

# Choose Happiness

## Four Tips to Flip the Joy Switch

by Linda Joy

A recent Harris Interactive poll indicates that only one in three Americans are happy. Success, education and increases in annual household income create only marginally more happiness. So what will it take to go the distance?

*Inspiration for a Woman's Soul:*

*Choosing Happiness* endeavors to discover just that. Its collection of intimate stories from more than two dozen women reveals telling insights—most profoundly, that happiness is a choice that anyone can make, regardless of their history or circumstances. Four tips from contributors to the book show how we all can rise up out of our troubles to the other side, shining.

### Let Go of 'Supposed To'

Family, friends and society exert pressure on us to achieve certain goals or impose their definition of success. When our soul doesn't fit the mold, exciting things can happen.

Happiness strategist Kristi Ling seemed to have it all: a high-powered job in Hollywood, significant income and the envy of all her friends—but her

success felt empty. She writes from her home in Los Angeles, "Each morning I'd get up thinking about who I needed to please, and then prepare myself to exist for another day. I looked and felt exhausted just about all the time. The worst part was that I thought I was doing everything right!"

After a middle-of-the-night epiphany, Ling left her job and set out to discover what her heart wanted. She began following a completely different life path as a coach and healer, in which success means manifesting joy.

### Be Grateful Now

While we're striving to change our life or wishing things could have been different, we often forget to pay attention to what we have right now.

Boni Lonnsbury, a conscious creation expert and founder/CEO of Inner Art, Inc., in Boulder, Colorado, writes about the morning she decided to choose happiness, despite the enormous challenges she was facing, including divorce, foreclosure, bankruptcy and possible homelessness. "I thought to myself, 'Yes, my life could be better, but it also could be a hell of a lot worse. I'm healthy and smart—why, I even have some wisdom. Why am I focusing on how terrible everything is?'"

Using the power of her choice to be happy right now, Lonnsbury not only found joy amidst the adversity, but created love and success beyond her wildest dreams.

### Let Love In

We all want to feel loved, but when we're afraid of getting hurt, we put up barriers

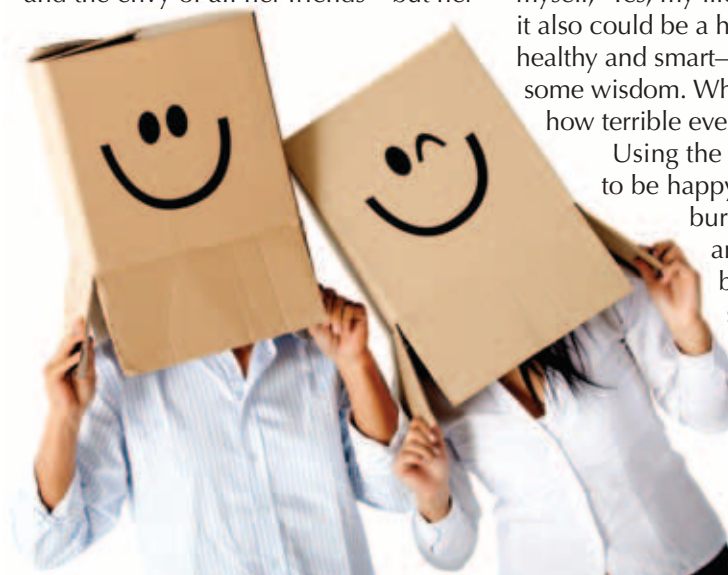


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to protect ourselves, even against the love we want.

Certified Relationship Coach Stacey Martino, of Yardley, Pennsylvania, writes, "From the first day we met, I'd been waiting for [my boyfriend] Paul to end our relationship. I begged him for another chance—not for our relationship, but to be my authentic self—to figure out who I am and show up in our relationship as the real me."

Fourteen years later, Martino and her boyfriend, now husband, are still exploring the depths of their love for one another. For them, the choice to be vulnerable was the gateway to happiness.

### Look Inward Instead of to Others

If we can't own our pain, how can we create our joy? Choosing happiness means taking full responsibility for our state of mind, with no excuses.

Lisa Marie Rosati, of Kings Park, New York, who today helps other women catalyze their own transformation, writes: "I didn't want to accept what was going on inside [me], so I looked outside for a way to make things better. I depended on intimate relationships to complete me, and on friends and acquaintances for entertainment. My self-esteem floated on incoming compliments and I absolutely never wanted to spend a minute alone with my own thoughts, lest they erode whatever happiness I possessed at the moment. I was exhausted, frustrated and quite frankly, pissed off."

It took a flash of insight to set Rosati free of her patterns of blame—and then realizing she could create her own fulfillment was all it took to catapult her into a place of empowerment. Look out, world!

As Los Angeles happiness expert and Positive Psychology Coach Lisa Cypers Kamen says, "Happiness is an inside job." Joy, love and inspired living are ours for the taking—all we must do is choose.

*Linda Joy is the heart of Inspired Living Publishing and Aspire magazine. Inspiration for a Woman's Soul: Choosing Happiness is her third in a series of bestselling anthologies. Next up is Inspiration for a Woman's Soul: Cultivating Joy. Learn more at [InspiredLivingPublishing.com](http://InspiredLivingPublishing.com).*

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