
a monthly newsletter from

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helping people create happier, more passionate lives!

Letting Go of Feeling Guilty

How many times have you used the term "Guilty Pleasures"? In the past, I know I've used that term to describe many things in my life.

Why in the world should we feel guilty about pleasure? I think the expression can be traced to our puritanical roots. In the 1920's, satirist H.L. Mencken defined *Puritanism* as "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere may be happy."

To this day, many people feel guilty about engaging in activities for their pure joy. Isn't that sad? I can't imagine a depriving myself of things that add pleasure to my life. Joyful, pleasurable pursuits give our lives satisfaction. The experience of play balances that which feels like work. Feeling joyful should be our most "natural state".

And, we need to engage in our pleasures in open, overt ways! If we feel guilty about our pleasures, our instincts are to hide, limit and be secretive. That makes our pleasures feel "bad" - and causes us to feel "bad" about ourselves.

What if we decided to change our thinking about our pleasures? What if we choose the term "Innocent Pleasure" instead?

Innocent pleasures feel like fun. Innocent pleasures bring us happiness and delight. Innocent pleasures indicate things we love to do for the pure enjoyment of the experience. In many ways, innocent pleasures define who we are and help us make choices that support our feelings of well-being.

PLAYTIME

What are your Innocent Pleasures? Make a list of the things you love to do for the pure enjoyment of the activity.

Here are some of my Innocent Pleasures:

- Knitting
- Spending Time with my Husband and 4-Legged Kids
- Watching American Idol
- Baseball Games
- Ice Hockey
- Afternoon Coffee

I would list more, but it's your playtime!

Once you have created a list of your Innocent Pleasures, could you invite yourself to participate in at least one item from your list each and every day? Could you guarantee yourself a moment of bliss every day? How would your life change if you KNEW you were going to enjoy a pleasurable experience every single day?

Innocent Pleasures add so much to our lives.