



Aggressively Happy: A Realist's Guide to Believing in the Goodness of Life

by Joy Marie Clarkson
Trade Paper ISBN: 978-0-7642-3824-6
\$16.99; 224 pp.
Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4934-3594-4
Release Date: Feb. 2022

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How Do You Find Joy in a Cynical World?

In a world drowning in negativity and struggling with injustice, exhaustion, anxiety, heated politics, and pandemics, it can be difficult to find hope and happiness—especially if these things never change.

And yet, Joy Marie Clarkson is known for doing just that.

This beloved writer, podcast host, and daughter of author Sally Clarkson was once criticized as “aggressively happy”—and took it as a compliment. Now, Joy’s new book, *Aggressively Happy: A Realist’s Guide to Believing in the Goodness of Life*, shares the simple secrets to acknowledging pain and suffering and still find true happiness.

“Her unflappable hope and sense of enchantment radiate through every page.”—Boze Herrington, novelist

Joy counters both cynicism and idealism with a lyrical, engaging narrative about unlocking genuine delight. For those who cringe at the ugliness in the world, each chapter leaves readers feeling lighter, braver, wiser, and happier.

Aggressively Happy is for readers who

- want to stand in defiant hope during difficult times
- feel crippled by cynicism, pain, helplessness, or fear
- struggle to see life as a blessing
- need a reason to put energy into doing what is beautiful, good, true, right, and honorable in a broken world
- strive to cultivate optimism while still seeing the world as it is

“If we accept that life will be full of difficulties and sorrows,” Clarkson writes, “we then have two options: to resign ourselves to life generally being a bummer, or to seek enjoyment, delight, and hope in the midst of (and in spite of!) life’s up and downs. To put it bluntly: You could choose to cultivate happiness, or you could not. . . . I think we should go for it.”

About the Author

Joy Clarkson is a lover of God and people, a crafter of words, and a dedicated evangelist for the soul-enriching benefits of teatime. Joy has pursued her doctorate in theology, imagination, and the arts at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, and hosts a podcast called *Speaking with Joy*. Someone once tried to insult her by telling her she was aggressively happy. She took it as a compliment and wrote a book about it. Learn more at joyclarkson.com.

A Realist's Guide to
Believing in the Goodness of Life

aggressively happy

JOY MARIE CLARKSON

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Sample Interview Questions

Aggressively Happy: A Realist's Guide to Believing in the Goodness of Life

1. The phrase “aggressively happy” sounds like a contradiction. Where the term comes from and how does it differ from idealism?
2. When did you begin writing this book?
3. In the book, you include elements from stories, poetry, music, linguistics, philosophy, theology, and more. Why did you include these pieces and how do they relate to happiness?
4. What are some of your rules for living a happy life?
5. Why is a good sense of humor important to an aggressively happy life?
6. You talk about your own struggles with mental health. Is it possible to battle with depression or anxiety and still be aggressively happy?
7. Why do you have to let yourself be sad to learn to be happy?
8. It can be easy to pick up our phones and get stuck scrolling through negative news or picture-perfect social media feeds. How can we see these and still tell ourselves the plain truth about the world?
9. What advice would you give to those who feel guilty enjoying things because it feels like the world is falling apart?
10. What is the difference between aggressive happiness and toxic positivity?
11. As a Christian, you mention that when your story feels disjointed that you turn to the story God tells about you. Tell us more about that.
12. Where can people connect with you and pick up their own copy of *Aggressively Happy*?

GUEST: Joy Clarkson, podcast host of *Speaking with Joy*, author

BOOK: *Aggressively Happy: A Realist's Guide to Believing in the Goodness of Life* (Available Feb. 2022, Bethany House)