

Nurses Notes

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Living with Joyspan,

I am currently taking an online course from the University of Chicago called Aging Brilliantly: the “Principles of Lifespan, Healthspan, and Joyspan”. It is led by a gerontologist named Dr Kerry Burnight. I want to share some of what I was taught week one because I feel it changes some of our current thoughts on aging. In a world that feels hurried, noisy, and uncertain, the idea of Joyspan offers a refreshing invitation to all of us:

What if we could stretch our capacity for joy.....not just in fleeting moments, but across the span

of our everyday lives? The concept of Joyspan, as taught by professor Burnight, reminds us that joy is not merely an emotion that comes and goes. Instead, it is something we can cultivate, deepen, and sustain. Joy is not dependent on perfect circumstances; rather, it is rooted in perspective , connection, and faith.

What does it mean to expand our Joyspan?

First, it means becoming more aware of the small, sacred moments woven into our daily routines. A kind word, a shared laugh, a quiet morning prayer....these are not insignificant. They are seeds of joy. When we pause to notice them, we begin to train our hearts to recognize goodness more readily.

Second, Joyspan grows when we practice gratitude. Scripture reminds us again and again to "give thanks in all circumstances." Gratitude shifts our focus from what is lacking to what is already present. It doesn't deny hardship, but it allows joy to coexist alongside it.

Third, connection plays a vital role. Joy multiplies when shared. Whether through fellowship,,service, or simply being present for one another, we strengthen our Joyspan by building relationships rooted in love and compassion.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Joyspan is sustained through faith. Christian joy is not shallow happiness—it is deep, abiding trust that God is with us in all things. Even in seasons of struggle, this joy remains, anchoring us with hope and peace. As we move through this Spring season, may we each be

intentional about stretching our Joyspan. We need to slow down enough to notice blessings, choose gratitude daily, reach out to one another, and rest in the assurance of God's presence.

Joy is not out of reach....**it is already here, waiting to be embraced.**