

## 2019 December Health Notes by Evelyn Ames

### JOYS of the Holiday Season

The holiday season, (often called “the holidays”), is a festive time of the year. In Western influenced countries it generally occurs from late November to early January. “Joy is an emotion that’s acquired by the anticipation, acquisition or even the expectation of something great or wonderful. It could be described as exhilaration, delight, sheer gladness.”

Appreciating the holiday season, as with anything in life, makes it much more enjoyable and much less stressful. Instead of rushing around in a high state of anxiety and worrying about crossing every item off our to do list, we have options to choose other ways that can make this holiday season enjoyable, fun, and peaceful. A way to think about joy is to ask yourself “What is on my list of JOYS?” A friend recently shared that it was faith, family, friends, and social on her list. Does your list include such words as hope, faith, celebration, love, generosity, others, stories, and promises?

As the holidays are a time for connection, cheer, and camaraderie, it is important to take care of yourself physically, mentally, socially, psychologically, and environmentally. These five components are part of a high level of wellness. You’ll not only enjoy the season more thoroughly, but you’ll also make the holiday season sweeter and kinder for those around you. Too often holidays go by in a blur. To keep from being “fogged in”, try answering these questions: What have I accomplished this year? Who has meant the most to me during the good and bad times? Where do I find my strength? Who has pleasantly surprised me this year? What was my biggest lesson I learned this year? What am I feeling right now? Is my life aligned with my values? What’s one thing I want to change for next year?

**From the December 2017 Health Notes:** Consider the following suggestions as ways of helping you become cheerful and to act cheerfully! \*Put a smile on your face! \*Focus your brain each morning on the good things and tasks to do each day. \*Think before criticizing or writing a negative note! \*Say positive things to yourself! \*Regulate criticism by ignoring peoples unwanted negative comments about you. \*Enjoy the company of friends and neighbors. \*Create or try something new or look at diverse ways to overcome problems. \*Admit the truth! \*Focus on memories! \*Review your daily/weekly schedule and consider taking a time-out or respite. \*Practice gratitude (say thanks) and patience, especially when driving during this time of year or even when waiting in a checkout line. \*Meditate, breathe, or pray to ponder the goodness of life. \*Let go of past negativity or stop worrying about the future and focus on the here and now. \*Be kind to yourself! \*Give someone a hug! \*Take a long walk! \*Do some muscle stretches. \*Stand up straight (you would be amazed how it can perk you up) and walk with a “bounce” in your stride! \*Bake cookies or a cake and enjoy them! \*Rely on yourself rather than others to bring cheer into your life! \*Buy yourself a ticket to a movie or concert! \*Always remember that happiness comes from within!

I asked at the December WWURA Board of Directors meeting what one word came to mind when hearing the word “joy”. Here are the comments from your board members: candy bar, who (is joy), attitude, travel, grandchildren, living, family, music, books, happiness, joy of cooking, and wife’s name abbreviated. Ask yourselves what joy means and add to the lists provided in these health notes.

