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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ SELF-HELP

Finding Peace Discovering Joy

Y. B. Gray
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The desire for peace and joy is universal, regardless of age, geographic location, or profession. Everyone seeks happiness, but many people don't know where to look for it, or how to cultivate it in their lives. As a result, an entire self-help industry has been built on offering advice.

Y. B. Gray's straightforward, clearly written guide explores what terms like "peace" and "joy" mean to individuals and the types of obstacles that keep people from achieving those states. Her commonsense approach adopts a tone that is more sage counselor than chirpy cheerleader, giving depth and resonance to her observations and encouragement.

Many people feel as if "something" is missing in their lives, she posits, and even if they realize that what's missing is peace, they might mistake simple relaxation or exhaustion with true calm. She writes, "This term 'finding peace' is an active term. It means that you have to actively look for and seek peace in your life."

Pointing out that the sign for "peace" in sign language is an incorporation of "transform" and "silence," Gray challenges readers to be involved in self-transformation, and to seek peace relentlessly, because from there, joy generally follows. Obstacles will crop up, she knows—sleep deprivation, physical ills, emotional challenges—but by making peace of paramount importance, individuals can cultivate a better understanding of themselves and how they experience happiness.

By blending anecdotes and advice, this guidebook builds awareness and helps people open themselves to a more joyful life. Gray's examples are well-chosen, highlighting the type of roadblocks that many people might encounter on their search for peace and joy.

In penning her first book, Gray draws on extensive experience, both professionally and personally, to bolster her thoughts on peace. As a mother of six children and a former "military brat," she's familiar with complicated family dynamics. She's worked as a financial advisor and an independent consultant. She notes that her background and education, including multiple degrees, have provided her with an understanding of how people function, both within and outside their workplaces.

Gray states that she has dedicated her life to helping others; by listening and teaching, she's living a life without regrets. Readers searching for that elusive bluebird of happiness would be wise to hear her harmonious advice, and, in so doing, may find some peace and joy on their own.

ELIZABETH MILLARD (April 27, 2011)

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