

## Where did it go?

As a newborn baby, our souls bounce gleefully into another chance to experience life on Planet Earth. A new body! Sights! Smells! Tastes! Music! Animals! Sunshine on flowers! Bicycles! Another chance to experiment with a body and all the great things it can do!

What happens to this unbridled enthusiasm? We see it in every little child, but how many adults do you know who exhibit any enthusiasm for anything? Where does it go?

It gets socialized out of us. They don't mean to, but the souls who made it to Planet Earth before us were socialized, too, and they're just passing it down. As a collective, we've unconsciously created a world view of "how it is" and inflict these arbitrary rules and guidelines on all our young. We tell our babies that they're "good" when they do something we want them to do (like sleep through the night or drink the whole bottle); we tell our little ones "no" and "don't do that" when they're doing something we consider inappropriate, like reaching for an interesting object or running joyfully through the house. We insist that our growing bundles of joy sit quietly and obey the teacher, when they're bubbling over with ideas, curiosity, and energy.

Not to despair – times are changing, and more awareness is creeping into our social structures. We're creating new modalities for learning and relating to each other, and are beginning to recognize the sacredness of the human experience.

But what about you and me, grownups who were socialized until our natural joy and enthusiasm were squashed? Is it gone, never to be recovered? Heck no. Joy and enthusiasm are inherent in our makeup, sitting deep inside waiting to be uncovered. That process begins with the knowledge that, truly, life was meant to be lived with creativity and self-expression. Awareness of the joy inside allows it to start peeking out. Then comes a de-programming of all those voices that said you weren't good enough, smart enough, compliant enough, *anything* enough. All those messages were, after all, just something somebody once told you, no more "true" than what you choose to believe about yourself now. It's time to tell ourselves the NEW truth: That we are beautiful expressions of the Divine, here to experience human life in all its wonder.

It's our birthright.