



PLAYFUL TOGETHER: LIGHTNESS. LAUGHTER. LOVE. LASTING.

JOT Plus is a curated collection of Adai Ad's Just One Things (JOTs) posts. Each edition shines a light on a specific theme related to building a successful marriage. It's not meant to be a complete guide, but rather a handy, focused gathering of insights from the JOTs shared up to the time of production. *Since this is a collection—not a guide—you'll notice some ideas come up again, in different ways. That's totally on purpose, because real growth often happens when we see the same truths from a few different angles.*

PLAYFULNESS: A LIGHTER WAY TO SEE LIFE

Playfulness isn't about games or goofiness—it's a mindset, an attitude. It's the choice to approach life with a bit more lightness, to soften the edges of the serious and see even the ordinary with a touch of curiosity or amusement. It doesn't mean ignoring what's hard or pretending everything is fine. It means making space for joy even in the middle of real life.

Playfulness isn't childish or careless. It's human. It's a way of staying open, creative, and connected—to yourself, to each other, and to the present moment. When you allow playfulness in, you invite energy, flexibility, and even resilience. You give life a little more room to surprise you.

It might look like laughing at a shared mishap, trying something unexpected, noticing the absurd, or finding beauty where others might not think to look. It's a gentle shift—from pressure to presence, from routine to possibility.

Playfulness isn't about avoiding responsibility. It's about making life feel more alive while being responsible. It brings levity to the weight of everyday demands and warmth to your relationships.

And it doesn't look the same for everyone. There are many types of playfulness—some bold, some quiet—which we'll explore further in this resource.



Playfulness is not a luxury.
It's a lifeline— back to joy,
back to connection,
back to what really matters.

Playfulness in marriage is more than just having fun—it's a vital ingredient that keeps the relationship emotionally alive and connected. In the busyness and responsibilities of daily life, playfulness brings lightness, humor, and a sense of shared joy. It helps couples move through stress with more ease, deepens their bond, and creates positive emotional memories that buffer against conflict.

Being playful isn't about acting silly all the time—it's about allowing space for spontaneity, laughter, and shared moments of delight. In a strong marriage, playfulness helps partners feel safe, seen, and cherished—not just as co-managers of a life, but as friends and companions who still know how to enjoy each other.

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We don't stop playing because we grow old;
we grow old because we stop playing.”

– George Bernard Shaw

THE TIMELESS BENEFITS OF PLAYFULNESS

Playfulness is important at any age. Possibly, even more so as an adult.

1. Playfulness helps to alleviate stress and promote relaxation.

Engaging in playful activities allows us to temporarily escape the burdens of adulthood, offering a respite from the constant pressure and worries. Play stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals, which can uplift our mood and create a sense of joy and contentment. This, in turn, contributes to reduced stress levels, improved resilience, and a better ability to cope with life's challenges.

2. Playfulness fosters creativity and innovation. When we embrace a playful mindset, we become more open to exploration and experimentation. Play encourages us to think outside the box, try new things, and take risks without fear of failure. By encouraging creativity, playfulness can enhance problem-solving skills, spark new ideas, and help us approach tasks and projects with a fresh perspective, leading to increased productivity and success in various aspects of life.

3. Playfulness is a social connector. Engaging in playful activities with others creates a sense of camaraderie and strengthens social bonds. It fosters a positive and light-hearted atmosphere that encourages laughter, playfulness, and a shared sense of enjoyment. Through play, we can build stronger relationships, deepen our connections with others, and even use it as a tool to resolve conflicts and improve communication within our personal and professional relationships.

We're never too old to be playful.




THERE'S MAGIC IN TRYING SOMETHING NEW TOGETHER.

Trying something new together isn't just fun—it can actually deepen your relationship. Studies suggest that novelty sparks dopamine, the same feel-good brain chemical associated with excitement and pleasure. It's not just about spending time together but about stepping outside the usual routine. A new experience—big or small—can bring a fresh spark, a sense of adventure, and even a little serendipity into your connection.

It doesn't have to be extreme. It could be as simple as trying a new food, doing a small project, visiting an exhibit, or taking a different route on a walk. The key is stepping into the unfamiliar, where you're both a little unsure, a little curious, and open to the unexpected. That energy creates a shared moment that stands out—one that feels alive and vivid. Of course, familiar, cozy activities are great too, but novelty adds another layer of connection.

That said, not all “new” experiences work. If one of you is completely uninterested, if it sparks frustration, or if there's a big skill gap (like one person skiing effortlessly while the other falls every five feet), it might not bring you closer—it might just be stressful. The goal isn't just doing something different but finding something that invites curiosity and playfulness for both of you.

Making a habit of trying new things together—even in small ways—helps keep the relationship dynamic. Over time, these shared experiences create a sense of “we've got this” when facing the unknown, building not just connection but resilience as a couple.



Trying something new stretches your mind, disrupts old patterns, and brings fresh energy into your life. Even small adventures can expand what you see as possible.

SELF-EXPANSION BRINGS NEW ENERGY TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP.

Self-expansion is all about carving out time to grow as an individual—whether it's trying something new, picking up a hobby, making new friends, reading, or just taking time for yourself. It's an important part of living a fulfilled life, helping you build confidence, increase self-awareness, and boost your happiness. Plus, it gives you that sense of accomplishment and energy that comes with doing something just for you, which positively impacts all areas of your life.

But self-expansion isn't just about you—it also benefits your marriage and family. When you try new things, you come back with fresh energy and exciting stories to share. It gives you new topics to discuss and opens up opportunities to show each other different interests and perspectives you might not have explored alone. It's a great way to keep things dynamic and strengthen your connection.

Since self-expansion is so important, it's worth making time and space for it. Decide together how much time and money you can invest in these experiences and where you can fit them into your schedules. Encourage each other to prioritize personal growth. You'll both feel more energized and empowered, making your relationship even better.

BE INTERESTED IN AND WILLING TO TRY YOUR SPOUSE'S INTERESTS.

Showing genuine interest in your spouse's passions, hobbies, or new pursuits does more than just show you care—it helps you understand them on a deeper level. Ask questions about what excites them and what they're passionate about, even if it's something you don't completely relate to. When you take the time to listen and learn, it not only strengthens your emotional connection but also builds a sense of support and shared enjoyment.

But it doesn't stop at just showing interest—be open to actively participating in their world. Even if their hobbies or activities aren't something you'd normally choose, stepping outside your comfort zone can bring you closer.

Be willing to learn and try new things together, even if they're not your first choice. Whether it's going on a hike or trying a new pottery class, make an effort to enjoy the experience. Just make sure not to kvetch along the way! When you can laugh together at your attempts on the pottery wheel, you create memories that bring you closer.

A little enthusiasm goes a long way! It's about being willing to try, but not begrudgingly—keep the vibe light and fun.

Note:

-If after trying, you find that a particular activity really doesn't resonate with you, don't begrudge it or ruin the mood for your spouse. It's okay to step back and let your spouse enjoy it on their own or with friends. Or do it together on occasion. Figure out a system that works for both of you.

-It's important to gauge whether your spouse truly wants you to join in that particular interest. If they're excited for you to be there, great! If not, give them space to enjoy it solo or with friends.



Sometimes, your spouse might suggest doing something that isn't quite on your radar. It could be visiting a new place, trying a different activity, or attending an event you're not initially enthusiastic about. Instead of hesitating or suggesting an alternative, consider taking the opportunity to step into their world.

Even if it's not your first choice, going along can lead to unexpected discoveries and strengthen your bond. You might learn something new about their interests, find a hidden passion of your own, or simply enjoy seeing them light up in an environment they love. It's all about embracing new experiences together and nurturing the connection that makes your relationship special.

So next time your spouse makes a bid to go somewhere, give it a try together. Who knows what wonderful moments and memories you might create along the way!

CREATE A LIST OF DATE IDEAS.

One evening when you can't get out, plan for your next dates. Create a list of things that you would like to do when you can go out. (Ideally on a shared Google document so you can each add to it as a new idea comes to you.)

Start with places and activities that you know you both enjoy.

Add in some recommendations from friends that you are interested in trying.

Also include some activities related to each of your hobbies or interests.

Be sure there are all kind of options on your list: Free activities or destinations; special evening type places; quick date spots; day trips.

You can also plan for in-home dates.

By just having this list, you will be more excited about going out together. Review the list often. This will inspire you to figure out how to make time for just the two of you.

COMPILE A MASTER LIST OF ACTIVITIES TO ENJOY TOGETHER.

Creating a master list of activities you both enjoy makes planning quality time easier and more enjoyable. Start by individually jotting down activities you'd like to do together—whether it's exploring new hobbies, visiting places of interest, or trying out new experiences.

Next, compare your lists and highlight activities that overlap or spark mutual interest. This process not only helps you find common ground but also encourages both of you to step outside your comfort zones and embrace new adventures.

Stay open-minded about trying activities that might be outside your usual preferences but interest your partner. This willingness to explore together can strengthen your bond and create shared memories that deepen your relationship.

Keep your master list accessible so that whenever you have free time, you can easily choose an activity from the list without the hassle of indecision. Embrace the opportunity to plan and enjoy meaningful experiences together, nurturing your connection and enriching your journey as a couple!



VORFREUDE

(German) - The exhilarating anticipation and joyful excitement felt in advance of a pleasurable or highly anticipated event.

Anticipation sparks a surge of dopamine—the brain's feel-good chemical—not only when something enjoyable happens, but even before it does. Simply looking forward to a date, trip, or shared adventure can lift your mood, fuel motivation, and deepen connection.

INSIDE JOKES

Inside jokes are little treasures that make your relationship uniquely yours. They come from shared experiences, funny moments, or quirky habits that only the two of you get. Maybe you recall a time when you both got lost on a trip, or when a cooking experiment turned into a hilarious disaster. Those are the types of moments that make for great inside jokes!

Inside jokes can also come from everyday quirks—like the way one of you always forgets where you put your phone. “Did you check the refrigerator again?” Or maybe a funny way of saying something that cracks you up. Or, you might share a line from a song, book, or meme that the two of you find hilarious. Or think of the time a waiter gave a fancy name to a very basic dish, like “deconstructed salad”.

Don’t forget about family memories, either! Sometimes, funny things happen on family trips or during ordinary family time—someone says something totally unexpected, or something silly becomes a family tradition. These shared memories often become the best inside jokes that bring everyone closer together. But here’s the thing: inside jokes are only funny if both of you find them funny!

It’s all about that mutual laughter and connection. So keep an ear out for moments that make you both chuckle and enjoy the fun language you create together.

PLAYFUL TEASING

We are not talking about taunting or belittling. It’s that playful ribbing that creates bonding. It’s gently poking fun at personal quirks you find entertaining and endearing.

Teasing is great because it shows that you really know your partner inside and out and that you love their greatest attributes and biggest flaws equally.

Laughter and teasing can help de-escalate conflict and help you remember that you actually like each other.

Stay clear of pressing each other’s buttons – insecurities, family vulnerabilities, and things that your partner may feel shame around.

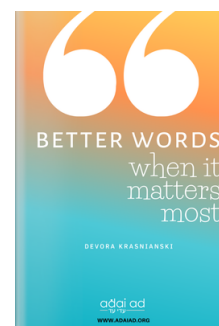
Build on your own inside jokes. Keep it light and playful.

Don’t do it all the time; it is the randomness that makes it more enjoyable.

NOTE: If teasing is not fun for BOTH of you, don’t do it. Keep an eye out for cues that it has gone too far.

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GOOFY COMPETITION

Sometimes, it's the little, silly competitions that lighten the mood and bring laughter into your marriage. No need for anything fancy—just a moment of play can reset the tone and remind you both of the joy in your relationship.

For example, try flipping bottle caps to see whose bounces the furthest. It's goofy, but a fun way to spark some lighthearted competition. Or grab a straw and see who can blow a paper off the side of the table the fastest. Even tossing pebbles into a pond, aiming for the biggest splash, can turn into an unexpected bonding moment.

It's the lightheartedness of these goofy games that strengthens your connection. By making room for play, you allow the stress of daily life to melt away, creating more opportunities for laughter, fun, and even resilience in your relationship.



play together.
laugh together.
thrive together.
forever.

LAUGH TOGETHER. LOVE TOGETHER.

Life has its stressful moments. No doubt. But, humor and laughter helps us cope. "If you can find humor in anything, you can survive it." Being able to see the humor even in the toughest situations helps us tackle our problems with a more positive outlook.

Even when you've had a tough day – or perhaps, especially when you've had a tough day – you need to laugh.

Problems always have some sort of sense of humor in them, you just have to look (with a less serious lens). Once you are able to find the humor in that difficult situation, you begin to win over it.

When it seems like you don't have control over situations, laugh at it.

When you make some crazy mistakes, laugh at them.

When you fall, laugh. (And then get up).

Don't wait till your problems are solved before you laugh, laugh your way through these problems.

DON'T BE SO PREDICTABLE.

Predictability has its place. At the same time, everyone appreciates a little novelty and surprise every so often. A little playfulness.

Do surprising things that make married life less predictable, more playful. Every relationship, without exception, needs excitement.

- Instead of going out for dinner for a date, go for brunch.
- Pick up a little gift that shows you were thinking of them. On a random Tuesday.
- Put on their favorite music.
- Plan a surprise evening.

LAUGH TOGETHER. STAY TOGETHER.

It is so important to laugh. Often. Life gives us lots to laugh about. If we choose to see the humor in the chaos.

Humor is the capacity to perceive, appreciate, or express what is funny, amusing, ludicrous, etc. in any situation. If you look closely enough, there is a certain amount of humor in everything. Small incidents that happen each day — cereal spilled on the floor, a silly photo or meme, something ridiculous your kid said, an unexpected result — are all great excuses to have a good laugh.

It's even better to laugh with someone. Studies show that couples that laugh together, stay together.

It starts with not taking yourself too seriously. Let loose together. Be playful. Notice the absurd. Laugh at your inside jokes. Prioritize the things in your life that might make you and your spouse laugh.

Yeah, schedule time to laugh. (If you are too busy to laugh, you are too busy.)



**Happiness is
laughing
together.**

DON'T BE YOUR BEST SELF. AND LAUGH TOGETHER.

If you're constantly trying to be your "best self", you're not going to laugh a lot. If you're insecure or self-conscious, then everything becomes a dance designed to validate your insecurities and make you feel good about yourself. And you won't allow yourself to be silly or dorky or your own unique selves — the elements that make for fun and laughs.

There is no right way to laugh together.

There's no sense of humor that is better than another. It's about getting into the mode of laughing together. Play games. Poke light fun at yourself as individuals, at each other and as a couple (respectfully only). People watch. Read and tell jokes together. Do something ridiculous and out of character. Try something that you are not good at and learn together. Laugh at mishaps. Make up your own 'inside jokes'. Be playful and silly.

ADD SOME PLAYFULNESS INTO YOUR MARRIAGE.

Don't take life so seriously all the time. Make time to laugh together. To do something goofy. Spontaneous. Irresponsible.

Make some space in the busyness of your life for playing. If you are the spontaneous type, then just let serendipity reign. Or, you can create a list of things you'd like to try, just beyond your comfort zone.

Reach back into your childhood for what you considered play. You can build sandcastles, play in the snow, stack cups into a tower, write messages to each other in the frost on a window or with dry erase markers. Silly stuff.

LAUGH YOUR WAY THROUGH A PROBLEM.

Humor is such a powerful (yet underrated) trait. Humor can really help you get through some tough times.

- Humor relieves tension during crises. It lightens the mood and puts people at ease; when there's tension in the room, humor helps you and the others to relax, think more clearly, and make better decisions.
- Humor softens the blow of bad news. Using humor to find the bright side of a situation doesn't solve the problem, but it provides bubble wrap to soften the blow.
- Humor creates an instant perspective shift. When we laugh at something (even bad news), it's our brain's way of saying, "I've never thought of it that way before."
- Humor is great for connecting. When we laugh and have fun together, it facilitates a sense of connection. It gets people to root for you. People like folks with a sense of humor.
- Humor is motivating. A sense of humor helps to keep folks motivated, especially when times are hard.

To build your sense of humor, end every day by finding something humorous in your day. If you really can't find anything, then find a joke online. Don't go to sleep until you have laughed. At least a tiny chuckle.

LAUGH YOUR WAY THROUGH YOUR MISHAPS.

Humor and resilience go hand in hand. If you can laugh at your mistakes and take things as they come, you'll be much happier for it! When we were kids, we thought the world is run by these perfect grown-ups. But then we get older, and we learn the truth: There are no grown-ups. There's just us. And we all make mistakes. All. The. Time.

When we make the inevitable mistake, we can learn from it and then laugh at it. Laughing at the mistake can take the pressure off you and everyone around you. The other people see you as human, just as they are.

A bit of self-ridicule is healthy if you are confident enough to really take it as a joke. Laugh at the situation, but do not put yourself down. Do not call yourself stupid for making that mistake. It makes the situation awkward for those listening.

What to do when you make a mistake in front of others:

1. Acknowledge the mistake. There's no hiding it now. Everyone saw!
2. Correct the mistake. If it's necessary, make whatever correction you need to get things back on track.
3. Make a joke. Make fun of yourself. Get everyone laughing and they won't care anymore.
4. Move on! And don't bring up your mistake again (until you're totally in the clear).

WHICH ARE YOUR PLAY STYLES?



Which Are Your Play Styles?

As you read through the list, notice which ones spark a “That’s totally me,” a “Hmm, I could try that,” or a “Not really my thing.”

Getting to know your style helps you lean into what feels natural—and maybe even rediscover parts of yourself from earlier years.

You might find that your style has evolved—or that it’s just been waiting to be reawakened.

The list shows how each play style can show up in marriage—with real-life examples to spark ideas and inspiration.

You can also blend styles—for example, combining creative and social play by inviting people over for a themed event.

CREATIVE PLAYFULNESS

- **Create handmade coupons** – Think sweet (“one back rub”) or practical (“I’ll do your least favorite chore”). Tuck them into a book, lunch bag, or under a pillow.
- **Invent a fictional couple** – Roleplay as them over dinner or a day trip. Eccentric artists? Secret spies? Tourists? Let your imagination lead.
- **Plan a themed date night** – Let a made-up theme inspire your food, outfits, music, and even accents. Pull from a recent travel memory or one of those Purim themes: “Blue Night,” “Opposite Day,” or “Under the Sea.”
- **Take silly photos** – Use props, costumes, or just goofy faces. Bonus points for captioning them like a magazine cover or movie poster. You could even print a few and make a “Fridge Gallery.”
- **Write or sing spoof lyrics** – Pick a familiar tune and rewrite the words to tell the story of your week, your inside jokes, or even your grocery list. Record it if you’re brave!

SOCIAL PLAYFULNESS

- **Spark spontaneous fun** – Invite a few friends for an impromptu gathering with no agenda—maybe food, maybe music, but mostly just enjoying being together and seeing what unfolds.
- **Host themed nights** – Plan a game night or dinner party with costumes, characters, or a creative twist.
- **People-watch playfully** – Sit together in a café or park and make up conversations or life stories for strangers—just to amuse yourselves.
- **Group up for fun** – Go on a double date and do a group challenge, escape room, or homemade scavenger hunt.
- **Try something new** – Go together to an event or class you wouldn’t normally attend, just for the fun of meeting new people together.

PHYSICAL PLAYFULNESS

- **Dance in the kitchen** – Turn up the music and move together while cooking dinner or cleaning up.
- **Explore outdoors** – Go hiking, boating, or orienteering for fun and fresh air together.
- **Try new activities** – Challenge yourselves with rock climbing, pickleball, roller skating, or any new physical adventure.
- **Spontaneous play fights** – Have a pillow fight or race to finish chores set to upbeat music for laughs and energy.
- **Bounce on rebounders** – Grab two mini trampolines and jump together for a fun, lighthearted workout.

HUMOROUS PLAYFULNESS

- **Inside jokes** – Create silly voices or private jokes that no one else would understand—but always make you both laugh.
- **Funny photo challenges** – Snap goofy selfies or recreate over-the-top poses just for the fun of it.
- **Comedy** – Watch stand-up or funny clips together (less doom scrolling, more laughing) and even try your own voiceover jokes.
- **Laugh at mishaps** – There's always at least one hiccup in the day—spot it, laugh at it, and move on lighter.
- **Playful teasing** – Gently rib each other in loving ways that spark smiles, not stings.



SHARE ABOUT YOUR PLAYFULNESS STYLES

Take time to get to know your own playfulness style—and then share it with each other.

Be curious. This isn't about wishing your partner were more like you; it's about understanding and appreciating how you each engage with joy. The differences aren't a problem—they're a gift.

Your different styles can stretch you, expand your world, and invite you into new experiences, perspectives, and even meet people you might never have crossed paths with otherwise.

Play becomes even more meaningful when it's shared across your unique ways of being.

LEARNING PLAYFULNESS

- **Take a class** – Try an online course or how-to video together, whether it's juggling, cheese tasting, or anything you're both open to exploring.
- **Teach and tell** – Host a mini TED Talk or skill show-and-tell night where you each share something quirky or fascinating.
- **Curiosity jar** – Fill a jar with odd questions or topics and pick one to dive into together each week.
- **Book swap night** – Choose books outside each other's usual taste, read a chapter, and discuss your reactions (over snacks).
- **Language play** – Learn funny or random phrases in another language and find ways to use them throughout your day.

INNER CHILD PLAYFULNESS

- **Grown-up twist** – Try an adult version of a childhood favorite. Liked crafts? Sign up for a stained glass or pottery class.
- **Unbirthday celebration** – Make up a quirky holiday and celebrate with cake, silly songs, or made-up traditions.
- **New kid toys** – Explore new toys or kid spaces that didn't exist when you were little—like Magna-Tiles, a fun video game, or a museum like the Museum of Ice Cream.
- **Toy/game throwback** – Pull out the LEGO, Play-Doh, or old board games and let yourself play just like you used to.
- **Water war** – Grab water guns, sprinklers, or balloons and turn your yard into a carefree splash zone.

INTELLECTUAL PLAYFULNESS

- **Trivia challenges** – Compete together in trivia nights at a café or create your own quiz at home.
- **Imaginary debates** – Explore “What if” scenarios like waking up in the year 1720 or living on another planet.
- **Puzzle solving** – Work together on crosswords, riddles, escape rooms, or brain teasers.
- **Un-Google questions** – List questions you won’t Google and enjoy figuring them out together.
- **Deep explorations** – Engage in thoughtful, curious conversations that invite exploring, experimenting and discovery.

NATURE PLAYFULNESS

- **Scavenger hunt hike** – Make a list of natural items, animals, or cloud shapes to spot and explore together on a hike.
- **Star-gazing nights** – Lie back outside, identify constellations, and create your own stories about the stars.
- **Garden naming** – Plant a garden side-by-side and give your plants funny or meaningful names.
- **Play like kids** – Climb trees, wade in creeks, or skip stones to reconnect with your inner child.
- **Outdoor picnic** – Have an outdoor picnic on the ground, in a park, or somewhere with a breathtaking view.

TRAVEL PLAYFULNESS

- **Tourists at home** – Explore your own city with fresh eyes like a tourist. Visit overlooked landmarks and wander the local “off the beaten path.”
- **Surprise detours** – Take turns adding spontaneous stops on your trip for unexpected adventures.
- **Unplanned day** – Spend a day with no set plans; ask locals for tips or follow wherever serendipity leads.
- **Travel challenges** – Challenge each other with fun tasks like ordering in a new language or hunting quirky souvenirs.
- **Photo storytelling** – Snap moments along the way, including zany or silly photos, then later craft a creative or funny story using your pictures.



PLAYFULNESS TOGETHER

As a couple, you may have different primary playfulness styles—and that’s actually a gift. See where you can weave both styles into shared experiences, or gently stretch your own.

Maybe you love being in nature while your partner enjoys intellectual curiosity—so go on a nature walk and learn about local birds or lizards. If you’re into travel and they’re into childlike fun, plan a stop at a toy museum or quirky roadside attraction.

Playfulness doesn’t have to match to connect; it just has to be open-hearted and shared.