

THE PLAYBOOK

YOUR COMPANION TO
THE ELEMENT OF **PLAY**



Reflect. Explore. Play.

elementofplay.com





Welcome to Your PLAYbook

This is not a workbook that expects perfection. It doesn't need to be filled in order, completed in one sitting, or handed in to anyone.

It's a companion. Something to reach for when a chapter of *The Element of Play* sparks something in you - a memory, a question, a quiet nudge that says 'I want to explore this more.'

Each section follows the P.L.A.Y. framework from the book: Presence, Lightness, Authenticity, and Your Turn. You'll find reflection questions to sit with, activities to try, and space to map out what play actually looks like in your real life.

There are no wrong answers here. Only honest ones.

How to Use This PLAYbook

Read a chapter from *The Element of Play* first, then come here.

You'll see three types of prompts throughout:

READ THIS

A short context or intro. Read before you write.

REFLECT ON THIS

A question to sit with. Writing lines follow underneath.

DO THIS - A STRUCTURED ACTIVITY

Steps, fill-in spaces, and prompts to help you take the idea off the page and into your actual life.

Write in it. Scribble. Use different colours. Make it yours. Come back to it. Things land differently the second time. You don't have to finish a section before moving to the next one.

And if you're the kind of person who skips straight to the activities without reading the intros - that's fine too. Play doesn't follow rules.

Let's begin.





Before We Begin: Define Your Play

READ THIS

You've read Jodi's definition. But the most important one is yours. There is no wrong answer. Just what feels true in your body when you think about aliveness, lightness, and connection.

My definition of PLAY is:

P; PRESENCE

Remembering What We Forgot

Presence is where we begin. Not with a grand plan or a productivity overhaul - but with noticing. With slowing down enough to ask: where am I actually at right now?

This section follows Chapters 1-4 of *The Element of Play*. It's about reconnecting with joy, reclaiming play from where it got buried, understanding the science behind why you're wired for this, and giving yourself permission to begin.

You don't have to feel ready to start. Presence doesn't require a perfect moment. It just requires a pause.

Chapter 1. Rediscovering Joy

READ THIS

Autopilot is sneaky. It doesn't arrive with flashing lights - it just quietly lowers the volume on your life until you stop noticing the difference. This chapter is about noticing again. About asking: when did I last feel genuinely alive?

REFLECT ON THIS

What have you stopped doing that used to make you feel like yourself?



 **REFLECT ON THIS**

What has been on repeat lately - even if it's 'fine'?

 REFLECT ON THIS

What is the difference between feeling 'fine' and feeling genuinely alive for you? What does each one feel like in your body?

 DO THIS - YOUR SPARK MAP

Three memories. One spark. Your map back to aliveness.

Step 1: Write down three moments from the last month where you felt joy, presence, lightness, or aliveness. Big, small, or beautifully ordinary.

Memory 1:

Memory 2:

Memory 3:

Step 2: Look at your three moments. What are the common threads?

The people - who was there:

The places - where were you:

The feeling - what was the spark:

Step 3: Circle the memory that lit you up most. Now choose one small action to recreate it this week.

My action:

When I will do it:





Chapter 2. Reclaiming Play: The Missing Piece

READ THIS

Play didn't disappear from your life by accident. Somewhere between growing up, getting responsible, and learning to be taken seriously, it got squeezed out. This chapter is about understanding why - and beginning to invite it back.

REFLECT ON THIS

When you hear the word 'play', what's your immediate reaction? Do you feel drawn to it, skeptical, or something else entirely?

REFLECT ON THIS

Think back to childhood. What did you love doing just for the sake of it, with no goal attached? What happened to that thing?

REFLECT ON THIS

What's the story you tell yourself about why play isn't for you - or isn't for right now?

REFLECT ON THIS

What would change in your day if you treated play as essential, not optional?

DO THIS - WRITE YOUR OWN PERMISSION SLIP

Make it official. Your nervous system needs to see it in writing. Write yourself a literal permission slip below. Sign it. Date it. Put it somewhere you'll see it this week.

I give myself permission to...

Signed:

Date:





Chapter 3. The Beautiful and Messy Science of Play

READ THIS

Play isn't just fun - it's biological. It's how your brain learns, your nervous system regulates, and your body remembers what safety feels like. Here's where you bring the science back to your own experience.

REFLECT ON THIS

Can you think of a time when play - movement, laughter, creativity, or connection - shifted your mood or energy almost instantly? What happened?

REFLECT ON THIS

Your body often knows before your mind does. Where do you physically feel the difference between a day with play in it and a day without?

REFLECT ON THIS

If play is a biological need - not a reward - what would you need to change about how you currently treat it?



 **DO THIS - THE 10-MINUTE AWE WALK**

Wonder doesn't need a mountain. It just needs your attention.

Step 1: Choose a space - your garden, your street, your kitchen. Move slowly for 10 minutes. Notice everything as if seeing it for the first time. Textures. Shadows. Colours. Sounds.

Step 2: Find one small thing that moves you - a flower, a shadow, a dapple of light. Sit with it for a moment. Not to analyse it. Just to notice.

Step 3: Come back here and write down what you found.

What I noticed:

What shifted (breath, mood, sense of time):

One thing that surprised me:





Chapter 4. Play as a Rebellion

READ THIS

Choosing play in a world that glorifies hustle is genuinely rebellious. This chapter is about standing in your own colour when everything around you is beige. It's about giving yourself - and others - permission to show up fully.

REFLECT ON THIS

Where in your life are you choosing 'beige' - playing it safe, dimming yourself, editing your personality to fit the room?

REFLECT ON THIS

Think of a time when someone else's boldness gave you permission to exhale. What did they do - and how did it affect you?

REFLECT ON THIS

What would it mean for you personally to lead with playfulness as a value - not just a personality trait?



 **DO THIS - THE TRAFFIC LIGHT AUDIT**

Where are you stuck at orange? Where are you ready to go green?

Scan the key areas of your life. For each one, name what's on your mind and give it a colour:

-  **RED** - a hard no. A boundary is needed
-  **ORANGE** - a maybe. Something is holding you back
-  **GREEN** - you're ready. You just need to move

Leadership & Work - what's on your mind:

Current colour:

Relationships - what's on your mind:

Current colour:

Creativity & Play - what's on your mind:

Current colour:

Health & Energy - what's on your mind:

Current colour:

The Someday Dream - what's on your mind:

Current colour:





Your Green Light Commitment

I am giving myself the green light to:

My first move is:

I will do this by:

✓ You've completed P - Presence. When you're ready, move to L - Lightness.





L; LIGHTNESS

From Pressure to Play

Once you can actually feel again, we make room for lightness. Not fake positivity - real moments of ease, curiosity, and delight. The kind that reminds your system: oh right... life can feel like this too.

This section follows Chapters 5-8. It's about playful leadership, beating burnout, turning up the volume on life, and making work feel more human.

Chapter 5. Lead Like It's a Playground

READ THIS

Playful leadership isn't about being the 'fun one.' It's about creating the kind of safety where people can speak up, try things, and bring their full selves. Because when teams feel safe to laugh and experiment - performance skyrockets.

REFLECT ON THIS

Think of a leader who made you feel genuinely safe to be yourself. What did they do that created that safety?

REFLECT ON THIS

Where in your own leadership (or life) have you been relying on pressure instead of presence? What has that cost you - and the people around you?

REFLECT ON THIS

What would it look like to build more psychological safety in your team or relationships? What's one small first move?





DO THIS - THE SAFETY SCAN

Notice where people shrink - and where they light up.

Step 1: Think about the team, community, or relationship you're part of. Where do people lean in? Where do they pull back?

Where people lean in (feel safe, contribute freely):

Where people shrink (stay quiet, hold back, perform):

Step 2: What unspoken signals or rules might be creating that dynamic?

Step 3: Where could one moment of lightness - a laugh, an honest question, a playful challenge - open the door to something deeper?

My one move this week:





Chapter 6. The Anti-Burnout Blueprint

READ THIS

Burnout isn't just exhaustion - it's disconnection. From joy, from purpose, from yourself. The antidote isn't just rest. It's revival. A return to what makes you feel alive.

REFLECT ON THIS

When did you last feel truly burnt out - or are you in it right now? What are the signs specific to you?

REFLECT ON THIS

What have you been telling yourself about needing rest or play? Is that story helpful or is it keeping you stuck?

REFLECT ON THIS

If burnout is a message from your body, what do you think it's trying to say to you right now?



 **DO THIS - BUILD YOUR PERSONAL PAUSE LIST**

Your emergency joy kit - 5 doorways back to yourself.

Create your own 5-point Playful Pause Plan. Think of this like a personal toolkit for when your energy starts dipping.

One breath reset:

One way to move your body:

One thing to laugh at or with:

One place in nature (even if it's a windowsill):

One person who reminds you who you are:

Write them on a sticky note. Put them somewhere visible. The point isn't to perfect the plan - it's to make joy easier to reach.

 DO THIS - YOUR EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Know your signals before they get loud.

List the early signs that tell you you're drifting away from yourself:

Body signals (jaw tension, shallow breath, headaches):

Mood signals (irritable, flat, numb):

Behaviour signals (scrolling instead of resting, saying yes on autopilot):

The first thing I stop doing when I'm burning out:





Chapter 7. Life With the Volume Turned Up

READ THIS

Awe, play, and curiosity aren't extras - they're signals that help you remember who you are. This chapter is about turning up the dial on presence, aliveness, and meaning. You can't think your way back into vitality. But you can feel your way.

REFLECT ON THIS

When did you last lose track of time doing something you loved? What were you doing - and what does that tell you about what lights you up?

REFLECT ON THIS

Where in your life have you been choosing safety over aliveness? What small experiment could you try?

REFLECT ON THIS

Think about awe - when did you last feel truly small in the best possible way? What created that feeling?



 **DO THIS - YOUR FLOW SCAN**

Notice what lights you up - and do more of it on purpose.

Step 1: Think back to the last time you lost track of time - not scrolling, but genuinely absorbed in something.

What were you doing?

Was it quiet or loud? Solo or shared?

How did you feel immediately afterward?

Step 2: Your flow activities (things that create that absorbed, energised feeling):

 DO THIS - CREATE YOUR JOY MAP

Plot in what you know will bring you aliveness this month.

Draw or write a simple map of your next month. Plot in 3–5 things that you know will bring you joy, wonder, or connection:

One might be small (a cup of tea with a friend)

One might be bold (booking that trip or experience)

One might stretch you (trying something new)

Bonus: at least one involves play

My Joy Map for the next 30 days:





Chapter 8. Work, But Make It Play

READ THIS

What if laughter, spontaneity, and connection aren't the opposite of great work - but the fuel for it? This chapter is about play as cultural glue: the rituals, traditions, and tiny moments of shared humanity that make teams (and families and friendships) thrive.

REFLECT ON THIS

What's one playful tradition you remember from a past job, school, or group - and what made it so memorable?

REFLECT ON THIS

Where is your team (or family or community) most in need of a lightness injection? What holds people back from letting their guard down?

REFLECT ON THIS

What would it look like to go first - to be the spark that gives others permission to loosen up?



 **DO THIS - START A PLAYFUL TRADITION**

Low-barrier, high-fun - something real and shared.

Think of a low-barrier, high-fun ritual your team (or family, or friend group) could start. It doesn't have to be polished - it just has to be real, shared, and yours.

The group this is for:

My idea for a tradition or ritual:

When I will introduce it:

What I think will happen when I do:

 DO THIS - THE 2-MINUTE PLAY INJECTION

Shift the energy in your very next meeting.

Choose one small thing to try in your next team meeting, family dinner, or gathering:

Start with a 'win of the week' instead of the agenda

Ask a question no one expects (the more curious the better)

Bring one playful prop or tradition item

Share something ridiculous that happened to you this week

My one play injection this week:

What shifted (write it down afterward):

☒ You've completed L - Lightness. When you're ready, move to A - Authenticity.





A; AUTHENTICITY

The Everyday Art of Play

This is where play meets real life - the relationships, the routines, the small choices that make up who we are. It's about dropping the polish, risking the weirdness, and trusting that the real you is actually enough.

This section follows Chapters 9–12. Movement. Mistakes. Microdoses. Connection. And the courage to be fully, imperfectly seen.

Chapter 9. Movement, Mistakes, and Microdoses of Play

READ THIS

Joy doesn't have to be big or elaborate to matter. This chapter is about the microdoses - those tiny, almost throwaway moments that can shift your state, soften your shoulders, and quietly tell your nervous system: hey, it's safe to feel good for a second.

REFLECT ON THIS

What's a tiny moment of play you've experienced recently that caught you by surprise? How did it shift your state?

REFLECT ON THIS

Think about the word 'failure.' How does it land in your body? What about 'mistake'? What about 'lesson'? Notice the difference

REFLECT ON THIS

When does your body know something before your mind does? What does that signal feel like - and how often do you listen to it?



 **DO THIS - THE ONE-MINUTE JOY TIMER**

Ridiculous, effective, and scientifically sound.

Step 1: Next time you catch yourself overthinking or feeling heavy, set a timer for 60 seconds.

Step 2: Skip. Dance. Shake your arms. Do something physically silly - even just five steps down the hallway.

Step 3: After: write down what shifted.

I tried it on (date/time):

What I did:

What shifted:

 DO THIS - THE 2-MINUTE MICRODOSE MENU

Small joys on purpose, every day.

Create your personal microdose menu - tiny acts of play you can access even on your busiest day:

Something that makes me laugh (meme, show, person, memory):

A movement I can do for 30-60 seconds anywhere:

A song that instantly shifts my mood:

Something I can look at or touch that brings me back:

A ridiculous thing I could do that no one needs to see:





Chapter 10. Unpolished on Purpose

READ THIS

Perfection might impress people, but it doesn't move them. Realness does. This chapter is about the energy cost of managing impressions - and what becomes possible when you stop performing and start participating.

REFLECT ON THIS

Where in your life do you feel like you have to 'switch modes' to be accepted? What part of you gets left at the door?

REFLECT ON THIS

Think about someone you find genuinely magnetic. What is it about them that draws people in? Is it perfection - or something else?

REFLECT ON THIS

What would '5% more authentic' look like for you in one specific situation this week?



 **DO THIS - DONE, NOT PERFECT - THE WEEKLY EXPERIMENT**

Practice imperfection on purpose.

This week, experiment with 'done, not perfect' in one area of your life. Send the message before the tenth edit. Share the idea before it's fully formed. Post the thing you've been overthinking.

The area I'm experimenting in:

The specific thing I'll do (or send, or say, or share):

What my inner perfectionist is afraid will happen:

What actually happened:

What I noticed about how I felt afterward:





Chapter 11. Connection Is the Point

READ THIS

Play is how we build trust without a single word. It's how we remember that we're safe enough to be seen. The sixth love language isn't spoken - it's played. And here, we explore how play weaves us back together.

REFLECT ON THIS

Think about the people you feel most connected to. What do you actually do together that creates that feeling? Is there a pattern?

REFLECT ON THIS

Think of a time a moment of laughter or lightness repaired something - a friendship, a relationship, a team dynamic. What did it change?

REFLECT ON THIS

Who might be waiting for a quiet signal that they belong? What's one small act of covert kindness you could offer this week?



 **DO THIS - YOUR CONNECTION RITUALS AUDIT**

Map the play that keeps your people close.

Step 1: List the people who matter most to you - your inner circle.

Step 2: For each relationship, what are the shared rituals of joy - the inside jokes, silly traditions, or moments that say 'I see you'?

Step 3: Where are the gaps? Which relationship could use a new shared moment of play?

The relationship:

My idea to introduce play into it:

When I will do it:





Chapter 12. The Courage to Be Seen

READ THIS

Play doesn't hide - it shows up. Every time you let yourself be seen, you shift the atmosphere around you. It's subtle, but real. Authenticity doesn't guarantee belonging - it creates clarity. It reveals your people.

REFLECT ON THIS

Where in your life are you most likely to 'shape-shift' to keep the peace? What part of you gets left at the door?

REFLECT ON THIS

Think of a moment when you were brave enough to show up as your real, unedited self. What happened? Who responded?

REFLECT ON THIS

What would 'visible and intact' look like for you - honest, open, and still boundaried?



 **DO THIS - YOUR REALNESS AUDIT**

One honest look. One small act of alignment.

Step 1: Scan the key spaces in your life (work, home, social, online). For each, rate how much of **your real self shows up (1 = very little, 5 = fully me)**.

Work / Professional:

Close relationships:

Social situations:

Online / Social media:

Step 2: In the space where you scored lowest - what is it costing you to keep that version of yourself hidden?

Step 3: What would one tiny act of more authentic visibility look like in that space this week?

My one act:

☒ You've completed A - Authenticity. When you're ready, move to Y - Your Turn.





Y; YOUR TURN

Say Yes to the Life You Actually Want

This is where it all comes home. Y is for Your Turn - to say yes to what's aligned, no to what's draining, and to keep choosing the kind of life you actually want to live.

This section follows Chapters 13–15. It's about building a system for your play, not just an intention. About maintaining the spark, catching drift early, and knowing how to repair - not restart - when life gets loud.

Chapter 13. Your Play, Your Way

READ THIS

The goal was never for you to become a copy of anyone else. This chapter is about building your own Element of Play - something that fits your personality, your season of life, your energy. It's time to stop copying other people's joy and build what actually fits.

REFLECT ON THIS

What kind of play actually restores you? (Calm, quiet, solo, sensory - what helps you come back to yourself?)

REFLECT ON THIS

What kind of play energises you? (Active, social, creative, surprising - what makes you feel more alive?)

REFLECT ON THIS

What kind of play connects you to others? (Shared rituals, silly traditions, adventures - what deepens your bonds?)





DO THIS - BUILD YOUR PLAY PROFILE

Your personal recipe for aliveness.

Create your Play Profile - three lists that become your go-to menu when you need to return to yourself:

RESTORES ME (calmer after):

ENERGISES ME (more alive after):

CONNECTS ME (more human after):

DO THIS - YOUR MINIMUM VIABLE PLAY PLAN

The simplest version that will actually happen. Write this somewhere you'll actually see it:

Low energy play (when I'm cooked):

Mid energy play (when I'm okay-ish):

High energy play (when I've got fuel):

My two-minute doorway (the tiniest reliable start):

My If-Then Plan:

If I notice _____, then I will _____.





Chapter 14. The Maintenance Plan

READ THIS

Drift is normal. What matters is what happens next. This chapter is your dashboard and first-aid kit: your early warning signals, your circuit breakers, the guardrails that protect your energy - and the repair protocol when things get loud.

REFLECT ON THIS

What does drift look like for you specifically? Not the textbook version - your version. What are the first three signs that you're sliding away from yourself?

REFLECT ON THIS

What's the most reliable thing that pulls you back to yourself - your most trusted circuit breaker?

REFLECT ON THIS

What guardrail would make the biggest difference in your life right now? What's stopping you from putting it in place?



 **DO THIS - BUILD YOUR EARLY WARNING DASHBOARD**

Your signals, in your words. Name your specific early warning signs for each category:

Body signals (first physical signs you're running hot):

Mood signals (how your emotional weather shifts):

Behaviour signals (what you start doing differently):

Thinking signals (how your mind gets narrow or critical):

Connection signals (how you pull back from people):

Play signals (the lightness that disappears first):

 DO THIS - YOUR CIRCUIT BREAKERS

60-second resets. Choose yours in advance.

Pick your three go-to circuit breakers - things that interrupt the spiral before it snowballs:

Circuit Breaker 1:

Circuit Breaker 2:

Circuit Breaker 3:

My go-to play breaker (silly, ridiculous, and fast):





DO THIS - YOUR GUARDRAILS

Simple boundaries that protect your energy - and your joy.

Choose one from each category:

Time guardrail (protects space):

Energy guardrail (protects your nervous system):

Play guardrail (protects aliveness):

People guardrail (protects your relationships):





Chapter 15. Repair, Not Restart

READ THIS

When the maintenance plan didn't catch it in time - when you've tipped over the edge of your capacity - the goal isn't to reinvent your life. It's to repair what's been strained. Stabilise. Restore. Come back in a way that doesn't recreate the same crash.

REFLECT ON THIS

Think about the last time you hit a wall. What did your brain tell you you needed (a fresh start, a big change)? What did your body actually need?

REFLECT ON THIS

What does 'I'm in repair mode' look like for you, practically? What would you give yourself permission to skip or simplify?

REFLECT ON THIS

Who are the people in your support network - and what specific role does each play? (Witness, practical help, perspective, joy?)





DO THIS - DO THIS - YOUR REPAIR KIT

Write it like a lifeline.

When I've overdone it, my best repair moves are:

The thing I'm not allowed to do when I'm in repair:
(e.g. start a new overhaul, punish myself, pretend I'm fine)

DO THIS - YOUR SUPPORT MENU

Know who to reach for - before you need them.

Name your go-to people for each kind of support:

Witness (someone who can listen without fixing):

Practical help (food, errands, a body double):

Perspective (helps you zoom out when you spiral):

Calm energy (makes you breathe slower just by existing):

Joy + lightness (pulls you back toward life gently):

A message I can copy and send when I'm in repair:

 You've completed Y - Your Turn. When you're ready, move onto your life, on purpose.



Make Waves.

You've completed The PLAYbook.

This wasn't a one-time exercise. It's a map you can return to whenever life gets loud, dull, heavy, or full. Flip back to the chapter that calls you. Try a new activity. Revisit a reflection you skipped.

Things land differently the second time.

You don't have to play perfectly. You just have to keep coming back to the question:

"What would it look like to choose play here?"

And then - choose play. Again and again.

**Your aliveness creates a ripple.
And enough ripples? Make waves.**

This is just the beginning.

**Explore more free tools, reflections, and your Play Archetype at
elementofplay.com**