



Jars of Joy, Hope and Happiness /2

Description

More inspirational quote jar ideas for life in a pandemic lockdown

By **Wanda Potrykus**

When we stake a claim to the needs and wants of our life, we may easily fail to live up to the standards of others. Empathy and connectedness, however, might bridge the gap, by stirring our consciousness of the sensitive queries and by assessing the intricate framework of our surroundings with their countless, prickly nitty-gritties.

– Erik Pevernagie, artist, writer

Jars, jugs, cans and cups can be all be prepared to fill a lot of needs

Or they can make you stop, think and maybe learn and laugh. The permutations are endless. Here are some examples of how various idea jars can be utilized. Other examples abound on the Internet. For instance:

- **Laughter jars**

Create a joke jar – spend time finding short jokes, or mottoes to include and thus help make others laugh at times of need.

- **Change a mindset jar**

If a child or adult is feeling angry or sad or bored, prepare a jar with ideas to potentially help alleviate that mindset.

- **Create an encouragement or positivity jar**

We all need a positive encouragement or maybe a little emotional pick me up at times, whether we are grandparents, parents, children, friends, or room-mates. Think how a [jar of “Positive Affirmations”](#) or a



“Pick me up” jar full of complimentary statements or remarks could help turn a grey day into a one shot through with a ray of sunshine.

- **Activity jar**

Colour-code the activities choosing those your family do in places such as ‘indoor at home’ or ‘outdoor at home’ (i.e. garden or alleyway), as well as when life goes back to normal, ‘indoor somewhere else’ (e.g. cinema, bowling or skating) or ‘outdoor somewhere else’, such as the lake, park or beach.



Positivity jar – Image: PowerofPositivity.com

- **Mental health wellness jar**

This is employed as an aide to help counter anxiety and depression. An [example](#) of one of these using colour-coded popsicle sticks instead of slips of paper went around the world a couple of years ago from North America to Europe to Australia.

- **Gratitude or thank you jar**

“Gratitude is riches. Complaint is poverty,” said Doris Day. On a small piece of paper, write down each day what you are grateful for and place it in your jar. At the end of the year, open it up and wonder at your life-affirming year.

- **It can be a game jar**

Potentially a way to stop the squabbling about what game (board or otherwise) to play or perhaps a solution to rationing screen time. Or maybe a method of choosing characters or ideas for a game of charades for those who have difficulty in knowing what subject to mime about.

- **Images and imagination jars**



Also, your jar doesn't have to contain only written quotes. Children or anyone else can create, draw or cut from a no longer required photo (but be careful here and be very certain that photo is indeed no longer needed in its original form) any number of small images and drawings, such as a butterfly, or animal, a flower or a tree.

An image that brings a bit of beauty to life in an instant or one that makes you laugh. Helpful when the mind runs to darker things. Then take the opportunity to look closer at the beauty of a butterfly, bird or insect wing. Maybe describe the image to someone else in conversation around the kitchen or coffee table, or by phone, Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp, etc.



Starling – Image: Martin Sepion – Unsplash

- **Learning jars**

I was reminded one day recently of the iridescent beauty inherent in starling feathers. Until then I didn't much appreciate starlings, but for a moment there, looking at one of their feathers, I realized they are quite beautiful birds in their own loud, noisy way. So I took the time to read up about them. I learnt how they are immigrants to North America, just as I am, and as some of you are. How all the starlings in North America belong to the same gene pool i.e. they are all related. Theoretically, it should potentially cause developmental issues with succeeding generations of birds but so far in the 130 years since they were first introduced into Central Park, NYC, in 1890, those problems haven't yet surfaced. They are now over 200 million strong and thriving.

I also learned starlings use their songs, whirrs, whistles and warbles to attract mates. In addition, they have an amazingly wide range of sounds that include chattering, chirping, purring, rattling, screaming and trilling sounds but they are also talented mimics that copy the calls of about twenty other birds types. Who knew? Not me. But now I do.



Treasure jar – Image: craftster.org

Treasure jars

They can contain a collection of small 'found' objects such as stones or shells, a feather, a nut such as an acorn or a 'conker', cones or twigs. Those small treasures picked up by children (and adults) during a walk and when brought home can be placed in a jar or container. And when they are next pulled out that person has to describe what the item means to them, or else has to come up with a story about it. The story doesn't have to be real but it can be, just as objects in and of themselves can be great imagination developers, which is why they became 'treasures' in the first place.

Create a dedicated shelf for your happiness jars

Jars can become a decorative element. Ranged on a shelf they become an eye-catching display even if they are not always in use.

It takes hands to build a house but only hearts to build a home.

– Unknown

Quote jars can be utilized several times a day



No need to pull out an inspirational quote or idea only once a day. Quotes can be found for a whole range of needs and accessed several times a day. Based on the ubiquitous job jar already used by many families, the inspirational quote jar can be a fun activity for the whole family. Researching and writing up all the various sayings or jokes takes time as can the task of decorating the jars or boxes or other containers.

Why not exchange jars?

An activity like this might be especially helpful for older people as we are the ones who are likely to have to self isolate or distance ourselves for the longest time and we will need to be creative in keeping ourselves occupied. Grandparents, why not prepare some joy jars for your grand-kids? And grandchildren why not set to and create a happiness or hope jar or jars for grandparents, or for aunts or uncles, or friends? As the saying goes: "It takes hands to build a house but only hearts to build a home."

Use the jars to remind your loved ones that even if you are apart they still have a place in the family 'home' in your heart. They can be picked up and delivered at pre-set times. Lovely to open a door and find an interesting surprise gift such as this; and it's one way to let an isolated loved one know you have been thinking about and missing them. And if you're worried about transmitting the virus you can always [let the jars sit for up to a maximum of five days](#) before opening, just to be extra careful.

Jars of joy or simply job jars

Take a leaf from organization guru Marie Kondo and ask yourself what sparks joy or ask your children what sparks joy in their lives? Write their responses down and put them in a jar. Then, at the appropriate time when the thought is picked out, whoever added that thought or idea to the jar can take the time to tell everyone else in the family why that thought, or idea, or activity brings joy to their lives. You might be surprised about what is revealed.



Activity jar – Image: Jessie Russell

One person or group activity

What is also good about this idea is that creating a quote or ideas, joke or job jar can be an activity for one person or several. If you are alone, you can use it not only for the reasons listed above but also to help you to stop



procrastinating about that potential never-ending “to do” list.

Conquer procrastination

Listening to the radio as I do each day, I have heard people say: “It’s strange, I have a list of things to do or could be doing during this time of self-isolation but can’t seem to make myself get around to doing any of them.”

Well, with a job jar you can encourage yourself to do whatever task you pick out of the jar. If you are on your own, you can even ‘cheat’ a little. What I mean by that is, say the job you pick is to go shopping, maybe the weather that day isn’t good, so you don’t fancy standing in a line-up outside some store or other, well simply pop that ‘job’ back into the jar and choose yourself another activity you might prefer to do that day. But don’t exchange the job choice too many times, or you’ll never get it done, as it then becomes yet another way to procrastinate.

Skill improvement

Or if you live in a household with others, swap your ‘job’ for with someone else but only if they want to. Persuading someone to take on your ‘unwanted’ job might help you hone your negotiating skills. But remember, no sulking if they don’t want to take on your task.

Where there is life there is wishful thinking.

– Gerald F. Lieberman

Or wishful thinking?

You can have a wishful thinking jar too. American writer Gerald F. Lieberman once said: “Where there is life there is wishful thinking” while accomplished wordsmith Dr. Seuss advised: “Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind”, although that doesn’t mean you can be intentionally hurtful in your remarks.



Jollyday Jars – Image: JollydayJars.com

Thus your jar can have all those things you always thought you ‘might’ like to do if you had the time. Well now perhaps you do. Make up a wishful thinking jar and use it to help you get cracking on that Spanish or Italian or another language course you always wanted to try. Or that book or poem or song you always wanted to read or write, or quilt you wanted to make, or sweater you wanted to knit or homemade dye you wanted to try but never had



~~the time. Or perhaps experiment and make that cheese soufflé you wanted to bake?~~

Sometimes dreams can become real... or not, but the fun is always in the trying.

Vocabulary improvement jar

Learn a word a day. It can be in English or French or any other language. Make a list of words using the dictionary and write down the pronunciation (using phonetics) as well as the meaning. Practise it throughout the day. And voilà... you have just added to your vocabulary.

Children teach your parents

In many immigrant or refugee families, the children go to school (well they do when it's not a pandemic quarantine) but it's hard for their parents to do so. So kids why not create a vocabulary jar for your parents and use it to teach them one word, or more, a day, thus helping them to learn or improve their vocabulary in English and/or French to help them with daily life in their new land?

The is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of you.

– Maya Angelou

Parents or grandparents teach your children

The same can be done in those families who feel their children are not learning or are losing the language of the country they emigrated from. Use a language jar to help them with their vocabulary or take the time to teach them a song or poem or tell them a story about your or your parents' time living there. As African-American writer, poet, dancer, civil rights activist Maya Angelou said: "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside of you".



Three happy jars – Image: Etsy.com

Storytelling jar

Parents, tired of reading the same story over and over or watching the same DVD? Create a storytelling jar and use it to pick what bedtime or naptime story is going to be told that day. It might help with the boredom factor (on your side if not your child's) and your child or children might then discover a new favourite story or movie.

Don't know where to start?

Free printable quotes are available from various websites such as [CJO Photo](#). It should help you get started and you can always research other ideas on the Internet and in books.

And kids if you don't understand what some of the quotes mean ask a parent, an older sibling or friend, grandparent or relative to explain. That might be another fun learning activity.

Plus you can always make up some inspirational quotes of your own and add them to the jar, with your name on them as attribution. My son's words have inspired me on many an occasion.

I hope you find some of these ideas interesting and fun. Happy jar of joy making everyone!

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