7 Ways to Find the Joy Again

You can love teaching without giving it your whole life. Choose one small invitation from these pages. You do not have to do all seven, and you do not have to do any of them perfectly.

01 Put life after the bell on your calendar.

Your interests and relationships deserve space alongside your work. Something to look forward to can be wonderfully ordinary.

Try this: Choose one thing this week that has nothing to do with school: a walk, a good book, coffee with a friend, or time to create.

02 Pause before your next yes.

Being capable does not make every opportunity your responsibility. A thoughtful boundary leaves energy for the commitments you choose.

Try this: Before accepting a voluntary task, ask: What will this yes cost me? If needed, say, "Thank you for thinking of me, but I cannot take that on."

03 Trade comparison for curiosity.

Another teacher's strengths do not diminish yours. Bring your attention back to the students in front of you and what they need next.

Try this: Write down one thing that worked in your classroom today. Let it count, even if nobody else noticed.

A little more connection. A little less pressure.

04 Make one student feel remembered.

Connection grows in everyday moments. A greeting or a follow-up question can communicate that a child matters.

Try this: Greet a student by name and ask about something they shared. Offer a warm welcome without requiring eye contact, touch, or a reply.

05 Let a little play into the day.

You do not need to make every lesson spectacular. A brief shared laugh can help you enjoy the people you teach.

Try this: Try a two-minute doodle, a riddle, or a wonderfully bad pun. Invite participation and offer a quiet alternative.

06 Notice something worth celebrating.

Progress is often small: an attempt, an act of kindness, or a question asked with courage. Specific encouragement helps that progress feel visible.

Try this: Write a short note: "I noticed you ____. That made a difference because ____." Choose private or public recognition to suit the student.

07 Give yourself a kinder ending.

The unfinished list does not tell the whole story of your day. Make room to notice what went well and to set work down.

Try this: Name one good moment. Write tomorrow's next step, then choose a stopping point. Rest does not have to be earned by finishing everything.

My one small step: _____

Joy is an invitation, not another obligation. These ideas cannot fix every workplace problem. Seeking support or choosing a different path does not make you a failure.