

Bulletin for Play

Business

Chalice Lighting

Bring with you what is yours—
 A burdened heart, a joyous song,
 A wearied spirit, a seeking mind.
Bring the gift of yourself to the altar.
It is an honorable gift.
Amerette Calloway

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence — holding ourselves and others in silent support

Shared Readings

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation. *Plato*

In the adult world play includes anything done for the sheer joy of it, rather than for a purpose.
Christine Robinson

A notable characteristic of play behaviour is that it generally does not appear to have an immediate practical goal or benefit. . . . Play appears to provide its own reward, at least in the short term, by being intrinsically enjoyable. *Patrick Bateson and Paul Martin*

A child who does not play is not a child, but the man who does not play has lost forever the child who lived in him. *Pablo Neruda*

When we play, we are engaged in the purest expression of our humanity, the truest expression of our individuality. Is it any wonder that often the times we feel most alive, those that make up our best memories, are moments of play? *Stuart L. Brown*

Playfulness is as sacred as any prayer, or maybe more sacred than any prayer, because playfulness, laughter, singing will relax you. And the truth is only possible in a relaxed state of being. *Rajneesh*

I believe that the number one warning sign that we need more rest and play in our lives is when we start taking ourselves, our interactions with others, and our work too seriously. *Scott Stoner*

My own prescription for health is less paperwork and more running barefoot through the grass.
Leslie Grimutter

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Round 1

Tell the group about a favorite play activity when you were a child.

Round 2

Share more deeply feelings, stories and attitudes on play in response to the preparation materials.

Round 3

As time allows, share additional thoughts on play, or reflect on what others have shared.

Closing Words

[Play] energizes us and enlivens us. It eases our burdens. It renews our natural sense of optimism and opens us up to new possibilities.

Stuart Brown

Song or Chime

The Covenant

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the facilitator know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share with the facilitator the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, or giving advice
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.

Preparation for Play

As a kid, I remember losing myself for hours in imaginary worlds, playing marbles or LEGOs or dolls or in the woods behind our house in Oregon. I remember playing the piano and long hours spent splayed across my bed reading. But I also remember that my mother, usually with a basket of laundry in hand, would come across me and sigh, “I wish I had the time to do that.” Did I somehow absorb the idea that becoming an adult, a mother, meant giving up time for the things that give you joy? *Brigid Schulte*

Play. The word evokes total absorption in childhood activities with our focus totally in the moment. When we were children, play encouraged our creativity and allowed us to take risks. It helped us grow and learn—from developing our motor skills to fine-tuning our emotional skills. And it was fun!

Then we became adults. We needed to provide for our material needs as well as pursue our lives’ work. We learned to work hard and be responsible, and our need for play was diminished. Yet being responsible does not preclude being able to play. Play is important for adults. It is an exercise of the spirit. It helps us live in the moment. It still encourages our creativity and allows us to take risks. Play relieves stress, and it can improve our connection to others. It refreshes us and allows us to put our responsibilities in perspective. Some research is showing that play, such as crossword puzzles and other thinking games, can slow cognitive decline in the elderly. And it is fun! A problem for us is to find a place for play in our busy lives.

Piaget believes that children go through three sequential stages of play: (1) sensory-motor play, (2) symbolic play, and (3) games with rules. In *Understanding Children’s Play*, Jennie Lindon states that children’s play can be viewed as four broad kinds of involvement: solitary play, spectator play, parallel play and co-operative social play. She notes that children do not move from one stage to another leaving the earlier stage behind, but rather move back and forth.

What does play look like for adults? There is a growing trend of coloring books for adults, games on the Internet such as Lumosity, which features brain games, and sports such as Pickleball, which some call “senior tennis” since it requires less stress on knees and hips. Many adults return to the creative arts, including painting, photography, or playing a musical instrument, after the busy years of work or raising children. Others engage in sports, including walking and hiking, golf, swimming, working out at the gym or taking a class in yoga. And more: hobbies, travel, cooking, gardening, being of service to others by volunteering (think of our tutoring program and ESL program at 1st UU). Ideas are endless!

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. *English proverb*

We need to learn to incorporate play and relaxation into our daily lives—they are an important counterpart to the natural stress of life. *Patricia Hoolihan*

The balance of family and social recreation is becoming harder and harder to come by. The balance of work and real play, activities done for no purpose at all except the release and recapture of energy, is becoming foreign. As a consequence our souls are drying up in work and

our minds are being numbed by TV nothingness. We need to learn to play again if our spiritual lives are going to be healthy at all. *Joan Chittister*

Almost all creativity involves purposeful play. *Abraham Maslow*

We need play in our lives for the same reason children do: to hone new skills, develop new empathies, involve us with new people, teach us our limits, and outfit us for our continuously changing environment. *Christine Robinson*

Play is not something that we do; it is something that we are. It is the state of consciousness that we are born with, and it gradually diminishes in power as we age, until, as adults, we generally find that we are able to enter and exit this state with ease only if we have practiced.
Amy Fusselman

There often seems to be a playfulness to wise people, as if either their equanimity has as its source this playfulness or the playfulness flows from the equanimity; and they can persuade other people who are in a state of agitation to calm down and manage a smile.
Edward Hoagland

Consider what the world would be like without play. It's not just an absence of games or sports. Life without play is a life without books, without movies, art, music, jokes, dramatic stories. . . . In a broad sense, play is what lifts people out of the mundane. I sometimes compare play to oxygen—it's all around us, yet goes mostly unnoticed or unappreciated until it is missing.
Stuart Brown

Questions to Ponder

1. What were your favorite play activities as a child? This question will be part of the sharing at the meeting.
2. How do you balance a need for play with the more serious aspects of life? What activities are play in your life now?
3. What activities in your life do you consider play? How does play nourish your spirit/soul and enrich your life? Are there activities that you do for recreation or leisure that don't really feel like play?
4. If you could find more time to just play, what would you fill it with?
5. List some ideas for play that you might like to try. Include activities you do now but would like to spend more time doing.
6. Think about different kinds of play—solitary play, social play, imaginary play and object play.
7. Has technology changed the way that you play, or what you consider play? If it has, how do you feel about the change?

Facilitator Notes for Play

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Sharing of Joys and Concerns (each person about 2 minutes)

Silence – holding ourselves and others in silent support – 3 minutes

Shared Readings

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Leslie Grimmer

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

In the rounds of sharing, pay close attention to the allotted time so that all members have the opportunity to share.

Round 1 (each person about 2 minutes)

Tell the group about a favorite play activity when you were a child.

Round 2 (each person about 5 minutes)

Share more deeply feelings, stories and attitudes on play in response to the preparation materials.

Round 3

As time allows, share additional thoughts on play, or reflect on what others have shared.

Closing Words

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Stuart Brown

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