

## Part 3: Joy

### Summary

The lack of joy among people today is due to wrong ideas and wrong attitudes. The wrong ideas are:

- (a) that joy can be found in stimulants or intoxicants,
- (b) that joy is something that *can* be directly sought,
- (c) that joy can be found in externals.

Wrong attitudes are the attitudes of the sulking child and the clinging child. Exercises are described that will help people get rid of wrong ideas and attitudes.

### Joy Exercise (The Koan)

In a meditative environment ask yourself, “What would happen if I let my clinging, negative emotions go? What would happen if I let go of my guilt, my heartbreak, my jealousy, my resentment?” Stay with this question as long as you can and see what you will discover. (Allow five to ten minutes for this exercise.)

### Discussion Questions

1. Is the topic of joy important for spiritual growth? What is joy? In what things do you find the most joy? Could you be happy without these things? Why or why not?
2. The Indian poet Kabir wrote, “I laughed when they told me the fish in the water is thirsty.” What does this mean to you? How does this relate to this program?
3. Fr. de Mello commented, “The whole of creation is shot through with joy.” What do you think he meant by this statement?
4. Why, in your opinion, does humanity often have so little joy?
5. Fr. de Mello said that humanity is often without joy because of wrong ideas and wrong attitudes. What ideas and attitudes cause you to be without joy?
6. For true joy, Fr. de Mello asserted, you must get rid of the notion that happiness comes from being on a high from outer stimulation or intoxication. Have these ways of “having fun” ever left you depressed? If so, recall an example. What do you think is missing from these activities? Where does true joy come from?
7. In the program it was said, “The thing to get intoxicated on is life. It’s a much quieter thing, but much more lasting.” How do you get intoxicated on life? Have you ever had such an experience? If so, what was it?
8. One of the wrong ideas described by Fr. de Mello during the program was the idea that we can chase after happiness. How has chasing after happiness disappointed you before?
9. In the program Fr. de Mello asserted, “Happiness is the offshoot of something else.” What is that something else? What have you done that you realized later made you happy?
10. It has been said, “Happiness is really a memory. It is barely an experience.” What does this mean to you? Do you agree with it? If so, give examples. Do you think sadness might also really be a memory?
11. Happiness is not found in externals. What external things do you depend on now for happiness? What things do you wish for to make you more happy? Has this program changed your ideas about these things? If so, how? What is necessary internally for happiness?
12. Fr. de Mello told several stories of prisoners who were in miserable conditions and yet who were happy. Do you know of other true stories that are similar? What are they? What do these stories teach about joy and happiness?

13. What is the attitude of the sulking child? Examine yourself. Do you have this attitude about something that is making you unhappy? How can you get rid of this attitude? Will a sulking child ever be satisfied?
14. What one thing would you ask for to make you always happy?
15. In a story told during this program God advises a man to ask to be happy no matter what he gets in life. Do you think this is possible for you? What comes in the way of your having this grace?
16. What is the clinging child attitude? What are you clinging to? What negative emotion are you unable to let go of? Explore the possibility that you are unable because you are unwilling. What can you discover about yourself?
17. "There is no sweeter prayer on earth than a grateful heart." How will the exercises described in this program lead you to a grateful heart? Can you think of other similar exercises with the same goal?
18. Do you consider the exercises described in this program to be prayer exercises? Why or why not? What did Fr. de Mello have to say about this?

## Exercises for Joy

### The Koan

In a meditative environment ask yourself, "What would happen if I let go of my clinging and negative emotions? What would happen if I let go of my guilt, my heartbreak, my jealousy, my resentment?" Stay with this question as long as you can and see what you will discover.

### The Awareness: Looking, Hearing, Sensing

Look at some nature scene or some object. Don't look for anything sensational. Just look as if you are seeing it for the first time.

Listen to all the sounds around you. If possible, avoid putting names to the sounds. Realize that each sound is really composed of many sounds. Don't look for anything sensational. Just listen to those sounds as if you are hearing them for the first time in your life.

### The Exclamation

It is impossible to be grateful and unhappy. In a meditative environment say to yourself repeatedly, "How lucky I am. How grateful I am." As you repeat these words recall some of your life's blessings.

Go over all the events that happened yesterday. Be grateful for all these events. Say, "Thank you. How lucky I was that that happened to me." When you come to an unpleasant event, consider the seeds for growth that it contains and be grateful.

### The Identification

Put yourself in the place of the paralyzed woman who was de-scribed on the program. Lie on your back and say, "I can do all the loveliest things in the world. I can have all the loveliest things in the world." Find out what these loveliest things are. If you discover them, you will find gratitude and you will find abiding joy.

### The Blessing

Recall the words of Juliana of Norwich, "And all shall be well. And all shall be well. And all manner of things shall be well." Think of pleasant and unpleasant events of the past. At each event say, "It was well. It was well." Think of some present things, things that are happening to you now. Say, "It is well. It is well." Think of something coming in the future. Say, "It will be well. It will be well." Your faith will be changed into joy.