

“Joan Marques has written a thoroughly delightful book.”

~ IAN MITROFF, PH.D.,
CO-AUTHOR, *A SPIRITUAL AUDIT OF CORPORATE AMERICA*,
PROFESSOR, MARSHALL GOLDSMITH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
VISITING PROFESSOR, UC BERKELEY

“This marvelous new book by Dr. Marques provides the perfect respite from our often too busy, complex lives. She calls to our higher knowing on each page, and asks us to remember our own heart and to act from our best self. Her words are clear and simple, a pleasure to read, and a prescription for joyous living and working.”

~ ROBERT RABBIN,
AUTHOR, *YOU ARE THE MESSAGE AND IGNITING THE SOUL AT WORK*,
SPEAKER, CREATOR OF REALTIME SPEAKING

JOY AT WORK WORK AT JOY

Living and Working
Mindfully Every Day

JOAN MARQUES, Ed.D.



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Personhood Press
PO Box 370
Fawnskin, CA 92333
(800) 429-1192
Fax: (909) 866-2961
www.personhoodpress.com
info@personhoodpress.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009938262

ISBN: 9781932181531

Printed in Hong Kong

Book and Cover design by: 1106 Design

Foreword by Marshall Goldsmith

Joy at Work, Work at Joy: Living and Working Mindfully Everyday
By Joan Marques, Ed.D.

I often use Buddha's teaching in my work. For example, Buddha suggested that his followers only do what he taught if it worked in the context of what was happening in their own lives. He encouraged people to try out what made sense, do what worked for them, and "let go of the rest." Similarly, I teach my clients to ask their stakeholders for suggestions, listen to these ideas, contemplate what's been offered, try out what makes sense, do what works, and let go of what doesn't.

In her motivating and encouraging book, *Joy at Work, Work at Joy*, Joan Marques offers suggestions in the form of inspiring quotes from some of the greatest minds that ever lived. Each of these pearls of wisdom is offered in order that one might live and work mindfully every day. Supporting each quote is an accompanying action item and a story or point to ponder relative to the quote. You may choose to ponder every point and try every action offered, or you may not. Either way, these suggestions can be looked at as gifts. If you can use the gift, use it. If the gift doesn't strike a chord for you or if it doesn't feel relevant for your life right now, put it someplace safe and "let it go."

Thank you, Joan, for this great gift of daily guidance!

~ Marshall Goldsmith—million-selling author of *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, *Succession: Are You Ready?* and the upcoming *MOJO*.

From the Author

Gautama Siddharta, better known as the Buddha, once said, “*We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves.*” There is a lot of truth in these words, and you don’t have to adhere to any specific religion, ideology, culture or generation to understand it.

This is a book of positive thoughts, carefully written over the course of three years, and especially focused on working people. We all work in different environments: some of us travel a lot, others work in the same office or factory for decades; yet others work from home, telecommute, or shift jobs regularly. Regardless of who and where you are at this moment, you will find yourself in this book. It is written for people who want to take more ownership of their lives—people who realize that positive thoughts lead to higher awareness, which leads to constructive actions, followed by improved circumstances, a better living and working environment, and, ultimately, a better world. Every great movement has started with one good intention from one wakeful person. *You* could be that person, and this book could steer you in the right direction.

Joy at Work, Work at Joy is not a book that you read from cover to cover in a day or a week. It should be read in small sections daily, because it entails a quote, an action plan, and a point to ponder for each day of the year. Some of the action plans are specific, and others are deliberately kept general to leave room for your own interpretation, according to what is going on in your life at the time. The points to ponder are either presented as elaborative thoughts on the quote, or age-old stories from all over the world.

This is a timeless book that transcends boundaries. People from all beliefs, cultures, mind-sets, preferences, ethnicities, or other classifications will relate to it well. It is a great gift to others, but even more to yourself, and can be used at various stages in your life, even after you have retired. Changing your world and your circumstances starts with changing yourself for the better. You just took the first step. Cheers!

— *Dr. Joan Marques*



January

January 1

GUIDING QUOTE:

Life is a promise; fulfill it.

~ MOTHER TERESA

ACTION:

I am fulfilling my life's promise by lending a smile to all those who may have a hard time finding one of their own. I radiate my good intentions, show that I care. This way, I enrich my own spirit and those I encounter.

POINT TO PONDER:

The promise of life can only be fulfilled through our own actions. That is the power we have. If we decide to give in to misery, mean-spiritedness, or tedium, we will dread our circumstances, and the fulfillment of life's promise will be bleak. If we decide to be courageous, loving, and mindful, we will enjoy every step of the journey, and the fulfillment of life's promise will be grand! We are the sculptors of our life, and we can create either a beautiful sculpture of togetherness by showing that we care, or a desolate monument filled with egotistical "I"-ness. We make the promise; we fulfill it.

January 2

GUIDING QUOTE:

*Make the best use of what is in your power,
and take the rest as it happens.*

~ EPICETUS

ACTION:

I use my power by offering my assistance where it is not expected—helping out a colleague, assisting a stranger, taking my loved ones out to dinner tonight. By making their day, I am making mine as well.

POINT TO PONDER:

An old couple got curious when they saw a young man dressed in working clothes passing by their cottage every day with a spade and a briefcase. After two weeks of watching, they decided to take a stroll before the young man arrived to see what he was doing. They came upon a rocky area and saw that he had been digging a trench. When he arrived, the old lady asked what he was doing and what he had in the briefcase. The young man explained, “I’m learning how to dig a good trench because the job I’m being interviewed for later today says that experience is essential, so I’m getting the experience. And the briefcase...it’s got my lunch in it.” He got the job.

January 3

GUIDING QUOTE:

*One must not attempt to justify [aspirations and judgments],
but rather to sense their nature simply and clearly.*

~ ALBERT EINSTEIN

ACTION:

Instead of justifying others as if they are part of a different world, I try to see the mirror of myself that is everyone around me. I seek to understand before wanting to be understood. I keep in mind that each of us has our own reality, and that such is what makes the world a beautiful place.

POINT TO PONDER:

Two monks were washing their bowls in the river when they noticed a scorpion that was drowning. One monk immediately scooped it up and set it upon the bank. In the process he was stung. He went back to washing his bowl and again the scorpion fell in. The monk saved the scorpion and was again stung. The other monk asked him, “Friend, why do you continue to save the scorpion when you know its nature is to sting?” “Because,” the monk replied, “to save it is my nature.”
(Adopted from John Suler, “Zen Stories to Tell Your Neighbors”)

We should remain true to our nature and respect that of others.

January 4

GUIDING QUOTE:

It is the greatest mistake to think that man is always one and the same. A man is never the same for long. He is continually changing. He seldom remains the same even for half an hour.

~ GEORGE IVANOVITCH GURDJIEFF

ACTION:

I cherish the thought of continuous change. I am subject to change on a constant basis, and so are others. It would be shortsighted of me to think that anything or anyone is the same as last week or even yesterday. I embrace change, because it is part of living.

POINT TO PONDER:

Oftentimes, we do not realize that we're constantly changing, because we are part of ourselves all the time! But we erroneously expect others to remain the same, and get disappointed when we find out the opposite. It is important to be aware that we change through all the influences we encounter—books we read, people we meet, circumstances we face, impressions from every place—our minds develop as a result of these encounters.

January 5

GUIDING QUOTE:

An ant on the move does more than a dozing ox.

~ LAO TZU

ACTION:

My actions speak louder than my words. I perform to the best of my abilities and do not get distracted by others who do not practice what they preach. I set a good example because I know it is for the betterment of everybody, as well as for my inner gratification.

POINT TO PONDER:

A Chinese teacher used to labor with his pupils even at the age of eighty, trimming the gardens, cleaning the grounds, and pruning the trees. The pupils felt sorry to see the old teacher working so hard, but they knew he would not listen to their advice to stop, so they hid away his tools. That day the master did not eat. The next day he did not eat, nor the next. “He may be angry because we have hidden his tools,” the pupils surmised. “We had better put them back.” The day they did, the teacher worked and ate the same as before. In the evening he instructed them, “No work, no food.”

January 6

GUIDING QUOTE:

A friend is one before whom I may think aloud.

~ RALPH WALDO EMERSON

ACTION:

I am a friend to those around me without expecting anything in return. I do not abuse information that is shared with me in trust. Even if not confidentially shared, I do not use information from others for my own gratification or to deliberately hurt them. I realize that I can only find real friends when I am one.

POINT TO PONDER:

How many of us are afraid to speak our mind anymore because someone may use our own words against us? How often have we heard of or experienced cases where individuals distorted others' statements with mean-spirited intentions? Finding someone with whom we do not have to be on guard is a virtue. Being the one with whom others do not have to guard their words is nobility.

January 7

GUIDING QUOTE:

You think you lost your horse? Who knows, he may bring a whole herd back to you someday.

~ CHINESE PROVERB

ACTION:

I do not allow material loss to daunt me. If I lose any property, I consider it to be for a good reason. If I miss an opportunity, a better one will emerge.

POINT TO PONDER:

One day, the stallion of an old farmer broke its fence and ran away. The neighbors said, "That's so bad!" The old farmer just said, "Maybe." The next day, the stallion returned with three wild fillies. The neighbors said, "That's great luck!" The old farmer said, "Maybe." The farmer's teenage son went out to break one of the new horses. It bucked him, and he broke his leg. His neighbors said, "How unfortunate!" The old farmer said, "Maybe." The army then came around, conscripting young men to fight in a war. Because of the broken leg, they didn't take the farmer's teenage son. The neighbors said, "How fortunate!" The old farmer said, "Maybe."

January 8

GUIDING QUOTE:

I had no shoes and complained, until I met a man who had no feet.

~ INDIAN PROVERB

ACTION:

I am grateful today. Grateful for all that I am. Grateful for all that I have. And grateful for all that I can be for others. I am fortunate to be here—to be able to read this, or hear it being read to me. I am fortunate for being part of the world—a miracle of its own. There are many who have less than I have. I try to find ways to help them and rejoice for the opportunity.

POINT TO PONDER:

We take too many things for granted and sometimes complain about little things that do not work out as we thought they would. Complaining is one of the easiest things to do. There is so much to complain about. But there is also so much to be thankful for. Unfortunately, many of us prefer to focus on our mishaps and take our blessings for granted. This might be a good moment to consider changing our attitude in that regard.

January 9

GUIDING QUOTE:

It is better to have less thunder in the mouth and more lightning in the hand.

~ APACHE PROVERB

ACTION:

Instead of talking all the time and not doing much, I show the world who I am! I lead by example, even if I am not an official leader of anyone else but myself. I do the things that I have postponed for a while, and get organized where I was not. I work systematically until the day is over, and then I retreat with a sense of accomplishment.

POINT TO PONDER:

It seems that many places encourage thunder in the mouth. Assertive people often steal the show. However, the greatest talkers are oftentimes the weakest doers. It might be wise to observe people for a while before drawing a conclusion on their actual qualities. Those with thunder in the mouth usually have little lightning in the hand, and those with lightning in the hand often have little thunder in the mouth.

January 10

GUIDING QUOTE:

The moon moves slowly, but it crosses the town.

~ AFRICAN PROVERB

ACTION:

I do not allow myself to panic when things do not happen as rapidly as I want them to. I do my very best to accomplish whatever I can, but I also practice patience where it is needed. I keep in mind that some things require more time than initially anticipated. I do not let that discourage me.

POINT TO PONDER:

Haste is everywhere around us. But haste doesn't always invite good outcomes. While we may not slack unnecessarily, we should always consider the fact that there may be unforeseen hurdles that might delay our plans. However, as long as there is progress, there is hope. Sometimes we appreciate the outcome of an effort better if there were setbacks on the way to achieving it. It is hardship on our way to paradise that helps us value the destination even more.

January 11

GUIDING QUOTE:

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.

~ MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

ACTION:

I am not upset by comments of those who dislike me. I am not disturbed by lack of support from my friends in times of need. I accept them as they are, because they are connected to me.

POINT TO PONDER:

There is an old Sufi story of two friends who traveled together. One night they came across a town with prostitutes. One friend wanted to indulge in physical pleasures, while the other tried to change his mind. Both wanted their way, so one went with a prostitute, while the other went to church. Meanwhile, the friend with the prostitute became regretful of his foolishness. The friend in church kept thinking how lowly his friend was. Then an earthquake demanded both their lives. In heaven, the remorseful fool was awarded over the one who thought his friend to be lowly. Thinking ourselves superior to others is the gateway to hell.

January 12

GUIDING QUOTE:

Work relieves us from three great evils: boredom, vice, and want.

~ FRENCH PROVERB

ACTION:

I am grateful to work. I am the driver behind my actions, my co-workers are my family at work, our customers are the purpose we perform, and the universe makes this possible. My work has meaning.

POINT TO PONDER:

A large corporation hired a team of cannibals to reorganize the workplace under one condition: no eating of employees. A few weeks later the HR manager called a meeting with the cannibals: “I am satisfied with your work so far, but one of the secretaries is missing. Anyone know anything?” All cannibals shook their heads. After the boss left, the cannibal leader said to the others angrily, “OK, which one of you ate the secretary?” One hand hesitantly rose in admission. “You fool,” said the leader. “For weeks we’ve been eating managers and no one noticed anything, but you had to go and eat someone important!”

January 13

GUIDING QUOTE:

The mind is everything. What you think, you become.

~ BUDDHA

ACTION:

I remain calm and quiet, even when challenged. Positive or negative thinking are both choices. I choose positive.

POINT TO PONDER:

A farmer needed to work his field, but his plough was broken. He decided to ask his neighbor, Murphy, who lived four fields away, knowing that Murphy finished his work early on. The farmer started to walk to his neighbor. After the first field he thought, "I hope Murphy has finished his work, otherwise he can't help me out." As his concern grew, the farmer thought, "Perhaps Murphy's plough is old and almost broken. Then he will not loan it to me." After another field, "Murphy has always been a hard one. He might just not want to help me out." Upon arriving at Murphy's farm, the farmer's mind was so clouded that he thought, "That Murphy was always a mean one. He won't help me just out of spite." He knocked on Murphy's door and yelled angrily, "Murphy, just keep your stupid plough!"

January 14

GUIDING QUOTE:

The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.

~ SOCRATES

ACTION:

Because I know nothing, I realize that I have no reason whatsoever to be arrogant. There is so much I do not know, and whatever I think I know became obsolete the moment after I learned about it. I open myself to learning, and I keep in mind that teachers come in various shapes and sorts, human and nonhuman.

POINT TO PONDER:

Humility is not as easy to practice anymore these days, because our society encourages us to swank about our skills and capacities. The loudest mouths seem to get all the glory, and that sends a message of discouragement to all who believe in humility. However, it is also important to know that there is a long-term outcome to everything. Superciliousness is a hard act to maintain, and ultimately crumbles. Humility remains intact and opens the way to continuous learning.

January 15

GUIDING QUOTE:

*Happiness is when what you think,
what you say, and what you do are in harmony.*

~ MAHATMA GANDHI

ACTION:

I decide to be happy. I refrain from lying, cheating, or deliberately hurting others. I consider my words carefully, but I remain honest. Responsible truthfulness is possible. I do not partake in gossip, even if it doesn't hurt anyone else directly, because it stains my spirit.

POINT TO PONDER:

There is freedom in being truthful. This sense of freedom starts within and radiates to others. Authentic behavior is simple behavior. It detangles us from the web of hypocrisy that social behavior sometimes demands. It prevents us from having to remember too many behavioral patterns applied to too many environments and individuals. Most importantly, it enables a well-earned and peaceful night's sleep.

January 16

GUIDING QUOTE:

The greatest gift you can give another is the purity of your attention.

~ RICHARD MOSS

ACTION:

I give the greatest gift by listening. I listen to my family and make sure that I am not caught in too many distracting activities. I listen to my colleagues and do not get carried away by my ambition. I listen to my pet and do not ignore this true friend of mine. I listen to those around me, because they are precious.

POINT TO PONDER:

If we think of the most common sentence we speak everyday when we encounter others, “How are you?” and we expect no more than “Fine, and you?” our intention is often not to hear more than that. We cannot even start imagining that someone would want to really tell us how they are. Why not change that? Why not show that we really care? Our body language can add meaning to our most common question. We can give more attention. It will enrich those around us, ourselves, and our connection.

January 17

GUIDING QUOTE:

[A]s we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

~ NELSON MANDELA

ACTION:

I set an example and exude a pleasant mood and an active attitude today. I work hard and practice kindness. I demonstrate my good intentions by offering my help where it is not expected.

POINT TO PONDER:

Once there were two true friends, Ndemi and Jinjo. Ndemi was rich, and Jinjo poor. Yet, they looked very much alike and did everything as if they were brothers. They traveled together, and one day, when Ndemi was in dire need, Jinjo came to his rescue, helping him to escape death and find his life's happiness. The friends soon separated, but their mutual lights kept shining for one another. Some time later, Jinjo got in trouble, and was facing an almost sure death. Ndemi sensed his friend's trouble, and traveled to Jinjo's village. He rescued his friend, and they were reunited.

January 18

GUIDING QUOTE:

He that can have patience can have what he will.

~ BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

ACTION:

I realize that patience is almost outdated in today's hurried society, but that it provides me with an advantage if I practice it when and where no one else does.

POINT TO PONDER:

A martial arts student went to his teacher and said earnestly, "I am devoted to studying your martial system. How long will it take me to master it?" The teacher's reply was casual: "Ten years." Impatiently, the student answered, "But I want to master it faster than that. I will work very hard. I will practice everyday, ten or more hours a day if I have to. How long will it take then?" The teacher thought for a moment. "Twenty years."

(Adopted from John Suler, "Zen Stories to Tell Your Neighbors")

Patience is a virtue that can only be taught through time.

January 19

GUIDING QUOTE:

We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.

~ OSCAR WILDE

ACTION:

I focus on the positive. I am a stargazer. How beautiful is the sky! I imagine myself high up there. How great to be able to dream! How wonderful to have thoughts! I like dreaming. My mind is mine, and the freedom of my thoughts is the thing no one can take from me. I look at the stars and determine my path to them. My life is a promise.

POINT TO PONDER:

It is all in our hands to get depressed or feel uplifted. While we cannot prevent ourselves from being less positive on some days, we can still choose to remain mostly joyful. The greatest predicaments are conquered by a sense of purpose. Unfortunately, many people fail to define their purpose and find their goal. Do not be one of them. Finding your purpose is a matter of turning inward and examining your interests. What excites you? Where is your star?

January 20

GUIDING QUOTE:

*Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.
Nothing can be done without hope or confidence.*

~ HELEN KELLER

ACTION:

I am an achiever, so I release the hopeless feelings that troubled me before. I accept the gift of each new day with the gladness and confidence of a child, and take it as it comes. If I encounter a windfall, I am grateful. If I encounter disappointment or challenge, I understand that it is up to me how I deal with it. I remain hopeful as long as I live.

POINT TO PONDER:

Hope and confidence are topics that have been lauded and condemned equally. However, what is life without a positive personal perspective? How do we dare anything if we do not hope for a good outcome? How can we face even the slightest challenge without some confidence? The great ones we now revere would not have become what they are without hopes. Nobel prize winners, inventors, great minds, artists, builders, and teachers: they all succeeded thanks to their hope and confidence.

January 21

GUIDING QUOTE:

*The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity.
The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.*

~ SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

ACTION:

As I make the most of my life, my optimism is tuned on high. While I am not reckless, I mindfully accept what the day offers, and perceive it in the right light. I do not take setbacks personally, but see them as means to make me stronger and more determined on my way to achieving my goals.

POINT TO PONDER:

Even if we are optimistic by nature, there is always a chance for partners, friends, or colleagues to drag us down with their gloomy perspectives. We should not get upset at them for being weak sometimes. Everyone has highs and lows, and that is OK. Instead of becoming upset with others, we could analyze the options and decide for ourselves that we will choose the opportunity viewpoint. This is how excellence is born.

January 22

GUIDING QUOTE:

If your desires be endless, your cares and fears will be so too.

~ THOMAS FULLER

ACTION:

The things I really need are few, and most of the things I want are only infused in me by external influences or my own greed. Therefore, I carefully examine my motives. I do not want to be driven by cares and fears.

POINT TO PONDER:

There is an African tale about the spider, Anansi, Firefly, and Tiger. Anansi, always trying to outsmart everyone, was invited by Firefly to go egg hunting. Firefly led the way, and they soon arrived in the egg field. Firefly opened his wings to shed light, but each time Anansi grabbed the eggs, stating, "This one's mine. I saw it first!" Finally, Anansi's bag was full, and Firefly flew off without one egg. Trying to find his way back in the dark, Anansi stumbled upon a house that turned out to be Tiger's dwelling. Tiger let him in, boiled the eggs, and ate all with his family. Anansi did not dare to complain, and quietly sneaked out in the early morning. His endless greed brought him endless fear.