

Global Citizenship Project Teaching Guide for *The Book of Joy*:

Neuroscience and Psychology: The spiritual practices discussed by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu are backed up by recent knowledge and studies in psychology and neuroscience. References to the scientists and their studies are brief leaving the opportunity for students to explore the science in more detail in class or independently. From the book: “Research conducted at the Institute of Neuroscience and Psychology at the University of Glasgow suggests that there are really only four fundamental emotions, three of which are so-called negative emotions: fear, anger, and sadness. The only positive one is joy or happiness. Exploring joy is nothing less than exploring what makes human experience satisfying.” (p. 34, Kindle edition)

- correlations between happiness and overall health ([“Good Genes are Nice, but Joy is Better” from *The Harvard Gazette*](#))
- [An overview of studies that demonstrate the positive impact of meditation on the brain](#)

Environmental Science: The Dalai Lama has spoken publicly about climate change and humanity’s responsibility to care for and learn about our environment. He offers actions that people everywhere can do to take care of the planet. From the book: “Many astronauts have reported that once they glimpsed Earth from space – a small blue ball floating in the vast expanse, lacking our human-made borders – they never looked at their personal or national interests in quite the same way again. They saw the oneness of terrestrial life and the preciousness of our planetary home.” (p. 199, Kindle edition)

Questions: The quote above best correlates with the pillar perspective. How can environmental scientists help broader humanity adjust their perspective from consumption to care when it comes to the environment and planet? What tactics are feasible for those with little disposable income?

- [The Dalai Lama Offers a Take on Climate Change](#)

Business: There are discussions about bringing care into the workplace. (p. 269) The Dalai Lama discusses Japanese companies that are very successful because of the relationship they foster between employer and employee.

Questions:

What does a caring relationship between employer and employee look like? How does care lead to greater productivity?

Students can research Japanese companies to compare their model against the model of many American companies.

- [“How the Japanese are Putting an End to Extreme Work Weeks” by BBC](#)
- [“What Working for a Japanese Company Taught Me” from Harvard Business Review](#)
“Those early meetings were another source of insight into Japanese management. When we got together to talk about why we were underperforming, no one got emotional. The discussions were always calm, and the focus was always on solving the problems. No one seemed the least bit interested in laying blame. Rather than chastising me and putting me on the defensive, they talked to me about what was going wrong and how to fix it.

I immediately felt that I was part of the team and worked that much harder to get us out of our predicament. I realized that others in the company had a lot of trust in me, and I wanted to live up to it.”

Biology, Anatomy, Physiology, and Health Sciences: The Dalai Lama discusses findings by health researcher Larry Scherwitz who found that people who more frequently say “I,” “me,” or “mine” were at higher risk of heart attack. Scherwitz has found that “self-involvement” was a better predictor of death than smoking, high cholesterol, or high blood pressure. (p. 200) Additionally, psychologist Charlotte VanOyen Witvliet conducted a study that asked people to recall someone who hurt or mistreated them. When individuals reflected on their grudges, they had a stress response that included increased blood pressure and heart rate as well as sweating. (p. 236-237) Furthermore, there are discussions about the connections between fear and anger as part of our natural flee (fear) and fight (anger) responses. (p. 102)

- [Happiness and Hypertension Across Nations](#)

“Scientists have found that we need love to survive. Our mothers show tremendous love and affection to us when we are born. Many scientists say that after birth, there are a number of weeks when a mother’s physical touch is the key factor to developing the brain properly. After birth, if the child is isolated without the mother or physical touch, it can be very harmful. This is nothing to do with religion. This is biology. We need love.” (p. 74)

- [Scientists Discover Children’s Cells Living in Mothers’ Brains](#)

History, Philosophy, Political Science: In terms of history, there are many areas to explore from the history of Tibet, communist China, India, and South Africa to the historical figures of Christianity and Buddhism. Thus, the text can be utilized for ancient and modern history.

The entire book is full of philosophical and theological deliberations on ideas of life, self, death, and joy that students can explore. Perhaps of interest to students is how the philosophical and theological contemplations affect the religious leaders’ day-to-day interactions. Doug Abrams asks Desmond Tutu, “How do you stay cool when driving in heavy traffic?” (p. 101)

Question: What commonalities do Christianity and Buddhism share in outlooks on life, self, and death? What are the significant differences?

Finally, the text invites students to contemplate global politics and economics. The Dalai Lama is the political leader of Tibet, and Archbishop Tutu was part of the political leadership of South Africa both before and after apartheid. Desmond Tutu also openly discusses with frustration that South Africa refused to issue the Dalai Lama a visa to travel for the Archbishop's eightieth birthday celebration in Cape Town. (p. 17) "Because the South African government would not grant the Dalai Lama a visa, we all knew – most especially the two of them – that this trip might be their last time together." (p. 291, Kindle edition)

Question: What dynamics played into South Africa's decision to refuse the Dalai Lama a visa? Examine the global/political relationship between China, South Africa, and Tibet.

- [South Africa Denies Dalai Lama Visa Again](#)

Sociology and Anthropology: For students in Anthropology and Sociology, the text is a window into the culture of Tibetan Buddhism. One of the final chapters, "Celebration: Dancing in the Streets of Tibet," provides a rich visualization of the colors, sounds, and flavors of Tibetan culture. The Dalai Lama celebrates his eightieth birthday with Archbishop Tutu at the Tibetan Children's Village in Dharamsala, India where child refugees from Tibet are taught Tibetan language and culture. Such teaching is suppressed in Tibet under Chinese occupation. "The Dalai Lama showed the Archbishop how to toss the barley flour into the air and then dip his ring finger into the milk as part of the ceremonial offering." (p. 278)

- [Tsampa: The Tibetan Cereal that Helped Spark an Uprising](#) (Article includes a video of the Tibetan rapper Shapaley performing "Tsampa.")

There are many examples like this one where the two religious leaders share their traditions with each other. In another spiritual collaboration, the Archbishop invited the Dalai Lama to receive the Eucharist during a celebration of the Holy Communion in the Dalai Lama's private residence. Doug Abrams, himself a Jew, writes, "This is one of the greatest challenges humanity faces: removing the barriers between who we see as 'us' and who we see as 'other.'" (p. 183)

Additionally, the importance of social connection is discussed at various points throughout the text. "We are more wary of others who look different: these are the unconscious roots of prejudice. Our empathy does not seem to extend to those who are outside our 'group,' which is perhaps why the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama are constantly reminding us that we are, in fact, one group – humanity. Nonetheless, the ability and desire to cooperate and to be generous to others is there in our neural circuits, and it can be harnessed personally, socially, and globally." (p. 57, Kindle edition)

Benefits of sadness when it comes to social understanding: “New studies conducted by psychology researcher Joseph Forgas show that mild sadness can actually have a number of benefits that could reflect its value. In his experiments, people who were in a sad mood had better judgment and memory, and were more motivated, more sensitive to social norms, and more generous than the happier control group. People who were in a so-called negative state of sadness were more discerning about their situation, better able to remember details, and more motivated to change their situation. What is particularly interesting is that brief sadness might generate more empathy or generosity. Participants in the study played a game, part of which involved deciding how much money to give themselves and how much to give to others. The sad participants gave significantly more to the other participants.” (p. 110, Kindle edition)

Technology: There is much discussion about the challenges of modern life and urban living – of having thousands of friends on social media but being lonely. (p. 125) It would be interesting for students to consider the ways in which technology divides humanity and how it can also unite humanity.

Question:

How do we strive for the eight pillars of joy – perspective, humility, humor, acceptance, forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, generosity – while also embracing modern technology?

- [Four Ways Technology Can Make You Happier](#)
- [Pursuing Happiness in a Digital World](#)

Humanities – English, Reading, Public Speaking, and Art: The applications for this text in English, Reading, and Public Speaking seems obvious. Yet, there are so many directions that faculty could pursue in writing or public speaking assignments from personal reflective essays on one of the pillars of joy to research papers or informative speeches on the antiapartheid struggle in South Africa, the rise of communism in China, or the contemporary challenges facing Tibet. There are also rich opportunities here to explore and express the pillars of joy like gratitude or compassion in a visual way through realistic or abstract art.

Questions:

How can art students convey humanity coming together? What might students create to visually display the concept *ubuntu*? *Ubuntu* is a concept the Archbishop speaks of often; it means “a person is a person through other persons.” (p. 60)

- “Mudita is based on the recognition of our interdependence, or ubuntu. The Archbishop explains that in African villages, one would ask in greeting, “How are we?” This understanding sees that someone else’s achievements or happiness is in a very real way our own.” (p. 140-141, Kindle edition)
- [Teacher Resource Guide focused on ubuntu: A series of visual art lessons to engage students with disabilities \(The Kennedy Center\)](#) (This guide is for k-12 students but may be modified for a college classroom.)

Additionally, in an art history course, students might focus on South African and/or Tibetan artistic traditions. Perhaps students can explore how those artistic traditions reinforce the ideas presented in the book much like the linguistic traditions referenced by the Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama.

The Pillars of Joy (Summary drawn from <https://www.keithedwards.com/2017/04/18/5-lessons-from-the-book-of-joy/>)

1. **Perspective** – Taking a [sacred pause](#) and finding the [widest perspective](#) helps us solve problems with creativity and compassion rather than rigidity and reactivity.
2. **Humility** – Discover how you depend on others – your parents, those who made your clothes, or where you live, or the medications you take. You are only one of 7 billion people.
3. **Humor** – Find ways to laugh at your faults, limitation, and foibles. Laugh at yourself. Laugh at life.
4. **Acceptance** – Don't argue with what was or is. Don't argue with reality. "Why be unhappy about something if it can be remedied? What is the use of being unhappy if it cannot be remedied?"
5. **Forgiveness** – Tell your story. Name the hurt. Grant forgiveness. Renew or release the relationship.
6. **Gratitude** – Be thankful for what goes well and the learning and growth possible when things don't go well.
7. **Compassion** – Loving kindness: May you be free from suffering. May you be healthy. May you be happy. May you have peace and joy. Begin with yourself, then those you love, then those you know, then those you don't know, and then those you fear or anger you.
8. **Generosity** – Offer more and more and more to others (resources, compassion, forgiveness, understanding) and see what comes back to you.

Joy Practices: The end of the book also includes joy practices that all people can do to cultivate the pillars of joy. There may be ways to implement these practices into your classroom (pp. 309-348)

- Have students set an intention at the beginning of the semester. Throughout the semester they should check in on how they have been upholding it
- Students might keep a journal throughout the semester reflecting on what they learn each class
- Focus and stress relief: a breathing practice (p. 312-313, Kindle edition)
- Loneliness: A Common Humanity Practice (p. 319-321, Kindle edition)

Videos

The Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama

[Forgiveness is good for your health, Archbishop Desmond Tutu](#)

['My Humanity is Caught up in Yours': How Desmond Tutu Dedicated his Life to Greater Good](#)

[Dalai Lama YouTube Channel](#)

Science

[Robert Waldinger: What Makes a Good Life? Lessons from the Longest Study on Happiness/TED](#)

[Happiness is all in your Mind: Gen Kelsang Nyema at TEDx Greenville 2014](#)

Meditation and Practices

[Cultivate Joy and Happiness: A 20 Minute Guided Mindfulness Meditation](#)

[How Calm the Voice Inside: Eckhart Tolle Teachings](#)

Music

[Shapaley YouTube Channel](#) (Shapaley is a rapper who spent his childhood in Tibet)

Podcasts

[The Dalai Lama's Guide to Happiness: Ten Percent Happier Podcast](#)

LibGuides

[Nelson Mandela Guide: Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(Cornell University Library\)](#)

“The only way out of this drunken stupor is to educate children about the value of compassion and the value of applying our mind. We need a long-term approach rooted in a vision to address our global challenges. This would require a fundamental shift in human consciousness, something only education is best suited to achieve.” Dalai Lama (272)