

The GLIMMER GUIDE

by Christin Rice

I did not invent the term GLIMMER, but when I first heard it [HERE](#), I felt an instant connection to something that made sense intuitively but I never had language for before. I see a lot of joyful possibility in glimmers, precisely because they are simple and free and can be found right inside the life you are already living. Join me in this exploration of the What, Why, and How of glimmers. Throughout you'll find prompts to find your own meaning and way to use glimmers to unlock more energy to create what you want in life.

So What Exactly Is A Glimmer?

Let's do a short, nerdy exploration of the word itself. I claim no professional understanding or training in such things, but I really like learning about words that carry whole worlds of meaning inside them.

Glimmer in its original meaning is either Proto-Germanic or of Scandinavian origin, as best I can tell from the internet. *Golman* (Proto-Germanic), *glimra* (Swedish), and *glimre* (Danish) are some of the source words for the English version I'm most familiar with. It translates to a dim or flickering light, or to shine faintly, or give a soft light. It can also be understood as a mashup (or portmanteau word) of gleam and shimmer, which is just fun. All that makes me think of a soft twinkly light that draws your attention and makes you a bit curious about it.

Language is ever-evolving through necessity and creativity. I first came upon the term Glimmer as we are using it here it in August of 2023. AMA Queensland (which supports doctors in Queensland Australia) shared a post about glimmers as the opposite of triggers and a source of positive impact

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for our mental health and well-being and even a way to balance out some of the triggers we can experience in life.

Here's how I define glimmers: instant joy portals, the opposite of a trigger. If a trigger is something that sets you off, zinging you to a dark place, a glimmer zings you to a place of joy, or calm, or peace, or a simple deep, good feeling.

Practically speaking, just as a trigger can be a person, a smell, a sight, a setting, a circumstance, a person, etc., so can glimmers. That original AMA post listed things like petting or cuddling a pet, a moment in nature, hearing a favorite song, eating a favorite food. I think it comes down to something that engages our senses in a particular way, because senses are superhighways between our bodies and brains.

That sensory element is perhaps what sets glimmers apart from mindfulness or gratitude, though I think those three—glimmers, mindfulness, and gratitude—share a relationship. Noticing a glimmer is a concrete way to engage with your life. They are a way to feel the good that is already present in your life. And they are free and accessible to everyone. They are already present in your life; you just have to notice them. And by noticing them, you find even more.

An important clarifier here: glimmers are not just a pretty way to live out toxic positivity. They are instead the experience of joy that can live right alongside sorrow and grief and bad days and bad years. In my typing of the word *glimmer* into my phone with its itty bitty keys, it frequently appears first as *glummers*. Which is how I've come to think of toxic positivity.

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Glummers: a forced denial of reality wrapped up in a silver lining that makes yourself or others more comfortable than the truth. Glimmers instead help you live inside your reality with more ease, more flow, more joy.

That's our starting place. Next up we'll explore why they matter, and then move on to how to cultivate them in your life.

But before we go on, a gentle warning: Intentionally inviting more joy into your life can be really, really uncomfortable. Isn't that strange? Noticing a glimmer is not difficult, it can be very, very easy in fact. But it's even easier to walk through life without noticing the good in it. And the funky fact about joy is that it's very related to sorrow. I think they might be cousins. To trust your heart to open to joy also means opening it to feel sorrow and maybe even grief that you've worked hard to keep out of sight. I want you to know that you are strong enough to feel that sorrow and grief, and you are strong enough to experience joy. If you don't feel like you can do that alone, there are people to help. A good therapist will hold space for you until you can feel safe with that sorrow and grief. A good coach will hold space for you to take action on that courage and healing and support you as you actively seek out joy.

Applying this for yourself:

What does the word "glimmer" mean to you?

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Why Glimmers Matter

In brief, I believe glimmers matter because they are empowering. They are a source of energy to support you in your life. No matter what you are trying to accomplish, be it a big new thing or simply getting through the day, glimmers can be there for you to help you through. They are an entirely free, presently available, sustainable source of energy.

They are joy portals, and joy is a [rock-solid power source](#). I'm starting to think of glimmers as a recharge station that I can plug into whenever I need.

They also matter because whatever you pay attention to expands. I first learned this concept in my Psych 101 class in community college. The premise was set up like this: if you buy a yellow truck, suddenly you will start to notice all the other yellow trucks on the road. I was very dismissive of this concept because who would buy a yellow truck? But now I get it. I love cats, therefore I spot cats in the windows of the houses I walk by all the time. I started hearing about quantum physics in a coaching class I loved and then proceeded to find it in the novel I was reading and in a reference on a show I was watching that same week. Sometimes this is even systematized: I google "best brush for detangling a child's hair" and the internet rises to the challenge in force, and the ads come looking for me well after the purchase has been made.

You can invite your brain to notice glimmers and it will reward you by noticing them more regularly. And that emerging habit of noticing glimmers – and letting the good of them all the way in – creates that refueling energy of joy that is now available to use in any way that serves you well.

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Glimmers also create a relationship with the good that is already in your life. That is a powerful antidote to the numbing that we can all fall into. I think I spent a half-decade or more in my thirties quite numb to my life. I share this in case it resonates. I was so busy with work, but not super engaged by it, more just caught up in the stress of it. And then to counteract the stress in my off-work time I'd numb out with TV, a drink, and overscheduling my social life. I made very little space for witnessing my life or feeling it. Plenty of good transpired during that time, but I didn't really let myself take it in.

Now living inside the middle chapters of my life, I'm realizing I want to pay attention to my life. I don't want to miss it. I don't want you to miss any of your life either. Which requires being awake to it. And one very gentle, easy way to do that is by noticing the glimmers.

Maybe this sounds too bold, but there's something about this time in history that I think glimmers could be a real gift in. We are in a place of emergence and integration after the worldwide experience of the Covid pandemic, living with the very real horrors of current wars, and have the shadow of a US election season ahead. If the headlines leave you feeling overwhelmed or feeling unable to move forward, glimmers can provide steppingstones to follow, so you can continue living your life AND find the strength to engage with the very real events happening in the world. They are a mental health strategy that requires nothing except the ability to notice.

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Applying this for yourself:

What is one goal you have this week?

What would achieving that goal create for you?

How could glimmers empower you in the journey of making progress on that goal?

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How To Find Glimmers

We've explored what glimmers are, and why they are important. Let's look now at how to find them and what you can do with them when you have.

I'll start with the super simple, and then build on that for those who want to take this further.

The super simple: You can train your brain to find more glimmers in life, because brains are amazing.

Step one: Notice what zings you to joy.

Step two: Pause and take it in. Let the good aaaaalllllll the way in. Into your body, into your heart, into your mind, your soul, your day.

Your brain will thank you by noticing the next glimmer. And the next. And the next. And by noticing and letting the good aaaaaalllllll the way in over and over, the way you experience your life will change. That change can unlock all the possibility we explored in the Why Glimmers Matter section.

It's really that simple. The hardest part is letting the good all the way in.

Letting the good all the way in might take some practice. And a touch of patience. So much of life just wants us to get to the next thing. So much inside us might resist actually feeling good, really good. It can bring up mis-beliefs about unworthiness. But the pause and practice of letting the

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good all the way in is where the glimmer can alchemize into the joy, the calm, the energy that fuels you in the hour, the day, the week you are living.

Before we go any further, I want you to know that it's absolutely okay to just try it on a little bit for a moment at a time. No one is handing out Glimmer PhDs. There are no Glimmer Olympics. You do not have to be the best in order to qualify. You don't even have to be good. Being able to notice the good that is already in your life is a basic right for every human. In fact, you were probably doing it since birth. If the idea of glimmers resonates with you, I think it's worth your time to explore how to experience more, so that you can access the full benefit of them in your life.

Ready to take this further? Here are some additional ideas for how to invite more glimmers into your life.

Enjoy your senses: Smell is a big joy-possibility zinger. Taste. Physical sensation. Sight. Sound. These are all glimmer conduits. So pay attention to the texture of your fleece blanket on your couch, your jaw-twinge at the thought of lemons, the way the air smells in the morning compared to the evening. Being alive to your senses is enlivening, and it helps you experience the glimmers in your life.

Enjoy your curiosity: Sometimes it's pure joy to just learn ABOUT something, not just learn how to DO something. It pries open something in our mind that we haven't considered before. Curiosity is like a lightning rod for glimmers. You can enjoy your curiosity any number of ways. My favorite way is to listen to a podcast on an unfamiliar topic – something that I'm not trying to become good at – such as [Song Exploder](#) or [Radiolab](#) or even

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[Ringside: An American Dairy Goat Podcast](#). This exploration of curiosity creates an immediate feeling of relief and wonder that there is just SO MUCH I don't know, that I never even knew existed. It could also look like trying something new – a new food, new place, new route to work. That little shift in patterns can be a real glimmer magnet.

Enjoy your point of view: Take pictures of the thing that appeals to you (and don't spend any time worrying whether other people will find it appealing). And share it with others if that feels good. Or just look back at your week in photos to practice letting the good all the way in. Because re-visiting or recalling a glimmer is an incredibly effective way to reinforce the good and reinforce the habit of being on the lookout for glimmers. Let that glimmer support you well after the moment you experience it.

Enjoy your wisdom: When a thought or feeling about the meaningfulness of life arises, savor it. When you meet a young person struggling with something you've overcome, be grateful for the point you are in your journey and wonder at all that brought you here. When something strikes you that comes from within, that lights you up, make space for it. We all carry wisdom and have since we were tiny children. Sometimes a glimmer sparks a connection with your wisdom. Be open to it.

Enjoy your noticing: The only requirement of a glimmer is to notice it. Anything beyond that is up to you. You may want to document it, note it, capture it, or name it. I personally forget things if I don't document them. My go-to methods are to take a photo with my phone, or write myself a notes on my Notes app on my phone, or journal about it later. Documenting helps me go from just witnessing something to letting it get all the way inside me. Do what works for you. Maybe that's movement, maybe it's telling a friend, maybe it's just something you do internally. Whatever it is, enjoy it. You deserve to feel the good that is present in your life.

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Enjoy your uniqueness: Glimmers are personal. What works for one person won't for another. And whatever works for you doesn't need to make sense to anyone else. Over time you might start to notice that certain things call to you, and are reliable glimmer-makers for you. Maybe it's a particular sensory experience (taste, touch, sight, etc.), or maybe it's a particular way the shadows fall on the sidewalk, or maybe it's a particular person. Now that you know that about yourself you can find those kinds of things even more intentionally.

After practicing noticing the glimmers in your life, if you want to take that practice even further, here are even more ideas that might be fun to try:

The Glimmer Walk or Run: Choose a day and a starting place. Walk or run with the intention of paying attention to what you think is beautiful. What calls to you? What do you notice? What smells, sights, sounds, feels, and tastes do you notice that make you feel good? Document it in any way that you find enjoyable (photos, notes to yourself on your Notes app, jotting in a journal, pausing long enough to memorize the look of something, telling your walking/running buddy about it, etc.).

Witness your space: Set a timer for five minutes or more and get comfy. Stay in one spot but look all around you. Notice everything. The sights, smells, tastes, touch, sounds. Choose one thing (object or sense) to focus on. Just enjoy it. Enjoy noticing that thing. If your brain or body wants to do something with it, go for it. If you just want to stare at it until the timer goes off, go for it. It's your glimmer. You don't have to understand why it's calling your attention (unless you enjoy exploring that sort of thing - then go for it!). Your only job is to pay attention to it until the timer goes off and let yourself enjoy it.

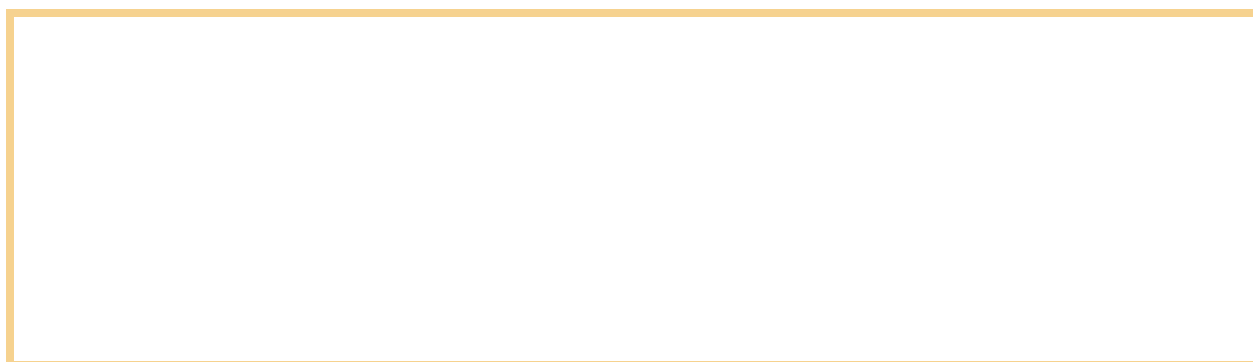
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Give yourself a glimmer challenge: Decide if you want to do this for one week or one month. Look for one glimmer a day and document it in any way that feels good to you (take a photo, share on social media, create a journal entry, etc.). When complete, look back at the entire collection and notice the reoccurring themes, if any.

Fill a glimmer jar: Choose a jar and make sure you have scraps of paper and a pen handy. If you like, choose a beautiful jar, a paper color that makes you happy, and use a glitter marker. (Can you tell I live with a five-year-old?) Or keep it simple. Write down one glimmer you noticed on each scrap of paper and place it in the jar. Once a week pull out a random scrap of paper to remind yourself of a glimmer. Let the good of that original experience all the way in again.

What idea do you want to add?



Developing your glimmer muscles will help you notice the good more frequently and that can go a long way in making each day qualitatively different in experience. And support you as you are doing your thing, whether that's big and crazy things in the world, or the simple day to day stuff.

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Applying this for yourself:

What might work for you?

What would you like to try this week?

What would be the impact of paying attention to the glimmers in your life today? This week? This year?

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May your experience of glimmers today, this week, this year, be a gift of energy and joy to you! You deserve to feel the good that is already in your life, you deserve to feel joy. I'd love to hear what it creates for you.

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if you want even more support and strategies for
creating the life you want to live!

Pay attention.

Be astonished.

Tell about it.

Mary Oliver

Click [HERE](#) to connect