

Amidst Cancer and Scans, I Gotta Say This: I'm Joyful!

We have a responsibility to share joy, writes brain cancer blogger Adam Hayden, adding that we must also expand our kinship relations.

August 7, 2025 By [Adam Hayden](#)

"I'm joyful!"

I said, almost surprising myself.

"And if you're joyful, you might as well say it."

"I guess."

I backpedaled, almost embarrassed that I admitted I was joyful.

Admitted.

You know what I mean?

Often, we conflate concern, with compassion, with care for others, and the circumstances of our lives.

And not only our lives, but the lives of others who we count among ours, shared by proximity, by family, who we feel connected to, and why we do, community, people with shared values, or other shared traits.

Kinship with others is a big deal.

I'd wager to say we are in a crisis of kinship.

A crisis of kinship is an inability to see beyond our natural bonds to make room for others to join in our kin relations. This is more about those who define the relations than it is about those who are included. That is, inclusion or exclusion has more to do with who's doing the counting than who is counted.

The wider the net we cast, the more connected we may feel. Yet, as our kin relations stretch further, so too must our moral imagination to confront the reality that not everyone shares our joy.

This raises a challenging question: who are we to participate in joy?

But here, like my backpedaling with my therapist, I had things the wrong way round. It is not that we do not deserve joy because others are in distress. Indeed, there is no balancing the scales of our own wellbeing. There is joy, in abundance.

To be embarrassed to say that we are joyful is not the guilt of our good fortune but the responsibility to share it.

I have lived a long time with a difficult thing, and I've lived so long that often I feel guilty, even distressed, in my joyful moments. This isn't about me having a greater share of well-being. Second thoughts in evaluations of joy are reminders of service owed to others because what could be more joyful than sharing well-being with kin?

"I'm joyful!"

I said, almost surprising myself.

"And if you're joyful, you might as well say it."

The lessons of this little letter are to speak joy, share joy, and expand your kinship relations.

Paradoxically, you cannot run out of what fills others up.

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