



SUPPORTING EACH OTHER: YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE

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.*

ASKING FOR HELP DOESN'T MAKE YOU WEAK—IT OPENS THE DOOR TO CONNECTION, GRATITUDE, AND SHARED STRENGTH.

You don't have to do it all alone. Get the support and help you need. Even if it means you have to ask for it directly.

It may feel like strength to be able to do everything ourselves. We may even get a momentary high feeling like we've proven something or shown someone what we're made of. But, it really isn't in our best interest.

Doing it all on our own can be overwhelming and lonely. And we are missing out on opportunities of interconnection and gratitude.

Too often, we don't ask for help because we assume or fear that the person might say 'no' and we will be rejected, and we want to avoid that feeling. The truth is most people do like to see themselves as useful and will be willing to help. When you ask for and accept help, you're not just meeting your own needs—you're giving someone else the chance to show up, to give, and to feel valuable. Let people in. It strengthens the relationship on both sides.

Welcome and appreciate the experience of support and connectedness. We all need help sometimes, but asking for it can feel uncomfortable. The more you do it, the easier it gets.



"We are not meant to be completely self-sufficient. We grow stronger in connection, not isolation."
— Unknown

"To receive support graciously is to allow others to love you."
— Unknown

"Sometimes asking for help is the bravest move you can make. You don't have to go it alone."
— Unknown

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GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO LEAN ON YOUR PARTNER.

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF RELATIONSHIP.

Of course, you are perfectly capable of taking care of yourself, but one of the nice things about being married is that you don't have to shoulder life all on your own. Let your spouse take care of you once in a while. You don't have to do it alone.

Your spouse wants what is best for you. They really want your life to be comfortable and with as little stress as possible. In a caring marriage, your spouse will have your back and you can lean on them. This supporting each other is an important part of relationship.

Help your spouse know how to support you. What do you want or need from them? Do you need physical or emotional support? Some esteem boosting? Advice? Practical help? Comfort? Validation? Help solving a problem? Time alone? Make a decision so you don't have to?

If you don't know, then ask that too:  "I don't know what I need, maybe you can offer some suggestions."

Don't expect that they will notice that you could use their support. Ask for what you want or need. Don't hint. Don't demand.

If you haven't asked for their support when you could have benefitted, reflect on that: Why haven't you asked? What is going on for you that you don't ask? Are you not clear on what you need? Do you not want to seem needy or fragile? Do you not want to burden your spouse? Are you afraid to show your vulnerabilities? Might it have something to do with how other people have treated you in the past? Are you getting support from someone else?



ASKING FOR YOUR SPOUSE'S SUPPORT: IT'S NOT WEAKNESS, IT'S CO-REGULATION.

People are social beings, wired to seek connection, especially during stressful or emotional moments. Co-regulation is all about leaning on each other to stay calm and balanced when things get tough.

Some people may feel like they need to handle everything themselves, but the truth is, we all need help sometimes. Sometimes, we just need someone to help us get back on track. Whether it's a kind word, a calming presence, or just someone listening, having another person there can help us manage stress and emotions.

In marriage, both spouses should feel comfortable asking for and offering support to help each other stay emotionally balanced. This mutual support not only strengthens your connection but also makes both partners feel more emotionally secure.

THE ART OF ASKING FOR HELP

ASKING FOR HELP EARLY, CLEARLY, AND KINDLY NOT ONLY GETS YOU THE SUPPORT YOU NEED—IT STRENGTHENS CONNECTION AND TRUST ALONG THE WAY.

Asking for help isn't weakness—it's wisdom. It's a way to honor your limits, protect your energy, and create space for connection. But many of us wait too long—until we're overwhelmed, stressed, or snappy—before reaching out. Once you know what kind of help you need, think about who might be best suited to give it. You may need to ask more than one person to get the support you're looking for—and that's okay.

Learning to ask earlier and more clearly can make all the difference. Here's how to do it thoughtfully and respectfully, so you're more likely to get the support you need.

ASK EARLY.

Don't wait until you're desperate. It's easier to ask kindly when you're calm, and easier for others to say yes when they're not being asked last-minute.

ASK CLEARLY.

Be specific about the kind of help you need. Communicate the task, the timeframe, or the area where you could use support. Use direct language—like “Can you help me?”—instead of expecting people to pick up on hints or subtle cues.

ASK KINDLY.

Be thoughtful in how you ask. Don't frame your request as a demand. Respect the other person's time and responsibilities, and make it easy for them to say yes—or no—without guilt.

SHOW GRATITUDE.

Let them know their help matters. A sincere thank you not only strengthens the relationship, but it also makes people more willing to help again in the future.



BE HONEST:

Let your spouse know when you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed. Don't wait for them to notice—express it directly. For example, “I'm feeling really stressed right now, and I could use some support.”

ASKING FOR HELP

ASKING FOR HELP—CLEARLY, KINDLY, AND WITHOUT BLAME—MAKES IT MORE LIKELY YOU'LL GET THE SUPPORT YOU ACTUALLY NEED.

The way we ask for help can significantly impact whether and how we receive assistance, as well as the quality of our relationships. When we approach others with empathy and clarity, stating our needs without judgment or blame, it fosters a sense of cooperation, mutual respect, and understanding.

The NVC (Non Violent Communication) model in asking for help encourages empathy and cooperation, fostering a collaborative environment where both parties feel heard and valued. An NVC ask includes these elements:

OBSERVATION:

Begin by stating the observable facts without judgment or evaluation.

💬 “I’m looking at this list of things that need to be done to get the seder ready. There are so many details to take care of.”

FEELING:

Express how you feel about the situation using “I” statements.

💬 “I feel overwhelmed by all that needs to get done.”

NEED:

Clearly communicate the underlying need or desire.

💬 “I need help to get through all of it so I feel calm and happy at the seder.”

REQUEST:

Make a specific request for the type of help you need.

💬 “Can we please go through this list and divide up the work so that it feels more manageable?”

💬 “Can you please take the kids out from 12-3 so I can work without the distraction from the kids?”

By incorporating these elements into our requests for help, we create an environment where both parties feel empowered to collaborate effectively, leading to more successful outcomes and stronger relationships.



YOUR SPOUSE ISN'T A MIND READER, ASK FOR SUPPORT.

Your spouse isn't a mind reader. If you need support, you need to ask for it. If you know what type of support you need, request it directly and clearly. It isn't helpful to hint or wish.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

SUPPORT MEANS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE.

Your spouse may prioritize a different type than you would. It's not about what you would want—it's about what's meaningful to them. Ask: "What kind of support would you like from me?"

There are some ways of support:

PHYSICAL COMFORT AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Listening and empathizing without fixing. Validating feelings. Taking your spouse's hand, giving your spouse a hug. Just being physically and emotionally present and available.

ESTEEM SUPPORT

Expressing confidence in your partner.
Encouraging.

INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT

Giving advice. Gathering information.

TANGIBLE SUPPORT

Taking on responsibilities so your spouse can deal with a problem. Helping to brainstorm solutions to a problem.

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

Shared prayers.
Making meaning from the situation.

BUFFERING SUPPORT

Helping protect spouse from outside stress (family, kids, etc.).

Ask for the support you need:

- "I just need to vent."
- "I'm feeling awful about this; I need a hug."
- "I need to know that I'll be alright."
- "I'm asking for your insight about this."
- "Please help me make sense of what happened."
- "I'd like for you to carve out 2 hours/ night for this next week for me to finish this project. I need quiet and no distractions."

When we're going through a challenge or a transition, we need the support of others. But not everyone needs the same kind of support.

Get to know your own style—and seek it out. You might prefer different types of support from different people. And what you need may shift over time or depend on the situation.

Bruce Feiler, in his book *Life is in the Transitions*, describes different types of support we may need in different situations:

COMFORTERS

Comforters offer warmth and encouragement. They reassure you that they're on your side and believe in you. "I love you." "I trust you." "You can do it." (This is the most common preference.)

NUDGERS

Nudgers are supportive too, but they gently encourage you to stretch or try something new.

"I love you—but maybe it's time to try this." (This was the second most popular style.)

SLAPPERS

Slappers take a more direct, tough-love approach. They jolt you into action.

"I love you—but get over yourself." (This came in third, but still made the list.)

HOW TO SAY THANK YOU FOR THE SUPPORT

GRATITUDE DEEPENS CONNECTION.

When someone shows up for you, saying thank you isn't just about being polite—it's a powerful way to deepen connection, reinforce trust, and make it more likely they'll want to help again.

A generic "thanks" is nice. But a meaningful thank you—the kind that lands—tells the other person: I see you. I value what you did. It mattered.

You can use the framework of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) to craft a deeper, more impactful expression of thanks. Here's how:

OBSERVATION:

Describe clearly what they did.

💬 "I really appreciate all you did today to help get the seder ready—the soup, the table, the eggs, everything."

FEELING:

Share how it made you feel.

💬 "I was stressed and anxious about getting everything done, but knowing you were on it helped me feel calmer."

NEED:

Acknowledge the deeper need it met.

💬 "Doing it together gave me a real sense of support and partnership."

IMPACT:

Highlight the difference their actions made.

💬 "Your help significantly eased my workload and lowered my stress."

APPRECIATION:

Close with warmth and sincerity.

💬 "Thank you. Not only did the day go more smoothly, but I really felt like we were a team—and I deeply appreciate that."

A thank you like this becomes a moment of mutual understanding and connection—not just an afterthought.

WHY IT SOMETIMES FEELS HARD TO ASK FOR (OR ACCEPT) HELP

IT MAY BE WORTHWHILE TO REFLECT ON WHY IT'S SO HARD FOR YOU TO ASK FOR HELP AND SUPPORT.

Finding it hard to ask for help? You're not alone. But here's the thing – that reluctance to reach out can make dealing with the stress or task more difficult for you. And can also lead to isolation and even resentment.

It may be worthwhile to reflect on why it's so hard for you to ask for help and support. Do any of these resonate?

Fear of Rejection: Are you worried that asking for help might lead to rejection or judgment, leaving you feeling vulnerable?

Self-Reliance: Do you typically rely on yourself, viewing asking for assistance as a sign of weakness or inadequacy?

Independence: Is your independence a core value, making it uncomfortable to depend on others, even when necessary?

Perceived Burden: Are you concerned that seeking help might burden or inconvenience others, triggering feelings of guilt?

Pride: Does pride hinder you? Does asking for assistance feel like admitting defeat or an inability to handle things alone?

Past Experiences: Have negative encounters in the past, such as being turned down or receiving unhelpful responses, made you hesitant to seek support again?

Perfectionist Tendencies: Do you believe others can't meet your standards or execute tasks the way you prefer?

Efficiency Concerns: Do you doubt the value of asking for help, considering explanations and follow-ups too cumbersome compared to handling tasks solo?

MUTUAL SUPPORT BUILDS TRUST.

When you're open about your own needs, it sends a powerful message: this is a relationship where it's safe to be real. Vulnerability invites connection.

The more you make space for support—not just giving it, but asking for it—the more trust deepens on both sides. It becomes easier for your spouse to open up too, knowing they won't be judged for needing help.

"I don't need you to fix it—I just need to not feel alone in this."

WHEN SUPPORT FEELS ONE-SIDED.

Support doesn't always come out 50/50. Sometimes one person is going through more, and the other steps up. That's not imbalance—it's partnership. What matters is the shared commitment to show up for each other, especially when it counts.

Talk about it. Name it. And remember: being a team means sometimes carrying more, and sometimes being carried.

ASK FOR SUPPORT IN CHANGING A HABIT.

Changing a habit is hard. It can be easier if you have support. Discuss the habit you'd like to change and ask for your spouse's support. Describe CLEARLY what you would like from them.

By showing them that you need them, you show that they add value to your life.

- "...“I really want to be more patient with the kids. I will need subtle reminders when I am slipping. This is the type of help I will need.... Can you please be that support for me?”
- "...“I really want to eat healthier lunches. Do you have any ideas? I will also need reminders. Can I count on you to encourage me?”

It is important to ask, and not fall into the trap that if 's/he really cared, s/he would know how to support me'. NOTE: Don't ask them to do something that is hard for them or takes so much of their time or energy.

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