

# Camp Joy Retreats

## *Letter From a Camper*

Dear Marea and Monique,

Where do I even begin?

First of all, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for gifting me one of the greatest experiences of my entire life. Before coming to Camp Joy, I felt overworked, lost, and so disconnected from my authentic self that I had forgotten what truly brought me joy. I struggled to create a life conducive to living in the moment, and genuinely connecting with others felt impossible when to-do lists and ideas of "success" and "achievement" were controlling the narrative of my life.

What I mean to say is... I've had so much trouble writing this letter because I wasn't sure how to put this incredible week into words. So, I will do my best (and please feel free to use any of this as anonymous testimonials). However, what I have come to realize is no matter how beautifully or poetically I write this recap of my experience, I could never come close to truly painting the picture of what it meant to live in the oasis you created.

I know you were looking for feedback, and I am truly sorry I can't offer constructive criticism. Instead, I thought I'd attach a note with some of my favorite parts of this priceless experience—because these reasons truly highlight what makes Camp Joy an innovative, creative, unmatched, and wonderfully unique experience. (Side note—perhaps use as a testimonial):

I believe that women are the backbone of society, often working tirelessly behind the scenes, carrying the weight of the world, and somehow making it all look effortless. Yet, this hidden labor frequently leads to traits we've come to associate with womanhood—stress-related ailments, habitual people-pleasing, and putting everyone else's needs above our own. At times, it feels like no matter how much we do, it's never quite enough.

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But this week at Camp Joy, we experienced the beautiful flip side of womanhood: the unmatched support, connection, love, and healing that emerges when we come together. In a society where we often quietly perform this grunt work without recognition, at Camp Joy, under Marea's healing guidance—woven into her prompts, meditations, and seminars—paired beautifully with Monique's lightness, humor, and joy (often the first thing to vanish in our busy lives), we rediscovered connection, presence, laughter, and joyful new experiences.

You two sisters embody the perfect yin and yang, crafting the ideal retreat for women where every need is not only met but exceeded. You showed us what becomes possible when we nourish our minds, bodies, and souls in ways we didn't even know existed. Camp Joy taught me what it truly means to live.

Even better, you never imposed your views, values, or expectations—instead, you provided the space, support, and encouragement we needed to reclaim our autonomy and build the life that's most true to us. I am 21 (almost 22) years old, and I now have a lifelong friendship with a 77-year-old. How? Because of Marea and Monique. Because of Camp Joy.

Before this journey, I had the privilege of saying that I already loved myself and enjoyed life, but after this transformative week, I never want to return to who I was—even though I loved her dearly. In fact, it's precisely because I still love her that I never wish to go back.

Camp Joy allowed me to:

- Rediscover my voice.
- Slow down enough to finally listen to what my inner self had been whispering for years, silenced by exhaustion, pressure, and expectations.
- Identify, heal, and release lingering pain that had occupied valuable internal space.

After Camp Joy, I feel lighter, freer, and fully present, able now to embrace the abundance of joy and love that live in each moment—a luxury I previously denied myself under a fundamental misunderstanding of discipline.

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Could I have found this at any retreat? Simply put, no. Camp Joy uniquely provides:

**1. Irreplaceable Inner Joy workshops led by Marea.** During this trip my spirituality deepened, not because of imposed views, but because, after spending a week under Marea's guidance, I genuinely believe she is an angel on earth—a healer, hero, educator, and leader.

**2. Permission to laugh and nourish the parts of myself** that longed to skinny-dip in a vineyard pool, something I never allowed myself before. I discovered an energy fueled by laughter, shared experiences, and fully engaging in life's joys. Previously, under misguided discipline, I restricted these joys, believing success meant endless striving. Camp Joy taught me that meaning and joy are the true fuels for motivation, far richer than caffeine, comparison, or external accolades. I learned I could be whole and still strive for more—one does not exclude the other.

**3. Self-kindness and release from superhuman standards.** At Camp Joy, surrounded by powerful and beautifully vulnerable women handpicked by Marea and Monique, I realized the beauty of humanity: we all experience good, bad, and ugly emotions. Without comparison, when we slow down and seek understanding, we see clearly—we are all the same.

**Choosing Camp Joy was the best decision I've ever made for myself.**

Camp Joy is unlike any other retreat. It perfectly balances everything we as women deeply desire but rarely even identify—let alone allow ourselves to pursue.

Monique and Marea have masterfully curated a magical week that profoundly changed my life, not only through unforgettable experiences but through priceless conversations and activities preparing me to reenter the world as my truest self. I've been reborn and now have 13 new lifelong friendships, including their incredible team.

With deepest gratitude and endless admiration,

K.C.