A HE CALLED IT LOVE GUIDE

THE JOY LIST

Forty small, specific things worth noticing again.

"Joy comes back in the smallest doses before it comes back in the big ones."

— from He Called It Love

BEFORE YOU START

Nobody tells you joy comes back small at first.

A laugh you didn't feel guilty about.

That's it. That's the whole sign.

This list is for catching those moments on purpose.

Waking up and not checking your phone first.

Making a decision and not running it past anyone.

Buying the thing you actually wanted, not the compromise.

A song that's just yours now, no baggage attached.

Rearranging furniture at 9pm because you felt like it.

Laughing so hard you have to sit down.

A text that says nothing important and made your whole day.

Sleeping diagonally across the whole bed.

Cooking a meal nobody's going to critique.

Realizing you went a full hour without thinking about them.

Saying something opinionated and not bracing for the rebuttal.

The quiet of a house that's entirely, peacefully yours.

Wearing the thing they never liked, again.
Making a plan and it actually happening the way you pictured it.

Crying at a movie for a reason that has nothing to do with your life.

Someone asking your opinion and actually waiting for the answer.

Realizing you handled something hard today and didn't need anyone to notice.

The first cup of coffee, made exactly how you like it, in silence.

Catching your reflection and not immediately looking for something wrong.

A whole weekend with no explaining required to anyone.

Remembering a joke and laughing alone in your car about it.

Getting good news and calling the person who'll actually be happy for you.

Falling asleep without replaying a conversation from three years ago.

A stranger being kind to you for no reason.

Doing something slightly reckless, just for you.

Feeling like yourself, specifically, and not like a performance of yourself.

A hot shower with nowhere to be after.
Realizing an old trigger didn't land the way it used to.

Dancing badly in your kitchen because a good song came on.

Someone new getting to know you and liking the real version.

Finishing something you started entirely on your own.

A morning with actual silence in it — no tension to read the temperature of.

Saying "no" and feeling relief instead of guilt.

An old friend saying you seem lighter lately.

Buying flowers for yourself, no occasion required.

Trusting your own memory of what happened, fully, without doubting it.

A good, ordinary Tuesday with nothing remarkable about it at all.

Daydreaming about the future instead of replaying the past.

Someone loving the parts of you that used to get edited down.

Realizing, mid-laugh, that you're actually, simply, having a good time.

The list ends here. Yours doesn't have to. Keep it going in a journal or a note on your phone.

— Sara at He Called It Love