

21 Ways to Celebrate Life

A Gift from Joshua Rothstein

~ April 16, 1987 – October 7, 2002 ~

Who better to suggest how to celebrate life than one for whom life is no longer on this earth but whose perspective is eternal. And so it was that Ways to Celebrate Life came to be. My son Josh was struck by a car and killed at age 15 ½ in 2002. My profound grief was tempered by a blessing. Josh began to communicate to me, often through my pen, as he did before his 17th birthday on April 16, 2004. He gave me *17 Ways to Celebrate Life* as a gift to share. For his earthly birthdays that followed, he offered an additional “way” to celebrate life. In honor of Josh, I now share *21 Ways to Celebrate Life* with you...

1. Smile. Smiling makes you and those around you feel good. If you don't feel good, a smile can trick your brain into feeling better.
2. Eat ice cream.
3. Run on the beach. If you can't physically do this, use your imagination.
4. Call someone who is ill or lonely. Listen to their story. Take the time. Tell them your story, if they ask.
5. Listen to music that touches your heart and soul.
6. Sing in the shower, or out loud if you are comfortable.
7. Visit the grave of a loved one and celebrate your continued BREATH. And tell your loved one what's on your mind.
8. Play with a dog.
9. Thank yourself for putting up with all the things about yourself that drive you nuts! Activate your sense of humor!
10. Apologize to someone you have wronged in any way.
11. Take a day, or even a few hours, “off” to do something you always want to do but never take the time to do.
12. Eat something you never indulge in (unless allergic!) and savor every bite....slowly. No guilt permitted!
13. Re-watch your favorite funny or happy movie in your most comfortable clothes.
14. Make plans with 2 friends that you are crazy about but never see...near or far away.
15. Go outdoors to a natural setting. Sit. Close your eyes. Listen to the world. It's all an extension of you! Your breath connects you intrinsically to the world.
16. Laugh. Do something fun or silly that evokes laughter. It has been said that laughter is God's sunshine.
17. Place this list in an envelope and revisit it periodically to see how you are celebrating YOURSELF! If you are good to yourself, you can be much better to those around you.
18. Go to your heart and make all your decisions from there; and all will be well.
19. Follow the path that matters.
20. Believe and feel the change you want to see and you will BE the change you envision
21. ...Yet you must know that in the end, it is LOVE's garden you must tend.

An epiphany would come to me soon after sending out Josh's 21st birthday tribute on April 16, 2008. #21 would be the last “way.” Josh would not communicate a 22nd Way to Celebrate Life for his 22nd birthday. This was clear. With the addition of #21, there was nothing more to say. For we “must know that in the end”...as well as in the beginning and in the middle... “it is love's garden we must tend.” It is ALL about love. And when we really think and act from love, which ways 1 through 20 help us cultivate, life will be a garden of celebration...and we will honor Josh and all beings, both those alive and those for whom breath and a heartbeat are no more.

I hope Josh's 21 Ways to Celebrate Life will resonate for you, bringing inspiration and joy. In this Light, I hope to perpetuate ways to celebrate life today, tomorrow and always. The list is now yours to use and to share. With love from Josh and his Mom, happy celebrating! ♥