

Joy Design Principles

Notice

Joy often ***begins in the body***, not the mind. Intentionally activating the five senses allows the restful (parasympathetic) nervous system to participate. With access to this relaxed state, we regulate our emotional responses and help our body recover from stress.

Connect

As social creatures, we look to each other for cues about how to feel. When we ***actively engage the people in our communities***, we deepen our relationship to others, and increase our own sense of belonging and good will.

Pause

A breath, an intermission, a midday recess...moments in time where we ***step back from routine*** to evaluate our thoughts, actions, and feelings. A pause gives us a much-needed time interruption of our daily patterns, and an opportunity to cultivate the conditions for more joy.

View

The way we approach a challenge can promote ***agency and creativity***, even in the face of difficulty. Recognizing ***complex joy*** - bittersweet, intertwined with sorrow - opens a space to approach setbacks with curiosity, and celebrate the breakthroughs that can follow frustration. Embrace joy as a survival strategy in extended struggle, and avoid the trap of toxic positivity.

Practice

Intentional repetition builds habits that can create the conditions for joy. A devotional routine uncovers its surprising locations in our busy lives, and allows joy to ripen expansively. We learn to identify it as it arises, nourish it consistently, and share it with others.

Joy encourages us to share that personal, uplifting feeling with others - as a contribution to the flourishing of the collective

Joy Design Practices

Notice

- Write or draw by hand
- Shift your physical environment: walk, nap, look at nature
- Focus on what you're grateful to see, hear, taste, touch, and smell
- Activate the body/mind connection for self-regulation (meditation or belly breathing)

Connect

- Choose collaboration
- Find your buddies and share your delights
- Practice Sympathetic Joy: wholeheartedly celebrate others' successes
- Reflect on those who have shaped you and how they continue to shape your choices

Pause

- Undertake a mindfulness practice, like a gratitude list
- Find delight in knowing what doesn't delight you
- Revel in anticipation—the pleasure of an event or experience that is not yet here
- "Blow it off": purposely enjoy rest as resistance to toxic productivity

View

- (Re)connect to your purpose
- Play with language (personify your "monsters" or tell a dad joke)
- Nurture and extend irrepressible joy (don't fight it)
- Reframe to consider future possibilities and potentialities

Practice

- Stack joyful moments
- Notice where your attention goes
- If joy or gratitude arises, embrace it fully in the moment
- Commit to a daily joy ritual to build strong "joy muscle memory"

These 5 principles lead to intentional practices of joy, to support individuals and infuse organizational culture with authentic, sustained care and positivity



More Joy Resources!