



Joy for a Lifetime: How to Live in an Optimal Way Every Day

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The use of ritual in religious practice helps devotees reinforce the tenets prescribed by their faith. Practitioners find solace and inspiration through repetition of routines intended to deepen their understanding and adherence to a belief system. Advocates for positive lifestyles sometimes encourage similar patterning of behavior to help people shed bad habits and establish new activities that encourage good health and well-being.

In *Joy for a Lifetime: How to Live in an Optimal Way Every Day*, Tamika Glasper and Valeria Jones present their ideas about the benefits of making specific changes to behavior in order to attain better physical, psychological, and spiritual health. The authors explain how positive conditioning in those three areas results in more joyful experiences throughout a person's life. They make use of the book's appendix to provide such useful items as recipes to improve diet, forms to monitor progress, and daily scripture readings for spiritual contemplation. According to Glasper and Jones, those who follow this inclusive program will achieve an inner balance that can help them face life's challenges with equanimity. Further, it can help them achieve success in academic and business pursuits as well as in their interpersonal relationships.

As part of the program, the authors recommend a nutritious diet combined with regular physical exercise. They warn against reliance on commercial products that promise effortless weight loss or body development. "To achieve long-term results is to develop a lifestyle reflective of effective internal and external physical conditioning regimes."

Sample worksheets provide a format for readers to document daily, weekly, and monthly goals. The multiyear approach allows for goal planning of up to twenty years. Glasper and Jones recommend that readers should "at the beginning of each year, take time to conduct a self assessment of progress made in the previous year" and identify new goals for the next year.

This book offers useful information about how we can maximize our potential by establishing life-changing habits. Despite the authors' zeal for the rigorous routines they propose, their narrative, written primarily in the passive voice, lacks motivational force. Basic precepts of their regimen are provided, but in generalized terms rather than with specific examples. In addition, convoluted syntax makes the text somewhat difficult to follow.

It is clear the book is inspired by Christian belief, and readers who follow the Christian faith are the ones most likely to embrace its suggested practices. Others might choose more secular options among the many self-improvement publications on the market.

Glasper works in the oil and gas industry. The nonprofit organization she founded helps people achieve academic and professional goals. Jones received a degree in public administration and served in juvenile probation for twenty-five years. Now retired, she works as a counselor and volunteer to multiple service agencies.

MARGARET CULLISON (February 16, 2012)

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