



START FROM

JOY

GUIDED JOURNEY

A Road Map to Emotional Health & Positive Change

NEAL SAMUDRE
CARLY SAMUDRE LPC-MHSP

START FROM JOY GUIDED JOURNEY



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Start from Joy Guided Journey

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To protect the privacy of our clients, the names and details of our case examples have been changed. All names are fictional, and any resemblance between the composites and real people is coincidental.

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MAKING YOUR DREAM A REALITY

“START FROM JOY” IS AN APPROACH that has transformed our lives—and the lives of countless clients—for the better. It’s not about choosing happiness, being blindly optimistic, having a positive mindset, or any other hokey misconceptions surrounding joy. Instead, it’s the way to make positive changes—and to make them last.

We run an emotional health and wellness company called Enjoyco, where we see clients who want good things for their lives. They want to get a job that honors their passions. They want their bodies to be fit and healthy. They want their spiritual lives to be marked by fervor and enthusiasm. They want relationships that feed their soul. The problem is, they often start their quest for change with disempowering emotions like shame, guilt, and fear.

They're afraid of what will happen if they don't find a job soon. They shame themselves into going to the gym. They feel guilty if they miss a day of Bible reading. And these feelings of shame, guilt, and fear get in the way of intimacy in their relationships. These disempowering emotions sabotage them, creating patterns that lead them further from the change they want.

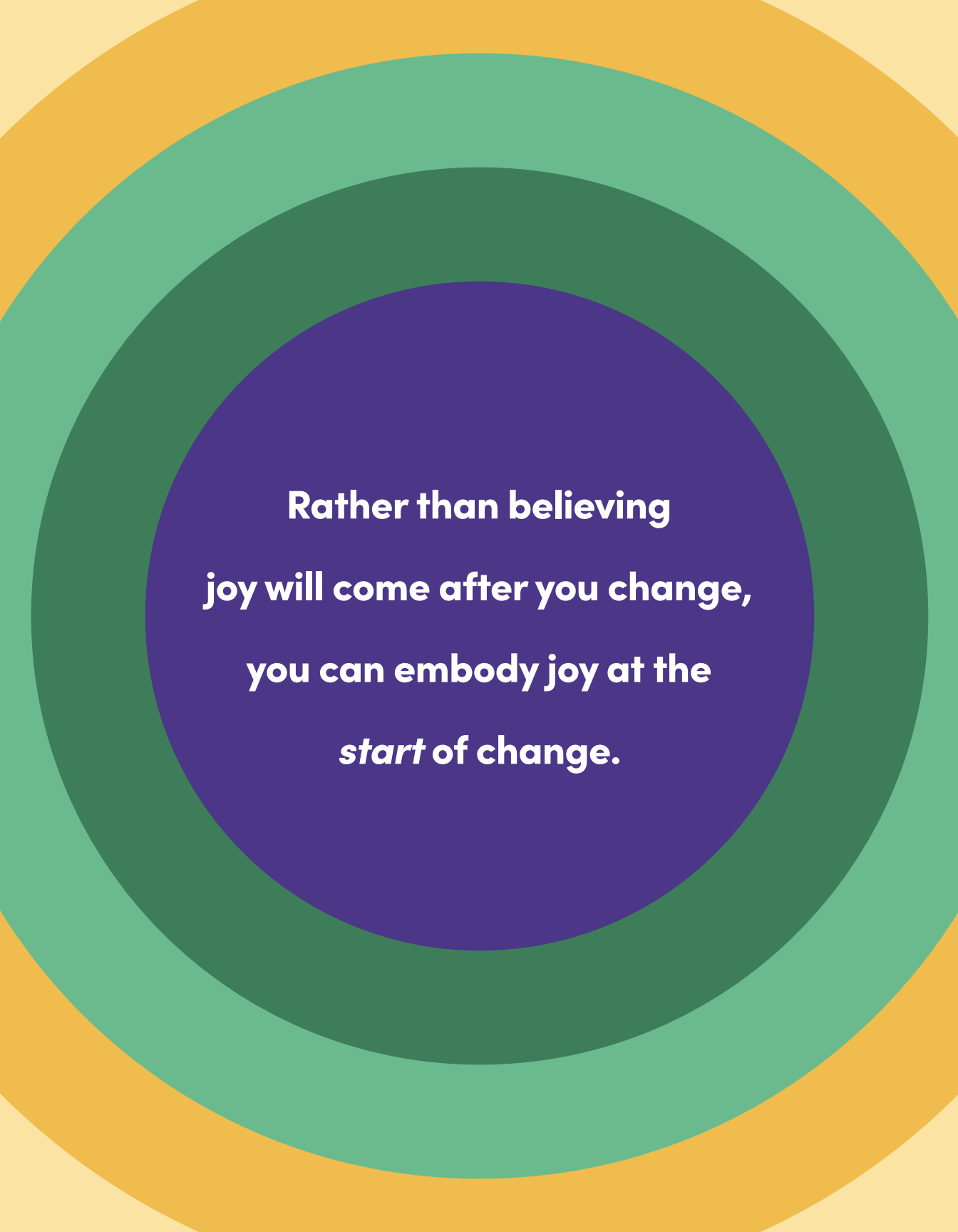
Starting from joy simply means putting empowering emotions—namely, joy—at the onset of positive change. Rather than believing joy will come after you change, you can embody joy at the *start* of change.

You might be thinking, *I don't struggle with shame, guilt, and fear*. But if you're stuck in old patterns, it's likely that disempowering emotions are under the surface. Maybe you want to change your relationship with your finances, but you keep spending blindly without creating a plan. You want to change the way you show up in your marriage and parenting, but you keep tuning out emotionally when your spouse or kids bring up hard topics. You want to have good boundaries at work, but any time your job gets stressful, you compromise and overwork. You've tried to change before, but no matter what you do, you keep getting stuck.

Not only that, but any results you've managed to accomplish are quick to disappear. The weight you lost from that last diet has all come back. The steps you took to decrease your dependence on your phone are now out the window. The habits you built to read your Bible and pray more have washed away in the busyness of life. You just haven't found a way to make positive change stick for you.

If this sounds like your story, we invite you to start from joy instead.

Over the years, we've studied how shame, guilt, and fear sabotage the change we want in life. We might experience shame for continually repeating harmful actions or for feeling certain emotions we think we shouldn't have. We might feel guilty for not being grateful enough for what we have. We might hear the voice of fear paralyzing us from taking the next right step. The way to counteract these emotions is to know the path back to joy.



**Rather than believing
joy will come after you change,
you can embody joy at the
start of change.**

This is where the seven principles for starting from joy come in. They're meant to combat these disempowering emotions at every entry point so you can get back to joy in your journey to positive change. They are:

- * **End the motivation of shame, guilt, and fear.**
- * **Be curious with your emotions.**
- * **Interrupt your loops.**
- * **Challenge false scripts.**
- * **Call out the Judge.**
- * **Find your Joyful Purpose.**
- * **Make it fun.**

We wrote the book *Start from Joy* to show anyone who's burned out from positive change that there can be a different approach. Instead of feeling pressure to change, you can embrace a lighter spirit. Instead of repeating old patterns, you can get rid of shame, guilt, and fear, and find lasting change. Instead of putting off joy to the future, you can build a fulfilling life today, before anything about your life changes.

The purpose of this guided journey is to help you put these principles into practice. We don't just want you to be inspired by these ideas; we want you to be able to apply them to your own life. In this book you'll find practical tools to help you experience the change you desire. We've developed these proprietary tools in our work at Enjoyco, and they have been successfully used

by our clients. In this guided journey, you'll learn how to use tools such as the Negativity Loop, the Boundaries Planner, the W.I.L.L., and more.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This guided journey is intended to be used in conjunction with the primary book, *Start from Joy*. We recommend reading *Start from Joy* first and then using the guided journey to apply the principles to your life in an area where you're seeking positive change, as it's helpful to know how all the principles work together when going through the guided journey. Or you can work through a session in this guidebook after reading the corresponding chapter in the main book. This is especially helpful if you're going through this guidebook with a group.

Each of the seven sessions focuses on a start-from-joy principle. Following a brief introduction to each principle, you'll find group discussion questions and an exercise to apply the principle to your circumstances.

This book can be used with a group or individually. After years of study, we've learned that joy is most often found in community. When we walk through life with others, joy becomes more real and tangible. We believe that when groups gather around these principles, they can make positive changes together.

That said, the guided journey can also be used on your own. If you're going through these sessions individually, we recommend carving out a quiet part of your day to do this work. Treat yourself to a coffee, find one of your favorite spots, and work through the group discussion questions as journal prompts. Then go through the exercises.

ARE YOU READY FOR A FRESH START?

A therapist friend once told me (Neal) that when you're sledding and you've been down a hill multiple times, your sled is almost forced to go down the path that's been carved in the snow. Committing to the work of healing, she

said, is like pouring fresh snow on the hill so you're free to travel wherever you want to go.

That's our hope for you as you read *Start from Joy* and work through this guided journey: that this experience will be like pouring a fresh coat of snow on paths you've traveled for ages. You don't have to repeat old patterns. The past doesn't have to dictate your future. You can be free to travel wherever you want to go.

You can lay down the heavy burden you've been carrying so you can live lighter and freer . . . while also making your dreams a reality.



SESSION
1

END THE MOTIVATION OF SHAME, GUILT, AND FEAR

A deeper look at chapters 1–2 of Start from Joy

CLAUDIA WAS HAVING A DAY.

It had started off well. She made it to work on time, with her favorite latte in hand. Her email wasn't overflowing, and her coworkers' spirits were light. But all it took was one meeting to derail her day. Her boss called out a mistake she'd made on a client project. Not only was this publicly humiliating, but she couldn't believe she'd done it in the first place.

Taking in her coworkers' judgmental glances, she told herself, *I'm so stupid. I have to do better.*

When Claudia got home, her day got worse. Already filled to the brim with negativity, she snapped at her two boys when they made a mess in the living room. They retreated to their rooms, feeling crushed. In her head, a familiar voice resounded, *I can't believe I did that. I have to do better.*

Now she felt flooded. An attempt to talk with her husband turned into a

sharp dispute. He walked off, leaving her alone with her thoughts. *I'm scared we're growing apart. I have to do better.*

At work and at home, she wanted to do better, to *be* better. She wanted to have a strong relationship with her husband and her boys, and she wanted to feel confident at her job. But instead of offering herself the forgiveness and kindness that would make this change possible, she beat herself up. Like most of my (Carly's) clients, Claudia falsely believed that if she wasn't hard on herself for her mistakes, she wouldn't change.

What she didn't realize was that by using shame, guilt, and fear as motivators, she was only making positive change harder for herself.

A NEW APPROACH TO CHANGE

When I (Carly) introduce the start-from-joy approach to my clients, I teach them a new way to go about positive change. I help them remove the emotional charge of shame, guilt, and fear so they can pursue positive change with joy.

The concept might sound simple, but it doesn't happen automatically. Many of us don't want to—or don't know how to—let go of shame, guilt, and fear. We've spent too long in a self-improvement culture that preaches results above everything. We believe that if we let go of these negative emotions,

we'll be “too soft” on ourselves and change won't happen. What we miss is that while pain is part of change, pain isn't a lasting motivator.

We often use shame, guilt, and fear as motivators when we're looking for fast results. When the end result is all we care about, we're willing to employ any means to get it. To a degree, this strategy works. Yet inevitably it backfires. While

shame, guilt, and fear can bring quick results, they don't lead to lasting, satisfying change—the kind you feel good about in the end.

When shame, guilt, and fear are motivators for change, they lead to self-sabotage.

For instance, someone might shame their body so they'll work out (*Ugh, I'm so fat. I need to go to the gym*). They might go to the gym but at the cost of wounding their view of themselves. Someone might guilt themselves into reading their Bible and praying because they forgot the day before (*I feel bad for missing my devotion time yesterday—I'll do better tomorrow*). They might check the box but at the cost of true intimacy with God. Or someone might scare themselves into anxiously pursuing their partner after feeling disconnected (*If I don't reach out to her, I'll lose her forever*). This might make them feel better in the moment but at the cost of denying the relationship the space it needs to grow.

When shame, guilt, and fear are motivators for change, they lead to self-sabotage.

TOXIC EMOTIONS VS. HEALTHY EMOTIONS

At this point, you may be wondering if these emotions of shame, guilt, and fear are all bad. The Bible says there's a positive side to these feelings when viewed through the right lens.

Shame can lead to repentance and humility. The healthy side of shame says we aren't enough on our own and points us in humility to Jesus. This truth is illustrated in Psalm 51:1-2: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."

Guilt can lead to forgiveness of sins. The healthy side of guilt acknowledges we've done wrong but points us to the grace of Jesus. The Bible says, "If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness" (1 John 1:9, NLT).

Fear can lead to wisdom. The healthy side of fear says we can't fully plan our own way, but God is in control of everything. This is illustrated in Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

Yet most of the time, we don't use these emotions in the way the Bible points to. Instead . . .



Why do we hold on to the toxic side of these emotions? If Jesus washed away the shame that leads to self-hatred, why do we choose to remain in it? If he has cleansed our guilt, why do we continue to heap it on ourselves? And if his perfect love casts out fear, why do we let fear rule our lives?

We might hold on to shame, guilt, and fear because of what was modeled to us, because these emotions give us quick results, or because we bond with others over them. We assume that holding on to these emotions in our positive-change journey will put us in control of our lives. But shame, guilt, and fear are healthy only when they lead us back to God. Toxic shame, guilt,

and fear, on the other hand, point us back to ourselves. When we motivate ourselves with these emotions, we buy into the idea that we have complete power to change ourselves.

The more we try to be the saviors of our own life, the more we pile on the pressure to change. It's to this end that Jesus says, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."¹

Jesus' heart is to take the burden of toxic shame, guilt, and fear away from us. The first principle for starting from joy is to end these motivations

Shame, guilt, and fear are healthy only when they lead us back to God.

START FROM JOY GUIDED JOURNEY

3. How do you balance your personal agency (your responsibility to act) with trust in God?

4. Can you share about a time when you experienced change that stuck? What do you attribute that positive change to?

5. Think about Jesus' promise that his yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT). What would it look like for you to pursue change with this perspective in mind?

6. Have you been part of groups in the past that have used shame, guilt, and fear as motivators for change? What were the results, both long-term and short-term?

EXERCISE: EXPLORE YOUR MOTIVATIONS

You can answer the following questions using the blank spaces provided to determine how shame, guilt, and fear have guided your journey toward positive change to this point and what you need to move forward. Answer these questions individually.



LOOKING BACK

Claudia's reliance on old motivators could only change once she got clarity on how they hadn't worked in the past. Reflect on how these motivators have showed up in your positive-change journeys.

When was a time you felt pressured to change?

What did you do to try to bring about this change?

What emotions drove this desire to change?

What setbacks did you experience during this process?
How did you respond to those challenges?

Did you achieve results? If so, how long did the change last?

What patterns do you notice about your quest for positive change?



LOOKING FORWARD

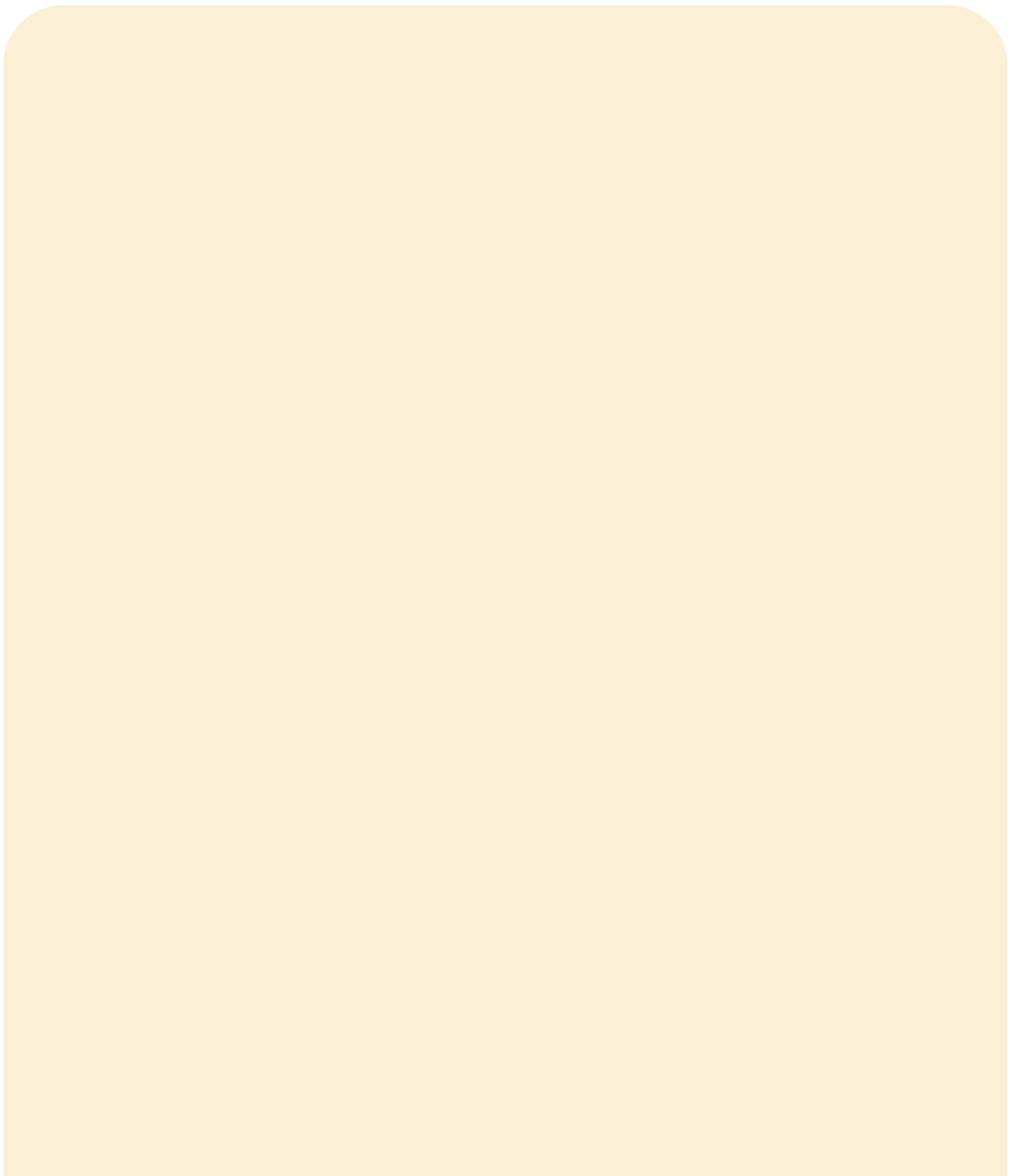
Claudia didn't want to be hard on herself—she simply didn't know any other way. When she worked with me (Carly), we got to the root of the emotions driving her self-sabotage. Eventually she was able to recognize these patterns in her life, and she realized that being hard on herself wasn't working. Instead of looking back, she started envisioning the future she hoped for. How did she want to approach these circumstances in the future? What would it look like if she weren't hard on herself and instead quickly returned to joy?

You, too, can shift your thinking to your desires for the future. When you clarify what you want and how you want to feel, the destination becomes clearer.

What is something you currently want to change in your life?
Write out your specific goal.

SESSION 1 : END THE MOTIVATION OF SHAME, GUILT, AND FEAR

Imagine that you did it. You achieved this positive change without beating yourself up or using shame, guilt, and fear as motivators. You centered yourself around joy and changed your life in a way that felt great all the way through. You handled setbacks with joy. Now write a congratulations letter to your future self, detailing the steps you took and the way it felt to reach this milestone.





**Let's make
the past a memory
and the future
a reality.**