Low joy - regulation

**High Joy** church - celebration v. Low joy - performance

## II. Freedom Skills - path from Predator to Protector

### A. Joy Skills- Maturity Process

1. **Sharing Joy** - Face of God

2. **Cycles of Rest** - Soothing Myself

[Matt 11.28](#) Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will **give you rest.** [29](#) Take my yoke upon you, and **learn from me**, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and **you will find rest** for your souls. [30](#) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

REST keeps relationships balanced. SHABAT is like a wedding ring, sign of God's love.

3. **Bonding** - connecting to Mom, then Dad & siblings

Our emotional brains are connected. It feels as though **you** are the source of **my** joy. In reality **we** are the reason for **our** joy.

[1 John 1.4](#) And we are writing these things so that **our** joy may be complete. (**our** now includes **your**)

### B. Maintaining Freedom - Returning to the State of Joy

4. **Appreciation - Learning to FIND Good in others, in life**

**We enter his Gates with Thanksgiving**

**In everything give thanks! It's a gift we give.**

[1 Thess 5.16](#) Rejoice always, [17](#) pray without ceasing, [18](#) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

[Prov 15.15 NKJ](#) All the days of the afflicted are evil,  
But he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast.

## 5. Returning to Joy - from distress (tribulation)

We **internalize** the cycle of upset and calming from mommy.  
Keeps us from living as predators.

# III. Challenging People and Returning to Joy

## Staying in Relationship when things go wrong

**A. Six Unpleasant Emotions** - Fear, anger, sadness, disgust, shame and hopeless despair are each signals of something specific going wrong.

## **B. Joy is our Natural State**

You and I are designed for glad-to-be-together joy. The longer we stay stuck in a negative emotion the **weaker we become**. Just six minutes in a negative emotion leaves the stress hormone cortisol in our bloodstream for 24 hours.

Feeling angry for 20 seconds is a much different experience than staying locked in anger for 20 hours or even 20 days.

## **B. David and the Bad Relative**

1 [Sam 25.1 NLT](#) Now Samuel died, ... 2 There was a wealthy man from Maon who owned property near the town of Carmel. He had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats, and it was sheep-shearing time. 3 This man's name was Nabal, and his wife, **Abigail**, was a **sensible** and **beautiful** woman. But **Nabal**, a descendant of **Caleb**, was **crude** and **mean** in all his dealings.

4 When David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, 5 he sent ten of his young men to Carmel with this message for Nabal: 6 **"Peace and prosperity to you, your family, and everything you own!** 7 I am told that it is sheep-shearing time. While your shepherds stayed among us near Carmel, we never harmed them, and nothing was ever stolen from them. 8 Ask your own men, and they will tell you this is true. So **would you be kind** to us, since we have come at a time of celebration? **Please share any provisions you might have on hand with us and with your**

**friend David.”** 9 David’s young men gave this message to Nabal in David’s name, and they waited for a reply.

- 10 **“Who is this fellow David?”** Nabal **sneered** to the young men. **“Who does this son of Jesse think he is?** There are lots of servants these days who run away from their masters. 11 Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I’ve slaughtered for my shearers and give it to **a band of outlaws** who come **from who knows where?”**
- 12 So David’s young men returned and told him what Nabal had said. 13 **“Get your swords!”** was David’s reply as he strapped on his own. Then 400 men started off with David, and 200 remained behind to guard their equipment.

Nabal’s response is offensive, which infuriates David who responds to the news with, “Put on your swords!” David is appalled. David has some very big feelings. The time for talking is over. With 400 men at his side, David leaves in a fury to solve the Nabal problem.

- 14 Meanwhile, one of Nabal’s servants went to Abigail and told her, “David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but **he screamed insults at them.** 15 **These men have been very good to us,** and we never suffered any harm from them. Nothing was stolen from us the whole time they were with us. 16 In fact, day and night they were like a wall of protection to us and the sheep. 17 **You need to know this and figure out what to do, for there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family. He’s so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him!”**

Nabal’s wife Abigail hears what happened and quickly responds by gathering food and supplies to take to David and his men.

- 18 **Abigail wasted no time.** She quickly gathered 200 loaves of **bread**, two wineskins full of wine, **five sheep** that had been slaughtered, nearly a bushel of roasted grain, 100 clusters of **raisins**, and 200 **fig cakes**. She packed them on donkeys 19 and

said to her servants, "Go on ahead. I will follow you shortly."  
But she didn't tell her husband Nabal what she was doing. 20  
As she was riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw  
David and his men coming toward her.

- 21 **David** had just been saying, "A lot of good it did to help this fellow. We protected his flocks in the wilderness, and nothing he owned was lost or stolen. But he has repaid me evil for good. 22 May God strike me and kill me **if even one man of his household is still alive tomorrow morning!**"

Notice the contrast between David and Abigail. David has shifted into a **non-relational predator response** and wants to decimate a village of people. Abigail stays **relational and protective**; she wants to preserve the village.

- 23 When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and **bowed low** before him. 24 She fell at his feet and said, "I accept all blame in this matter, my lord. **Please listen** to what I have to say. 25 I know **Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man**; please **don't pay any attention to him**. He is **a fool**, just as his name suggests. But I never even saw the young men you sent.
- 26 "Now, my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, since **the LORD has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands**, let all your enemies and those who try to harm you be as cursed as Nabal is. 27 And **here is a present** that I, your servant, have brought to you and your young men. 28 **Please forgive me** if I have offended you in any way. **The LORD will surely reward you with a lasting dynasty, for you are fighting the LORD's battles**. And you have **not done wrong throughout your entire life**.
- 29 "Even when you are chased by those who seek to kill you, **your life is safe in the care of the LORD your God**, secure in his treasure pouch! But the lives of your enemies will disappear like stones shot from a sling! 30 When **the LORD has done all he promised** and has made you **leader of Israel**, 31 don't let this be a blemish on your record. Then your conscience won't have to bear the staggering burden of needless bloodshed and

vengeance. And when the LORD has done these great things for you, please remember me, your servant!"

Abigail encounters David on his way to slaughter Nabal and all his men. Abigail falls at David's feet then **pleads with David by validating and comforting David in his upset**. She **REFRAMES** the insult.

32 David replied to Abigail, "**Praise** (Blessed be) the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you to meet me today! 33 **Thank God** for your good sense! **Bless you** for keeping me from murder and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands. 34 For I swear by the LORD, the God of Israel, who has kept me from hurting you, that if you had not hurried out to meet me, not one of Nabal's men would still be alive tomorrow morning." 35 Then David accepted her present and told her, "Return home in **peace**. I have **heard** what you said. We will not kill your husband."

Shema - Hear, o Israel

David accepts her intercession and offering then sends Abigail home in peace. **David returns to joy** from his anger and a cooler head prevails.

### C. Non-Relational Strategies

"Take my yoke and learn from me..."

If we don't learn from his yoke, we will manage what we feel rather than quiet our emotions back to joy. Relationships blow out.

Self-justification – "She made me do it!"

Blame others – loss of opportunity

Simply shut down

Artificial means of quieting for comfort. (Behaviors, Events, Experiences, People, Substances)

## IV. Back to the Joy Zone

### A. Put on Your True Self

#### 1. Return to Joy

[Phil 4.4](#) Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

**Appreciation** - Learning to FIND Good in others, in life

**We enter his Gates with Thanksgiving**

**In everything give thanks! It's a gift we give.**

[1 Thess 5.16](#) Rejoice always, [17](#) pray without ceasing, [18](#) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

[Prov 15.15 NKJ](#) All the days of the afflicted are evil,  
But he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast.

#### 2. Chill Out

[5](#) Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand;

#### 3. Pray with Thanksgiving

[6](#) do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

#### 4. Let SHALOM Guard and Rule your heart

[7](#) And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[Eph 3.14](#) For this reason I bow my knees before the **Father**, [16](#) that (you may) [19](#) **know the love** of Christ that **surpasses knowledge**, that you may be **filled with all the fullness** of God.

[20](#) Now to him who is **able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think**, according to the power at work within us, [21](#) to him be glory in the church ...

**We ENTER His Gates with Thanksgiving!**