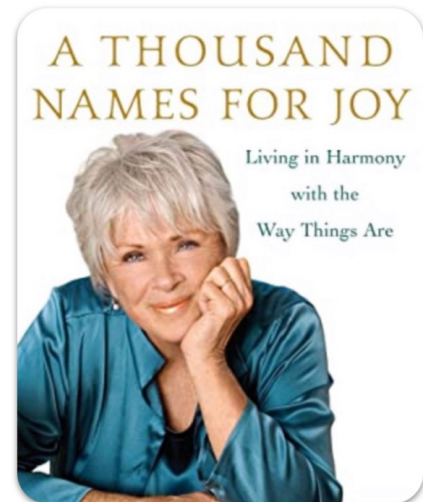


A Thousand Names for Joy

Living in harmony with the way things are (a summary by Pat Evert)

- Preface

The Master is simply someone who knows the difference between reality and his thoughts about reality. He is just like everyone else, except that **he no longer believes that in this moment things should be different than they are.** “I discovered that when I believed my thoughts, I suffered, but that when I didn’t believe them, I didn’t suffer, and that this is true for every human being. Freedom is as simple as that.” Though reality itself is unnamable, Katie says, there are a thousand names for joy, because nothing is separate, and joy, deep down, is what we all are. When you want something that’s different from what is, you can know that you’re very confused.



When **the mind believes what it thinks**, it names what cannot be named and tries to make it real through a name. Some think that only certain things are beautiful. But **to a clear mind, everything in the world is beautiful in its own way.** Could it be that whatever seems bad to you is just something you haven’t seen clearly enough yet?

The mind is always looking for value. When it projects qualities away from itself, it robs itself of its own value. It starts traveling out of itself to find what it thinks it lacks. The Master leads simply by being, doing one thing at a time. Anger, sadness, or frustration lets us know that we’re at war with the way of it. Even when we get what we wanted, we want it to last, and it doesn’t, it can’t.

A stuck mind is the only death—death by torture. The unquestioned mind, believing what it thinks, lives in dead ends—frustrated, hopeless, forever trying to find a way out, only to experience another dead end.

To live running after security and approval, as if by making enough money or getting enough praise we could be happy once and for all. But **nothing outside us can give us what we’re really looking for.**

I don’t know what’s best for me or you or the world. I don’t try to impose my will on you or on anyone else. I don’t want to change you or improve you or convert you or help you or heal you. I just welcome things as they come and go. That’s true love. The best

way of leading people is to let them find their own way.

Seeking is the movement away from the awareness that your life is already complete, just as it is. **If I had a prayer, it would be this: God, spare me from the desire for love**, approval, or appreciation. Amen. I don't have a prayer, of course, because I don't want anything but what I have. I know the benevolence of life. God is another name for reality. It's complete, it's perfect, it fills me with the utmost joy. It's painful to seek what you can never have outside yourself. Because you think you know what love looks like, what it should or shouldn't be, it becomes invisible to you. It's the blind seeking what doesn't exist. **Only by seeking the truth within will you find the love you can never lose.**

You can have ten thousand thoughts a minute, and if you don't believe them, your heart remains at peace. Whenever you mentally oppose what is, you're going to experience sadness and apparent separation. There's no sadness without a story. **Everything you thought you'd had in another you can find in yourself; there is no difference.**

If I can walk into the light, so can you. All I have to offer is the four questions and turnaround. I offer them so that **you can disassemble your own identity**, and in the process, as you disassemble the nightmare, you begin to notice that even the dream of what is beautiful isn't true. **Until eventually there's nothing left but our own nature: brilliant, infinite, free.** There is no need of dependence upon someone out there.

If I think that I'm supposed to be doing anything but what I'm doing now, I'm insane. The earth just gives, without condition, unnoticed, and that's the proof of love. She doesn't ever withhold. She continues to give without any expectation of return.

When you no longer believe the thought that you need to achieve anything, the world becomes a much kinder place. Everyone is doing his job. No one is more valuable than another. We're always going to get what we need, not what we think we need. Then **we come to see that what we need is not only what we have, it's what we want.** Then we come to want only what is. That way we always succeed, whatever happens.

Things come to me only when I need them and only for as long as I need them, and the way I know I need them is that I have them. When something's over, it's over. They go to someone else when they need them.

An open mind is the only way to peace. As long as you think that you know what should and shouldn't happen, you're trying to manipulate God. This is a recipe for unhappiness. It's our story that leads us to believe that there is injustice in the world. If you're feeling sad or afraid or anxious or depressed, that's what you should be feeling. But when you're feeling sad, for example, just notice that your sadness is the effect of believing a prior thought. Locate the thought, put it on paper and question it, for the love of truth, and then turn it around.

When you really go inside yourself, for the love of truth, and question even one stressful concept, the mind becomes a little saner, a little more open. And you begin to see that there is no objective world out there. It's all projected. You've been living in your story of the world. **As long as you believe any negative concept about one person** ("He's selfish," "She's arrogant," "He shouldn't do this," "She should be that"), **you're going to project it onto everyone**—your husband, your wife, your parents, your children. When you truly love yourself, it's not possible to project that other people don't love you. I like to say, "When I walk into a room, I know that **everyone in it loves me**. I just don't expect them to realize it yet." There's nothing you wouldn't give to anyone if you weren't afraid. Of course, you can't be generous ahead of your time. There's nothing to lose. So eventually there's no attempt at protection. Giving everything you have becomes a privilege. The only true love affair is the one with yourself. I am married to me.

Who would you be in people's presence without, the story that anyone should care about you, ever? You would be love itself. When you believe the myth that people should care, you're too needy to care about people or about yourself. To exclude anything that appears in your universe is not love. Sadness is always a sign that you're believing a stressful thought that isn't true for you. Sadness isn't rational, it isn't a natural response, and it can't ever help you. **It just indicates the loss of the awareness of love.** Sadness is the war with what is. Because I don't believe my thoughts, sadness can't exist.

The truth is that until we love cancer, loneliness, loss... we can't love God. The first time I don't give you what you want, or threaten what you believe, you'll put that concept onto me. No one knows what's good and what's bad. No one knows what death is. It wasn't the way we'd planned; it was perfect instead.

Anyone who thinks that evil exists is frightened and therefore confused. What I know is that God is everything and God is good. Sanity doesn't suffer, ever. A clear mind is beautiful. It simply knows the difference between what's real and what's not. A lover of what is looks forward to everything: life, death, disease, loss, earthquakes, bombs, anything the mind might be tempted to call "bad."

We are the happiest when we're giving ourselves without condition. **When you open your arms to criticism, you are your own direct path to freedom**, because you can't change us or what we think about you. You are your only way to stand with a friend as a friend, even when she perceives you as an enemy. And until you can be intimate with us however badly we think of you, your Work isn't done. It's the end of trying to control what can't ever be controlled: other people's perception. The mind rests, and life becomes kinder, and then totally kind, even in the midst of apparent turmoil.

If someone says no, the Master sees options yet to come. In seeing the wisdom of the no, she keeps the door open for something better. Others can give themselves what they need if I'm not available. What really matters is always available to everyone.

Nothing comes ahead of its time, and nothing has ever happened that didn't need to happen.

We're born alone, we die alone, and we live alone, each on our own planet of perception. There's nothing sweeter than being with myself, by myself. The amusement, the wonder of thoughts!

The gentlest thing in the world is an open mind. Since it doesn't believe what it thinks, it is flexible, without opposition, without defense. Nothing has power over it. Nothing can resist it. Even the hardest thing in the world—a closed mind—can't resist the power of openness. When you don't believe your thoughts, there's only laughter and peace. There are names for a place like that. I call it heaven. The truly open mind doesn't have a goal or a purpose other than to be what it is.

This room is the whole world. I'm a success at sitting. I'm a success at breathing. If I died now, I'd be a success at not breathing. What could I possibly fail at? You see that all stressful thoughts are already gone, you realize that there's no substance to them, and you feel intense delight.

Perfection is another name for reality. Only the mind that believes what it thinks is capable of creating imperfection. **"God is everything, God is good" isn't an idea; it's reality.** There's nothing too much for an open mind, nothing that's not welcome, nothing that it wouldn't or couldn't include.

We can only be afraid of what we believe we are—whatever there is in ourselves that we haven't met with understanding. If I thought you might see me as boring, for example, it would frighten me, because I haven't questioned that thought. So it's not people who frighten me, it's me that frightens me. I don't have to guess what God's will is. Whatever happens is God's will.

The world runs perfectly. It's all done without you. It's all done for you, whether or not you interfere. All you need to do is notice.

Freedom means living in kindness, as kindness. It means never having a moment of fear, anger, or sadness—living totally exposed, as a gift. There's nothing personal in it. When you become a lover of what is, the war is over. Since I don't believe my thoughts, I have no hopes, fears, or expectations; I'm a woman without a future.

When you experience anything as unacceptable, the result is suffering, and inquiry can bring you back to the peace you felt before you believed that thought. It can bring you back to the world prior to any problems. After the death of the body, the dream is over, I was absolute perfection, I could not have had a better life.

Life is not difficult; it's your thinking that makes it difficult. That's where your happiness or misery comes from. There are two ways to live life: you can do it comfortably, or you can do it with stress. If you don't love where you are, I invite you to question your

beliefs. How do I know that I don't need him? He's gone. How do you know that you need cancer? You've got it. **The only time you suffer is when you believe a thought that argues with reality. You are the cause of your own suffering**—but only all of it. There is no suffering in the world that's real. Isn't that amazing! People who do The Work stop fearing pain. They relax into it. They watch it come and go, and they see that **it always comes and goes at the perfect moment**. When inquiry is alive inside you, thoughts don't pull you away from loving whatever happens, as it happens.

I no longer believe that the man with no legs shouldn't have lost his legs. I see that he wants them, I see that he thinks he needs them, and I see the heartbreak that comes from believing that. I see that his war with reality is causing all his misery. Misery can never be caused by loss of legs; it can only arise from his desire for what's not. **Small-mindedness doesn't allow you to see why the loss of legs is good**, why blindness is good, sickness, hunger, death, a village wiped out, the whole apparent world of suffering.

Being present means living without control and always having your needs met. Let life live you. It does anyway. It's painful to think you know what's best for your children. It's hopeless. When you think that you need to protect them, you're teaching anxiety and dependence.

When you know how to question your thoughts, there's no resistance. You look forward to your worst nightmare, because it turns out to be nothing but an illusion. How do you react when you believe that what is isn't normal for you? Shame, sadness, despair. Who would you be without that thought? At ease with your condition and loving it, whatever it is, because you would realize that it is completely normal, for you.

The Work is wonderful, because it leaves you with the real thing, beyond all answers. It leaves you with no concept of who you should be. "Don't be spiritual; be honest instead." It's painful to pretend that you're more evolved than you are, to be in the position of a teacher when it's kinder to yourself to be in the position of a student.

When you understand that you're one with reality, you don't seek, because you realize that what you have is what you want. And when you make a mistake, you realize immediately that it wasn't a mistake; it was what should have happened, because it happened. Before the fact, there were infinite possibilities; after the fact, there was only one. Question anything that would cost me the awareness of my true nature.

The don't-know mind is the mind that is totally open to anything life brings you. Our concepts are sacred religions; we're completely devoted to them. "People should come..." **It becomes obvious that we prefer our beliefs to freedom.** It is to unlearn a cruel world, a world where the heart's desire is never attained. When the mind has seen that it doesn't know what it was so sure of, it begins to unravel, the knots relax and begin to untie themselves.

It's the truth that sets us free. **You can find the truth only when you go inside.** Going outside for a solution, trying to convince her to see it your way, is war. Fear is blind and deaf. This Work is not about a right or a wrong; it's about realizing for yourself what's true and moving on to kinder ways of acting. Because that's where freedom lies.

Freedom from anger and freedom from resentment.

Everything is seen for what it is, and you understand that no one is in danger of losing anything but his identification.

If you have the thought that the dishes need washing, wash them. That's heaven.

Hell is asking why. Hell is "I'll do it later," "I don't have to do it," "It's not my turn," "It's not fair," "Someone else should do it," and on and on, ten thousand thoughts a minute. If it comes to you to do something, just do it. All the unquestioned thoughts about that action are how you hurt yourself.

It's not possible for something to be against you. There's no such thing as an enemy; no person, no belief, not even the ego is an enemy. It's just a

misunderstanding: we perceive something as an enemy, when all we need to do is be present with it. **It's just love arising in a form that we haven't understood yet.**

Whatever I lose I am better off without. I need only what I have at any given time, never more, and never less. **What actually happens is the best that can happen, whether you understand it or not.** I come to see what fills that space in my life because she isn't there.

The mind open to being questioned is the only mind that can take this journey.

Everything you wanted to keep hidden comes to the surface, you feel all the repercussions of it, and you keep undergoing the death of who you thought you were. Inquiry continues to kill what you think you are, until you discover something else. The questioned mind is pure wisdom, and it can heal the whole world.

It's a fine thing to love Jesus, but until you can love the monster, the terrorist, the child molester, until you can meet your worst enemy without defense or justification, your reverence for Jesus isn't real, because each of these is just another of his forms.

Everyone is your teacher, and the most powerful spiritual practice is to hang out with the people who criticize you.

The balanced mind is always at ease. It isn't for or against anything; it only wants what is. It's not attached to pleasure, because it doesn't need more than it has already. Life becomes difficult when you are against anything. It's painful to have an enemy.

You can delight in change, you see the goodness of creation and how it can only keep surpassing itself. **Why would the mind hold on to what was, when it recognizes that what is is always better?**

The Master is the woman who dented your car, the man who stepped in front of you on line at the supermarket, the old friend who accused you of being selfish and unkind. **Do you love the Master yet?** There's no peace until you do. This is your work, the only work, the work of the Master.

In life, there's a sweeter dream than yours: reality. That's the ultimate dream, the kindest dream.

How to Do The Work

Judge your neighbor, write it down, ask four questions, turn it around. Who says that freedom has to be complicated? We may find that **even the most unpleasant thoughts can be met with unconditional love**. If you try to do The Work in your head, without putting your thoughts on paper, the mind will outsmart you. Be totally honest and uncensored about how you feel. Every story is a variation on a single theme: This shouldn't be happening. I shouldn't have to experience this. God is unjust. Life isn't fair. You'll put each written statement—one by one—up against the four questions and let each of them lead you to the truth.

INQUIRY: THE FOUR QUESTIONS AND TURNAROUND

1. Is it true?
2. Can you absolutely know it's true?
3. How don't you react when you believe than thought?
4. Who would you be with out the thought? and Turn it around.

For more see www.thework.com