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## Editorial - The Missing Ingredient Found: The Affirmation of Joy

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## Editorial - The Missing Ingredient Found: The Affirmation of Joy



EDITORIAL

The Missing Ingredient Found:  
The Affirmation of JOY

We live in the age of the double standard, the cop out and sell out; the age of say anything, do anything to make a buck, plastic coated culture. As a result, we also live in a time of deep distrust in nearly everything; where perhaps the sneer is the growing symbol of the age.

For those living constantly in this environment, it seems there are two ways of reacting. One is to say that this condition is universal and commit the sin of Denethor: Despair. Because I believe man is primarily reasonable and noble, it seems to me those who find themselves in this state of despair and the resultant cynicism are caught between, on the one hand an objective perception of reality that is connected with their own inner sense of truth, and on the other hand, the unhealthy environment that surrounds them. Their frustration and confusion bring despair; and although they don't like the untruth around them, they accept its supposed universality and reject that inner sense of objectivity, even coming to hate it for being there to trouble them.

The second reaction is also of despair, but of a different kind. It too is aware of the tension, between the sense of objective rightness of things and the hypocrisy of our environment. (Hypocrisy cannot exist without a previous standard to judge from, I believe that standard is innately known to us.)

The second reaction doesn't lapse into the corrosive poison of cynicism. It denies that cynicism and hypocrisy are universal. It believes that some part of existence and/or the universe is free. This is even harder to do than remember what clear blue skies look like when your eyes and lungs are smarting on a very smoggy day.

If man were designed to live in a smoggy environment, his eyes and lungs would not hurt him. Man may try to adapt to pollution, but scientists say it will eventually kill him.

We have lived in the smoggy environment of cynicism so long, we have nearly forgotten that there are clear skies of meaningful values. Many just do not believe in clear skies anymore and seriously doubt they ever existed. Those who struggle to still believe, because of the daily experiences of their environment, find their belief assuming a nearly mythological form.

Then, by seeming chance, there comes upon us experiences that impress us with the very uniqueness and strangeness of life itself: experiences and ideas that are entirely unrelated to past experience and leave even the intuition at a blank, and evoke a sense of wonder or confusion and fear.

Beyond that there comes even less often (some people seem never to have experienced it) an opening to our environment. We see the clear sky with warm light clearing our anesthetized faces and minds, and with this comes a transcending feeling of immense Joy; a Joy that in a moment gives affirmation to those values that were before a hazy mythological form and makes them alive, real, and immediately intimate.

This Joy is not the mere absence or alleviation of despair. Despair is one of the prerequisites of Joy, but the absence of despair does not by itself produce Joy. We shouldn't be like the man who hit his head with a hammer because it felt so good when he stopped. Joy is not the negation of despair; it is a greater and more real (if less frequent) experience.







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III. The Experience of Joy, as it came to those in Minas Tirith:

. . . so they stood on the walls of the City of Gondor, and a great wind rose and blew. . . And the Shadow departed, and the Sun was unveiled, and light leaped forth; and the waters of Anduin shone like silver, and in all the houses of the City men sang for the joy that welled up in their hearts from what source they could not tell.

And before the Sun had fallen far from the noon out of the East there came a great Eagle flying, and he bore tidings beyond hope from the Lords of the West, crying: . . .

IV. The Goal or Final Results of Joy, as experienced by Frodo:

And the ship went out into the High Sea and passed on into the West, until at last on a night of rain Frodo smelled a sweet fragrance on the air and heard the sound of singing that came over the water. And then it seemed to him that as in his dream in the house of Bombadil, the grey rain-curtain turned all to silver glass and was rolled back, and he beheld white shores and beyond them a far green country under a swift sunrise.

