

Preface

Since I founded laughter yoga in 1995, it has expanded around the world. Thousands of people have now trained in it and this has led to an explosion of new ideas and creative approaches with it.

I first met Joe in 2002 when he was already running laughter workshops, and I was happy to introduce him to laughter yoga. Since then he has continued to use laughter yoga creatively and expansively, and he continues to be a pioneer here.

This book contains 7 insights from his 15 years laughter yoga experience. I am delighted to be asked to write a preface, and to be able to support this pioneering approach.

Dr Madan Kataria, founder & President of Laughter Yoga.

Introduction.

'It's time to take laughter seriously', said the founder of laughter yoga, Dr Madan Kataria.

Laughter yoga is now more than 20 years old and has benefitted millions of people worldwide.

I have been a laughter yoga practitioner for over 15 years and have worked with individuals and groups worldwide. This book is based on that experience, and gives you practical laughter yoga tips and insights for a more relaxed, fulfilling, and happier life.

It gives you simple psychological, emotional, physical and spiritual practices you can use on your own.

It shows you underlying principles, so you can develop your own 'way'. It is light on instruction and strong on encouragement.

There are tips and insights for mind, body, emotions and spirit. I find one or other of these works irrespective of time, place, company, mood and so on.

This book combines laughter yoga & other laughter practices with emotional wellness, resilience, and mindfulness techniques. I use, practise and teach these every day.

Every technique mentioned in this book can be personalised so it suits you. They can all be expanded, moulded, and developed to suit your own life, in any circumstances, and at any moment.

The result for you is a happier, more relaxed, and fulfilling life.

Let's get started – and remember to use the resource list at the end of the book?

Chapter 1

Laughter yoga & Happiness tip 1 – ‘Permission to Enjoy’.

Often the biggest obstacles to being happier are in your own mind – are your own mind?

When you give yourself permission to enjoy, life changes instantly. When you take this immediate, simple, and often overlooked step, one guaranteed result is an immediate lightening of your mood.

Doesn't your life feel better when you give yourself permission to enjoy it?

What generally follows almost immediately is smiling, followed by laughter. All this by just a small tweak to your mindset.

‘Permission to enjoy’ means putting enjoyment and laughter up your priority scale. It means remembering to enjoy the ride, not just to head for the destination seriously, glumly, in resentment or even fear.

It means to take occasional little bits of the most precious and irreplaceable quality in your life – your time – and spend it on appreciating the journey we're experiencing.

‘Permission to enjoy’ means beating back stress, over-seriousness, anxiety and the ‘blues’, by flicking a simple mind switch.

Use it as a mantra. ‘I give myself permission. I give myself permission to enjoy my life.’

Say it to yourself now and see if you feel different.

To help make this experience real and more tangible, have a look round your environment, wherever you are, and see what you can find that brings a smile to your lips.

It's even better if you can find something, anything at all, that elicits a little chuckle. If you can't find anything, chuckle about that.

Set a ‘Permission to enjoy’ alarm/reminder on your phone at least once a day.

Choose one place at home where you put up a ‘Permission to enjoy’ sticker.

Practice giving yourself permission to enjoy your life. It'll start to feel better, you'll promote your own wellbeing, and you'll start to feel happier.

You will probably find you naturally start to smile and laugh more – more easily, more naturally and more often. As you smile more, you will receive more smiles. This is a simple and easy way of starting to improve your quality of life.

A lovely Anne Frank quotation is: *"How Wonderful It Is That Nobody Need Wait a Single Moment Before Starting to Improve the World"*.

One benefit of smiling more is you yourself start to experience this improvement instantly.