

On Focus

I have a growing suspicion that I probably struggle with adult ADHD.

- ◆ My mom and sister both have it.
- ◆ I regularly jump on ideas and commit to carrying them out, without fully weighing the level of commitment required.
- ◆ My house usually looks like I've spent the last two weeks battling a poltergeist. I blame my kids for the mess...but I'm pretty sure they are only half of the problem.
- ◆ I live constantly with about seventeen gajillion irons in the fire. I am excited about every single one of them. And it is hard to focus on any of them. So I avoid them all until the absolute last possible moment – that moment when even the things that I enjoy don't actually bring me joy, because by the time I get around to them, they have become “have tos” instead of “get tos.”
- ◆ I *always* have a cup of strong coffee in hand.

In a 2017 episode of *The Road Back to You* podcast, Marriage and Family Therapist Chris Gonzalez reflects on his experiences with work and workflow; with energy and attention. “It sounds pathological when I say it out loud,” he remarks, “but I get energy from avoiding the thing I don't want to do. I get very creative. Some of the best thoughts I have happen when I am avoiding this other necessary thing. If I could always have some important thing to avoid, I could probably be a genius.”¹

I can relate.

In his book *Alive with Joy*, sports psychologist Billy Streen argues that the first step in

rediscovering – and stepping into – a life of joy is to pay attention to the things that bring us energy and that capture our attention. Streen focuses primarily on the physical body (eating foods that nourish; drinking plenty of water; getting adequate quality sleep; practicing mindfulness)², but I would add that

there is also a spiritual component. Especially for those of us who's attention tends to be a bit...well...scattered.

Experiencing joy involves intentionally placing ourselves in a position to be energized by the things that naturally “set our hearts ablaze” or “make our souls sing.” It involves being nourished by the things of life that give life – and giving ourselves permission to do the things that we enjoy – even when the “need to do” list is already a mile long (and before the “get tos” become the “need tos.”)

At its core, it involves learning to pause and revel in delight, allowing our energy and attention to grow and to be drawn toward a God of deep and abiding joy.



Questions for Reflection:

1. When you get busy, overwhelmed, exhausted, or bored, where do you notice your attention being drawn?
2. What is it that brings you energy, or “makes your soul sing?”
3. If you could spend time right now doing one thing—anything—what would it be? For what is your soul longing right now?

¹ Ian Morgan Cron and Suzanne Stabile, “The Enneagram and Therapy: A dialogue with Chris Gonzalez,” January 18, 2017, in *The Road Back to You: Looking at Life through the Lens of the Enneagram*, podcast, MP3 audio, 43:02.

² Billy Streen, *Alive with Joy! 5 Elements to Re-Charge, Re-Connect, and Re-Discover* (self-pub, 2018), pp. 13-24).