The Book of Joy Study Guide

The Book of Joy by Dalai Lama

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Summary

This three-part documentation of a week-long meeting between two of the world's most renowned spiritual leaders is crafted by author and activist Douglas Abrams. The topic of the week was joy. More specifically, the men attempted to create a road-map for ordinary people to cultivating a lasting sense of joy in their life, regardless of their suffering. Abrams divides the book into three sections; the first is dedicated to the nature of joy, where the men create a vague definition of joy as a lasting state, not just a fleeting emotion. The second section of the book addresses the most pressing obstacles humans face to joy. The third and final section of the text defines eight pillars to joy that the men have agreed upon throughout the weeks' worth of discussion. These pillars to joy are ultimately the discussion's conclusion: actively practicing the eight pillars to joy are the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu's secret to attaining true, lasting joy.

The mission of the visit was not only to discuss joy, but to celebrate the Dalai Lamas's eightieth birthday. Thus, it is fitting that Abrams states in his introduction that the book is a three-layer birthday cake. The first layer comprising of specific teachings from the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu, the second layer representing scientific findings on the nature of joy, and the third and final layer dedicated to a documentation of the personal, intimate reunion between the two old friends. Abrams incorporates all three of these layers to each of his chapters by including the words of the men themselves, scientific references, and his own human observations. Abrams incorporates these three sources of information seamlessly to fully incorporate the reader into the meeting room of the Dalai Lama's residence in Dharamsala, and ultimately into the conversation. While some may categorize this as a self-help book, it reads as more of a casual conversation. Abrams often digresses from the conversation to incorporate his own doubts, opinions, and observations, as well as the input from professionals and scientific experts, to make the conversation more fluent.

Abrams brings the discussion to a close by creating a convergence of the most important aspects to living a joyful life, as taught by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu throughout the week. They decide on eight pillars, four of the mind and four of the heart, that are essential to cultivating a joyful life. The pillars of the mind, perspective, humility, humor, and acceptance, and the pillars of the heart, forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, and generosity, are not offered as a foolproof system to attaining joy. Rather, each pillar represents a trait that one can actively practice throughout the duration of his or her life. The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu reiterate several times that joy cannot be cultivated overnight. Also, joy will never come to those who actively seek it; Tutu warns that "we cannot pursue joy as an end in itself, or we will miss the bus" (303). This is the reason behind the eight pillars to joy - they are essentially a road map for living a meaningful and purposeful life. A life defined by a true sense of lasting joy is the byproduct of actively practicing the eight pillars to joy.

Arrival: We Are Fragile Creatures

Summary

The authors' intricate study of joy begins on a plane to Dharamsala, India, where the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu were scheduled to spend a week together discussing how to change joy from a fleeting emotion to a permanent state of being. Douglas Abrams, the writer tasked with documenting the historic meeting, begins his journey airborne with Tutu, where the Archbishop gave his first lesson on joy: "as we discover more joy, we can face suffering in a way that ennobles rather than embitters. We have hardship without becoming hard" (12). Abrams follows with a description of the postcard backdrop of Dharamsala's snow covered-mountains, which have not always been as welcoming in the past. As if by divine intervention, "today the sky was blue, the wisps of clouds held at bay by the mountains" as the men made their descent to begin their historic interfaith meeting (13).

Abrams recalls the two moral and religious leaders embracing affectionately on the tarmac as evidence of the strength of their friendship. After the presentation of a ceremonial scarf to the Archbishop, the two relaxed in an airport lounge, awaiting transportation to the Dalai Lama's residence. The overwhelming presence of the media reminded Abrams, who was admittedly caught up in the logistics, how significant this meeting was to not only Buddhist or Christian audiences, but to the world.

After a brief meeting with the press and a drive to the Dalai Lama's residence down streets lined with devout supporters, Abrams concludes this chapter by recalling Archbishop Tutu's and his own mounting nervousness. While the Archbishop relayed concerns over small differences in his and the Dalai Lama's thought processes, the exact root of Abrams' nerves are not revealed. However, as the dialogues approach, Abrams recites to the reader and possibly himself the goal of this book: to discover "the nature of true joy" (24).

Analysis

Towards the beginning of this chapter, Abrams interjects a page-long quote from the Dalai Lama made before Tutu's trip to Dharamsala in which he attempts to answer an age-old question: What is the purpose of life? Abrams uses this quote as a precursor to the weeks' worth of discussions he is about to document. His Holiness argues that happiness is not only intrinsic, but it is the purpose of life, and it "depends on the attitudes, the perspectives, and the reactions we bring to situations and to our relationships with other people" (14). The reader can assume at this point that the discussions between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu will focus on the power of the individual to attain their own permanent state of joy.

A seemingly serious conversation about the Dalai Lama's failed trip to Cape Town years' prior at the hands of the South African government turns into lighthearted banter about the size of the crowd the Buddhist leader attracts. Tutu joked that "There were seventy-thousand people who wanted to come hear this man, and he can't even speak English properly" (18). While humor may not be expected from such esteemed moral leaders, Abrams frequently documents their cheerful teasing to prove that humor "is a sign of intimacy and friendship, to know that there is a reservoir of affection from which we all drink as funny and flawed humans" (19). The two leaders "were eight more than eighty" (16), which Abrams interprets as their inability to hide their childlike affection for each other. Abrams points out that "there are not many members of the moral leaders club" (20), which gives the men a deeply appreciative understanding of each other.

Before concluding this chapter, Abrams vividly describes the streets of Dharamsala which were adorned with devout Buddhists trying to catch a glimpse of the Dalai Lama and his esteemed guest. His description captures more than the physical aspects of the land, which provided many "reminders that this was a community that had been traumatized by oppression and exile" (22); but Abrams also captures the paradoxical grouping of two monumental leaders with such humble identities. Specifically, he focuses on the importance of the Dalai Lama to Tibetans for readers unfamiliar with Buddhism. The Dalai Lama, despite regarding himself as a common monk, "is both the symbol of [Tibetans'] national and political identity and also the embodiment of their spiritual aspirations" (23).

Abrams concludes this opening chapter by justifying his own nerves with the "honest expression of concern" that the Archbishop had admitted to as well, proving that "even great spiritual leaders get nervous when they are journeying into the unknown" (24). In this case, the unknown is the week-long dialogue into the origins of joy between two men who, Archbishop Tutu believes, have very different ways of thinking. He poses the Dalai Lama's intellectual and scientific approach in contrast to his own more instinctual approach toward philosophy. To this point, Abrams has drawn the men as two close friends, but interjecting this small difference of thought processes may be foreshadowing ideological conflicts throughout the week-long dialogue.

Vocabulary

rebar, embitters, rarefied, censure, decries, perfidy

Why Are You Not Morose?

Summary

The week of dialogue begins with Abrams asking the Dalai Lama to share his hopes for the leaders' time together. In an eloquent answer, the Dalai Lama acknowledges humankinds' focus on materialistic, external sources to define happiness, when truly, happiness comes from within. He believes "everyone has the responsibility to develop a happier world" (30), which Archbishop Tutu exemplifies perfectly. He compliments Tutu by saying he is "always laughing, always joyful," which "is a very positive message" to those who look up to him as a moral leader (31). Archbishop Tutu responds not by disagreeing, but by deepening the Dalai Lama's argument, noting that "joy subsumes happiness" (32). He compares joy to the feeling of unconditional love that a mother feels for her child.

Abrams dissects the idea of joy further by citing the writings of a friend of the Dalai Lama's and expert emotions researcher Paul Ekman, who compiled a list of feelings encompassed within the state of joy. Abrams calls this list a "helpful mapping of the kingdom of joy," which includes the feelings of pleasure, amusement, contentment, excitement, relief, wonder, ecstasy, unhealthy jubilation, exultation, radiant pride, elevation and gratitude (34). Another famous Buddhist scholar added three more feelings to this list: rejoicing, delight, and spiritual radiance. Abrams believes the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu exemplify the spiritual radiance "born from deep well-being and benevolence" (34).

"Is joy a feeling that comes and surprises us, or is it a more dependable way of being?" Abrams offered as the first question of the week-long interview (34). The Dalai Lama is able to briefly differentiate between happiness and joy before being interrupted by Archbishop Tutu, who asks his Holiness how long he has been living in exile. Here, Abrams diverts into a brief history of the Dalai Lama's political conflicts with Communist China. The Dalai Lama's answer, however, is not rooted in pain and suffering, but rather "a shift in perspective - from oneself and toward others" (37). He believes a crucial part in creating a lasting state of joy is to look at the world with a wider perspective, allowing oneself to find solidarity among his "human brothers and sisters" and their similar suffering (37).

Both Abrams and the Archbishop were noticeably taken back by the Dalai Lama's profound response to living a life in exile. Tutu complements the Dalai Lama's answer by adding that hardship is inevitable in the human experience. Part of the recipe for creating lasting joy lies in one's ability to turn frustrations and anxieties into positive aspects, according to Archbishop Tutu. Abrams notes that as he leaned forward, the Archbishop collected his thoughts and said to the Dalai Lama, "he wants to ask another question" (41), joking at the length of their answer to just the first question. The two men joust playfully as Abrams concludes this chapter.

Analysis

This chapter first attempts to loosely define joy. While it can be argued that the entire book aims to define joy, this chapter provides the reader with a basic definition of joy as the two leaders aim to capture it. Abrams cites a Scottish study that identifies only four fundamental emotions: fear, anger, sadness, and joy. Thus, since joy is the only possible positive emotion, “exploring joy is nothing less than exploring what makes human experience satisfying” (34).

Abrams argues that the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu are the embodiment of joy, which leads him to ask his first question of the week-long dialogue: How can people turn the fleeting emotion of happiness in to a permanent state of joy? Abrams allows the two men to converse and expand their ideas, while he interjects relevant background information and his own personal observations. This trio of voices allows the reader to feel submersed in the conversation, as the three distinct tones stand out among each other. Thus, the reader is more-so participating in an active conversation rather than reading a traditional book.

The bulk of this chapter is dedicated to the Dalai Lama’s reflection on living a life of joy despite also living in exile for more than 50 years. The Archbishop notes that the Dalai Lama has every right to wear a continuous “sourpuss” (39), which humorously confused his Holiness. However, the Dalai Lama preaches that while he loves Tibet, a life in exile has granted him unprecedented opportunities to meet real people, travel, and cultivate a greater understanding of his life and emotions. He tasks all of humankind to find the opportunities that come from negative situations, and to use those to achieve a state of joy.

Part of what makes this chapter read so effortlessly as a fluent conversation is the men’s presumed personal invitation to the reader. First, inviting an author to record the discussions was the first indication that the men shared the goal of perpetuating their dialogue to a wider audience than just those present in Dharamsala. Also, Archbishop Tutu makes a direct reference to the reader in his pontificating, when he states he wants to add information for the sake of “our brothers and sisters out there” (39), or in other words, the reader. The esteemed leaders wish to achieve an open dialogue, one that ignites emotion and empathy from the reader. They accomplish this by keeping their audience in mind during their answers, primarily by predicting questions or confusions the reader may find throughout the dialogue. Abrams does this as well, by including a break for tea at the end of this chapter.

Vocabulary

morose, subsumes, opulent, dejection/dejected, cloistered, transmuted

Nothing Beautiful Comes Without Some Suffering

Summary

This chapter focuses on Abrams question to Tutu, specifically, about how he maintains joy in the face of suffering. Whether the suffering is physical such as the Archbishop's prostate cancer, or political such as his struggle under the oppression of apartheid, Abrams seeks to discover what Archbishop Tutu does to remain joyful in the exact moment of frustration.

Archbishop Tutu counters by stating that suffering is part of the recipe for generating compassion. Suffering, or more specifically one's approach to suffering, can define one's capacity for compassion and ultimately joy. Thus, in the face of suffering, Archbishop Tutu claims a form of acceptance is necessary; one must realize that emotions are inevitable and uncontrollable. But one also has the power to train their mind to not be so self-centered. Selfishness, the Dalai Lama agreed, would never lead to joy. Focusing on the suffering of others as opposed to one's own suffering is, the men agree, a surefire way to alleviate pain.

Abrams concludes this chapter by referencing a Buddhist tradition, as well as recent science on our ability to cultivate joy. The Buddhist teaching of mind training, called lojong, focuses on "lessening one's self-absorption" (48). It teaches that joy is a natural state that humans are perpetually seeking to reenter. While modern science has not researched the cultivation of joy as thoroughly as Buddhist scholars, Abrams cites a study that suggests there are three factors that have the greatest influence on our happiness: "our ability to reframe our situation more positively, our ability to experience gratitude, and our choice to be kind and generous" (49). Abrams believes the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu exemplify each of these factors, and ultimately, they exemplify true joy.

Analysis

Archbishop Tutu argues that suffering is a necessary part of life, and a necessary part for generating compassion. To make this argument, he briefly recounts the life and work of Nelson Mandela. Tutu and Mandela fought against the same oppressive apartheid government, but Tutu was protected by his standing in the church. While some argue Mandela's 27 years in jail was wasteful, Tutu argues that Mandela's jail time made him into the compassionate, magnanimous man he grew into. Ultimately, "it is how we face all of the things that seem to be negative in our lives that determines the kind of person we become" (44). In this light, Mandela is a shining example of the way suffering, if approached correctly, can shape the human spirit.

Abrams uses Archbishop Tutu's recurring battle with prostate cancer to demonstrate his seemingly perpetual state of joy despite the extent of suffering he continues to face daily. Archbishop Tutu argues that he constantly and consciously must count his blessings and be grateful for what he has, as opposed to only focusing on the suffering he feels. The Dalai Lama adds to this with an example of his own medical emergency, when gallbladder pain drove him away from an important session of Buddhist teachings. He recalls seeing a man lying on the ground whose "hair was disheveled, his clothes were dirty, and he looked sick" (47). Empathic by nature, the Dalai Lama virtually forgot his pain at the overwhelming sight of this man, proof that "compassion works even at the physical level" (47). The Dalai Lama carefully guides the reader through his thought process when he saw this man, to demonstrate that even in physically painful times, one can practice living in a state of joy, empathy, and compassion.

In this chapter, Abrams provides the reader with a glimpse of one of the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu's areas of disagreement: the amount of control people have over their emotions. Tutu's opinion on emotions is shared during this conversation, but the Dalai Lama's is not. Therefore, Abrams takes it upon himself to acknowledge their differences in opinion: Tutu argues people have little control over their emotions, while the Dalai Lama will, later in the book presumably, express his opinion that people possess more control over their emotions than they think.

Abrams concludes this chapter not by summarizing or analyzing the previous discussion with the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama, but by reinforcing the men's ideas with both a Buddhist teaching and modern science. He first draws on the practice of lojong which focuses on teaching one's mind not to obsessively focus inward. Abrams next quotes a psychological study that lists three important factors that influence happiness: one's ability to reframe a situation, one's ability to be grateful, and one's choice to be generous. Abrams concludes that these three factors "were exactly the attitudes and actions that the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop had already mentioned and to which they would return as central pillars of joy" (49). Thus, these three scientifically-based factors are essential factors to cultivating the lasting joy that the discussion was dedicated to.

Vocabulary

dross, magnanimous, admonition, disheveled, immutable

Have You Renounced Pleasure?

Summary

Before delving back into the conversation, Abrams informs the reader his overall goal the line of questioning in this chapter: he wants to explore “the relationship between joy and pleasure and between what the Dalai Lama has called happiness at the physical level and happiness at the mental level” (51). In other words, he wants to hear the Dalai Lama’s opinion of the boundary between enjoyment and greed. His first question is also the name of this chapter: “Have you renounced pleasure?” he asks the Dalai Lama (52).

The Dalai Lama answers by clarifying that there are two different types of happiness: “the enjoyment of pleasure” and “happiness at a deeper level through our mind, such as through love, compassion, and generosity” (53). He suggests that when joy and pleasure come from within, the temptation to indulge in pleasures of the senses subsides. Physical pleasures and comforts, he continues, have virtually no connection to the lasting state of mental happiness and joy. Good food and good music are relatable examples of physical pleasures, but Abrams asks the Dalai Lama to further explain mental pleasure. His answer is simple: “a genuine state of love and affection,” which can be achieved by developing a “strong sense of concern for the well-being of all sentient beings and in particular all human beings” (54).

Abrams concludes this chapter by reiterating one of the central themes that the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu had been advocating for throughout the day: we can achieve the mental pleasure that generates joy through “our relationships, and specifically, our expression of love and generosity to others in life” (56). He uses the research of a neuroscientist and a leading expert on the science of the unconscious to reinforce the Dalai Lama’s ideas that internal joy that springs from compassion and empathy. The research suggests that humans come “factory equipped for cooperation, compassion, and generosity” (57). Abrams’ closing statement calls on humanity to realize its’ innate “ability and desire to cooperate and to be generous to others” on a personal, social, and global scale (57).

Analysis

While this chapter is short, the bulk of it is comprised of the Dalai Lama’s answer to the question of how enjoyment and pleasure play a role in his life. Abrams allows an unfiltered answer from the Dalai Lama to flow onto the page, using interjections as infrequently as possible. His answer is purely philosophical, which Abrams reinforces in the final section of the chapter with scientific studies on neurological research of happiness. So far, chapters seem to encompass just one question, followed by one or both the men’s answers, and concluded by Abrams’ verifications and observations on the men’s discussion.

The casual nature of the conversation is continued in this chapter with the input of an old Tibetan prayer by the Dalai Lama's interpreter and friend, Jinpa. This helps to reinforce to the reader that the input of all is welcomed in the vast discussion of joy. Also, the two esteemed moral leaders begin the conversation by joking that they have renounced pleasure in the form of renouncing sex. Such trivial banter between two highly regarded moral and religious leaders brings the conversation to a more human level. At first, one may feel ill-prepared to discuss these issues compared to the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu, but the casual structure helps to invite readers of all walks of life to engage in the dialogue.

The Dalai Lama uses food in this chapter as an example of the two different forms of happiness he acknowledges, physical and mental. Abrams observed the Dalai Lama seeming to thoroughly enjoy his food at lunch, which can initially be seen as gluttonous or as a form of seeking physical pleasure. The Dalai Lama claims that to achieve deep, mental happiness one must train his mind to think differently. He exemplifies this by appreciating and enjoying each of his meals for the sustenance and nourishment they provide for his body. Thus, the Dalai Lama is using a commonality shared among all humans, the need to eat, as a way for the reader to identify the difference between his two proposed types of happiness at the most basic level.

The very end of this chapter provides the first allusion to putting joy to action "personally, socially, and globally "(57). The philosophical nature of the first part of the chapter is grounded by Abrams' scientific references which ultimately conclude that humans are genetically hardwired for generosity, compassion, and empathy. Though no detail is given to Abrams' call to action, it gives the reader an incentive to read on to continue the conversation. The art of putting joy to action is presumably the key to achieving a lasting state of mental joy.

Vocabulary

incredulously, hedonic/hedonism, sentient

Our Greatest Joy

Summary

This chapter begins by Abrams asking the Archbishop to further explain the idea that joy is not merely a feeling, but “a way of approaching the world” (59). His answer both affirms the scientific research presented in the previous chapter and confuses Abrams because of its simplicity. He claims that “our greatest joy is when we seek to do good for others” (59). Archbishop Tutu reinforces his answer by drawing on the South African concept of “Ubuntu…a person is a person through other persons” (60). Ultimately, the Archbishop believes humanity is a delicate network, and seeking joy is only possible through active participation in this profound network.

The Dalai Lama adds to the discussion by providing a recipe for generating more meaningful human connections throughout one’s life. Trust, born from a genuine compassion for another’s well-being, naturally attracts more friends. He echoes the idea that humans are inherently social animals who require meaningful human contact to achieve pure lasting joy.

Abrams then analyzes the information the two men have provided, and concludes that the reader is presumably left in a paradox. One the one hand, the conversation is about achieving a lasting state of personal, intrinsic joy; on the other hand, the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu are saying joy can only be achieved by selflessly caring for others. The line between focus on oneself and focus on others is blurry, as Abrams points out. Before the men break for lunch, Abrams asks one final question, this time directed toward the Dalai Lama.

Continuing along the theme of the first question of the chapter presented to the Archbishop, Abrams asks the Dalai Lama what it was like to manifest true joy and wake up with joy each day. The Dalai Lama concludes this chapters’ discussion by echoing the ideas of the Archbishop; each day is to be meaningful, which, to the Dalai Lama, means “if possible, serve and help others” (64). Thus, this chapter argues throughout that our greatest joy lies in compassion and generosity toward others.

Analysis

This chapter begins with Abrams’ clear acknowledgement that the following discussion is aimed at the Archbishop. While no concrete question is asked, Abrams aims the conversation at the idea that joy is more than a feeling, but a way of approaching the world that is available right now, without waiting for physical pleasures such as getting rich or buying a house. The Archbishop’s response comprises the bulk of this chapter, in which he discusses the chapters’ namesake, “our greatest joy” (59).

Humanity’s greatest joy is, quite simply, “when we seek to do good for others” (59). Abrams admits his own skepticism, as well as acknowledging that the reader may also

have some reservations. Abrams is skillful at including the reader in the conversation at every step of the way. For example, he notes that while it is easy to focus emphatically on others in theory, most people on a day-to-day basis are struggling to pay the bills and feed their families. Abrams even cites the Archbishop's marvelous gaze on a lavish Nevada mansion, when he joked "I was wrong – I do want to be rich" (61). Both the Archbishop and Abrams acknowledge the immediate attraction that comes with wealth, but they are careful to note the difference between the type of happiness that comes from such pleasures and internal happiness. Internal happiness thrives, Archbishop Tutu argues, on the bond formed by humanity.

After a brief addition to the conversation by the Dalai Lama, Abrams concludes this chapter with his own analysis of the prior discussion. He concludes that the discussion has led to a paradox: "If one of the fundamental secrets of joy is going beyond our own self-centeredness, then is it…self-defeating to focus on our own joy and happiness" (62)? Abrams draws from the discussion that the two men are arguing that "the way we heal our own pain is actually by turning to the pain of others," in a perpetual "virtuous cycle" (63). Cultivating joy through meaningful human relationships allows for the capacity to spread more joy to others. Though in theory this presents a paradox, the cyclical nature of the cultivation of joy is evident through the life and work of the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu.

Abrams concludes this chapter by acknowledging the Dalai Lama's embodiment of cultivating joy daily by asking him, "What it was like to wake up with joy?" (64). The Dalai Lama then describes his thought process each morning; he decides to choose joy. He recalls the importance of kindness and compassion and thus sets his "intention for the day: that this day should be meaningful" (64). This is the first example in this book of detailing day-to-day practices that reinforce real joy.

Vocabulary

complementarity, ambivalence, antagonistic

Lunch: The Meeting of Two Mischievous People is Wonderful

Summary

Abrams begins this chapter by describing the elegant yet simple décor in the Dalai Lama's dining room. He notes that he can feel in the Dalai Lama's "posture and his body language the power of a leader" (67) because of his genuine concern felt for all those around him. Abrams praises the Dalai Lama's ability to engage with every new person he meets, a testament to his being "fully present" (68). Also evidence of the Dalai Lama's present mindset is his ability to switch from an esteemed religious leader to a caregiving host, who thoughtfully asks the Archbishop if the temperature of his soup is okay before continuing their conversation.

During their meal, the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama turned to the topics of "bringing together their two religious traditions, the great challenge of religious conflict, and the need for tolerance" (70). The Dalai Lama began by stating the need for all those of faith must accept not only the inevitability of other religions, but the inevitability of non-believers. Archbishop Tutu uses the Dalai Lama's seemingly universal popularity as evidence that all of humankind has the capacity to appreciate a true moral leader. The Dalai Lama then begins to discuss the importance of the concept of humanity, a concept he would return to frequently throughout the week. He dismisses any notion of formality, insisting that "when we are born, there is no formality…when we die, there is no formality…we are all the same human beings" (73).

The conversation concludes by Abrams noticing the paradox that often in the west, parenting is "too focused on our children, and their needs alone, rather than helping them to learn to care for others" (77). The Dalai Lama reinforces this idea by claiming that the world needs "unbiased love toward entire humanity, entire sentient beings, irrespective of what their attitude is toward us" (78). He boldly challenges the reader to extend the same love that one feels for their child toward the rest of humanity. Abrams admits that he wishes the men could spend more time discussing "the elasticity of love and compassion" (78), but everyone had finished their lunch. The men would now break for the day to prepare for the following day's discussion of the obstacles that often stand in the way of joy.

Analysis

This chapter is more informal yet longer than any of the previous chapters. Abrams sits back as the observer of a casual mealtime conversation between the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop, drifting from the vague question and answer format of other sections. Obviously, lunch was a daily occurrence, but this is the only lunchtime conversation

Abrams documents. Lunch began, as Abrams notes, “by returning to theme of birthdays, aging, and mortality” (68).

The conversation begins as normally as any conversation between two 80-year-old men: the Dalai Lama recalls a recent visit to his doctor, where he was told he was in great health, but knees were weakening. However, because of his age, nothing could be done. In the compassionate and humble way only the Dalai Lama could, he expressed his delight with this finding; “It’s very important to think about impermanence. He reminds me I’m eighty years old. That’s wonderful,” he says with a smile (68). He even teases Archbishop Tutu by reminding him “but, my friend, you are even older than me” (68). In one statement, the Dalai Lama exemplifies a concrete example of finding blessings, opportunities, and even humor in the face of pain.

The conversation turns to the need for religious tolerance in the world. To paint the argument, Archbishop Tutu drafts an example of the Dalai Lama approaching the gates of heaven, and being turned away by God because he is a non-Christian. “Everybody sees just how entirely ridiculous is it” (72), he claims, bringing the religious argument to more of a moral, commonsense argument. He goes on to say that everyone respects the Dalai Lama not only for what he says, but for who he is. People of faith, government leaders, scientists, and homeless people alike recognize the Dalai Lama’s authentic nature; Archbishop Tutu offers this as an example that humankind, regardless of religious affiliation, has the power to recognize and appreciate real compassion.

The conversation turns grim for a moment when they come to the topic of twins, and the Archbishop’s daughter asked Abrams to see a picture of his own twins, who were born prematurely. One of the twins barely made it, and was even born unresponsive. Abrams insists that though his wife’s touch and healing words, their daughter was able to survive. Even the doctors insist that his wife speak to the baby in an attempt to revive her. The power of maternal love, Abrams believes, is undeniable. The Dalai Lama corroborates this idea with science. In most chapters, Abrams is the one making the scientific references, but here, the Dalai Lama takes the torch. He argues that “all mammals, including humans, have a special bond with their mothers,” as biologists have proven (76).

The men continue to discuss the idea of parental love to conclude the chapter. Abrams interjects many of his own observations into the discussion, which he attributes to the “fierce and focused love of parenthood” (78). He admits that he is skeptical of the Dalai Lama’s idea that humanity must extend the love one feels for his children toward the rest of humanity. “I imagined that what the Dalai Lama was saying might be an aspiration for humanity, but was it a realistic one?” (78). This doubt, whether intentional or not, reassures the reader that not every idea in this book is simple, or universal. Doubt was a normal response, and it often represented a need for further information or further practice. Doubt is a natural human characteristic, as Abrams exemplifies.

Vocabulary

ornate, ruminating, impermanence, reincarnation, chortled, irrespective, prolapsed

You Are a Masterpiece in the Making

Summary

The second day of the dialogues and the second section of this book are dedicated to the obstacles to joy. This first chapter briefly introduces the reader to the concept of discovering “joy in the face of suffering” (83), which the conversation will delve into over the next two days. The Dalai Lama suggests that developing a mental immunity similar to the construct of a physical immune system is the way to alleviate suffering and other obstacles to joy. He defines mental immunity as “learning to avoid the destructive emotions and to develop the positive ones” (83).

The conversation turns next to Archbishop Tutu, who agrees with the Dalai Lama, but adds his own thoughts to the argument. He argues that emotions, including negative ones, are “natural and unavoidable” (85), and thus there is no usefulness in feeling shame or guilt for feeling negative emotions such as anger, frustration, or anxiety. On the other hand, the Dalai Lama believed that cultivating a mental immunity made negative emotions avoidable. Knowing that this was an area of disagreement between the two men, Abrams then digresses on his own interpretations of the argument.

The focus then returns to the conversation, as the Dalai Lama addressed fear and frustration as additional obstacles to joy. While some aspects of these emotions are uncontrollable, such as delayed flights or natural disasters, the way an individual chooses to approach these situations is controllable. All three men draw on examples of delayed flights or other travel frustrations; the Dalai Lama says that when one of his flights is delayed, he takes the time to “sit and meditate” (90). Likewise, Archbishop Tutu notes that when he is caught in traffic, “it is an opportunity for being quiet” (91).

The chapter concludes with a final, eloquent statement by the Archbishop describing the continuous process of learning to be laid-back. He notes that both he and the Dalai Lama take their mental state into their own hands by meditating and praying on a daily basis, evidence that achieving serenity is not an overnight process. To conclude the discussion and the chapter, the Archbishop compares learning to be laid-back to learning how to be a parent. He claims “you are better than your third child than you were with your first child” (92), equating spiritual and mental growth to a process that works over time.

Analysis

This chapter is the first of the second section of Abrams’ book, which is wholly dedicated to the obstacles to joy. Each subsequent chapter in this section addresses various obstacles to joy, while this provides more of an introduction to the topic as a whole. The following chapters focus on individual obstacles listed in their titles, such as fear, despair, loneliness, and anxiety. This chapter does not focus on one particular obstacle

to joy, but rather the larger feeling of worthiness and self-respect that is necessary for understanding the various obstacles to joy. Reading as more of a narrative than a conversation, this chapter allows the reader to ease into the complex discussion to follow.

Though most of this chapter is focused on the words of the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Tutu provides the chapter's namesake phrase, "You are made for perfection, but you are not yet perfect. You are a masterpiece in the making" (92). Tutu is reiterating the idea that all human beings have the capacity to be a compassionate, empathic, joyous person, but no one is there yet. In this light, life is a constant and perpetual choice to inject meaning into day-to-day experiences in order to achieve this perfection Archbishop Tutu speaks of. This, as evident by the name of the chapter, is the lesson of this particular chapter. One can also presume that it will be a concurrent theme throughout the entire section, because this chapter is ultimately a precursor of the discussion to come.

This chapter provides an example of one of the areas of philosophical difference between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu. The Archbishop argues that negative thoughts and emotions are "natural and unavoidable" (85), while the Dalai Lama argues that mental immunity is the way to avoid negative emotions. Abrams weighs in on the argument as well, ultimately concluding with help from psychological experts that both men were making valid arguments. The two perspectives "simply reflected a different stage in the cycle of emotional life" (86). In just a few pages, Abrams takes the reader through both sides of a complex argument and offers a practical, scientifically based common-ground between the two.

Abrams interjects a well-known Buddhist teaching in this chapter to reinforce the Archbishop's and the Dalai Lama's idea of the inevitability of challenges in life. The teaching dictates "life is filled with suffering" (87). The Sanskrit words for suffering and happiness, respectively, are "dukkha" and "suhka," which literally translate to "having a bad (or good) axle," according to Abrams (87). He provides this as a metaphor for life to the reader: "Our mind is the axle that often determines whether we experience the ride as bumpy or smooth" (88).

Archbishop Tutu takes the time to reiterate that he and the Dalai Lama are "fallible human beings" (91), and highlights this point by saying there are still times presently when he and the Dalai Lama feel annoyed. Not only does this conversation prove that both men are capable of enjoying humor, but they also feel negative emotions such as frustration. They use examples of a flight being delayed and waiting in traffic to relate to the reader on a basic, relatable level.

Vocabulary

berate, fallible, vale

Fear, Stress, and Anxiety: I Would Be Very Nervous

Summary

This chapter begins with Archbishop Tutu's observations on fear; not only are fear and anxiety felt by all humans, but he adds that they are basic survival instincts. Fear becomes a negative and harmful emotion, however, when it is "exaggerated or when it is provoked by something that is really quite insignificant" (93). Abrams states that his main goal in this discussion is to determine how humans can minimize the worry and stress that seems to accompany modern life.

While stress will always be inevitable, it seems to be more prevalent and more widespread today than overall stress has been in history. The Dalai Lama argues that stress is often birthed in "too much ambition" (96), a concept with which Abrams analyzes deeper by claiming it is a matter of priorities. He interprets the Dalai Lama's phrasing to mean that "when we see how little we really need, love and connection" (97), then we can let go of trivial, material obsessions. The goal is to achieve inner peace now, "rather than always chasing after our expectations and ambition" in a never-ending cycle of stress (97).

Abrams cites a psychological study to reinforce the idea that humans have two possible responses to stress: view it as a threat, or view it as a challenge. Both the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama recommend accepting the challenge to focus not on one's own stress, but on the stress of others. Archbishop Tutu describes "thinking about others" as a way to "see yourself as part of a greater whole" (99). The Dalai Lama agrees in the conclusion of this chapter by profoundly asking, "what do you need to worry about when you have seven billion other people who are with you" (100)? Ultimately, the men are teaching that focusing on the stress of others is the only way to naturally alleviate stress from one's own life.

Analysis

In this chapter, Abrams poses many questions, but most seem to be directed at the reader or rhetorically instead of at the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop. He quotes the men often, but unlike other chapters he does not quote his own questions. Presumably, Abrams paraphrased much of the conversation regarding fear, stress, and anxiety - the subjects of this chapter. He also incorporates observations from the Dalai Lama's interpreter, Jinpa, examples from Nelson Mandela's biography, and scientific studies throughout the narrative-style conversation. As if Abrams sensed the lack of a concrete dialogue in the chapter, he concludes with a clearly stated – not quoted – question, and excerpts from both of the men's answers.

Like the last chapter displayed how the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu experience frustration as all humans do, this chapter displays the leaders' capacity and reasoning for fear. Abrams notes that he has always been impressed by Tutu's willingness "to admit his fears" (93), something that leaders today are seemingly reluctant to do. The Dalai Lama, especially, makes it a point to stress that on a basic human level, we can all relate to the idea that "like me, he or she wishes to find happiness, to have fewer problems and less difficulty in their life" (100). There is a solidarity in the human experience, which we share through emotions such as fear, sadness, anger, and joy.

Abrams calls chronic stress "a global health epidemic" before interjecting a page devoted entirely to the scientific study of stress (97). This continues with his theme of constantly interjecting scientific data into the book, presumably to help the reader not get lost in so much philosophical language. The study suggests that there are two different approaches to stress: one can view stress as a threat, prompting a fight or flight reflex, or one can view stress as a challenge, prompting a competitive, resilient instinct. Abrams concludes that "the problem is not the existence of stressors, which cannot be avoided… The problem – or perhaps the opportunity – is how we respond to this stress" (98). This scientific backing allows Abrams to transition to the next question in his discussion: "What determines whether we see something or someone as a threat" (99)? He argues that the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu have already been engaging in dialogue that suggested what science is now trying to prove; "that so much of our stress is dependent on seeing ourselves as separate from others" (99).

Vocabulary

frailties, irritants

Frustration and Anger: I Would Shout

Summary

Abrams begins this chapter by confessing one of his main inspirations for wanting to work with Archbishop Tutu: “How does a deeply spiritual and moral leader drive in traffic” (101)? While he may not mean this literally, it is an example of his goal of proving to himself and to the reader that figureheads society has revered such as the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu are human. “What I really wanted to know,” Abrams confesses, “was how all his spiritual practice and beliefs affected his day-to-day interactions, like driving in traffic” (101). Abrams experiment was fulfilled when a car cut in front of the Archbishop, to which Tutu wondered if the driver was “on his way to the hospital because his wife was giving birth, or a relative was sick” (102). Abrams marvels at the Archbishops’ ability to take “the high road of humor, acceptance, and even compassion” (102), when most people resort to anger and frustration.

Abrams then devotes a short section to what the Dalai Lama teaches is the “subtle and profound connection between fear and anger,” which is that “fear underlies anger” (103). To sooth anger, one must “acknowledge and express the fear” that is ultimately causing anger (104). The focus then returns to the men’s conversation, where Archbishop Tutu provides examples of the fears and frustrations commonly felt by all. He argues that frustration comes from a variety of sources- misunderstandings at home, difficulties cooperating at work, or from larger societal issues such as Tutu’s own experience during apartheid.

While the Archbishop notes that anger, if manifested in the form of “righteous anger,” can be used as a “tool of justice” (106), both men agree that most forms of anger are harmful both physically and mentally. Thus, the Dalai Lama provides a means to combat these feelings “through training of our minds,” which enables us to “transform our emotions” (106). While this seems like a whimsical idea, Abrams reminds the reader that this is less of an overnight transformation and more of a lifelong wrestling match against fear and anger. The Dalai Lama reinforces this idea by claiming that “sometimes it is a matter of timing” (108), meaning that physical health, station in life, and even time of day can impact one’s ability to effectively curb anger. Abrams concludes the chapter by mentioning the subjects of the next chapter: sadness and grief.

Analysis

Abrams begins this chapter by drawing a comical analogy to summarize his inspirations for first wanting to work with Archbishop Tutu: to understand how “a deeply spiritual and moral leader drive[s] in traffic” (101). He is quick to note that his true purpose was to explore how the Archbishop’s spiritual beliefs and practices affected his day-to-day interactions. Abrams has devoted a lot of effort thus far to humanizing the esteemed moral leaders, but this is his most profound metaphor yet. Most, if not all readers can

relate to the frustrations that traffic causes. Abrams praises the Archbishop's ability to remain calm and humorous in stressful situations, and presents it as an example of the constant effort that mental contentment requires.

In order to introduce the reader to the concepts of fear and anger, Abrams spends half of this chapter generalizing the Archbishop's, the Dalai Lama's, and his personal observations about these complex emotions. The second half of the chapter is then devoted to the specific conversation the men held on the second day of their discussions, but Abrams first draws on excerpts of conversations had later in the week at a Tibetan school to explain the relationship between fear and anger. Supporting his theme that humankind experiences the same spectrum of emotions, Abrams concludes that "we need to be willing to admit our vulnerability" (104). Abrams uses the ability of the two great leaders to admit their susceptibility to feelings of anger and frustration as a comfort to common people such as himself and the reader that these emotions are natural.

Abrams includes a scientific figure in this chapter, but not in the same fashion as his previous chapters. He recalls a story told to him by Paul Ekman, a scientist quoted several times throughout the book, regarding his personal experience meeting the Dalai Lama. A self-proclaimed "rage-aholic" (107), Ekman credits the Dalai Lama's deep compassion with draining the anger out of his body as soon as they met. Such a spiritual experience told from a renowned scientific figure adds a level of scientific validation to the men's arguments without directly quoting a study or research.

For the final four pages of the chapter, Abrams returns to the morning's conversation before their break for tea. Both Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama offer their personal experiences with fear and frustration, which Abrams presents as physical proof that anger does not evade even the most esteemed moral leaders. One of the keys to soothing anger, the Dalai Lama teaches, is "to recognize that the other person has their own fears and hurts, their own fragile and human perspective" (108). Similar to previous chapters, the solution for controlling emotions of fear and anger come from focusing on others rather than on oneself.

Vocabulary

precariously, impugn, marred, succinctly, indignation, scythe, besieged

Sadness and Grief: The Hard Times Knit Us More Closely Together

Summary

This chapter begins with a long-winded and uninterrupted statement by Archbishop Tutu in which he recalls his involvement on the Truth and Reconciliation Council convened to rebuild South African politics after apartheid. His experiences on this council and throughout his life have taught him that expressing sadness can alleviate the long-term damaging effects of pain. On the contrary, holding down emotions of sadness and grief, he warns, “is not wise” (109).

Abrams summarizes the Archbishop’s statement by claiming “sadness is seemingly the most direct challenge to joy, but…it often leads us most directly to empathy and compassion” (110). Like anger, too much sadness is categorized as depression and it is harmful to overall well-being. Bouts of sadness, however, are linked to increased rates of generosity and empathy, according to a psychological study cited by Abrams. Archbishop Tutu humanizes the idea by claiming that “even tears are a signal to others that we need comfort and kindness” (111), circulating the idea that true joy comes from focusing more on others than oneself. In this light, “joy and sorrow…are inevitably fastened together” (111), casting emotions as a dynamic and versatile state of flux rather than a permanent state of being.

The discussion then swings from sadness to grief, and from the Archbishop to the Dalai Lama. After relating his own experiences with, specifically, grief resulting from loss, the Dalai Lama simply and elegantly stated that “the way through the sadness and grief that comes from great loss is to use it as motivation and to generate a deeper sense of purpose” (112). The Dalai Lama claims that focusing on the loved one lost instead of the pain felt internally can lessen the effects of sadness and grief. In what is becoming a common theme, he is suggesting that the way to alleviate pain is by focusing on others as opposed to oneself.

Analysis

The Archbishop begins this chapter’s conversation about sadness and grief by first addressing that sadness is just as natural of an emotion as anger or joy, but we often feel the need to repress it. He uses his experiences post-apartheid to express how deeply the sadness of others affects him, recalling weeping as one witness testified to cruel acts of torture under the oppressive regime. Including this story allows the reader to understand the relationship between sadness and empathy, even if the Archbishop did not expressly explain it yet.

Before returning the conversation, Abrams interjects a psychological study examining the biological reasons for sadness. While fleeting emotions like anger and fear have a clear purpose (fight or flight), sadness lasts significantly longer and serves a less clear biological purpose. One study, however, suggests that sadness “may have some benefit in our lives,” in the sense that it is the emotion that “causes us to reach out to one another is support and solidarity” (111). While it could not be concluded why, researchers proved that addressing one’s emotions is far more beneficial to overall mental and physical health than suppressing them. Abrams draws this seamlessly to a statement made by Archbishop Tutu, also the chapter’s namesake: “it is the hard times, the painful times, the sadness and the grief that knit us more closely together” (111).

In this discussion, the Dalai Lama eloquently and straightforwardly addresses the complex emotion of grief. Experiencing loss is something all humans can relate to, and the emotions that follow a loss are often complicated to understand or express. The Dalai Lama argues, however, that grief can be used as a motivator to live a more purposeful, more meaningful life dedicated to those one has lost. Concurrent with other emotions examined so far in the discussions, grief and sadness can only be worsened by focusing inward; focusing on others is the key to alleviating sadness. According to the Dalai Lama, the effect of sadness on an individual “depends on how [he] respond[s] to [his] experience of loss and sadness” (112). One can either choose to accept that all humans deal with death, loss, and grief, and find solace in that solidarity; or one can focus on the pain that death and loss have caused to oneself, creating a jaded, cynical, and harmful mental state.

Vocabulary

grueling, eudemonic

Despair: The World Is in Such Turmoil

Summary

Abrams begins this chapter by claiming that “people all over the world wanted to know how they could possibly live with joy in a world so filled with sorrow and suffering” (115). It was a question frequently sent to Abrams by those anticipating the profound dialogue between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu. The Archbishop offers a straightforward and thoughtful answer, “you show your humanity” (115), before delving further into his beliefs.

Archbishop Tutu uses well-known international crises such as 9/11, the outbreak of Ebola, and tsunamis that regularly ravage poor, coastline communities to ultimately conclude that catastrophic events typically earn worldwide support and concern. He offers that countries that hated America could have boasted in the aftermath of 9/11, but instead, “there were very, very, very few people gloating” and “people were deeply, deeply distressed” (117). He marvels at “just how compassionate and generous people can be” (116).

The conversation then turns to the Dalai Lama, who recalled his personal experience with despair during violent demonstrations in his home of Lhasa, Tibet on Tibetan Uprising Day in 2008. Though there was virtually nothing the Dalai Lama could do to help those suffering, he says the Buddhist practice of “tonglen,” or literally “giving and taking” (118) helped him ease the despair he felt. He meditated on the anger felt by the attackers and tried to mentally give them compassion and serenity. He admits that the process was not practical, but it helped him feel forgiveness and compassion, and argues “that every person has this same sort of opportunity, this same capacity” (118).

Toward the end of the discussion and the chapter, the conversation focuses on the distinction between optimism and hope. Though optimism is valued in society as a revered quality, the Archbishop argues that it is more superficial and “liable to become pessimism when the circumstances change” (121). Hope, on the other hand, in deeper in the sense that “there can never be a situation that is utterly, totally hopeless” (122). Ultimately, the discourse between the two men, per Abrams, proves that hope is the remedy for despair. The Archbishop concludes the discussion in a profound way, addressing Abrams personally. He asks Abrams to compare hope to the love he feels for his wife, Rachel. Without any proof that it would last, and amongst a culture so influenced by divorce, he faithfully chose her, and she him. Archbishop Tutu laughed as he said, “you turned out to be right” (123).

Analysis

This chapter focuses heavily on the concept of humanity. When catastrophic events occur, humanity comes together despite racial differences, language barriers, or

international borders. Abrams notes, in quite a profound phrase, that these events can cause people to despair at “humanity’s obvious inhumanity,” especially after terrorist attacks (117). In response to this despair, the Archbishop claims that “we do have setback, but you must keep everything in perspective” (117). Choosing to focus on humanity’s ability to come together instead of focusing on those who stray from the pack is the key to living a life of joy in a world filled with turmoil.

The chapter is devoted to this obstacle of living a joyous life in a frightening world. Archbishop Tutu begins the discussion by claiming that clinging to a sense of humanity is the key to addressing despair. The Dalai Lama contributes to this by suggesting that focusing mentally and emotionally on both those affected by tragedy and those perpetuating the tragedy can help bring compassion and forgiveness into moments of despair. Both of their arguments focus not on ignoring catastrophic events, but on the underlying compassion and overall sense of humanity that comes with each event. Abrams recognizes this similarity by stating “neither man was asking us to look at the world through rose-colored glasses or to not see the world with anything but a searingly honest view” (121). To these men, an honest view means not focusing inward on one’s own emotions. As seems to be the key to soothing the turbulence of any negative emotion, focusing on the emotions of others is essential to joy.

As seen in previous chapters, the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu share their personal experiences with despair to relate to the reader on a human level. Even Abrams includes himself in the grouping, by recalling being with Archbishop Tutu in South Africa when terrorist attacks devastated Paris, France. Archbishop Tutu’s response to the attacks call on those affected to keep the forward progression of humanity in perspective. He argues that “we are growing and learning how to be compassionate, how to be caring, how to be human” (117). His response seems unrelated at first, but Abrams notes that a month after the attacks, international leaders came together in Paris to ratify climate change laws “that overcame national differences and economic greed to give our world a better chance of survival” (117). He reiterates this point with a quote from an abolitionist minister Theodore Parker (whom was quoted by both Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Archbishop Tutu) claiming that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice” (118). Relating personal feelings with larger ideas such as moving toward social justice allows the reader to identify and react properly to feelings of despair.

The chapter and discussion conclude with a thoughtful analysis of hope as the “antidote to despair” (122). While it is not always easy to capture an emotion with words, the Archbishop effectively describes hope as presumably all readers can relate to. “It’s in the pit of your tummy. It’s not in your head” (122) the Archbishop exclaimed, meaning that hope was sometimes a feeling that could not be reasoned with logic. He eloquently articulates that “to choose hope is to step firmly forward into the howling wind, baring one’s chest to the elements, knowing that, in time, the storm will pass” (122). Whether hope springs from faith of from the simple will to live and thrive, hope is something Archbishop argues is an “unshakable” part of the human spirit (122).

BOOKRAGS

Vocabulary

reverence, farthing, lambast, aberration, searingly, precipice, ephemerality, resignation, dogged

Loneliness: No Need for Introduction

Summary

In this discussion based on loneliness, the Dalai Lama begins by claiming there is no need for loneliness because “we are same human beings,” thus there is “no need for introduction” (126). He condemns materialism, saying that in a culture so devoted to work and money, “there’s no concept of friendship, no concept of love” (127), two of the necessary ingredients for deep connections to humanity. His argument is simple: one must embrace his obvious connection with other humans. Even “scientists are discovering that our basic human nature is compassionate” (127), supporting his philosophical theory that the human experience can only be enriched through meaningful connections with other humans.

The next part of the conversation focuses on the difference between “the psychological experience of loneliness” and “the physical state of being alone” (128). The Dalai Lama answers first, claiming that loneliness largely depends on one’s attitude. Negative thoughts lead to feelings of separation, but “if you have an open heart and are filled with trust and friendship, even if you are physically alone, even living a hermit’s life, you will never feel lonely” (129). He also argues the purely mathematical argument that with seven billion people in the world, one can never truly feel loneliness if one’s attention is focused towards others rather than oneself.

The men continue to discuss the paradox of loneliness to conclude the chapter. The Dalai Lama confidently asserts that “the only thing that will bring happiness is affection and warmheartedness” (129). These attributes will naturally bring about trust, and he argues that trust is essential in developing cooperation between human beings. Trust is larger than ordinary people may assume, however, as the Dalai Lama also argues that “when there is trust, people are brought together - whole nations are brought together” (129). The paradox, the Dalai Lama presents, “is that although the drive behind excessive self-focus is to seek greater happiness for yourself, it ends up doing exactly the opposite,” meaning that the only way to attain true joy is to focus on others as opposed to oneself. Too much inward focus will ultimately result in loneliness. In Abrams’ words, “openheartedness - warmheartedness – is the antidote to loneliness” (131).

Analysis

The Dalai Lama begins this chapter by identifying loneliness as one of the biggest problems plaguing today’s world. Abrams confirms this by citing a study by sociologist Lynn Smith-Lovin that “found that that number of close friends people reported having has reduced from three to two. While we might have hundreds of Facebook friends, our true, close friends are decreasing” (125). This statistic, due to the popularity of

Facebook, is something presumably many readers can relate to, which is why Abrams includes it at the very beginning of the chapter.

Abrams interjects his own experiences into this chapter by recalling his childhood in Manhattan, where he barely knew the neighbors he passed in the halls daily. He presumes that this "willful avoidance…must have been a defense against the crush of so many people crowded together" (126). As the Dalai Lama speaks, Abrams delves deeper into his own memories. The Dalai Lama preaches that just as people in rural communities have a shared sense of responsibility for their neighbors, every area of the world must cultivate this responsibility. Abrams now wonders if the willful avoidance he witnessed in Manhattan was a manifestation of "the shame of being physically close and emotionally distant" (126).

The Dalai Lama highlights the importance of interdependence in this chapter, a notion that is deeply rooted in Buddhist teachings. He emphasizes that "we are born and die totally dependent on others, and that the independence that we think we experience in between is a myth" (127). Recognizing this interdependence on a daily basis is effective at preventing feelings of loneliness. The Dalai Lama also notes that there are many differences we can choose to focus on, but the most important similarity is that we are all human.

The conversation concludes by dissecting the paradox of loneliness, which is exemplified by the Dalai Lama's experience as a monk. "We are often alone without feeling lonely and feel lonely when we are not alone," Abrams offers (128). Monks traditionally separate themselves mentally from the material world, which the Dalai Lama claims, ironically, brings them closer to humanity. Loneliness does not depend on physically being near others, but it depends on the friendships and bonds one chooses to cultivate. The Dalai Lama lives much of his life in meditative solitude, but always focuses his mind on others, on humanity. He is a living testament that openheartedness and warmheartedness naturally bring happiness.

Abrams is clear to state the solution or antidote to loneliness: openheartedness, or "when one is thinking about others with kindness and compassion" (131). The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu have different means of approaching this solution, however. For the Archbishop, an underlying sense of humanity, or community comes with the territory of Christianity. One enters a fellowship not only with God but with millions of believes worldwide. The Dalai Lama, on the other hand, may not be able to "touch God directly," but he and many other Buddhist monks believe in "serving God's children, humanity" (129). Thus, the means for approaching openheartedness may be different in the two faiths and between the two men, but both result in the book's prevalent theme that focusing on others as opposed to oneself is the key to attaining joy.

Vocabulary

averted, subatomically, venerated, monastic

Envy: That Guy Goes Past Yet Again in His Mercedes-Benz

Summary

This chapter is devoted to envy, an emotion that Archbishop Tutu begins by describing as inherent and natural to all human beings. Before returning to the Archbishop's statement, Abrams offers some background information of the inherent nature of fairness and equality, suggesting that it is, in fact, inequality that leads to envy. Abrams claims that "envy doesn't leave much room for joy" (137), meaning it is damaging to one's mental well-being. While the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama agreed about the negative effects of envy, they disagreed about how to respond to it.

Archbishop Tutu begins his argument for how to respond to joy, ultimately concluding that there are three remedies for envy: gratitude, motivation, and reframing. Being thankful for one's blessings in life, or using envy as a tool to better one's own station in life are the simpler of the three ideas. Reframing, however, requires more intrinsic thought. The Archbishop claims the best question to ask oneself is "Why do I want to have a house with seven rooms when there are only two of us," to explain reframing. One has to draw the line between luxury and necessity, and reframe one's mindset to focus on the necessities more.

The Dalai Lama then offers his own response, claiming that one must actively defend against negative emotions such as anger and jealousy as opposed to accepting them as natural. Training the mind through recognizing humanity's interdependence is the biggest step, the Dalai Lama argues. It is just as important, in contrast to Archbishop Tutu's beliefs, that "any sort of emotion that disturbs this happiness and peace of mind, we must learn to avoid right from the beginning" (139). The Dalai Lama believes in actively being compassionate in order to combat envy. "If you have genuine kindness or compassion," he preaches, "then when someone gets something or has more success you are able to rejoice in their fortune" (140).

Analysis

Abrams focuses this chapter not entirely on the feeling of envy, but on the delicate manner of affection the two men meet their conflicting ideas with. The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu disagree on how to confront or control envy, but their disagreement is in no way hostile. Archbishop Tutu's approach relied on the principle that "there are things about us that we do not control" (138). In stark contrast, the Dalai Lama claims that "it is a mistake just to consider all of these negative emotions, like anger or jealousy, as normal parts of our mind, something we cannot do much about" (139), and suggests that one must actively defend against these negative emotions. Most importantly, however, at the moment of disagreement, Abrams notices that the Dalai

Lama did “what each of them did throughout the dialogues when they would come to a disagreement: reaffirm the relationship and compliment the other” (139), in essence reaffirming their friendship as to not offend the other.

Abrams includes Buddhist prayers, teachings, and practices frequently throughout this book, but in this chapter the prevalence is significant and woven into almost every page. In fact, on the first page of the chapter, Abrams uses a Buddhist teaching to relay what causes suffering in life: “Envy toward the above, competitiveness toward the equal, and contempt toward the lower” (135). Abrams also dedicates a large section in this chapter to the Buddhist concept of mudita, or “sympathetic joy” (14), explained by the Dalai Lama’s interpreter as consciously taking joy in the good fortune of others. This concept is similar to empathy, but on a larger level because it is being used as a direct antidote to envy. Finally, Abrams concludes the chapter with the direct translation of a Buddhist prayer used by the interpreter, Jinpa, to cultivate mudita, ending with “bless me so I may take joy in others’ happiness” (144), summing up what Abrams concludes is the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu’s message: focusing on others’ happiness can alleviate envy.

The Dalai Lama concludes the discussion by relating negative emotions such as envy and anger to a physical illness. Just like preventative health measures are more effective than medicine one takes after an illness begins, cultivating one’s mind so one “can learn to prevent [envy] from arising in the first place” (143) is more effective that combating envy and anger only when they arise. He claims that doctors are always telling their patients to relax and keep a calm mind, and for good reason. He warns “if you are full of anger, full of jealousy, full of attachment, you will never be able to relax” (143). The Dalai Lama is connecting to the reader on the physical level; most readers will be able to associate stress and anxiety with physical symptoms such as headaches. He not only offers a connection between the body and the mind, but he offers the reader with a remedy for strengthening the mind: “we must develop as sense of '“we,’ or recognize the “oneness of humanity” (142) to truly combat envy.

Vocabulary

primatologist, poignantly, corrosive, dissipate, equanimity

Suffering and Adversity: Passing through Difficulties

Summary

Abrams begins this chapter by asking the men to describe how it is possible to experience joy in times of suffering and adversity. The Dalai Lama begins the discussion with a philosophical argument rooted in metaphors that suffering is “an opportunity destiny has given to you,” to “remain firm and maintain your composure” in times of distress (146). Archbishop Tutu, while praising the Dalai Lama’s statement, offers an answer more rooted in practicality, arguing that “you will be surprised by the joy the minute you stop being too self-regarding” (148). In other words, they key to remaining joyful, as the men have preached in previous chapters, is focusing on others, not on oneself.

A fluent dialogue ensues with few prompts from Abrams, allowing the men to dissect their ideas together. Archbishop Tutu marvels at the fact that the Dalai Lama is a complete embodiment of calmness and joy that so many wish to attain. The Dalai Lama is quick to note, however, that such mental and spiritual growth is cultivated on a lifelong basis, and he has been cultivating these values for decades already. He then goes on to describe some of the biggest challenges he has faced in his life, including becoming a refugee in India at the age of 24. These challenges ultimately made him in to the compassionate and empathetic soul he is today. The men laugh about the “irony that we could experience more joy in the face of great adversity than when life is seemingly uneventful” (150).

They continue the dialogue with examples of those who have persevered and flourished in the face of adversity, such as Nelson Mandela and Lopon-la, the Dalai Lama’s friend and prisoner in a Chinese work camp for 18 years. Mandela’s 27 years in prison transformed him into the compassionate man he was known as. Similarly, Lopon-la was quoted saying the biggest danger he faced was the “danger of losing…his compassion for his Chinese guards” (156). Even in times of great adversity, this man was able to retain his innate compassion for humanity. Through these examples, the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu were preaching that when “we’re passing through difficulties” (156), it is useful to keep in mind that suffering leads to inner strength.

Analysis

The Dalai Lama provides the first insights into suffering and adversity in this chapter, in response to Abrams’ question about how to live a life of joy in the face of suffering. While his answer is too philosophical for the Archbishop, Abrams sees it as quite profound, as he takes a break from the conversation to reflect on it. The Dalai Lama argues that “suffering is what makes you appreciate the joy” (146), a simple argument,

but one that Abrams personifies through paternal love. He argues that parents often try to save their children “from pain and suffering,” but when they do, they “rob them of their ability to grow and learn from adversity” (146). Archbishop Tutu brings the discussion back to the reader, however, by redirecting the Dalai Lama to focus more on translating joy “into language [the reader] can understand” (148).

Again in this chapter, Archbishop Tutu draws on one of his biggest inspirations, Nelson Mandela. He uses Mandela’s transformation from an angry, young, imprisoned leader, to a compassionate and trusting voice of peace as proof that “you actually feel more joy after you’ve succeeded in the face of opposition” (151). When Abrams asks how Mandela accomplished this transformation, he relates it to the human capacity of the reader: “when we can find a shred of meaning or redemption in our suffering, it can ennoble us, as it did for Nelson Mandela” (153). All three men use first person regularly, but this is a clear example of how the strategic use of first person skillfully places the reader in the discussion.

At the beginning of the chapter, Abrams is clear that he wanted the men to delve into how everyday people could overcome suffering and adversity. Both men answer in a way that represents one of the book’s major themes: the solidarity felt through the bond of humanity. Both men provide examples of personal experiences of adversity, such as the Archbishop’s struggle through apartheid and his battle with polio earlier in life, as well as the Dalai Lama’s experience living in exile in India. Even to such experienced philosophers, there is no better way to explain an emotion than providing a relatable, human experience as an example. Though many readers may not be able to relate to being a political figurehead by age 15 and a refugee by age 24, many can relate to the feelings of anguish explained by the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop during their times of struggle.

Vocabulary

cryptic, adversaries, gulags, alchemy, perverse, cloistered, extrapolate, decimated, erstwhile, axiom

Illness and Fear of Death: I Prefer to Go to Hell

Summary

This chapter is the last chapter of the section dedicated to obstacles to joy. Fittingly, Abrams devotes this chapter to one of the most difficult human experiences to talk about - death. Almost everyone can relate to the suffering of illnesses or the death of a loved one, but one's own death is a challenging topic to discuss. The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu choose to approach this emotion as they do with previous emotions in their discussion, with humor and humility.

The Archbishop confronts death in a very straightforward manner, claiming that it is merely a fact of life. "I have had a beginning, I've had a middle, and I'll have an end. There is a lovely symmetry about it," he exclaims (162). The Archbishop sees death the same way he sees emotions: natural and unavoidable. The Dalai Lama also weighs in that death and the fear of death is a natural, matter-of-fact occurrence that one cannot avoid. What is more important than death, the Dalai Lama explains, is to remember "to make our life meaningful while we're alive" (166). This line of thinking re-frames the discussion to focus on what constitutes a meaningful life as opposed to the woes that typically accompany a conversation about death.

The discussion concludes with the Dalai Lama directly confronting the fear of death. He argues that this fear is senseless, for "while we remain on the earth worrying about hell, about death about all the things that could go wrong, we will have lots of anxiety, and we will never find joy and happiness" (168). Abrams pointed out earlier in the chapter that the fear of death is perhaps the greatest obstacle to joy. The Dalai Lama solidifies this observation by concluding that obsessing over the fear of death will lead to a life lived completely in worry. Accepting death as inevitable and natural allows one to focus on the present, a prevalent teaching in Buddhism.

Analysis

As death is a tough topic to approach for some readers, Abrams addresses it respectfully but bluntly. He asks the men to tell the readers their thoughts about their own deaths, an eerie thought but one the men lightly poke fun at before answering. Abrams notes that throughout the week, both men joked with each other about who was going to heaven and who was going to hell, a gentle reminder that differences in religion do not always have to form rigid divides. Abrams begins the discussion not with death, but with illness instead. Archbishop Tutu dealt with severe illnesses throughout his childhood, which Abrams offers as evidence that suffering makes one stronger. He offers his own conclusion: "Illness is one of the most common sources of suffering and

adversity that people face, and yet even here…people can find meaning and spiritual growth in it" (161).

Abrams fills a moment of silence in the conversation with his own observations about the fear of death. He claims that perhaps "the fear of death is truly the greatest challenge to joy," which he dissects further by stating what exactly one fears, "the suffering that often precedes [death], and ultimately the fear of the oblivion and the loss of our personhood" (163). The reflective silence in the conversation is ended by the Dalai Lama's reiteration of the Archbishop's claim that "there's a beginning and there's an end" (163), or that death is as inevitable as life, and thus should not be feared.

The Dalai Lama concludes the discussion by employing Buddha's first and last teachings, the first being "about the inevitability of suffering and the transient nature of our existence," and the second about "the truth of impermanence" (165). The Dalai Lama explains not to Abrams or the Archbishop, but directly to the reader, that understanding one's impermanence is the key to overcoming the fear of death. He profoundly reiterates this message by stating "we are guests here on this planet," and as respectful guests, "we need to use our days wisely, to make our world a little better for everyone" (166). In this light, impermanence is not something to fear, but a gift that each individual can choose to harness for the good of humanity.

Vocabulary

verities, sanctity, levity, formidable, pieties, infinitude, stalwarts, impassive

Meditation: Now I'll Tell You a Secret Thing

Summary

This chapter is interesting because it is not about the larger pursuit of joy, but it is descriptive account of a profound experience between the two religious leaders: the sharing in their meditation traditions. The Archbishop participated in a thoughtful form of clear light of death meditation, and the Dalai Lama received Holy Communion.

The meditation the Dalai Lama asks his guests to participate in focuses on “training our mind by going through quite a detailed process for what we will experience at the time of death” (176). Though this sounds dark, Buddhists practice for “getting ready for another destination in life,” for Buddhists, reincarnation, and for Christians, heaven (176). Before moving from the Buddhist tradition to the Christian tradition, the men playfully joke about their spiritual differences. When the Archbishop calls for silence, the Dalai Lama jokes: “Yes. First, you should be quiet. Then we will follow” (185) a nod to Tutu’s verbose nature.

The chapter ends with a causal conversation between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu about physical health and security at the residence in Dharamsala. The Dalai Lama notes that his largest security concern at his residence is a potential earthquake while the two men walk hand-in-hand to where their following interviews were being filmed.

Analysis

This chapter is much unlike any of the previous chapters in the sense that it does not document a conversation, but it documents a traditional and spiritual ceremony taking place between the two men. Most strikingly is the teasing and joking that happens before and after the revered and solemn ceremonies of meditation and Holy Communion. One would expect such traditions to be surrounded by silence and contemplation, but the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama are pleasant reminders that all of us succumb to humor at inappropriate times, and there is nothing wrong with that.

This chapter is also interesting because it highlights Abrams’ thoughts and feelings during the exchange of religious traditions. He admits feeling his mind race during meditation, until gazing up and feeling his demeanor start to mirror that of the Dalai Lama, tranquil and focused. Abrams also devotes a part of this chapter to a previous encounter with the Archbishop, where he saw firsthand the Archbishop’s ability to “pause and choose his response” (180) after feeling aggravated. In this light, Abrams is suggesting that these men are the complete embodiment of living with joy, even such that their presence is contagious.

While unconventional in style in relation to the rest of the book, this chapter provides the reader with a break from the often complex conversations between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu. It also offers a personal look into two sacred religious practices as performed by esteemed leaders of their religions. Finally, Abrams offers a unique quality not often talked about of religious leaders: acceptance. The Dalai Lama is more than willing to take part in Communion, a sacrament that in some Christian denominations is reserved for those confirmed in the faith. Similarly, Archbishop Tutu bows his head in thoughtful meditation surrounded by traditional Tibetan Buddhist tapestries and scrolls. This physical proof of acceptance and compassion is a manifestation of all the two leaders have preached thus far: showing genuine care for all humans.

Vocabulary

sanctum, breakfront, coronet, incredulous, tangible, sentinels, esoteric, dissolution, duality, austere, ascetic, totemic, reverentially

Perspective: There Are Many Different Angles

Summary

As the men set out on their fourth day of discussion, Abrams claims that since they have covered the nature of joy and the obstacles to joy, next it was time “to move on to the positive qualities that allow us to experience more joy” (193). These positive qualities constitute the eight pillars of joy. The first pillar of joy, perspective, is the focus of this chapter.

The Dalai Lama begins by claiming that there are many angles, or perspectives, for looking at everything in life. He uses his ability to “see the calamity of his losing his country as an opportunity” (195) instead of a tragedy to exemplify using a wider perspective on one’s problems. Employing a wider perspective allows us “to move beyond our limited self-awareness” (196) and focus on the larger spectrum of life. While the men acknowledge the reality that stress can make it hard to see other perspectives, they reinforce that “often what we think is reality is only part of the picture” (197). Humans have a natural inclination to think of their own perspective first, but through training one’s mind, one can make it easier to employ a wider perspective to his own problems.

Abrams concludes the chapter by reiterating the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop’s point that keeping others' suffering in mind when you are suffering “reminds us that we are not alone, and actually lessens our own pain” (200). In essence, employing a wider perspective is comparable to seeing the perspective of our human brothers and sisters. Compassion and empathy, as the men have preached in previous chapters, lies at the root of one’s perspective and ultimately one’s capacity for joy.

Analysis

Abrams begins this chapter (and the book’s third section) by claiming that the Dalai Lama’s idea of mental immunity relied on “filling our mind and heart with positive thoughts and feelings” (193). Thus, the conversation led the men to agree on eight central pillars of joy - “four were qualities of the mind: perspective, humility, humor, and acceptance… four were qualities of the heart: forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, and generosity” (193). By stating these eight pillars of joy outright, Abrams is ultimately mapping this chapter and the next seven chapters for the reader, to assure that they flow coherently.

In previous chapters, Abrams has reinforced the Dalai Lama’s and Archbishop Tutu’s ideas with scientific proof toward the end of the chapter, after the men have made their arguments. In this chapter, however, before quoting either of the men, Abrams calls on

psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky's research which supported that joy relies on "our ability to reframe our situation more positively" (194). He uses a scientific backing to confidently state that "a healthy perspective really is the foundation of joy and happiness" (194), presumably a theme he wants the reader to keep in mind during this chapter.

One of Archbishop Tutu's phrases in this chapter sticks out because of its blatant honesty. He says "the very fact of not thinking about your own frustration and pain does something" (199), suggesting that focusing one's mind elsewhere is a way to alleviate feelings of pain . He follows up with, "I don't know why. But it will make you feel much better" (199). This is an honest admission that the Archbishop is basing his beliefs on his own personal experiences and feelings. He does not have scientific data or a plethora of research behind his claims, but he beautifully captures the transparency and candidness that Abrams hoped would come from the week-long conversation.

Abrams concludes the discussion by claiming the men "were trying to shift our perspective from focusing on 'I' and 'me' and 'mine' to 'we' and 'us' and 'ours'" (199). Training the mind to constantly focus on others is seemingly the men's message in every chapter thus far. Abrams embraces this message through his writing, as evident through his constant use of first person. While first person can come across as bossy or preachy in literature, Abrams is skillful in using the first person to include the reader in the conversation, not directly tell the reader how to think.

Vocabulary

converged, calamity, equanimity, perspectival, myopia, Pollyanna, self-referential, ruminating

Humility: I Tried to Look Humble and Modest

Summary

This chapter describes the second pillar to joy - humility. Though it is an admittedly difficult trait to teach, the men claim that humility is essential to living a life of joy. Interestingly, the conversation naturally flows toward the idea of humility, but the men never say the word humility until Abrams prompts them to consider it. One cannot claim to be humble, but one can actively train his or her mind to approach others on a human level, a level all can relate to.

The conversation begins with the two men jokingly sharing stories of their experiences speaking on large platforms in front of even larger crowds, when they actively had to remind themselves and the audience that everyone in attendance, even the Dalai Lama or the Archbishop, were humans. The Dalai Lama claims that he tries to keep in mind that all of us “were born the same human way,” and that “there are no special ways bishops are born,” to maintain his humble demeanor (208). The Archbishop, while agreeing in theory, questions the Dalai Lama’s statement by saying people look up to the Dalai Lama for exactly how he cultivates humility and joy on a daily basis. “How are you able to cultivate it?” he asks, “You were not born like that” (208).

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to actual practices the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu employ to cultivate humility. The first step, they argue, is recognizing that “as human beings we can’t solve everything or control all aspects of life,” but rather, “we need others” (209). It is equally as important to avoid the arrogance that comes from insecurity. Archbishop Tutu argues that all humans are “of equal and intrinsic value,” which helps him remember to greet all those he meets with genuine compassion (210). The chapter concludes with more playful banter between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu, leading Abrams to introduce the next pillar to joy: humor. He argues that “when we have humility, we can laugh at ourselves” (213), presenting a clear correlation between this chapter and the next, between humility and humor.

Analysis

Abrams begins this chapter with a conversation between the two men, where instead of Abrams asking the question, the Dalai Lama starts. The Dalai Lama marvels at the Archbishop’s statement at the funeral of his friend that he did not consider himself as a superior, but just one of the crowd in attendance to mourn a great man’s death. He suggests that “similarly, [people] should consider me as the same human being, with the same potential for constructive emotions and destructive emotions” (203). He is relaying his own humanity to the reader as evidence that all humans experience the entire

spectrum of emotions, even those as seemingly revered as himself and the Archbishop. He uses himself as evidence of humility.

This chapter is structured differently throughout because it is mostly a conversation between the two men, without much from Abrams. Abrams offers an explanation as to why the chapter is framed the way it is, by explaining the men's perception of humility. The Archbishop laughed when Abrams asked the men to explain humility's role in cultivating joy, presumably because "humility is not something that one can claim to have" (207). Thus, Abrams relies on a fluent conversation between the two men for the bulk of this chapter, to preserve the integrity of humility.

Abrams concludes the chapter by interjecting his emotions before accepting the daunting task of documenting a meeting of two of the world's most esteemed moral leaders. He recalls thinking the night before the talks began, "surely there were many others who were more qualified to conduct the interviews" (210). He was able to combat this nervousness by remembering that this meeting was not about him, his limitations, or his career, but rather he was "simply the ambassador asking questions on behalf of all those who wanted to benefit from the wisdom of the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama" (211). He presents this to the reader as his own example of practicing humility; he recognized the importance of the task at hand, but also realized his personal role in it was minute. The real benefactor from the meeting of the two great men is the reader, not Abrams, and this sense of acceptance and humanity is a perfect encapsulation of humility.

Vocabulary

acolytes, deference, karmic, timidity, wry, foibles

Humor: Laughing, Joking Is Much Better

Summary

Abrams begins this chapter by introducing something he has observed throughout the week as a central factor of the men's personalities, humor. Often, "their first response to any subject, no matter how seemingly painful, was to laugh" (215). The Dalai Lama offers a simple yet eloquent answer for cultivating joy through humor by stating that laughter naturally makes us more relaxed, and the more relaxed we are, the easier it is for us to control our train of thought.

Immediately, Abrams draws the connection between humility and humor, the second and third pillars to joy. They act interchangeably, as Abrams points out by saying, "we have to have a sense of humility to be able to laugh at ourselves and … to laugh at ourselves reminds us of our shared humanity" (216). People who turn to humor, Archbishop Tutu suggests, "have a sense of abandon and ease" (216), or are able to take life moment-by-moment, and not take struggle personally.

The men continue by discussing the difference between the humor that comes from being able to laugh at oneself and the kind that jokes maliciously and cruelly toward others. The kind of humor the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop exhibit aims to unify, not turn one against the other. This humor stems from not taking oneself too seriously; "it's about bringing people onto common ground" (220). Archbishop Tutu claims that this type of humor says "come stand next to me and let's laugh at me together, then we can laugh at you together" (221). He ends the conversation with a lesson to those who have trouble finding humor in their lives: "it is something that you can cultivate…so learn to laugh at yourself" (222).

Analysis

Abrams begins the chapter with an observation many readers presumably share at this point: "One of the most stunning aspects of the week was how much of it was spent laughing" (215). When one imagines the meeting of two esteemed religious leaders, one expects a somber tone and a still environment. However, these two men exude joy and laughter throughout their weeks' worth of dialogue in both their words and their actions. Abrams cleverly phrases it "when a Dalai Lama and an Archbishop walk into a bar, you don't expect them to be the ones cracking the jokes" (215). Naturally, they would include humor as one of their eight pillars of joy.

This bulk of this chapter is dedicated to dialogue, and most of the dialogue is given by Archbishop Tutu. Abrams does interject one paragraph regarding science and modern research on humor, but this pales in comparison to the detailed studies he cites in other chapters. Part of the reason for this is a lack of scientific research on humor; Abrams does, however, mention that some research suggests "there is an evolutionary role for

laughter and humor in managing the anxiety and stress of the unknown" (221). Ultimately, Archbishop Tutu with his calm and laid-back demeanor exemplify humor in a way that science cannot yet articulate. Tutu, however, speaks with ease on the subject.

Generally, Abrams draws the connections between the pillars of joy outside of the realm of conversation. At the end of this chapter, however, Archbishop Tutu seamlessly describes the relationship between the previous pillar of joy, humility, humor, and the next pillar of joy, acceptance. "It's about humility. Laugh at yourself and don't be so pompous and serious," he preaches, "it makes everything easier, including your ability to accept others and accept all that life will bring" (222). Here, he is referencing the fluidity of the pillars of joy; practicing one makes practicing the seven others easier.

Vocabulary

guffawing, denigrating, kiln, palpable, acerbic, gravitas, fervently, pompous

Acceptance: The Only Place Where Change Can Begin

Summary

This chapter is dedicated to what the men have agreed is the fourth pillar to joy, acceptance. Acceptance, Abrams argues, was what allowed the Dalai Lama to live in exile for more than 50 years without, “as the Archbishop put it, being morose” (223). It was also the same factor that allowed Tutu to not “accept the inevitability of apartheid,” but to “accept its reality” (224). The Archbishop preached “we cannot succeed by denying what exists,” but instead, “the acceptance of reality is the only place from which change can begin” (224). In other words, part of living a joyful life is to stay grounded in reality, or to accept the world around oneself.

Abrams argues that acceptance “allows us to engage with life on its own terms rather than rail against the fact that life is as we should wish” (225). Humans will always have expectations for how they wish their life would be, but part of embracing true joy is shedding previous expectations and learning to appreciate and accept reality. Abrams also concludes that much of human suffering comes from reacting to circumstances in one’s life rather than accepting them. The difference between reacting and accepting begins intrinsically; one must train his mind to identify what can and cannot be changed before reacting.

The brief chapter concludes with a practical lesson about acceptance from the Dalai Lama. He asks the reader to imagine living next to a difficult neighbor to highlight how acceptance can work. “You cannot control your neighbor,” he says, “but you do have some control over your thoughts and feelings” (226). Instead of allowing frustration and anger to take over, one can practice cultivating compassion and understanding for their neighbor. “You will be able to be joyful and happy whether your neighbor becomes less difficult or not” (226), signifying the power that acceptance has over one’s own mental state. Abrams concludes the chapter by relating this pillar of joy with the next - forgiveness. “When we accept the present, we can forgive and release the desire for a different past,” Abrams concludes (228).

Analysis

Abrams begins this chapter by referencing a Buddhist teaching that he believes articulates the Dalai Lama’s approach to life: “Why be unhappy about something if it can be remedied? And what is the use of being unhappy if it cannot be remedied” (223)? He uses this to open the dialogue to the concept of acceptance, the fourth pillar to joy. Before dissecting this pillar on its own, Abrams first describes how the four pillars discussed thus far are interrelated. Without directly stating it, he is suggesting that the pillars of joy function like steps or stages, with the essence of one leading naturally to

the next. “Once we can see life it its wider perspective, once we are able to see our role in its drama with some degree of humility, and once we are able to laugh at ourselves,” then we can cultivate acceptance, or learn to “accept our life in all its pain, imperfection, and beauty” (223).

This chapter is noticeably shorter than the descriptions of the first three pillars to joy, perspective, humility, and humor. All of the chapters dedicated to the pillars of joy are peculiar, however, because they do not represent a cohesive conversation, but rather Abrams’ summation of all the men’s conversations throughout the week. The third section of the book reads more like a self-help book rather than a transcript of a conversation. However, Abrams is clear to point out that after days’ worth of conversation, the men collectively decided how to retell their conclusions. They identified the eight pillars to joy after their conversations, presumably once they saw the overwhelming amount of information that came from the dialogues, and consciously decided to organize them for the reader.

Abrams employs Buddhist teachings and practices throughout this chapter, highlighting the idea that acceptance is one of Buddhism’s core principles. Abrams explains meditation by claiming “the ability to be present in each moment is nothing more and nothing less than the ability to accept the vulnerability, discomfort, and anxiety of everyday life” (225). This is important because it reinforces the idea that optimism is not always the best route. One must accept reality, even the anxieties and frustrations that accompany reality.

Abrams uses the end of this chapter to further ground the idea of acceptance on a personal level to the reader. He stresses that “the kind of acceptance that the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop were advocating is not passive,” but instead it is an active and powerful tool (226). They suggest we are constantly learning, impliing that acceptance, like other emotions, takes constant practice to cultivate. Thus, the eight pillars of joy are less of a road map to joy and more of an active recipe for the lifelong cultivation of joy. Part of acceptance, they argue, is accepting that pain and suffering will come, meaning joy is not a lasting state. It is, however, an attainable state no matter one’s circumstances, through the active cultivation of the eight pillars of joy.

Vocabulary

contingent, equanimity

Forgiveness: Freeing Ourselves from the Past

Summary

The men begin their conversation about the fifth pillar of joy, forgiveness, by giving examples they have come across during their time as leaders. Archbishop Tutu offers an example of a grieving mother gently touching her son's killers face and saying, "my child, we forgive you" (230). Similarly, the Dalai Lama offers the story of a man from Northern Ireland who forgave and befriended the soldier who shot him in the head, causing him permanent blindness. The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu offer these examples to show that forgiveness on such an extreme scale is possible, which brings the conversation back down to the smaller, day-to-day forgiveness necessary for cultivating a joyful life.

The Dalai Lama argues that forgiveness is rooted in a genuine concern for other's well-being. Keeping other's well-being at the forefront of one's mind simply means "there is no room for anger and hatred to grow," even during times of suffering (233). He argues that humans are wired for compassion, and with compassion comes forgiveness. It is not a passive emotion though; "we choose forgiveness," the Dalai Lama reminds (233). In this light, forgiveness is a reaction to stress or pain that relies on compassion and empathy rather than anger and hatred.

The men contest the notion that forgiveness is a sign of weakness, and that revenge is a sign of strength. Abrams provides evidence that humans are, in fact, wired for both forgiveness and revenge. However, humans have the power to choose the lasting feeling of forgiveness over the fleeting high of revenge. Choosing forgiveness, the men argue, is not only good for one's mental health, but physical health as well. Abrams cites a study that claims "unforgiveness seems to compromise the immune system" to further his point (237). Abrams concludes the chapter by shifting from a scientific tone to a more somber one, asking Archbishop Tutu about his experience forgiving his abusive father. Though he forgave his father, he never had the opportunity to know his father's feelings, and thus carries with him a feeling of regret. Forgiveness is powerful; it gives the Archbishop a sense of comfort and contentment, even from such a traumatic relationship.

Analysis

In previous chapters, Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama have used their own experiences and memories to describe emotion. In this chapter, however, the men tell stories of friends and people they have come across in their capacities as leaders to identify large-scale example of forgiveness. The unspoken message weaved through these examples is that if someone can achieve such compassionate forgiveness in the

wake of tragedy, it is possible for the reader to practice forgiveness on a smaller scale on a daily basis. Many readers will not be able to directly relate to forgiving someone who murdered a loved one, but it gives the reader a comprehensive view of the power of forgiveness.

A crucial theme in this chapter is that forgiveness can be a powerful tool. The Dalai Lama expresses this outright by saying “the power of forgiveness lies [in] not losing sight of the humanity of the person while responding to the wrong with clarity and firmness” (234). Thus, forgiveness does not make a person weak, but rather, forgiveness is the ability to separate a human from their actions and respond accordingly. The Dalai Lama vehemently denies that forgiveness is a sign of weakness, claiming it is a “thousand percent wrong,” to which Archbishop Tutu adds “those who say forgiving is a sign of weakness haven’t tried it” (235). Forgiveness is ultimately a sign of empathy and compassion, traits the men have constantly asserted are key to cultivating joy.

This chapter ends on a somber yet profound note. Abrams asks the Archbishop about forgiving his abusive father, which prompts Tutu to go on an honest and reflective reminiscence. Shortly after telling Archbishop Tutu he had something he wanted to discuss, his father died. “I’ve never known what it was he wanted to tell me,” the Archbishop reflects, “I hope it was that maybe he had a premonition of his death and wanted to say how sorry he was for the treatment that he had meted out to my mother” (238). Though the Archbishop was able to forgive his father, he never got the opportunity to tell his father, or to hear his father’s response. This is exactly why forgiveness is so powerful; Archbishop Tutu finds comfort in his ability to forgive, but still feels a deep regret for never expressing it outright.

Vocabulary

adjourn, latent, rupture, meted, assuage, spurned

Gratitude: I Am Fortunate to Be Alive

Summary

Abrams begins this chapter by quoting a lesson that the Dalai Lama often preaches, “Every day, think as you wake up, ‘I am fortunate to be alive. I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it’” (241). The next pillar of joy and focus of this chapter is gratitude, which Abrams argues both men radiate throughout their weeks’ worth of discussion. While both of their spiritual beliefs frown on taking pleasure from sensory indulgence, “neither of them was opposed to the pleasures permitted in their spiritual lives” (242), such as something as simple as ice cream. The men exude gratitude in each experience they face.

The Dalai Lama exemplifies gratitude by choosing to use his time in exile as an opportunity rather than a setback. “When you are confronted with the reality of suffering, all of life is laid bare” (243), forcing you to choose gratitude to find joy. The Dalai Lama claims that exile has brought him closer to reality, and ultimately makes gratitude easier because “there is no room for pretense” (243). Exile has granted the Dalai Lama the opportunity to meet international scientific figureheads, inspiring everyday people, and spiritual leaders. His ability to take joy in these opportunities instead of feeling anger and contempt for living in exile is physical proof of gratitude.

Abrams concludes the chapter not with conversation, but with Christian and Buddhist spiritual teachings, scientific findings, and inspirational stories relating to gratitude. He tells the story of Anthony Ray Hinton, who forgave his captors after more than 3o years living on death row. Abrams follows with both Buddhism and Christianity’s beliefs regarding, which ultimately both conclude that “gratitude connects us all” (246). Finally, he concludes this chapter with scientific evidence of the value of gratitude. Research has validated that gratitude enables people to live more joyous lives, and focus less on their suffering. This conclusion ultimately leads to the next and final two pillars of joy - compassion and generosity; when one is able to appreciate all he is given, he is more likely to want to share that with the rest of humanity through compassion and generosity.

Analysis

Abrams draws much of this chapter from his personal observations about the Dalai Lama’s and the Archbishop’s behavior. Both of them exude gratitude in everything they do and say. He learns from the men that “gratitude is the recognition of all that holds us in the web of life and all that has made it possible to have the life that we have and the moment that we are experiencing,” which Abrams presents as one of the central themes of this chapter (242). In fewer words, gratitude allows us to shift our perspective from self-centered thinking to “the wider perspective of benefit and abundance,” focusing blessings rather than burdens (242).

The final two sections of this chapter do not include any pieces of dialogue from the conversation, but rather, Abrams provides an example from his own experiences, examples from both Buddhism and Christianity, and scientific research to describe gratitude. First, he draws on examples given previously in the week by the two men of imprisoned friends who used their incarceration to better themselves mentally and spiritually. This reminds him of the story of Anthony Ray Hinton, who spent 30 years on death row only to be found innocent. Instead of harvesting anger for those who imprisoned him, he holds on to the belief that “the world didn’t give you your joy, and the world can’t take it away” (245). While this lesson seems cliché, Abrams finds it powerful. “I choose to be happy” (246) Hinton proudly stated to Abrams, echoing the teachings of the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu.

Next, Abrams pairs the importance that gratitude holds in both Buddhism and Christianity with modern scientific findings on gratitude. Abrams claims that gratitude is a powerful tool that connects the world: “when we are grateful for a meal, we can be grateful for the food that we are eating and for all those who have made the meal possible” (246). Celebrating “our good fortune and the good fortune of others” (247) is a key principle in Buddhism, while the Christian word for Eucharist comes directly from the Greek word for thanksgiving. Gratitude is also a point of curiosity for the scientific community. One study that Abrams cites suggests that “grateful people do not seem to ignore or deny the negative aspects of life; they simply choose to appreciate what is positive as well” (247). This study supports the men’s conclusions on not only gratitude, but on acceptance as well. Thus, gratitude is dependent on one’s ability to practice acceptance; this supports the idea that the eight pillars of joy cannot be separated from each other.

Abrams concludes the chapter by providing scientific evidence to prove that gratitude is physically and mentally beneficial. Seasoned researchers in the field of gratitude have concluded that grateful people “have the capacity to be empathic and to take the perspective of others” (248), are more likely to provide emotional supports to others, exercise more often, feel more positive about their lives, and report lower levels of stress and depression. Abrams also presents research that suggests “the simple act of smiling for as little as twenty seconds can trigger positive emotions, jump-starting joy and happiness” (248). Ultimately, gratitude is essential to cultivating lasting joy, and it leads directly to the next pillars of joy, compassion and generosity; “when we recognize all that we have been given, it is our natural response to want to care for and give to others” (249).

Vocabulary

incredulously, demotivating, tegmental, koan

Compassion: Something We Want to Become

Summary

Abrams begins this chapter by creating a definition of compassion that encompasses both the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu's ideas. Ultimately, compassion connects empathy to one's actions and thoughts, and it allows one to have empathy for the suffering of others. While the Dalai Lama claims compassion comes from "our mother's nurturing," Abrams points out that it is a skill that can be cultivated as well (252). Compassion is a mental tool one can develop and then "use to extend our circle of compassion beyond our immediate family to others," ultimately helping one recognize "our shared humanity" (253).

Abrams begins the dialogue of this chapter by asking the Dalai Lama to explain to skeptics how to be compassionate toward other's problems despite having problems of one's own. To the Dalai Lama, the answer is a matter of common sense that every human has the capacity to realize: "when we think of alleviating other people's suffering, our own suffering is reduced" (254). Archbishop Tutu uses the Dalai Lama as an example of compassion, stating that the reason people come to see his Holiness speak is because of "his caring for others, even in the midst of his own suffering" (254). Archbishop Tutu goes as far as explaining just why thinking of the wellness of others works; he claims that humans are innately "wired to be caring of the other," such that compassion is as essential as oxygen (255).

Abrams then refers to a biological phenomenon called "reciprocal altruism," which he describes with the adage: "I scratch your back today, and you scratch my back tomorrow" (258). It is a fundamental part of human nature, as evident by the fact that it is contagious. Some research has even shown that "the same reward centers of the brain seem to light up when we are doing something compassionate as when we think of chocolate," which comes from a release of the hormone oxytocin (258).

Abrams concludes the chapter with the assertion that showing compassion toward oneself is equally as important as showing compassion toward others. The age-old wisdom of not being able to truly love oneself before being able to love another is true, according to the Dalai Lama. Abrams enlists the work of psychological researchers to reinforce this idea; "when we treat ourselves with compassion, we accept that there are parts of our personality that we may not be satisfied with, but we do not berate ourselves as we try to address them" (261).

Analysis

The seventh pillar to joy is compassion, and Abrams begins by noting that both men throughout the week allude to the idea that "basic human nature is compassionate" (251). Before delving into the conversation, Abrams takes a moment to discuss what compassion means, since it is a term that, in his opinion, is often misunderstood. To define compassion, he uses experiences from the life of the Dalai Lama's translator and Buddhist scholar Thupten Jinpa. Abrams quotes an excerpt from a book written by Jinpa, claiming that "compassion is a sense of concern that arises when we are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to see that suffering relieved" (252). With this definition in mind, Abrams returns to the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu's conversation.

In this chapter, Abrams returns to the question and answer format to carry forth the discussion. He mentions that the men discussed compassion so much throughout the week that his book could arguably be named "The Book of Compassion" (253). Abrams was sure, however, to dedicate a section of both the conversation and the book specifically to compassion. In previous chapters, Abrams has paraphrased the weeks' worth of dialogue on a certain emotion to form the bulk of the chapter. Compassion is presumably so important to the conversation of joy, however, that Abrams dedicates most of this chapter to the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu's words and not his own paraphrasing.

Abrams argues that one of the keys in developing compassion is to recognize "our shared humanity," a prevalent theme throughout the book (253). This shared sense of humanity is also manifested through the idea that all humans experience the same spectrum of emotions. All three men explain the deep, interconnected nature of emotions, and Abrams expresses it clearly in this chapter by identifying the relationship between compassion and empathy: "while empathy is simply experiencing another's emotion, compassion is a more empowered state where we want what is best for the other person" (259). Thus, while empathy and compassion are similar on a basic level, they differ in their scope. This is presumably why compassion, a deeper and more powerful emotion, is a pillar to joy and empathy, while still important, is not.

The Dalai Lama offers what he calls "the true secret to happiness," in this chapter, which he believes is that "when we think of alleviating other people's suffering, our own suffering is reduced" (254). This falls in line with a prevalent theme throughout the book - that focusing on others as opposed to on oneself is key to cultivating lasting joy.

Archbishop Tutu offers one of the most humbling statements of the entire discussion in this chapter. When trying to explain the benefits that practice compassion can bring to one's everyday life, the Archbishop says that compassion, like other emotions, is "very difficult just speaking about it theoretically," but rather, "it's something you have to work out in actual life" (255). Abrams has marveled thus far in the discussion at the men's ability to put words to complex emotions, and here, Archbishop Tutu is offering the

humbling statement that emotions, mental immunity, or inner strength alike all depend on the effort one devotes to actively practicing positive emotions.

Again in this chapter, Abrams devotes half of the content to the conversation between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu, and the other half to a mixture of his own observations and scientific evidence supporting the conversation's main points. In the final few pages of this chapter, Abrams presents "one of the core paradoxes of happiness: we are most joyful when we focus on others, not on ourselves" (261). To exemplify this, he again turns to Anthony Ray Hinton, who "was able to bring love and compassion to a loveless place, and in doing so he was able to hold on to his joy in one of the most joyless places on the planet" (262). If someone in such turmoil can choose joy and compassion, Abrams is presumably arguing that the reader can choose joy despite his or her daily struggles.

Vocabulary

altruistic, pall, deleterious, indebted

Generosity: We Are Filled with Joy

Summary

This chapter addresses the eighth and final pillar of joy, generosity. Abrams identifies generosity as “a natural outgrowth of compassion,” connecting the two final pillars of joy (264). Archbishop Tutu begins the conversation by claiming that true joy comes from learning “self-forgetfulness” (263) focusing on the needs and concerns of others as opposed to oneself. Ultimately, generosity is equivalent to charity. After identifying the ways charity is expressed in major world religions, Abrams lists a slew of scientific evidence that suggests generosity not only makes us feel good, but it is essential to our survival.

Abrams describes three methods of giving (or charity) in this chapter: giving money, giving time, and spiritual giving. He first cites psychological research and an example of a doctor who felt more satisfaction giving his money away as opposed to keeping it to prove that “money can buy happiness, if we spend it on other people” (265). Next, Abrams argues that donating time is also an important factor of one’s generosity. “Compassion and generosity are not just lofty virtues - they are at the center of our humanity” (266) Abrams claims, essentially saying that the act of giving is part of human nature. Finally, Abrams addresses spiritual giving before returning to the men’s conversation. He defines this as “giving your wisdom, moral and ethical teachings, and helping people to be more self-sufficient and happier” (268), which the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu have been giving to Abrams and the reader all week.

The focus then returns to the direct conversation between the men. Abrams begins by asking Archbishop Tutu to identify what he believes is distorting “our innate sense of compassion and generosity” (269). He answers by arguing that humans are not wired for competition, but complementarity. He claims that the truth in humanity is that “you can’t survive on your own,” and “you need other people in order to be human” (271). The next and final question comes from a prospective reader, written to Abrams asking the men to address how we can “help the world and still find joy” in our own life (271). The men conclude, through a series of back-and-forth quips, that you must “do what you can,” but also “realize you are not meant on your own to resolve all of these massive problems” (273).

To conclude this chapter, and ultimately to conclude the remainder of the text about the men’s discussion, Abrams summarizes how generosity is the most profound of the pillars to joy. He claims both men possess “generosity of the spirit,” to which he attributes several qualities: “big-hearted, magnanimous, tolerant, broad-minded, patient, forgiving, and kind” (274). Both Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama radiate joy, and their very company brings joy to others. They do this by a daily effort to cultivate the eight pillars of joy this book has defined.

Analysis

This chapter very directly addresses one of the central themes of the discussion on the first page: Archbishop Tutu reiterates “our book says that it is giving that we receive” (263). He then goes on to use the Dead Sea as an example of living a life without generosity. The Dead Sea collects, or receives, fresh water, but it has no outlet. This is why it is dead, he argues, “it receives and does not give” (264). With this analogy in tow, Abrams announces the eighth and final pillar of joy, generosity.

Abrams describes the idea of generosity as it is expressed through the major world religions, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. He does this to highlight the idea that generosity expresses a “fundamental aspect of our interdependence and our need for one another” (264). Thus, generosity is not a religious trait, but a human trait. Abrams goes further by arguing it is a biologic trait as well. He cites several scientific studies to reinforce this idea; “the reward centers of our brain light up as strongly when we give as when we receive,” for example (264).

Abrams argues that giving money is a form of practicing generosity, or charity. He uses the example of a wealthy entrepreneur-turned-philanthropic-neurosurgeon James Doty to prove that “money can buy happiness, if we spend it on other people” (265). At the moment of bankruptcy, Doty had the opportunity to withdraw charitable donations for his own benefit. However, he realized that “the only way that money can bring happiness is to give it away” (266). Abrams uses Doty’s own words, and very little of his own interjection, to personify a true act of generosity.

Abrams also offers giving one’s time as a form of generosity. To make this argument, he references four different scientific studies in one paragraph. Though he does not allow much room to go into detail on each study, they each provide evidence about the physical benefits of those who actively volunteer their time to charity. One study claims that “volunteering reduces the risk of death by 24 percent” (266). It is not unusual for Abrams to employ scientific research in his arguments, but this rapid-fire approach to several studies at once is overwhelming.

Returning to the conversation, Abrams poses two final questions for Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama. The final question asks the men to address how one can life a joyous life despite feeling the pain and suffering of those around the world. The Dalai Lama begins, and a brief dialogue ensues before Abrams redirects the conversation to frame the question more clearly. The men then regroup and answer Abrams reiterated prompt: “This person [who wrote the question] wants to know how she can find joy in her life while there are still so many who are suffering [worldwide]” (273). Abrams, as the author, could have excluded the dialogue between his two questions altogether because the men’s first answers were seemingly off-track, but their worlds presumably hold value to Abrams. The dialogue represents a minor difference in opinion between the men; the Dalai Lama is claiming that compassion and empathy needs to be taught in schools in a secular way, based on scientific and social research. On the contrary, Archbishop Tutu reiterates his running theme that humans are naturally good and

compassionate, even if they need a little reinforcement sometimes. This paradox between compassion as a learned trait and compassion as an innate quality is intriguing because both men make eloquent cases. Abrams sees this eloquence, and his choice to leave the dialogue in the chapter is important.

Abrams concludes this chapter by reiterating the interconnectedness of the eight pillars to joy. Practicing generosity is ultimately a part of each other pillar, suggesting that practicing generosity is the most important skill to cultivate. Focusing on generosity, on others as opposed to oneself, makes it easier for us to practice the other pillars to joy, from compassion to perspective. Abrams ends the chapter with a quote from the Dalai Lama, which delightfully summarizes a weeks' worth of conversation: "taking care of others, helping others, ultimately is the way to discover your own joy and to have a happy life" (275).

Vocabulary

salivary, immunoglobulin, hypertension, squalor, aberration, impotence, lashed, elusive, flout, secular, modicum, pretension

Celebration: Dancing in the Streets of Tibet

Summary

Archbishop Tutu's week-long visit came to an end with a large celebration of the Dalai Lama's eightieth birthday at the Tibetan Children's Village, one of the Tibetan schools in Dharamsala founded by the Dalai Lama. Similar to Abrams' earlier chapter describing lunch, this chapter steps back from the conversations held in the meeting room to describe a joyous celebration honoring not only the Dalai Lama, but his esteemed guest Archbishop Tutu, each of the children present, all the staff who made the week possible, and finally, the entirety of humanity.

As the schoolchildren sang their songs for the Dalai Lama, Abrams describes the traditional Tibetan ceremonial procedures before the men take their seats and begin the celebration. Several children from the school were asked to share their personal stories of coming from Tibet to India. Just as the Dalai Lama had to struggle with living in exile, these children have adopted the same lifestyle, some from a very young age. The first two students to speak were so distraught reliving their painful memories they burst into tears on stage. Abrams notes that both the director of the school and the Dalai Lama's translator Jinpa were wiping tears as the girls spoke. Trying to ease the students' minds, the Dalai Lama reminds them of their inspiration - rebuilding Tibet.

Archbishop Tutu then took his own turn at addressing the children. He spends his time speaking of how highly he regards the Dalai Lama, and of the hope he has for the future of the Tibetan cause. "The world loves the Dalai Lama," Tutu exclaims, and he continues to thank the Indian government for their safe-keeping of such a "great treasure" (287). "With the force of righteousness," he tells the students he is confident they will one day return to Tibet, and they "will be free from the oppression that has driven [them] to here" (286). Despite their efforts to remain calm, the Archbishop's words made the children cheer in a mixture of hope, excitement and gratitude.

Analysis

This chapter is obviously different from the others in terms of structure and content, but it is intertwined with some of the key themes the book has addressed so far. Aside from initiating in a conversation about lasting joy, the purpose of Archbishop Tutu's trip to Dharamsala was to celebrate the Dalai Lama's eightieth birthday.

The Tibetan Children's Village is special because it houses children from ages five to 18 who have all made the difficult trek across mountain ranges to flee from Tibet to Dharamsala for a traditional Tibetan education. These children leave their families with full knowledge they will not reunite for many years, if ever. At the beginning of the

celebration, several children were invited to the stage to tell the stories of their personal struggles and their paths to joy. The first student to speak, Tenzin Dolma, retold the story of traversing to India alongside her grandmother, constantly evading Chinese police. As Tenzin fought tears during her testimony, she graciously thanked the Dalai Lama for his work establishing the school; “I was sad to leave my family,” she states, “but I have found many things that have brought me joy” (281). Tenzin, currently in the final year of her studies at TCV, has used her suffering as a tool or an opportunity rather than a burden, which is presumably why she was asked to share her profound wisdom.

To understand why so many parents send their children on the treacherous journey to Dharamsala, one must consider what the Dalai Lama believes is the “larger destiny of the Tibetan people,” which is the “responsibility to rebuild Tibet” (282). In response to the students’ testimonies, Archbishop Tutu speaks to the hope he has for the Tibetan cause, something he has always supported “unflinchingly” as the Dalai Lama phrased it (285). He compares the children’s situation with his own struggle in South Africa, reassuring them that “one day you, too, all of you, will see your beloved Tibet” (286). As he has done several times throughout the book, he offers the chapter’s namesake with his poetic words: “One day, you will be dancing and singing in the streets of Tibet, your home country” (287).

Abrams ends this chapter by returning to the celebration; the children continued to sing, cake was being distributed, and the Dalai Lama was desperately trying to extinguish the trick candles on his cake. A conversation centered around joy has no better ending than a celebration, especially a celebration of this magnitude. Though typically forbidden of Buddhist monks, the Dalai Lama joined the Archbishop in a dance, where he appeared to Abrams “at first as uncomfortable as a middle school boy on the dance floor” (288). But this was deeper than a casual encounter; when dancing, “they were celebrating the true joy of friendship, the true joy of our unbreakable connection to one another, the true joy of the world coming together as one” (288). They, together, in that moment, were joy.

Vocabulary

plaintive, indomitable, thronged, valiantly, lute, tenor

Departure: A Final Goodbye

Summary

The final day of Archbishop Tutu's trip to Dharamsala was brief, but the men managed to address a few final questions. Abrams first asked the men to discuss why now was the right time for the Book of Joy. Archbishop Tutu begins by claiming that all of humanity was distressed by the amount of violence and tragedy plaguing the world, thus, it was the men's responsibility to release their wisdom of joy to the world. The Dalai Lama adds that one must look at the world with a longer perspective; humankind has improved as a whole, despite some setbacks. "We must promote basic human values," he preaches, and "we must teach people, especially our youth, the source of happiness and satisfaction. We must teach them that the ultimate source of happiness is within themselves" (297). This is the recipe for continuing on a path of righteous development.

Abrams invites both men to share their final thoughts they wish to convey to readers before their departure. Archbishop Tutu closes with an outpouring of love to all of God's children. He beckons, "please, my child, help me. Help me to spread love and laughter and joy and compassion" (298). The Dalai Lama's closing message relays his hope that the book be a "contribution toward bringing about this happier humanity," that can be achieved by developing a "sense of greater responsibility rooted in genuine concern for others' well-being" (298). He finishes his statement with the claim that "the ultimate source of a meaningful life is within ourselves" (299) a direct call to the reader to take one's own happiness upon himself.

As an expression of gratitude for extending his home for the week, Archbishop Tutu praises the Dalai Lama. "I admire him enormously," he claims, before admiring his ability to turn a life in exile into a life of serenity, joy, and "eagerness to spread goodness and compassion to the world" (300). The Dalai Lama reciprocates this admiration by praising Archbishop Tutu's ability to bring a contagious joy with him everywhere. On a deeper, more profound level, he says that he will remember the Archbishop at the time of his death, a symbol of their true friendship.

Abrams concludes this chapter with his final observations on joy. Throughout their lives, both the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu have cultivated an "enduring trait of joyfulness" (303), which is what they hope to teach other to cultivate. When the men finally part ways, they appear to Abrams "as children do," with their "eyes twinkling, and fingers waving goodbye" (304). He concludes with his own primary takeaway from the week's worth of dialogue: "the more we turn away from our own self-regard to wipe the tears from the eyes of another, the more – incredibly – we are able to bear, to heal, and to transcend our own suffering. This was their true secret to joy" (305).

Analysis

Abrams begins this chapter on a somber note, acknowledging that he as well as the two men knew this was most likely the last time the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu would see each other. Archbishop Tutu seemed to notice Abrams' subdued disposition; when Abrams responded that he was simply reflecting on the men's time together coming to a close, the Archbishop reassures him that "everything has an end" (292). This is presumably not only a comment on the discussions, but on life itself. He had been adamant throughout the week about the inevitability of death, possibly because of his latest battle against prostate cancer. His solemn and peaceful response to Abrams represents Archbishop Tutu's lifelong practice of acceptance and gratitude; instead of approaching death with fear or anguish, he accepts it as inevitable and instead focuses on all he has in the present moment.

The Dalai Lama creates a depiction of the ripple effect created by practicing joy. A peaceful and joyful society must begin with peaceful and joyful individuals, then, this joyfulness spreads outwards to family members, community members, and ultimately throughout society. He then enlists a quote from the late Queen Mother, who at the age of 96, offered him a profound wisdom. The Dalai Lama asked if, throughout her time on earth, she believed humankind was becoming better or worse. "Without hesitation, she answered, better" (295), before going on to explain the advancements she had witnessed in human rights and the right to self-determination. The Dalai Lama offers this wisdom to the reader as a beacon of hope for the future of humankinds' development.

Abrams notes at the beginning of this book that the men did not want to create a religious text, but a universal text. In this chapter, the Dalai Lama embraces this idea by offering that the solution for creating a joyful society is education. "Education is universal," he reminds the reader, "we must teach [people] that the ultimate source of happiness is within themselves" (297), not in machines, technology, money, or power. By employing a realistic, human approach, he appeals to the widest possible audience.

Before parting ways, Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama exchange a series of compliments, jokes, and stories of admiration. Keeping in mind Abrams' claim that this may be the last time these two great friends have the chance to see each other in this life, the conversation turns to a somber yet profound tone. The Dalai Lama, with Archbishop Tutu's hand in grasp, says "I think, at the time of my death…I will remember you" (302). Abrams recalls how the words hung heavily in the air, everyone in the room gasped, and he thought, "we were all so moved" (302). This admission speaks to the level of deep spiritual connection these two feel for each other; this book and the week they spent together proves that at the root of this profound connection is a dynamic mixture of perspective, humility, humor, acceptance, forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, and generosity. Their friendship embodies the joy that this book aims to give people.

Abrams claims that 45 seconds after the film crew's plane left Dharamsala, a large earthquake struck in Nepal. "We witnessed as people from all around the world poured in to help the displaced, repair the broken, and heal the thousands who were wounded,"

Abrams marvels (304). Humanity, with its innate goodness, came together to help the victims as the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu had given examples of earlier in the week during other natural disasters. This manifestation of the power of humanity was not lost on Abrams; “the more we turn away from our self-regard to wipe the tears from the eyes of another, the more – incredibly – we are able to bear, to heal, and to transcend our own suffering” (305). The secrets to joy discussed throughout the week in Dharamsala were more than just dialogue, but they were concrete, real-life practices for cultivating a better, happier world.

Vocabulary

transmission, improbable, laureate

Important People

The Dalai Lama

Tenzin Gyatso, better known as His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, considers himself a simple Buddhist monk. He was recognized as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama at the age of two while living with his poor farming family in rural Tibet. As a teenager, he was given the enormous responsibility of assuming position as the political leader of the Tibetan people. Due to a tense and sometimes violent political relationship between China and Tibet, the Dalai Lama has lived in exile in Dharamsala, India for more than 50 years. In his position as Dalai Lama, he is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and the Tibetan branch of Buddhism. He has dedicated his life to promoting a secular and universal approach to cultivating fundamental human values. The Dalai Lama travels extensively in an effort to promote world peace and basic civil rights for all of humankind; these efforts were recognized in 1989 when the Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Dalai Lama is a living embodiment of joy, which is why the collaboration between him and Archbishop Tutu focused on how others can bring joy into their own lives. Using his own experiences and day-to-day spiritual practices, the Dalai Lama aims to lead by example. His genuine compassion is radiant and contagious, which is exactly what he preaches throughout the dialogues; focusing on others as opposed to oneself, or cultivating a genuine sense of compassion for others, is the key to attaining lasting joy.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu is the Archbishop Emeritus of Southern Africa, whose efforts in the anti-apartheid movement gained him national recognition as a great spiritual and moral leader. Archbishop Tutu campaigned ferociously for racial equality in South Africa alongside such prominent names as Nelson Mandela. In 1984, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, ultimately bringing national recognition and support to the anti-apartheid cause. Without his influence and his work as a spiritual leader, the present state of South Africa could be remarkably different.

Archbishop Tutu has gained his respect not only through his anti-discrimination efforts, but for his world-wide peace efforts as well. He possesses a down-to-earth nature and with it he brings calmness and mental focus to each situation he encounters. In his childhood he suffered from polio, most of his life has been dedicated to solving racial injustice, many of his friends were wrongly imprisoned for decades, and even in his later years he faces an ongoing battle with prostate cancer; despite these obstacles, Archbishop Tutu remains one of the most joyful people in the world. This joy is evident though his humorous, sometimes trivial banter with the Dalai Lama throughout the course of the dialogues. According to Abrams, Archbishop Tutu possesses the unique gift of seeing the world as a dynamic work in progress. He sums this up beautifully by

saying that "for the Archbishop, one did not want to miss the opportunity to link prayer to politics and meditation to activism - or a good joke" (177).

Douglas Abrams

Douglas Abrams is an esteemed author focused on "helping visionaries to create a wiser, healthier, and more just world" (354). In this book, he respects his position as the interpreter and scribe for the conversation between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu. From the beginning, he envisions it as a three-layer birthday cake; the first layer is the teachings and stories told by the two men, the second layer is the science supporting the men's theories, and the final layer is Abrams' observations about physically being in Dharamsala. He creates a fluent travel log-style narrative that includes the reader completely in the conversation.

Abrams greatest strength in this book is his ability to weave together his three-layer birthday cake in the form of a fluent narrative. While he interjects his personal thoughts, memories, and observations throughout the conversation, he possess the same power held by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu: the focus is never solely on himself. The reader is included every step of the way. Toward the end of the week, Abrams thanks the men for allowing him to be a "representative of all those who will benefit from this work," placing himself in direct alignment with the reader as an equal contributor to the conversation (299).

Thupten Jinpa

Thupten Jinpa has served as the Dalai Lama's translator for more than 30 years, and he is a well-read Buddhist scholar. Throughout the week, Jinpa not only translated for the Dalai Lama, but often interjected his observations about joy from his years of reading, praying, and studying. Abrams frequently refers to Buddhist teachings throughout the discussion, many of which are provided by or supplemented by Jinpa's help. Thus, Jinpa's presence in the conversation goes much deeper than that of a translator of language, but he is a translator of Buddhist teachings and ideals.

"Jinpa explained" to Abrams his interpretation of a Buddhist text explaining the basics of mind-training, saying "that joy is our essential nature, something everyone can realize" (48). It is clear through the constant interjection of Jinpa's additions throughout the text that his words resonated with Abrams; essentially, the conversation was meant to focus on the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu, but Abrams gives Jinpa a significant amount of attention. Abrams does offer a glimpse as to why he finds Jinpa so fascinating; at one point he digresses from the conversation to tell the reader that he "thought of the journey, both physical and psychological, that Jinpa had undertaken; from life in a Buddhist monastery that was largely unchanged for thousands of years to the family life he now lives in Montreal" (96). While Abrams does not offer many details about Jinpa's unique personal life, going from life as a Buddhist monk to living a common family life in

Canada, he is constantly referring to Jinpa's wisdom and knowledge speaks to the respect Abrams has for him.

Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was an influential leader in post-apartheid South Africa during the period of racial reconciliation, and was a close friend and inspiration to Archbishop Tutu. Mandela spent 27 years wrongly imprisoned under the oppressive apartheid regime, but upon his release became one of the most influential leaders in South African history.

Mandela is a shining example of a convergence of the men's eight pillars to joy, specifically perspective, acceptance, humility, and compassion. Archbishop Tutu presents several examples from Mandela's life's work throughout the discussions not only because he was an internationally known moral leader, but because Tutu regards him as a dear friend. He praises Mandela's ability to "discover that people he regarded as his enemy, they too were human beings who had fears and expectations" (44). Instead of becoming embittered during his 27-year incarceration, he developed a deep sense of "compassion...magnanimity, [and] the capacity to put himself in the shoes of the other" (44). He turned his immeasurable suffering into an opportunity to grow and develop a plan for the future of South Africa.

Paul Ekman

Paul Ekman is a renowned emotions researcher and a longtime friend of the Dalai Lama's, whom Abram refers to frequently throughout the book. Abrams first references Ekman's work by citing the comprehensive list of emotions associated with joy, including pleasure, amusement, contentment, excitement, relief, wonder, ecstasy or bliss, exultation, radiant pride, unhealthy jubilation, elevation, and gratitude. Abrams concludes that this "helpful mapping of the kingdom of joy conveys its complexity and its subtlety" (34) ultimately providing a mapping of the extent of emotions the book attempts to discuss.

Abrams mentions not only Ekman's research, but also his personal experience with the Dalai Lama. Ekman agreed to attend a Mind and Life conference with the Dalai Lama because his daughter was a fan, even though he shared no interest in his teachings. Ekman was a self-diagnosed "rage-aholic" (107), but something miraculous happened when he met the Dalai Lama. "The Dalai Lama took Ekman's hands, looked into his eyes lovingly, and suddenly, Ekman said, it felt like all the anger drained out of his body," almost as if "the Dalai Lama's deep compassion helped heal some lingering hurt and reactivity" (107). This renowned man of science felt the real human connection that comes from real compassion, a feeling that the Dalai Lama had been preaching for during the entire discussion.

Edith Eva Eger

Edith Eva Eger is a psychologist and Auschwitz survivor whom Abrams references several times throughout his book. Interestingly, he does not quote any of her work in the field of psychology, but rather, he quotes her observations about human emotion that she experienced in the concentration camp. First, she noticed that "the spoiled, pampered children were the first to die at Auschwitz," presumably because, "they had not learned how to save themselves" (146). Abrams presents this as evidence that suffering and adversity lead to a stronger and more warmhearted mental state. Her experience at Auschwitz taught her, as she often tried to teach others, that "our perspective toward life is our final and ultimate freedom," meaning that even in times of tremendous difficulty, one's ability to be happy is entirely up to oneself (195). This teaching adheres to many of the Archbishop and Dalai Lama's own teachings that lasting happiness is an intrinsic quality.

Brother David Stiendl-Rast

Brother David Stiendl-Rast is a Catholic monk and scholar who has devoted much of his life to Christian-Buddhist interfaith dialogue. Abrams relies on Brother Stiendl-Rast to describe gratitude in a way that represents both the Christian Archbishop Tutu and the Buddhist Dalai Lama. "Whatever life gives to you," he preaches, "you can respond with joy. Joy is the happiness that does not depend on what happens. It is the grateful response to the opportunity that life offers you at this moment" (245). Abrams uses another quote from Brother Stiendl-Rast to identify the relationship between happiness and gratitude: "It is not happiness that makes us grateful. It is gratefulness that makes us happy" (242).

Phillip Potter

Right before Archbishop Tutu's trip to Dharamsala, he attended the funeral of his close friend, Phillip Potter. While it may not seem fitting to include the topic of death in a conversation about joy, it is truly one of humankind's largest obstacles to joy. Archbishop Tutu begins to praise what a great man Potter was in life, but does not miss the opportunity to crack a joke at the situation as well; he jokes that both he and the Dalai Lama could fit inside Potter's coffin because he was such a large man. Although Phillip Potter is only mentioned on one page, what his memory brought to the conversation was vital. Death is a taboo topic for many people, and attending Potter's funeral immediately before the trip to visit the Dalai Lama undoubtedly played a role in the clarity and profundity Archbishop Tutu brought to the discussion. Also, the way Archbishop Tutu approached the death of his friend, by both celebrating his life and bringing laughter to the situation, encapsulates how both men agree that death should be approached: with respect and levity.

Rachel Abrams

Rachel Abrams is the wife of author Douglas Abrams, and although she is only mentioned a handful of times throughout the book, she has a close relationship with not only the author, but with Archbishop Tutu. She has served as his physician for several years. At lunch, when discussing maternal love, Abrams recalls the traumatic birth of his and Rachel's twin daughters. The second twin, Eliana, was having trouble passing through the birth canal, and her chances of survival were decreasing by the second. "I've never witnessed anything like the strength Rachel had exhibited as she threw herself headlong into the pain and wrenched every ounce of maternal will from her body to push our daughter out," he remembers (76). Eliana was born unresponsive, but the doctors urged Rachel to talk to her baby, "the voice of the mother having an almost magical healing effect, even in the high-risk operating room" (76). Eliana survived, which Abrams credits to the power of maternal love.

Objects/Places

Parental Love

Archbishop Tutu frequently refers to humankind's natural parental instincts to accurately describe joy. "Think of a mother who is going to give birth," he directs the reader, "after the painful labor, once the baby is out, you can't measure the mother's joy" (32). Though humans have a natural inclination to avoid pain, "nothing beautiful in the end comes without a measure of some pain, some frustration, some suffering" (45). The same way a mother turns her pain and suffering into a beautiful gift, the Archbishop believes each individual has the ability to turn their suffering into something beautiful. Abrams briefly weighs in on the concept as well, pondering on the idea that "we try so hard, with our natural paternal instinct, to save our children from pain and suffering, but when we do, we rob them of their ability to grow and learn from adversity" (146). While referencing paternal instincts in a different context, Abrams employs the power of said instinct in the same way as Archbishop Tutu.

Buddhist Traditions

Though Abrams has made a clear effort to create a universal picture of joy instead of a religious picture of joy, he employs Buddhist teachings and prayers frequently throughout the book. From what Abrams presents, Buddhism emphasizes several of the practices and beliefs that both the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu claim are essential to joy. For example, Abrams recalls "a Buddhist saying that trying to seek happiness through sensory gratification is like trying to quench your thirst by drinking saltwater" (51). He also references the "Buddhist concept of mudita, which is often translated as 'sympathetic joy' and described as the antidote to envy," one of the most damaging emotions to joy (140). With examples such as these and many others throughout the book, Abrams draws an eye-opening amount of similarities between Buddhist practices and practices to attaining true joy.

Questions from the 'Audience'

Abrams notes from the beginning that he wants this book to benefit the widest audience possible, and as such, the questions he poses to the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu are intended to represent and encompass the most common questions people wrote to Abrams asking him to present to the leaders. The topic of joy is universal; both the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu believe it is humankind's natural state. Thus, in preparation for the discussion, Abrams reached out to the worldwide community to ask for individual's questions pertaining to joy. One prospective reader asks, "How can you be of service to people, nature, and causes in need without losing yourself completely to a crisis mentality? How can we help the world heal and still find joy in our own life" (271)? This question is similar in nature to what identifies as the most common question sent in

to him, which was how to live a joyous life in a world filled with such despair. These questions bring the conversation to both the global and the personal level; while bringing perspective from around the world, they also represent the concerns of common people. A young boy writes specifically to the Dalai Lama: "Your quotes always lift me up and give me purpose when I am down on myself. What is the best way to keep a positive attitude when things aren't going your way" (212)? Such an innocent question from a young boy brings the topic of joy back down to the most basic human level, such that even a child can comprehend.

Cultivation

Frequently throughout the book, all three men refer to the idea of cultivating certain emotions or mental practices. The idea of cultivation is important because it speaks to the nature of human emotion; emotion, regardless of whether positive or negative, is not a concrete state. Emotions are dynamic, which is why the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu refer to training one's mind to frame one's emotions in a different perspective. Emotions, most importantly joy, must be actively cultivated over a lifetime through conscious and mindful practices. Joy is not a permanent state, where once it is attained, one remains there forever; instead, joy is a way to live one's life each day.

Dharamsala

Dharamsala, India, is where the Dalai Lama has lived more than 50 years in exile. In Hindi, Dharamsala translates to "spiritual dwelling" (24), which is a fitting name for the host town of an exiled leader and thousands of other Tibetan refugees. It resembles the climate of Tibet because of its high altitude and cooler weather compared to the rest of India. Many times throughout the book, the Dalai Lama expresses his gratitude toward the Indian government for allowing him to seek haven and continue his spiritual teaching with their protection.

Tibet

Tibet is a large, formerly autonomous region in China with a rich culture and history, especially with relation to Buddhism. After Communist, atheist China took control of Tibet, tensions stirred, causing a failed Tibetan uprising in 1959. The uprising upset the Chinese government further and prompted persecution of Buddhist leaders, which ultimately led to the Dalai Lama's decision to flee the country and create a government-in-exile in India. Today, the Dalai Lama and the thousands of students enrolled in his Tibetan schools in Dharamsala remain hopeful that someday an agreement will be reached with the Chinese government that will allow Tibetans semi-autonomy and religious freedom.

South Africa

Abrams and Archbishop Tutu make several references to the oppressive apartheid regime in South Africa, mainly because of Tutu's heavy involvement in bringing a more equal and humane government to power. Alongside pioneers such as Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Tutu helped change the course of South African development toward a more just and fair society.

Meditation

Each day, the Dalai Lama wakes up at 3 a.m. to meditate for at least four to five hours. Buddhist monks meditate frequently, but the Dalai Lama takes this practice as serious as a medicine regiment. Over the course of their week together, the Dalai Lama even taught Archbishop Tutu how to meditate, and Abrams was relieved to notice the Dalai Lama scratch his head during the session; "I felt relieved that he was not some sort of austere ascetic who would deny his itches and aches" (178), a tribute to the Dalai Lama's humble and realistic nature. The Dalai Lama practices several different forms of meditation, each with their own distinct focus or goal; these range from death meditation, to analytic meditation, to joy meditation. While it is inherently a Buddhist tradition, the Dalai Lama praises its proven scientific benefits, meaning it has a universal benefit as well.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a South African concept rooted in tradition that simply says "a person is a person through other persons" (60). Archbishop Tutu interprets it to mean that humans are "meant for a very profound complementarity," in that "none of us came into this world on our own" (60), and none of us can survive in this world on our own. This concept speaks to the men's running theme that true joy only attainable through recognizing humanity's shared solidarity.

Tibetan Children's Village

Aside from engaging in a conversation about joy, the purpose of the meeting between the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu was to celebrate the Dalai Lama's eightieth birthday. At the end of their week together, a surprise birthday party was held at the Tibetan Children's Village, one of the schools established by the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala meant to preserve Tibetan culture. At the party, some children take turns telling stories of their experiences fleeing from Tibet- crossing dangerous mountain passes under the veil of night while hiding from Chinese police. Yet the biggest struggle the children recall is leaving their families behind. The students at the Tibetan Children's Village are not only a beacon of hope, but they have a more comprehensive and working knowledge of joy than most people.

Themes

Solidarity in Humanity

On a basic level, this book is offered as a guide to achieving lasting happiness in a changing world, as the title phrases. Arguably the most important factor to creating lasting happiness is to recognize that there is a physical, mental, and spiritual solidarity among human beings. "We are the same human beings," the Dalai Lama often reiterates throughout the conversation (126). Humans share not only the same biologic makeup (for the most part,) but they also experience the same spectrum of emotions; recognizing this sense of humanity, the men argue throughout the week, is crucial for attaining joy.

"Life happens to all of us," as Archbishop Tutu bluntly phrased it (222). Part of accepting one's own emotions and training one's mind is recognizing that seven billion other human beings are experiencing their own problems and pain as well. The Archbishop also argues that negative emotions such as envy or guilt are often exacerbated because "we forget that many of those these things affect all of us universally" (137). Recognizing the solidarity that exists among human beings is, Tutu believes, essential to achieving joy. The Dalai Lama agrees by claiming that even the one billion non-believers in this world "are also our human brothers and sisters. They also have the right to become happier human beings and to be good members of the human family" (31).

"We are the same human beings," is identified by Abrams as one of the Dalai Lama's "most profound refrains" throughout the dialogues (126). The Dalai Lama references multiple times that he does not understand the benefit of formality, which is evident through how he addresses the Archbishop, Abrams, and audiences he speaks to alike. There is no need to feel or act special when "we all know that we are all the same, ordinary human beings" (206). If this idea is kept in mind, one can see that that Dalai Lama is, in his own words, "the same human being, with the same potential for constructive emotions and destructive emotions" (203). There is a feeling of genuine compassion felt by recognizing that all of humanity are "our human brothers and sisters, who have the same right and the same desire to live a happy life" (142). Realizing this larger goal for all of humankind's happiness can be attained, the Dalai Lama preaches, thorough realizing the solidarity felt through the bonds of humanity.

When concluding their week-long discussion, Archbishop Tutu clearly reiterates this theme by saying, "I hope that books such as this one will awaken in us that sense of being human" (270). He suggests here that this sense of humanity is an innate human value. The Dalai Lama shares this belief, and adds a sense of responsibility to it by claiming, "as one of the seven billion human beings, I believe everyone has the responsibility to develop a happier world" (30). Thus, this sense of humanity goes beyond the pursuit of living a happy life, but it naturally brings happiness to others. As

both men have pointed out frequently during the discussions, bringing joy to others is the natural recipe for bringing joy to oneself.

Abrams weighs in on the topic of humanity as well. During the discussion on empathy, he notices that "our empathy does not seem to extend to those who are outside our 'group,' which is perhaps why the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama are constantly reminding us that we are, in fact, one group - humanity" (57). At this early point in the conversation, Abrams notices this theme and directly points it out to the reader, presumably because of its prevalence throughout the remainder of the dialogue. Toward the end of the discussion, he again concludes that "you need other people in order to be human" (270).

Science

In his introduction, Abrams is clear that this book is structured as a three-layer birthday cake, the second layer comprised of relevant scientific research on emotions and happiness. Each chapter features scientific research in fields such as psychology, emotional development, stress, and physical ailments as they relate to stress. Such frequent interjection of scientific data serves two purposes: it speaks to the three men's goal to create a universal narrative, not a Buddhist or a Christian narrative. It also allows for a more well-rounded text; a conversation focusing only on spirituality or philosophy may drag to the reader, but grounding the sometimes lofty conversation with scientific data is helpful for Abrams' prose.

While a majority of the scientific data in the book is presented by Abrams, the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu are not shy to the powers and benefits of modern science. Abrams notices this as well, stating that "scientific research consistently supported so much of the dialogue that was unfolding over the week" (194). The Dalai Lama admits to being inspired by scientific research on the benefits of meditation, even so much that it helps him to get out of bed for his 3 a.m. daily meditation when he is feeling tired. Archbishop Tutu, as well, is breaking the traditional mold by being a religious leader willing to accept scientific principles. He speaks of the importance of "self corroborating truth - when many different fields of knowledge point to the same conclusion" to reinforce his belief in scientific research (5). Both men understand the value of incorporating proven scientific principles into their spiritual beliefs.

While Abrams, Archbishop Tutu, and the Dalai Lama all refer to Christian and Buddhist traditions throughout the book, they share the same goal of drafting a universal narrative "supported not only by opinion or tradition but also by science" (5). Abrams achieves this by incorporating science in every chapter of his book, many times directly after the Archbishop or the Dalai Lama present a spiritual argument. For example, Abrams concludes the Dalai Lama's argument on the benefits of gratitude by interjecting a study by psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky. This study suggested that "gratitude is a factor that seems to influence happiness along with our ability to reframe negative emotions into positive ones" (249). Abrams appears to have an affinity for several researchers due to their presence throughout the book. For example, he references

Lyubomirsky again when breaking down happiness at the scientific level early in the book; her research "suggests that only 50 percent of our happiness is determined by immutable factors like our genes or temperament, our 'set point.' The other half is determined by a combination of our circumstances, over which we may have limited control, and our attitudes and actions, over which we have a great deal of control" (49).

Abrams uses a delicate balance of both summarized research results, such as those quoted above, and more concrete scientific examples as well. For example, when discussing stress, Abrams notes that "stress and optimism turn out to be exactly what initiate our development in utero. Our stem cells do not differentiate and become us if there is not enough biological stress to encourage them to do so" (45). And in some instances, he employs both summarized and specific approaches. For example, he quotes leading stress researcher Elissa Epel's idea that the human "stress response evolved as a rare and temporary experience, but for many in our modern world it is constantly activated" (98). He then delves into specific detail, citing "it is not just our stress but out thought patterns in general that impact our telomeres, which has led Epel...to conclude that our cells are actually 'listening to our thoughts'" (98). The incorporation of both types of scientific language allows Abrams prose to flow fluently and keep the reader engaged.

Being Self-Centered Is Harmful

This book offers not only steps to achieving lasting joy, but it also incorporates emotions and habits one should avoid because of their detrimental nature to the essence of joy. The most destructive of the emotions they describe is selfishness or self-centeredness. Self-centeredness stands in direct opposition of what the men teach is the key to joy: focusing on others as opposed to oneself. The Archbishop preaches that "if we think we want to get joy for ourselves, we realize that it's very shortsighted, short-lived. Joy is the reward, really, of seeking to give joy to others" (293).

Abrams offers a Buddhist teaching to reinforce the idea of selfishness. A mind-training text explicitly teaches that "as long as you are too focused on your self-importance and too caught up in thinking about how you are good or bad, you will experience suffering" because "obsessing about getting what you want and avoiding what you don't want does not result in happiness" (48).

Several times throughout the dialogue, the Dalai Lama insists that "too much self-centered thinking is the source of suffering," while on the contrary, "a compassionate concern for others' well-being is the source of happiness" (251).

The men draw their wisdom on selfishness not from purely spiritual beliefs, but from personal experiences as well. Archbishop Tutu, for instance, has had several close encounters with death as a result of various illnesses. He claims that even when he is being prodded, "even in the midst of that pain, you can recognize the gentleness of the nurse who is looking after you...you can see the skill of the surgeon who is going to be preforming the operation on you" (46). Ultimately, he concludes "you begin to realize,

Hey, I'm not alone in this" (46). Focusing away from his own pain allowed Archbishop Tutu to alleviate his own. Similarly, the Dalai Lama recalls the painful two hour car ride he had to endure to the hospital to remove his gallbladder. Seeing a homeless, sick, and obviously suffering man along the side of the road, he began to focus on this man's pain and forgot about his own. This sense of compassion naturally ousts self-centered thinking from the mind, and the Dalai Lama is adamant that "a self-centered attitude is the source of the problem" (47).

Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama are not subtle about the nature of joy; "in fact," the Dalai Lama said, "taking care of others, helping others, ultimately is the way to discover your own joy and to have a happy life" (275). On the other hand, "too much focus on yourself leads to fear, insecurity, and anxiety," ultimately making joy unattainable (212). Thus, selfishness is the most detrimental element to joy. In the second section of the book, the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu discuss eight different obstacles that stand in the way of joy. While the men do not dedicate one particular section to selfishness or self-centeredness, the theme flows throughout the book's entire second section. Each obstacle to joy relies on the idea of not focusing one's attention inward, but outward toward others.

Humor Is Powerful

While the men devote a chapter and a pillar of joy to humor, the real manifestation of humor's importance can be seen throughout the dialogue in the book. The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu are constantly teasing each other, joking at their own expense, and actively seeking humor in their most stressful memories. Their obvious devotion to living a life full of laughter does not come from any calculated logic, but rather from human experience. The Dalai Lama simply phrases that "it is much better when there is not too much seriousness...laughter, joking is much better" (216).

The Dalai Lama recalls a memory of an interfaith meeting, where an Indian spiritual leader insisted his chair be elevated over the other leaders' chairs using bricks. He thought to himself, "if one of the bricks were to move, and he fell over, then we would see what would happen" (204). He then jokes with the Archbishop that he should have prayed to God to topple the chair, "then that spiritual leader will act like a real human being" (204). While obviously the nonviolent Dalai Lama was joking, he implies that there is a sense of humanity that lies in humor; it it something that arguably, all humans can see.

Abrams connects the power of humor with the previous theme that there is a solidarity in humanity. He claims that "to laugh at ourselves reminds us of our shared humanity" (216). The Archbishop and the Dalai Lama add to this idea of laughing at oneself by claiming "when we have humility, we can laugh at ourselves," and essentially, humor is crucial to the cultivation of joy. (213). They provide simple advice: "If you start looking for the humor in life, you will find it" (222). Archbishop Tutu believes the way of "getting into the hearts of people is the capacity of making them laugh" (221), or in other words, humor is powerful because it opens a direct opportunity to get into others' hearts.

Humor is more than a key factor to joy, however. For the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu, it is a manifestation of trust and friendship. The Archbishop claims they "tease each other, but it is a statement of trust in the relationship. It's an indication that there's enough of a reservoir of goodwill that you're really saying 'I trust you. And you trust me that I know you will not undermine me or be offended by me'" (220). This deep sense of trust speaks to the men's idea that their souls are kindred spirits. They personify the idea that humor and laughter can help form lasting, compassionate bonds between people. These types of bonds are crucial to cultivating joy.

Humankind is Generally Good

Of the many obstacles that stand in the way of joy, despair at the state of the world is the most prevalent, and it is the topic of the most common question written to Abrams in preparation for the dialogues: "How do I find joy in the midst of such large world problems" (115)? The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu conclude that the answer lies in recognizing that "we have a fascinating capacity for goodness" (116). This capacity is an innate human quality. Archbishop Tutu argues that humans are fundamentally good, and "the aberration is not the good person; the aberration is the bad person" (267). One can find solace in a world filled with turmoil by choosing to see the positive even in times of suffering. This positivity stems from the notion that humankind is generally good.

Because the meeting of the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu was centered around the Dalai Lama's birthday, it was natural for the men to keep the spirit of gift-giving in mind when approaching the conversation. Thus, the men approached the book as a gift to any of those in the world interested in engaging in the dialogue on joy. Keeping this in mind, it is important to note how frequently the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu allude to humankind's natural goodness. It is less a theme of the book, and more a lesson to the reader. "Fairness seems to be hardwired into our genes," Abrams notes, implying that each individual, or each reader, is hardwired for fairness and goodness (136). Archbishop Tutu reiterates this theme by saying "we are made for goodness...and when we get opportunities, we mostly respond with generosity" (267).

When speaking of the purpose of the book, Archbishop Tutu says "we must remind people...that basic human nature is good, is positive, so this can give us some courage and self-confidence" (212). It is easier to embrace the eight pillars of joy into our lives if we approach life with the idea that we are naturally good-natured. The Archbishop often warns against the dangers of guilt, claiming that negative emotions and suffering are "part of the warp and woof of life," something one cannot suppress entirely (39). Thus, we can only truly cultivate joy if we embrace and act on our good nature. This predisposition for goodness paired with our capacity for practicing the eight pillars of joy is a dynamic map to lasting joy.

Styles

Structure

Although many of the book's topics overlap, the book is loosely broken into three sections: the true nature of joy, obstacles to joy, and the eight pillars to joy. Describing the true nature of joy first allows the reader to begin with a framework for the rest of the conversation. The first section and ultimately the first day of the week's worth of conversation defines the type of deep, lasting joy that the men are discussing. Days two and three of the week-long trip confront some of the most difficult obstacles that stand in the way of this joy. Dissecting what most often stands in the way of joy allows the reader to begin to analyze ways to combat these obstacles. Finally, the conversation reaches its climax when the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu, with Abrams' help, converge and agree upon eight pillars of joy. The eight pillars of joy represent a road-map for living a joyful, mindful life.

From an analytical standpoint, chapter-by-chapter the structure is confusing because the conversation does not always flow chronologically; from a narrative standpoint, however, the complex ideas read fluently as a narrative. Though the focus of the book is ultimately the weeks' worth of discussion, Abrams is effective at including relevant outside information - from his own observations, to the physical interactions between the men, to a description of a casual meal, to conversations aboard the anxious flight to Dharamsala - to create an all-encompassing picture of the topic of joy. The structure ultimately represents a balance of the three men's ideas, aimed at inviting the reader to interject his or her own ideas.

Perspective

The perspective of this book is of one Abrams' most skillfully calculated literary devices. With the intent of truly capturing the conversation, Abrams is successful at making the reader feel like he or she is sitting in the room with the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu discussing the virtue of joy. His ability to achieve this perspective without adhering to dialogue for the duration of his book is fascinating. He frequently digresses from the conversation to interject his own observations and thoughts, as well as scientific examples relevant to the conversation; he does this, however, without breaking the fluency of the narrative.

One of the most prevalent themes in the discussion is the importance of realizing the solidarity that exists naturally in humanity. Abrams recognizes and practices this theme by documenting the week as a casual observer in a casual setting. There was a wonderful lack of formality (presumably encouraged by the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu) flowing throughout the conversation, and Abrams radiates this feeling through his writing. Allowing the reader to feel that he or she is sitting at an equal physical and

spiritual level as two of the most renowned moral leaders allows the reader to fully engage in the conversation.

Tone

While one may approach this book thinking the tone will be that of a lofty, rose-colored-glasses self-help book, the tone of the book represents the kind of lasting, deep joy that the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu are attempting to define.Topics as grim as death, international terrorism, apartheid, and living in exile away from one's family are covered, but never in a bitter tone. The men have the ability to convey a realistic and relatable tone when dissecting the complex realm of emotion. They are also skillful at approaching the reader as an equal; humility is one of the practices they teach. This tone allows the reader to feel comfortable dissecting their own ideas of joy, with the support and framework the Archbishop and the Dalai Lama have provided.

Quotes

A lot of the problems we are facing are our own creation, like war and violence. Unlike a natural disaster, these problems are created by humans ourselves."
-- The Dalai Lama (chapter 2 paragraph 2)

Importance: Very early in the book, the Dalai Lama is making a point to distinguish between problems that one has control over versus those that are not.

Everyone seeks happiness, joyfulness, but from outside - from money, power, from big car, from big house. Most people never pay much attention to the ultimate source of a happy life, which is inside, not outside. Even the source of physical health is inside, not outside."
-- The Dalai Lama (chapter 2 paragraph 6)

Importance: This quote represents a criticism, albeit a light criticism, of humanity's obsession with seeking happiness from material possessions.

The goal is not just to create joy for ourselves but, as the Archbishop poetically phrased it, 'to be a reservoir of joy, an oasis of peace, a pool of serenity that can ripple out to all those around you.' As we will see, joy is in fact quite contagious. As is love, compassion, and generosity.
-- Douglas Abrams (chapter 5 paragraph 2)

Importance: Abrams is careful throughout the book to use concise language to capture more of the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu's ideas rather than his own. He is skillful at summarizing their beliefs and extended discussion into fluent prose, but this example highlights not Abrams' linguistic skills but Archbishop Tutu's instead. He creates a vivid metaphor for incorporating joy into one's life, comparing joy to a reservoir capable of rippling out and affecting others.

If your health is strong, when viruses come they will not make you sick. If your overall health is weak, even small viruses will be very dangerous for you. Similarly, if your mental health is sound, then when disturbances come, you will have some distress but quickly recover. If your mental health is not good, then small disturbances, small problems will cause you much pain and suffering."
-- The Dalai Lama (chapter 3 paragraph 7)

Importance: With this analogy, the Dalai Lama compares mental health to physical health. Often, one does not consider mental health having the same structural immune system as one's body, but the Dalai Lama argues this is not the case. This is the basis of his argument for mental immunity, which he argues several times throughout the book is crucial to cultivating lasting joy.

I really hate formality. When we are born, there is no formality. When we die, there is no formality. When we enter hospital, there is no formality. So formality is just artificial. It

just creates additional barriers. So irrespective of our beliefs, we are all the same human beings. We all want a happy life.
-- The Dalai Lama (chapter 6 paragraph 6)

Importance: This quote is proof of the Dalai Lama's belief that he is no more or no less than any other human being. He is persistent throughout the dialogue that humanity is created equal, and that even he, in his esteemed and moral role, is no different than the reader.

When a disaster such as 9/11 happens, we realize we are family. We are family. Those people in the Twin Towers are our sisters and brothers. And even more startlingly, the people who were piloting those planes, they are our sisters and brothers."
-- Archbishop Desmond Tutu (chapter 11 paragraph 5)

Importance: This quote is powerful because it addresses the paradox of compassion; compassion requires accepting all of humanity as one's brothers and sisters. During times of international crises such as 9/11, it is difficult but necessary to feel compassion and empathy not only for the victims, but for the perpetrators who have lost their way.

I worked on a book many years ago with a physician who cared for seriously ill and dying patients. He made a powerful distinction between healing and curing: Curing involves the resolution of the illness but was not always possible. Healing, he said, was coming to wholeness and could happen whether or not the illness was curable."
-- Douglas Abrams (chapter 15 paragraph 2)

Importance: This quote is significant because it shows the subtle yet important differences that are present when examining human emotions. Healing and curing, for example, seem like interchangeable terms, but Abrams identifies their difference to the reader with this quote.

I hope that books such as this one will awaken in us that sense of being human. And then we will realize just how obscene it is for us to spend the billions or trillions of dollars that we spend on what we call a budget of defense. When a very small fraction of those budgets would ensure that…I mean, children die daily, die because they do not have clean water.
-- Archbishop Desmond Tutu (chapter 24 paragraph 2)

Importance: This quote represents a powerful criticism of modern society. Archbishop Tutu argues against massive military spending when there are more obvious, more human problems to deal with.

As a Tibetan Buddhist monk, the Dalai Lama's vows prohibit dancing, but today he got up to dance for the first time in his life. He started to sway and rock his hands back and forth. At first as uncomfortable as a middle school boy on the dance floor, the Dalai Lama started to smile and laugh as the Archbishop encouraged him. They took each other's hands and moved to the music, celebrating the true joy of friendship, the true joy of our unbreakable connection to one another, the true joy of the world coming together

as one.
-- Douglas Abrams (chapter 25 paragraph 3)

Importance: The quote represents how a seemingly simple act such as a dance between two friends, can represent much more. Abrams notices that the both the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu embodied joy, in thoughts, in words, in prayer, and in action.

This concern for others is something very precious. We humans have a special brain, but this brain causes a lot of suffering because it is always thinking me, me, me, me. The more time you spend thinking about yourself, the more suffering you will experience. The incredible thing is when we think of alleviating other people's suffering, our own suffering is reduced. This is the true secret to happiness. So this is a very practical thing. In fact, it is common sense.
-- The Dalai Lama (chapter 23 paragraph 2)

Importance: In this quote, the Dalai Lama offers what he believes is the secret to happiness - focusing on others as opposed to oneself.

Just to pray or rely on religious faith is not sufficient. It will remain a source of inspiration, but in terms of seven billion human beings, it's not sufficient. No matter how excellent, no religion can be universal. So we have to find another way to promote these values.
-- The Dalai Lama (chapter 26 paragraph 3)

Importance: This quote represents the reality with which the Dalai Lama approaches the world; despite being the leader of a major world religion, he understands religions' obvious limitations, and embraces other ways to promote human values universally.

Then the Dalai Lama's playful tone changed as he pointed at the Archbishop's face warmly. 'This picture, special picture.' Then he paused for a long moment. 'I think, at the time of my death...' The word death hung in the air like a prophecy.'...I will remember you.
-- The Dalai Lama (chapter 26 paragraph 6)

Importance: This profound expression of friendship and compassion speaks to the idea that the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu's souls are kindred spirits. As one of the final statements before the men part ways presumably for the last time on this earth, it is an indication of the love that exists between the two men.

Topics for Discussion

What are your preconceived notions about the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu? How did they change after reading?

These two men are two of the most renowned spiritual leaders in the world, thus, students may approach the conversation with some knowledge of the men. Even if the student has no familiarity with either, he can identify what he learned throughout the course of this book. For example, one may think the Dalai Lama, being a Buddhist monk, would be solemn, quiet, and reserved. However, this book proves that the Dalai Lama travels extensively promoting world peace, actively engages in scientific and interfaith discourse, and is one of the most playful, laughter-inducing humans ever.

Prior to the book, did you have any knowledge about Douglas Abrams? Is this helpful or harmful?

While Abrams is a successful author, he is not a household name in the same way as the Dalai Lama or Archbishop Tutu. At first, this can make the reader skeptical of Abrams' interjections or observations. However, the nature of the book is that of a casual, open conversation. Thus, it is ultimately helpful that Abrams, for most readers, will be a true representative of a causal contributor to the conversation (in relation to the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu).

Early in the discussion, the Dalai Lama claims that despite religious affiliation, "from the moment of birth, every human being wants to discover happiness and avoid suffering" (14). Do you agree with the idea that this innate motivation for happiness has the power to outweigh religious differences?

This question is largely opinion-based, but students should be encouraged to reference the book at least once in their answer. The Dalai Lama is arguing that humankind's innate desire for happiness can rise above religious differences and tensions; however, this can be greeted with skepticism due to the amount of religious conflicts that ravage the world today.

Why do you think Abrams references so many Buddhist traditions, prayers, and practices throughout the narrative?

Presumably to most western readers, Buddhism is a foreign form of religion. Thus, Abrams goes out of his way to reference many Buddhist principles in an effort to enlighten the reader. Buddhism stresses many of the same principles and practices that both the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu were teaching to be essential to joy.

In the first chapter, Abrams mentions Archbishop Tutu's daughter Mpho. During their time in Dharamsala, she excitedly - and with the support of her father- proposed to her girlfriend. What does this say about Archbishop Tutu?

Archbishop Tutu is a longtime supporter of gay marriage, despite the strict, conservative views of many Christian denominations. He famously remarked that he would refuse to go to a "homophobic heaven" (17). This support is a crucial element of why Archbishop Tutu himself is a pillar of joy. Despite religious tradition, he has the ability to critically decide right versus wrong on the human level. While the South African Anglican Church was not nearly as supportive of Mpho's decision, stripping her of her ministry, her father's support speaks to the righteousness of her decision.

Do you appreciate the narrative-style writing structure of this book, or would you prefer a more standardized, question-and-answer type text?

While both approaches may have their benefits and setbacks, it is important to value the multiple sources of information that Abrams provides through his writing style. Not only does he interject several famed scientific researchers, but the interjection of human examples such as Anthony Ray Hinton and Nelson Mandela help the reader create an all-encompassing picture of joy.

The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu differentiate the first four pillars of joy from the last four, calling the first four pillars of the mind and the last four pillars of the heart. They do not, however, discuss the difference in nature between those that come from the heart versus those that come from the mind. What is your opinion on the difference between these two types of pillars?

The pillars of the mind - perspective, humility, humor, acceptance - are qualities all humans have the capacity to cultivate. These qualities force us to look inward. The pillars of the heart - forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, generosity - are innate aspects that all humans are born with; cultivating these aspects relies on looking outward and focusing on others.

Identify which obstacle to joy you find to be the most damaging, as well as which pillar to joy you find the most important.

This identification would work best in a conversation-style setting, where students can compare their ideas and argue their cases. The discussion in the book offers many different obstacles to joy, as well as many pillars that are crucial to attaining joy. Students may have a ready answer, they may wrestle with the idea for a while, or they may claim there is no most important or most damaging theme, or that each pillar to joy and obstacle to joy work dynamically.

Using either the Dalai Lama or Archbishop Tutu as an example, identify how the men personify one of the pillars of joy.

Each of the eight pillars of joy can be seen through the words and actions of both Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama. For example, when the Dalai Lama jokingly makes a remark, the Archbishop retorts that he must remember to act "like a holy man" (207). Humor is one of the most identifiable characteristics of both men, and it is also a pillar to joy.

The Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu frequently refer to each other as mischievous. What is your interpretation of this word?

Though the men never offer their definition of mischievous, the Dalai Lama offers an explanation by way of a story. At an interfaith meeting, an Indian spiritual leader insisted his chair be lifted with bricks, so that he sat above the others at the meeting. The Dalai Lama recalls the story and jokes to the Archbishop, "maybe you will see some mysterious force move the brick because I will pray to God, 'Please, just topple that chair.' Then that spiritual leader will act like a real human being" (204). Thus, this mischievousness is meant to represent a playful, joyful nature, but also a very human nature as well.