



BETTER WORDS: WORDS TO USE #2

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.*

The right words can create connection, even in tense moments. When we speak with curiosity, respect, and care, we invite the other person to stay open instead of getting defensive. Simple shifts—like asking instead of accusing, or naming your own feelings instead of blaming—can soften the conversation and make space for real understanding.

Words that connect start with the intention to understand, not just to be right. They're about reaching for common ground, even when there's disagreement. A well-timed "I hear you," or "Help me understand," can shift the whole tone of a conversation. These small choices in language build trust, signal respect, and make it easier to stay connected—even when things feel hard.

Words that connect don't have to be fancy—they just have to be honest, kind, and grounded in the desire to move forward together.

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WORDS TO USE

"DO YOU WANT ME TO FIX IT OR FEEL IT?"

When someone is talking about a problem, ask what they want from the conversation – to vent or a solution? Don't share possible solutions when all they want is a listening ear.

If you are the one who is sharing, say what you want from the conversation.

- ... "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."

WORDS TO USE

"I WANT TO UNDERSTAND YOU."

All of us want to be seen, heard and understood. We especially want this from those closest to us. We want them to be interested in and to care about what's happening inside our hearts. This is a basic human need.

With real curiosity and humility, seek to really understand them.

... "I want to understand you." To understand doesn't necessarily mean to agree. Rather, understanding simply means listening fully and intently. It means absorbing what they're saying.

Listen to understand and then make sure you actually understood accurately. ... "I think I'm understanding you. But let me check: What I am hearing is ..."

And allow them to clarify. Stay with this process until they have no need to further clarify their perspective, because they know you get it.