

1. Properties of play
  1. apparent purposelessness - play activities don't seem to have any survival value, play is done for its own sake
  2. inherent attraction - It's fun, makes you feel good. It is a cure for boredom
  3. diminished consciousness of self - we stop thinking about the fact we are thinking
  4. improvisational potential - we aren't locked into a rigid way of doing things
  5. continuation desire - we desire to keep doing it, and we devise ways to keep it going
2. Play involves:
  1. anticipation
  2. surprise - a discovery, new sensation or idea, shifting perspective
  3. pleasure-a good feeling
  4. understanding - acquisition of new knowledge, etc.
  5. strength - the mastery that comes from constructive experience and understanding.
  6. Poise - grace, contentment, composure and sense of balance in life
3. play is largely responsible for our existence as sentient, intelligent creatures
4. Bob Fagen, on studying play in grizzly bears: "In a world continuously presenting unique challenges and ambiguity, play prepares these bears for an evolving planet."
5. How is play useful? One major theory is that play is simply practice for skills needed in the future
  1. Play allows "pretend" rehearsal for the challenges and ambiguities of life, a rehearsal in which life and death are not at stake.
6. Animals that play alot quickly learn how to navigate their world and adapt to it.
7. The amount of play is correlated to the development of the brain's frontal cortex, which is an important brain region responsible for much of what we call cognition.
8. Our perceptual experiences are coded within the brain in scattered "map", each of which is a complex network of interconnected neurons. For example, the many different shapes and sizes of trees that exist in the world are encoded into a common map that encodes for "treeness", which allows us to recognize a tree even when we have never seen its particular kind before.
9. As children, play helps us learn how the world works: Imagining possibilities, simulating what might be, and then testing this against what actually is.
10. Research shows that we provide babies and young children with the chance to play and socialize-toys and tots, play and parental interaction to help them reach their full potential.
11. There is no exact blueprint for creating our brains. The information encoded in our DNA is far to sparse to define exactly how all the neurons should connect with each other. The brain wires itself up.
12. In an unpredictable, changing world, what we learn from playing can be transferred into other novel contexts.
13. Lila in Sanskrit is a concept meaning "pastime", "sport", "play". Lila is a way of describing all reality, including the cosmos as the outcome of creative play by the divine absolute.
14. It creates a low-risk format for finding and developing innate skills and talents.
15. dogs display an adaptive pattern called neoteny, which describes the stretching of juvenile periods and sometimes the retention of juvenile characteristics into adulthood. Human juvenile periods are stretched out as well.
16. Play very likely continues to prompt continued neurogenesis throughout our long lives. in early dementia, play forestalls mental decline by stimulating neurogenesis
17. Eight personality types
  1. The Joker - play revolves around some kind of nonsense, clowns find social acceptance by making other people laugh

2. The Kinesthete - people who like to move-"need to move in order to think"
3. The Explorer - exploration becomes their preferred avenue into the alternative universe of play.
4. The Competitor - breaks through into the euphoria and creativity of play by enjoying a competitive game with specific rules
5. The Director - enjoy planning and executing scenes and events.
6. The Collector - The thrill of play for the collector is to have and hold the most, the best, the most interesting collection of objects or experiences.
7. The Artist/Creator - The joy is found in making things.
8. The Storyteller - the imagination is the key to the kingdom of play
18. The sea squirt - after finding a permanent home never to move again, ingests its own nervous system. Our behavior and brains become fused without play. It can lead to neurodegenerative diseases.
19. we give up play because we grow out of childhood and leave behind "childish things", there is a societal pressure to be serious and productive.
20. Studies of the Dutch "hunger winter" during WWII demonstrate that IQ, risk of heart disease, and other health problems are influenced by how well your grandmother ate during the third trimester of her pregnancy with your mother.
21. Attunement - As mother and child lock eyes, the neural activity in the right cortex of their brains are synchronizing. mind meld is a very pure form of intimacy
22. Lack of experience with rough and tumble play hampers the normal give and take necessary for social mastery, and has been linked to poor control of violent impulses later in life.
23. Play can become a doorway to new self, because play is all about trying on new behaviors and thoughts, it frees us from established patterns.
24. Nikki Gordon has found evidence that play increases gene expression in the frontal lobe for brain-derived neurotrophic factor, a protein thought to be involved with brain maturation.
25. Learning and memory also seem to be fixed more strongly and last longer when learned in play.
26. Stephen Siviy, in work with rats, speculates that by strengthening connections between brain areas that might be weakly connected previously, play enhances the retention of knowledge.
27. Kids get toys that come straight out of movies and shows that come with preset collection of ideas and who the characters are and how children should play with the toys.
28. Authentic play comes from deep down inside us. It is not formed or motivated solely by others.
29. Goals are good, but overly rigid pursuit of those goals can inhibit growth and understanding.
30. Bowen found that, as a group, athletes did better financially after college than other students, a fact attributed to the drive and energy that sports cultivates.
31. the opposite of play is not work - it is actually depression, our inherent need for variety and challenge can be buried by an overwhelming sense of responsibility.
32. Play is important in developing creativity, because it breaks us out of set patterns of thinking and behaving
33. Play is called recreation because it makes us new again, it re-creates us and our world.
34. The beauty of sports is that it embraces the paradox of seriousness and play.
35. we talk about working together as a team, but it might be more beneficial and productive to talk about playing together as a team.
36. brainstorming is credited with more than doubling the productivity of work groups.
37. crisis of the soul that comes from pouring every moment of your time and every ounce of your being into other's expectations

38. joy is our birthright. for highly competitive, serious people, to realize that they have missed this joy can be devastating.
39. when we lack that feeling of lightness in what we do it should be taken as a warning sign.
40. Brown conducted a study showing that regular physical activity could help seriously depressed women rise out of their depression.
41. body play is the first thing that shows up in evolution, the body remembers what the mind has forgotten.
42. to regain play in your life you will need to take a journey back into the past to help create avenues for play that work for you in the present.
  1. to figure this out, sit and remember something you did in the past that gave you the sense of unfettered pleasure, of time suspended, of total involvement, of wanting to do this thing again and again.
43. "the master in the art of living makes little distinction between his work and his play, his labor and his leisure, his mind and his body, his information and his recreation, his love and his religion. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence at whatever he does, leaving others to decide whether he is working or playing. To him, he's always doing both".
44. The defining factor among couples who were able to find romance again, and even to find new fields of emotional intimacy previously unexplored, was that they were able to find ways to play together.
45. Brown claims that sustained emotional intimacy is impossible without play.
46. Teasing, is a common way to probe the boundaries of a relationship and address power issues.
47. Jokes, when they contain unrealistic exaggeration, can allow us to safely address real fears without making them seem like accusations.
48. Dr. Fisher believes romantic love has evolved to get us to focused beyond the initial intensity of transient erotic preoccupations to a continuing commitment to one mate.
49. We can feel lusty toward one, greatly attached to another, and feel romantic love for yet another.
50. It is common knowledge that a little risk can stoke love's flame
51. Dr. Geoffrey Miller proposes that play itself is a sexual trait
  1. he thinks the products of play - art, drama, sports, music - exist because they are part of the human mating display.
  2. he believes these things are analogous to the peacock tails, that sexual selection even trumps natural selection.
  3. to view these as essentially useless is to ignore the way that play and the humanities help us attune to each other as individuals and as a culture
52. in real play, the activity is enjoyable in itself and done for its own sake. it overrides consciousness of any goal.
53. play has a moderating influence in a relationship. without play, romantic love naturally tends to drift into territoriality, possessiveness, dominance, or aggression.
54. studies show that being lovesick can cause actual physical sickness.
55. couples that made a point of doing things that were new and unfamiliar had a much higher satisfaction measure than the couples who spent time doing familiar things
56. when someone is domineering, aggressive, or violent, they are not engaged in true play.
57. play is in union with emergent morality, play signaling in animals as the basis of social trust, animal play operates to level the playing field and promotes fairness
58. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, the origins of "knowing" coming from body movement.
59. Dr Frank Wilson believes hand and the brain co-evolved and are closely dependent on each other.

60. Many of those who are addicted to computer gaming are those who don't feel comfortable meeting life's varied and ambiguous challenges.
  1. online or video gaming offers a world in which they can succeed. They are quickly rewarded for success, and failure is easily reversed.
61. Play sets the stage for cooperative socialization. nourishes the roots of trust, empathy, caring, and sharing.
62. if diverse, clashing ethnic or cultural groups can be coaxed to actually play together, the positive effects can be dramatic
63. in large part, play is our culture, in the form of music, drama, novels, dances, celebrations and festivals. play shows us our common humanity.
64. the ability to innovate largely comes out of an ability to play.
65. remedy
  1. take your play history
    1. one of its goals is to create a general mental picture of your play attitudes, and color them with emotion-laden scenes.
  2. Expose yourself to play
    1. people begin to close themselves off to play when they start to feel that they should always be serious, always be productive
  3. give yourself permission to be playful to be a beginner
    1. probably the biggest roadblock to play for adults is the worry that they will look silly, undignified or dumb if they allow themselves to truly play.
  4. Fun is your North Star, but you don't always have to head north
    1. trick is, that some of the really transforming acts of play aren't purely fun
  5. Be active
    1. We are alive when we are physically moving.
  6. Free yourself of fear
    1. we all need "secret spaces" in which we can be safely alone and give ourselves over to needed fantasies if we are to adapt to a challenging world
    2. find out if it is your surroundings that prevents a sense of trust and well being that would allow play to emerge
  7. Nourish your mode of play, and be with people who nourish it, too
    1. if people around you cannot learn to understand your need for play, find people who do.