



Session 2

Tool #1: Building Joy

What is joy?

From your brain's perspective, joy is something that happens on the right side of your brain.

- The right side of the brain is like radar. Its job is to recognize what is important enough to give my focus to.
 - The left side of the brain is about focus.
 - Philippians 4:8 – put your focus on what there is to appreciate.
 - There is a very close relationship between appreciation and joy.
1. We need a really big **joy bucket** in our brain.
 - a. The primary tool for growing a big joy bucket is appreciation.
 - b. Maturity is characterized by four RARE habits.
 - i. Remain relational
 - ii. Act like yourself
 - iii. Return to joy
 - iv. Endure hardship well
 - c. Begin growing a big joy bucket by practicing appreciation.
 - i. 5 minutes
 - ii. 2 times each day (ideally 3 times)
 - iii. 30 days (ideally 90 days)
 - d. GAMES acrostic for practicing appreciation.
 - i. **G**ratitude (present)
 - ii. **A**nticipation (future)
 - iii. **M**emories (past)
 - iv. **E**xperiences (creativity)
 - v. **S**inging





2. We need well-developed **joy pathways**.

- Negative emotions take place in the back of the brain
- Joy happens in the front of the brain.
- We need pathways back to joy from each of six big negative emotions.
 - Shame
 - Anger
 - Despair
 - Sadness
 - Anxiety/Fear
 - Disgust

- We build pathways back to joy with the VCR process.
 - As infants we need **external regulation**. Someone else needs to validate and comfort us so that we recover.
 - As children we practice **co-regulation**. Others notice when I am upset and help me recover so that I learn how to comfort myself.
 - As adults, we practice **self-regulation**. This means we can bounce back from moderate emotions on our own.
 - **V**alidate
 - Name the emotion.
 - Identify how big the emotion is.
 - **C**omfort
 - Make the problems smaller and thus more manageable.
 - **R**ecover
 - Our brains want to recover relationally. We want someone to be happy to be with us as we go through hard things.

