



THE
DAILY GUIDE
TO A
JOY-
FILLED
LIFE

LIVING THE 4:8 PRINCIPLE

TOMMY
NEWBERRY

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

"What Tommy has captured so beautifully in this book is how Philippians 4:8 serves to get joyless, critical thinking under control. This book reminds us all that we have a choice when it comes to our thought life and that right choices generate right attitudes. Prepare to be challenged! If you want revolutionary thinking, then read this book!"

JANET PARSHALL

Nationally syndicated talk show host

"Tommy Newberry's book is a surefire primer for finding authentic joy in the center of God's will. And thank the Lord, Tommy is honoring God by writing books like this one."

DON PIPER

New York Times bestselling author of *90 Minutes in Heaven*

"*The 4:8 Principle* is one of only a small handful of books that have deeply influenced me over the last decade. I have shared it with many friends and thousands of youth leaders across the country. In this book, Tommy Newberry amplifies his call for joy and shows us, step-by-step, how to activate 4:8 throughout our lives. Read this book and spread the joy!"

DR. JEANNE MAYO

President of Youth Leader's Coach; youth communicator; author

"If we desire more joy, then we need to line up our thinking with the apostle Paul's advice in Philippians 4:8. Tommy coaches us to put this powerful principle into practice! With this book, you'll be inspired to leave your comfort zone behind and start living in the joy zone."

BRYANT WRIGHT

Senior pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church; president of the Southern Baptist Convention

"This book is a powerful and practical resource. It is a must-read for anyone interested in improving their quality of life and their relationship with God."

GREGORY A. DALE, PHD

Professor of sport psychology and sport ethics at Duke University; author of *It's a Mental Thing!*

"Simple, relevant, and powerful, the 4:8 message continues to touch lives in deep and meaningful ways. If you want to live each day with more joy, then read this book."

JEREMIE KUBICEK

CEO of GIANT Impact; author of *Making Your Leadership Come Alive*

“Straight to the point and fun to read, this book will inspire you to think differently about . . . everything! Read this book and feel the joy.”

JON GORDON

Bestselling author of *The Energy Bus* and *The Seed*

“If you want to experience a joy-filled life, I challenge you to not only read but put into practice the wisdom in this book. Tommy has a way of provoking, challenging, and inspiring that has transformed my life as a husband, a father, and a pastor. I hope you experience the same journey.”

JEFF MULLEN

Lead pastor at Point of Grace Church

“In less than six weeks, Tommy Newberry will change your life from the inside out. In a world where we measure transformation in years, this book is literally a Godsend.”

TIM SANDERS

Bestselling author of *Today We Are Rich*

“In this book, Tommy Newberry makes experiencing joy simple and achievable for everyone. Follow Tommy’s game plan—live the 4:8 Principle for forty days—and you’ll be amazed at the transformation . . . and so will everyone around you!”

GREG L. JANTZ, PHD

Author of *Battles Men Face*

“This book shows you how to guide, guard, and gauge your thoughts every day. Tommy communicates convincingly that if we can harness what goes on in our minds, joy can be the norm in our lives; the rule, not the exception.”

DR. TIM ELMORE

President of GrowingLeaders.com; author of *Nurturing the Leader within Your Child*

“This is a book for serious people—for Christians who hunger for ‘something more’ and are willing to exert effort to fulfill that yearning.”

CECIL MURPHEY

Coauthor of *90 Minutes in Heaven*

“In this book, Tommy Newberry lays out a plan for making joy an everyday experience. Timeless truths mixed with real-life examples make this book fun to read and highly practical.”

EVA PIPER

Author of *A Walk in the Dark*



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DAILY GUIDE
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LIFE



LIVING THE 4:8 PRINCIPLE



TOMMY
NEWBERRY

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*This book is dedicated with gratitude to all
those who bring joy to the world.*

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Introduction: I Should Have Had a 4:8

WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, my grandmother shared with me a certain Bible verse that grabbed my attention and provoked my interest. Over the years that followed, I kept this verse in front of me and often contemplated its meaning as I experienced my own life unfolding. As I launched my coaching practice in 1991, I began sharing this special verse with clients, curious whether it would touch and challenge them as deeply as it had me.

As time passed, I observed, first with individuals and then with couples and families, that this single passage from the New Testament contained within it the secret to a joy-filled life. By applying this verse to their daily lives, my clients started amplifying the joy they experienced in their marriages, with their parenting, and in their lives as a whole.

Of course, the verse I am referring to is Philippians 4:8:

Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. (NKJV)

Today, we live in a culture inundated with negative headlines that spread images of despair and defeat around the globe in a matter of seconds. Wars continue. Children starve. Tragedy strikes. Corruption abounds. Families break. Scandals erupt. Debt grows. Storms rage.

As a result, we have become far too comfortable accepting the unacceptable and viewing the world, our lives, and ourselves in a defeatist way that directly competes with the passionate, joy-filled, and faith-driven people God desires us to be.

Many years ago, I was listening to a missionary speak at a fund-raiser for YWAM when she raised the question she feared many others were quietly contemplating: “With so many bad things going on in the world, how could there be a God?”

My impulsive response, which I blurted out, surprised me and caught the speaker off guard: “With so many good things going on in the world, how could there *not* be a God?”

I believe it was that very moment, inspired by God and nurtured by my grandmother Lilli, that eventually led me to write *The 4:8 Principle* ten years later, and it continues to fuel my motivation to coach readers with this book.

Based on Philippians 4:8, the 4:8 Principle states that whatever you give your attention to expands in your experience. If you dwell on your strengths, your blessings, your goals, and all the people who love you, then you will attract even more blessings, even more love, and even more accomplishments. It’s a powerful truth. While trials and tribulations are permanent fixtures of this world, our attitudes toward them can help soothe the wounds and bring about solutions while glorifying our heavenly Father in the process.

In this book, I will show you how you can be the catalyst for “stubborn joy” throughout your life. But be forewarned:

clearly, this is not a book about thinking the way most people think. Rather, this is a book about thinking the way *few* people think. If you are okay with being a part of this joyful minority, we can work together to transform it into the majority!

But first things first. Start with yourself. Allow this book to challenge your edges, awaken your faith, and nudge you away from the junk that limits your joy.

Throughout the pages that follow, I will coach you to think, speak, and act in a manner that will bring about the abundant joy of life that God had in mind when he first envisioned your existence. Being full of joy doesn't mean that your life is perfect. It means that you trust that God has good plans for your life, no matter what is happening right now! It's an outward sign of inward faith in God's promises.

This book has been written to help you put the 4:8 Principle into practice in your everyday life . . . *for the rest of your life*. Even sporadically using the 4:8 Principle will bring about worthwhile results. But the rewards of wholeheartedly living the 4:8 Principle are immense and more than worth the prerequisite effort. That is what this initiative is all about. Think of this forty-day exercise as Operation Activate 4:8. When you sincerely activate the 4:8 Principle in your life, it will become a defining moment for your spiritual growth and personal development. You will never turn back.

The process this book follows is near and dear to my heart. As a life coach for over twenty years, I have specialized in helping my clients reach and exceed their goals. The best results have always followed repeated exposure to the right principles over a reasonable period of time. In my experience, forty days is an appropriate time frame for making definite progress with a principle that will bless you and your loved ones indefinitely.

Of course, a quick glimpse through the Bible reminds us of the special spiritual significance to the forty-day time frame as well. We know that Noah's transformation came through forty days of rain, Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai receiving the law, and of course Jesus had perhaps his deepest spiritual experience withstanding forty days of temptation in the desert.

If you have already read *The 4:8 Principle: The Secret to a Joy-Filled Life*, you will love the reinforcement and the action-oriented approach of this book. Better still, you will build rapid momentum as a result of your preexisting appreciation of this principle. Think of it as your *joymentum!*

If you have not yet read the original 4:8, you will find the book you are holding to be a user-friendly way to become fluent with a life-enhancing principle. And I am confident that once you have completed this boot camp for joy, you will be inspired to grab a copy of the original!

The key distinction between this book and its predecessor is the obvious emphasis in the sequel on activating this attitude. This is not a trivial difference. As human beings we often *know what to do*, but we frequently do not *do what we know*. This book has been organized to overcome this particular feature of our human nature.

When you put this book aside at the end of Day 40, you will not be magically free of trouble and tragedy, but you will be equipped to process the world, including the desperate times and difficult people, in a way that multiplies your joy and the joy of those with whom you are investing your life.

Turn to the next page to find out how to get the most from this book. Let's get started!

How to Use This Book

Game Plan from Coach

I HAVE DESIGNED forty consecutive life lessons that each highlight a key component of the 4:8 frame of mind. Studying the 4:8 Principle in these brief, easily digestible chunks helps you assimilate the ideas and take ownership of the message. You will find that each of the forty chapters, or days, supplies you with an important concept to meditate on for the rest of the day, further helping you incorporate the 4:8 Perspective into your unique mental makeup.

Make this book an active read. Highlight passages that stand out or seem to be speaking directly to you. Make notes in the margin when you read an idea that is particularly relevant to your circumstances. Paraphrase inspiring thoughts in your own words. Make the 4:8 Message *your message* to the world!

Following each lesson or meditation, you will find an “Activate 4:8” drill followed by an “Extra Mile” assignment. These exercises are drawn from mental drills that I have used for more than two decades in my private coaching practice. They are intended to sharpen your thinking, illuminate blind spots, and discipline your mind so that you are ready to experience maximum joy. Investing the time and thought power to

do these exercises will pay huge dividends for both you and your closest relationships.

Next, you will find a “Make It Stick: Thought of the Day,” which is intended to help you stay aware of the 4:8 Principle as you go about your normal daily routine. Consider texting or e-mailing it to yourself after you finish the chapter so you’ll have a handy reminder with you at all times. For example, I have set a recurring alarm on my iPhone that reminds me every day at precisely 4:08 p.m. to “Think 4:8.”

Finally, each chapter concludes with a brief prayer thanking God for his goodness and inviting his direction as you attempt to live with more joy.

There is nothing to gain from rushing through this book. Please work through the chapters one day at a time so you will experience the full impact of the day’s lesson and have the opportunity to contemplate what it all means to you and your most important relationships.

Please read through this book in sequence the first time around. Along the way, I encourage you to reread those special chapters that seem to be speaking directly to you. When possible, reread these chapters aloud for double reinforcement.

Finally, consider making the journey through this book an annual ritual, like spring training for your mental and emotional fitness. Just as the best baseball players in the world return to the basics before each new season begins, I encourage you to revisit the fundamentals of joyful living at least as often.

Your Joy Blesses Others!

Coach

THINK THIS, NOT THAT

The Joy of Free Will

A HEALTHY BODY produces energy. Likewise, a healthy mind produces joy. This is not an accident. If you want to experience vibrant health and abundant energy, it is essential that you consume certain foods and drinks and refrain from consuming others. The same is true if you want to lose weight or put more muscle on your frame. You have to say yes to the foods that lead you toward your goal and no to those that lead you away. Very simply, you need to eat this, not that. And while, for the most part, this is now considered common sense, it is not always common practice for those desiring to reshape their physical bodies or increase their energy levels.

Progress toward joy begins the same way, with a firm decision to cut back on *joy-reducing* thoughts and increase *joy-producing* thoughts. In short, you have to change your mental diet. You have to *think this, not that*. After all, joy is the sum and substance of emotional health.

Many well-meaning individuals desire to be leaner or more energetic but then continue to indulge in a diet and lifestyle

that takes them in the opposite direction. Consequently, they do not reach their goal. Many with the goal of increased joy run into the same predicament: they keep consuming a mental diet mismatched with their goal. In both instances, there is a major disconnect between desired objectives and daily behavior.

Joy is a state of mind that must be purposely cultivated if you are to live and love and influence others as God intended. Fortunately, joy does not depend on the outer conditions of your material life, but rather on the inner condition of your mental life. Joy is the result of something strikingly simple, though not necessarily easy: *consistently thinking joy-producing thoughts*.

Is this within your grasp? Is it even possible for anyone to accomplish? Before you answer, let me remind you that few endeavors worth pursuing come easily to anyone, and the attainment of a joy-filled spirit is no exception. There are risks in shooting for this gold standard of faith in action. There is a high price to be paid, and it must be paid in advance. Certain comfort thoughts will need to be relinquished. Counterproductive habits will need to be abandoned. Tenured excuses must be surrendered.

Since you are free to choose what you think about, and you have billions of options, what specific thoughts should you increase to become joy filled? What specific thoughts should you decrease? What kinds of thoughts will distress your soul? What types of thoughts will nourish and hydrate your soul?

At any given moment we can consciously choose to

- think excellent thoughts, not mediocre thoughts;
- think focused thoughts, not scattered thoughts;
- think fresh, exciting thoughts, not stale, boring thoughts;

- think compassionate thoughts, not harsh thoughts;
- think innovative thoughts, not common thoughts;
- think loving thoughts, not indifferent thoughts;
- think energetic thoughts, not exhausted thoughts;
- think constructive thoughts, not destructive thoughts;
- think helpful thoughts, not hurtful thoughts;
- think successful thoughts, not failure thoughts;
- think faith thoughts, not fear thoughts;
- think fit thoughts, not fat thoughts;
- think bold thoughts, not comfort thoughts;
- think opportunity thoughts, not security thoughts;
- think giving thoughts, not getting thoughts;
- think serving thoughts, not self-centered thoughts;
- think grateful thoughts, not entitled thoughts;
- think abundant thoughts, not lacking thoughts;
- think responsible thoughts, not irresponsible thoughts;
- think reconciliation thoughts, not retaliation thoughts;
- think principled thoughts, not popular thoughts;
- think positive thoughts, not negative thoughts;
- think thoughts of victory, not thoughts of defeat; or
- think about the promises of God, not the problems of this world.

Think about what you want, not what you don't want. Why is this required for joy-filled living? Very simply stated, we tend to bring about what we think about. As King Solomon counseled, "As [a person] thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7, NKJV).

Building on Solomon's wisdom, James Allen wrote that "the outer world of circumstance shapes itself to the inner world of thought, and both pleasant and unpleasant external conditions

are factors which make for the ultimate good of the individual. As the reaper of his own harvest, man learns both by suffering and bliss.”¹

It is my intention that during this forty-day regimen, you will start experiencing more of the bliss that is called joy-filled living. Starting today, release the need to hang on to thoughts that haven’t worked well for you.

It is true that we can think this, not that!

ACTIVATE 4:8



Drill #1

Think about the person you intend to become. Then on the following page, identify a few specific thoughts that are incompatible (Not That column) with that vision. In the left-hand column, identify a handful of thoughts that are compatible (Think This column) and helpful. At the bottom, write a short sentence indicating your commitment to improve your thinking.

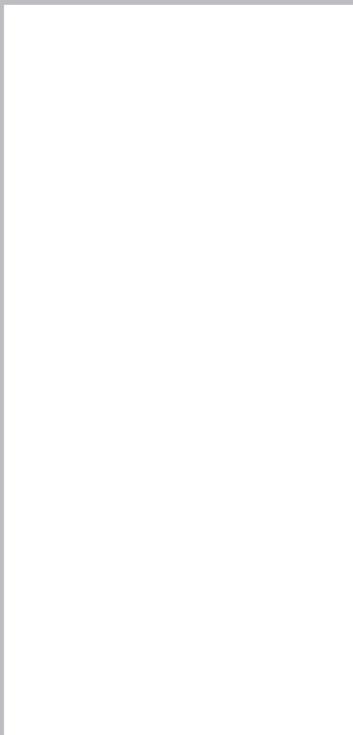
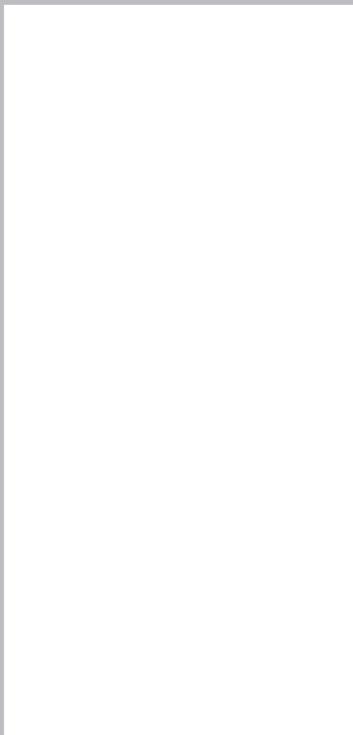
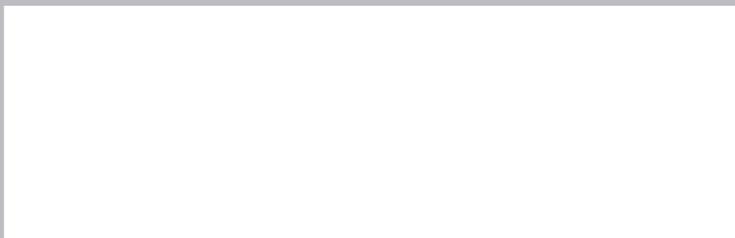


The Extra Mile

Invite a trusted friend to participate with you over the next forty days. Send a brief e-mail to each other before midnight every day sharing what you deem the most valuable concept or “aha moment” from that day’s lesson. If possible, talk about the experience once per week by phone or over a cup of coffee.

THINK THIS

NOT THAT

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin gray border, intended for writing thoughts or observations under the 'THINK THIS' header.A large, empty rectangular box with a thin gray border, intended for writing thoughts or observations under the 'NOT THAT' header.A wide, empty rectangular box with a thin gray border, spanning the width of both columns above, intended for a summary or conclusion.



Make It Stick: Thought of the Day

I am free
to choose my
thoughts.



Prayer

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the freedom to select my thoughts.
Today, nudge me to think the right thoughts all day long. Amen.*

DEAL OR NO DEAL

The Joy of Decisiveness

DO YOU BELIEVE that God has great plans for your future? I often ask my audiences this question, and predictably they respond by unanimously raising their hands in affirmation. Of course, they know the answer I am looking for, so it is probably not a very reliable test.

Besides, I am not asking the question for theoretical reasons. I want to know: if God himself were in your presence in physical form and directly affirmed his great plans for you, what would be different about the way you would live from that point forward? Would anything change?

Do you believe that God has grand plans for your future? Stop reading, and make sure you have answered this question truthfully. If you answered no, then skip the rest of this chapter and move on to Day 3.

Since you are still reading, I know that you either answered yes or you are simply blowing off my instructions. Assuming you answered yes, do you really believe it? Do you believe

it intellectually or do you believe it in your heart, with every fiber of your being? If you accept that God has a great future planned for you (see Jeremiah 29:11), then this belief must naturally translate into behavior that is consistent with that belief.

Who, when assured of a wonderful future, would sulk, complain, and mentally escape with hours of excessive television and other distractions? Often we act today as though tomorrow does not hold much promise. However, I believe that once you accept that God's will for you is something amazingly great, it alters the way you behave and interact in some dramatic, obvious, and observable ways. You will begin to respond with gratitude. Do you agree?

In the popular TV game show hosted by Howie Mandel, there's always a moment when the catchphrase is spoken: "Deal or No Deal?" This is the moment of truth. Will the contestant take the money offered by the "banker" or, instead, choose to bet on the unknown amount of cash in the briefcase? This is the best part of the show. With the cameras rolling and the pressure building, the contestant has to make a decision.

I love the phrase "Deal or No Deal" because it forces the contestant to get out of the neutral zone and take a stand. It's exciting to see whether the decision ends up being a good one or a bad one. But when it comes to choosing to believe that God has good plans for us, we rarely have someone standing over us insisting that we make a decision. The same is true with choosing gratitude, the cornerstone of 4:8 Living. Consequently, it is too easy to perpetually postpone this life-altering decision. With no cameras rolling and no host prompting us, we freeze, we stall, and we rationalize, but we do not respond to the call of "Deal or No Deal." Instead, we linger in

the land of “Wait and See,” effectively deactivating one of the greatest faith builders and joy amplifiers available to us.

Gratitude is a choice. It is a conscious and deliberate decision to focus on life’s blessings rather than its shortcomings. Life will always have shortcomings, and it will always have virtues. When you focus on your blessings, your life feels abundant. When you focus on what’s missing, life feels incomplete. Where you point the spotlight of your attention is purely a matter of choice.

The power of gratitude is undeniably immense. Without a doubt, a perpetual spirit of thankfulness is the central ingredient in the recipe for a joy-filled life. You are going to draw more joy out of your business, out of your marriage, out of your family life, and out of all the other aspects of your existence when you make a commitment to become an openly and overtly grateful person.

Gratitude is also an effective antidote to most negative emotions. You cannot experience gratitude and hostility at the same time; you have to make a choice. Which one is it going to be? The more things you appreciate today, the more things you will notice tomorrow to be grateful for. On the flip side, the less appreciative you are today, the fewer blessings you will tend to acknowledge tomorrow. The Greek philosopher Epictetus said, “He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not but rejoices for those which he has.”

Today’s focus is the conscious decision that precedes this thankful state of mind. My challenge to you is to take a stand and make this decision—right now.

What are you going to do?

Own your joy! Either make the decision to be an exceptionally grateful individual from this point forward, or make the



Make It Stick: Thought of the Day

I am ready
to take a
leap of joy!



Prayer

Father God, thank you for the amazing future you have planned for me. Today, help my heart to overflow with gratitude as I reflect upon those awesome plans. Amen.