

An Awareness of Joy

By Marilyn Reeves

So much of our daily lives takes place in what I call the “neutral zone.” We get up in the morning, eat breakfast, take a shower and get ready to face whatever work we have waiting for us that day. We are neither particularly happy nor sad ... it’s just another ordinary day.

Occasionally something bad happens. You find yourself suddenly embroiled in an argument with a friend or family member. You are handed a pink slip at work. The property taxes that you didn’t think about come due. Or you get bad news from your doctor.

But despite the moments of hardships and pain that we all must endure, there are also many moments of happiness and contentment ... even joy.

There is the joy of welcoming a new arrival into your life. Despite the dirty diapers and the sleepless nights, you see your little one look up with wide, curious eyes and smile at you, and you experience an almost unbearable moment of joy. It’s like being in love, but a different kind of love than what you felt when you first fell in love with your mate.

Oh, the agony and ecstasy of new love! Most of us have experienced that rapture at least once in our lifetime. When things are going right you find yourself in a state of absolute euphoria, only to have it be dashed by a single frown, or a forgotten promise. But then he or she does something wonderful and you’re back on that high again. You wish these moments of extreme joy could last forever, but should be thankful that the highs and lows finally mellow out into something more lasting, more comforting, more sure.

The problem with moments of joy is that we often experience them unaware until they’re behind us. But I’m happy to say that one of my most cherished memories in recent years was of a time when I suddenly became aware of my feelings as it was happening. Jim and I were spending a long weekend in Pitkin and were climbing the steep side of a mountain in the old truck. It was a beautiful day, the air was clear and the scenery was gorgeous. We were both feeling high on just being alive and I said to myself, “This is it! This is what joy feels like. It doesn’t get any better than this. I shall cherish this moment forever.” And I have.