

The magic of Play! Engage with Glee & Fascination

Magic, delight, wonder, play they all exist on a spectrum, from a tiny glimmer of enjoyment or appreciation to mind blowing awe and ecstasy. Wherever you are, that is a great place to be. You don't need to be militant with your magic It's not about "doing it right" "doing it more, or better-er"

So how DO you DO THIS? First, we choose to make life more magical We start small and we start where we are. We notice the pleasure, the presence, curiosity, & thankfulness, and plant those magic seeds with our attention and nurture them with the water and sunshine of our feelings and sensations, and in time watch them grow into the beautiful garden of our life experience.

When we use these tiny but potent tools in our every day with patience & compassion, these moments can grow to become the very ground we stand on.

Sometimes life get dark and difficult and it feels like there is nowhere to stand at all and nothing to hold on to. Our Magic that we've built with our love and attention can become the parachute that helps us find our way back to solid ground.

Let me be very clear that these experiences can change your life in incredible ways, but hormones genes and biology and are FOR REAL! Know and listen to your body, find the ways to support your body in any way possible. For me Naturopathy, Acupuncture, herbs, lotions, diet, therapy, neurofeedback, light therapy, nervous system regulation and so many other things were all really incredible and important parts of my very long healing journey. But I would not be here today or be cheerful and in love with life without my magic. It was my light and refuge along my dark and winding path and the memory of its sweetness kept me going through my very darkest night.

Previous Module review- Somatic warm up

1- Decision, Discovery and everyday delight

2. Module 2

Cultivation- Wonder and gratitude compared them to other neutral or less positive emotions

intrinsic and ingenious magic

Wonder of Play

"The truth is that play seems to be one of the most advanced methods nature has invented to allow a complex brain to create itself."

— **Stuart Brown, Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul**

"Of all animal species, humans are the biggest players of all. We are built to play and built through play. 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 Brown

Dance Party!

The Magic of Play - Next week's module will be on connecting with others. Others can be key part of play but I wanted for you to first explore how YOU play before considering how your play combines with others.

- As I'm describing play, see what memories come to mind for you and jot them down.
- As memories come up feel into one that is particularly strong and juicy. Later on, we'll use this memory as part of our exercise.
- Let's broaden our definition of play not just to games but to one that can include physical exercise, learning and intellectual pursuits, hobbies, pastimes, adventure, acts of creation, and so much more!

What is play-

- Like many things we are discussing, it's hard to define. But we know it when we feel it.
- Many smart people talk about definitions of play involving "losing track of time" or "decreased self consciousness" "element of risk" and many other qualifying factors all of those things are true.
- In this moment, I'm not concerned with defining play as much as exploring the experience of it, and how to get there. The three ingredients that I find to be key for Play are Engagement, Glee, and Fascination.
 - **Engagement**- an investment in the activity, a buy in, believing in what is proposed, agreeing to the rules and the risks
 - **Glee**- this is a spectrum of course, and deeply connected to the explorations of the last few weeks. From general enjoyment, pleasure, delight, and turning it all the way up to exuberance, glee, or even ecstasy! the more this knob is turned up, the more we are in love with the game we are playing, and the deeper the satisfaction
 - **Fascination- (or expansion)** not always, but many times part of play once you've made the investment of engagement, and if you are enjoying what you are doing you find that you want to dig deeper, to understand more fully, how you can achieve greater heights or deeper understanding.
- I think it is possible to have Play with Glee and Engagement, or Play with Engagement and Fascination. But when all three are present, you're really cooking with Gas! Let's be a triple threat
- Also, Surprise! You're already skilled in several parts of this! As I go into each part, notice which parts of this sound like related experiences from our adventures in the last few modules.
- As you listen to ways of interacting with each of these elements, feel into them somatically as well.

- Bring to mind the playful memory of choice and see if you can identify and feel how each of these three elements relate to your memory.

Engage- possibility anticipation, invitation-

- Looking for the **invitations- This week we are focusing on noticing and accepting the invitations not as much on creating them, but once you start looking you'll inadvertently start creating them as well. More on this in the next two modules**
- **Make sure everyone is playing**
- Connected to ourselves, and others (plants, critters, objects and people)- more on this next week.
- Say yes- once you see the invitation, say yes, in whatever way suits the situation- your mind, your body, your words
- Mimicking- one way to say yes is to simply try to imitate the thing or being that you are trying to engage with. Car wash man
- Partnering- with objects animals or people- They do what they do, you do what you do in response and in connection to what they do. kayaking you are partnering with the water, Tree climbing, you are partnering with the tree, or take it even further swings, you are partnering with the swing, air, gravity and physics!

Glee

This glee bubbles up from the activity being done, who and what you are sharing it with, and sometimes, just from the decision to “Say Yes” or a combination of all of them and more! See if as you think of your sweet playful memory you can give your attention to pleasure of the play and let it grow, expand and bubble up to feel bigger, sweeter and let it push up the corners of your mouth into a big ol smile!

Fascination/ Expansion

- Expansion and Magnification- yes...And! - improvisers and clowns- you've said yes, how do you expand or elaborate, go deeper, make it richer, bigger yes, more precise
- More Please!- do it more often, build a relationship, make it a place you can live
- Creativity- how can you take what you know and make new connections or conclusions
- Ask questions- find out more about what people know, this can be verbally, or asking a question with your actions. Passing a ball back and forth
- Exploration and curiosity- General Exploration, where can you go, what can you do!
- Make proposals- try things a different way, see what happens, what do you learn?
- Trial and error- try it! If it doesn't work, try something else, or try it a little differently next time.

- Don't be afraid to find out how far the rules bend- As some of you know I've spent a lot of time doing hand balancing the balance point in a handstand is just before you go too far. If you want to hit the balance you have to be willing to go past where you are scared of falling to find the good stuff. Once you know where too far is, you have a much bigger playground. Make sure you are being respectful of all involved as you do this.

Once we are fully engaged and fascinated Flow States- where time speeds up and slows down

Photos of play- look and feel for all three elements

Some other thoughts on play

- Risk losing to make it interesting- Joe Dieffenbacher
- Sometime as you fascinate and expand, you may break the game but you may also create a new game
- The Joy and risk of Play- play involves risk, some play more than others. Playing yahtzee less so than Free Solo rock climbing (without any gear) Some risks of play:
 - You can think someone is playing and they are not and they get offended
 - You can extend an invitation to play and be rejected
 - You could be physically or mentally injured in play
- The play you find may be outside your usual comfort zone
 - But if you don't "Say Yes" you can't get to the play!
 - Listen to you, your heart, your needs, your abilities rather than your comfort zone understand the risk and say an enthusiastic and responsible yes when it feels right to you.
- If the invitation isn't accepted, such as the other person does not accept invitation to play-
 - "Grab hold tightly, let loose lightly"- Eric Bass
 - "Be a goldfish"- Ted Lasso
 - SWx4- Jack Canfield
- Silliness- for extra bonus points, not a requirement, but it's one of my favorite play ingredients.
 - This beautiful combination of glee and fascination and surprise comes about as we in joy ask "can we take the play over here? What about here?"
 - From clown school " The audience will go with you ANYWHERE, but you have to TAKE them there."- Dan Griffiths potato baby example

Your Magic Play ID:

Play personality 8 types: From “Play” by Stuart Brown MD

Note, these are about HOW and WHY you do, not WHAT you do. As I read notice which type or types stick out as ways you play

The Joker- funny costumes photos

The Kinesthete- upside down and handstand photos

The Explorer- destination bike helmet photo

The Competitor- Best muscles in town

The Director- necessary targets photo

The Collector- belly button list

The Artist/ Creator- monster, dragon

The Storyteller- Nomad and Calvin

Sense of humor

What makes you laugh?

Physical- buster keaton, charlie Chaplin

Satire- SNL or the simpsons or family guy

Situational/ Farce-

Farce-a comic dramatic piece that uses highly improbable situations, stereotyped characters, extravagant exaggeration, and violent horseplay. Marx brothers, Mel Brooks, Zoolander, less farcical but still situational comedies include such as snatch or oceans 11.

In life these tend to be the stories that you tell that are funny uh oh in the moment, but funny ha ha when you tell them later

Dark- The Addams Family

Surreal, silly, Non- sequitur- Monty Python, or Tobi Silliness

Observational- shared experiences- Jerry Sinfeld

Improvisational- improv comedy shows, Who's line is it anyway,

Whit/ Wordplay-

Wordplay- Tobi Jokes

- Peekaboo joke
- Origami Joke

Oscar Wilde-

- “To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.”
- “I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train.”
- “Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.”

Dry/ Deadpan/ sarcasm- Delivery rather than content

- Why did the airplane run into the mountain?
- Mitch Hedberg- Rice is great if you're really hungry and want to eat two thousand of something.

Humor of ages

Body Juvenile- bell, radar, sticky

Adult- risque or sexy

With all play, but especially the last two, Make sure everyone is playing:

Self deprecating-Mike Birbiglia - Sleepwalking

Aggressive/ Insult/ Roasting- Black friar roasting

What Fascinates you?

This ties into what we have already been noticing and cultivating over the last few weeks. Now that we have some ground to stand on let's dig in deeper. Enjoy the feelings in your body as you delve into thinking about these topics that light you up, and write down what comes to mind.

- over the last few weeks and patterns you've noticed and any new ones developed
 - The things that bring you pleasure and wonder
 - Now that you are building a habit of discovery and cultivating the feelings, can you allow that to lead to fascination, engagement and glee?
- When you were a kid, how did you like to play? And what did you like to play?
 - Our play personalities can evolve and grow, but many times the heart of what we loved as a kid stays true through our whole lives.
 - What did you love about those things?
 - What things do you love now you would have hated as a kid?
- What kind of nerd are you?
- My favorite party trick instead of asking "What do you do?" I ask people "What is your favorite thing to tell people about?" So let's play! "Hi friend! It's so nice to meet you! What is your favorite thing to tell people about?"
- Take a moment to reflect on your play personality, your sense of humor and your Nerd points of interest. And ask Where and how could you find more of your play personality, and sense of humor.
- Start to think of places where others who share people who share your play personality & magic themes might congregate.

Magical Praxis

Make more magic

Continue on with these practices from past modules until they just become how you do life.

- Being a magic detective. Noticing moments of delight and wonder and cultivating them. See if you can allow these moments to evolve into play by Engaging in fascination and Glee
- Having a time of gratitude and wonder scheduled into your day and taking it with you through the rest of the day

- Having a “self-care” Magic time at least one scheduled in your week. Even if it’s just 5 minutes. Look forward to it, enjoy it, luxuriate in it. eg. A daily walk, or reading time on Thursday night. See if you want to invite play into this special time, or if resting in the pleasure and gratitude feel what serves you best at this time.

Magic in the messiness

Gamification of the boring or unfun-

Wear a tiara while you do the dishes- this is my dish doing tiara

Playing hide and seek while you are trying to find your keys

Dance party when you get out of bed in the morning

Look to your play personality for ideas- these examples are with chores, but you can come up with examples that work for whatever the unplayful areas of your life are:

- storytellers- I have a fantasy novel audiobook that I can only listen to while I’m doing chores, if I want to hear the next chapter, than it’s a good thing I’ve got that pile of laundry to fold! Thank goodness!
- Kinostete- put on one of your favorite albums and dance your dishes away!
- Director can you boss your closet into epic organization?

Being in the sh!*#- “poop”

- Carol Burnett show or SNL when things go wrong or a play, and they are in the moment and say yes! You’re cheering for them, you feel connected, because you know it’s real.
- “Comedy is simply tragedy happening to someone else”- WC Fields
- What play can happen when we decide that tragedy happening to us is hilarious.
- Plastic trunk breaking story
- It isn’t appropriate in every situation, but it works way more often than you would think, and makes life much more fun!

Decision between play and others module. Others can be key part of play but I wanted for you to first explore how YOU play before considering how your play combines with others.

Notice how moments of play feel more deep and rich when you take time to notice, appreciate and cultivate the Engagement, Glee, and Fascination

- Can you use Play to explore and expand these points on your magic map?
 - Get more specific or find new nooks and crannies Eg. Nature-finding specific places, under bridges, or sensations, fluffy grasses, or leaves brushing the top of my head. Water- I love sitting next to water, now explore, I notice that I really love putting my feet in the water and feeling that perfect texture of mud on the bank squish between my toes.
 - Look for what you like other places get creative. E.g.-sparkles on water, reflected on trees, combined with clothing and movement wearing a sparkly belt and standing in the sunshine wiggling and enjoying the sparkles!

Where and how could you find more of your play personality, and sense of humor. Start to think of places where people who share your play personality & magic themes might congregate.

Magic in the messes

Gamification of the unfun

Integrating play into everyday activities (here comes the airplane eating)

Wear a tiara while you do the dishes- this is my dish doing tiara

Playing hide and seek while you are trying to find your keys

Dance party when you get out of bed in the morning

Being in the sh!*#- poop

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- What play can happen when we decide that tragedy happening to us is hilarious.
- Carol Burnett show or SNL when things go wrong or a play, and they are in the moment and say yes! You're cheering for them, you feel connected, because you know it's real
- You can do this in life too!

Whistle in the life boats- you're here! You're doing the thing! How can you make it more pleasant? Can you sing while you do the dishes? Can you dance while you vacuum, can you put on your favorite music and jam out while at work? Can you listen to a fascinating podcast on your commute?

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~~Somatic Exercise-Say yes, go deeper and enjoy!~~

~~Pick your top Playful memory senses, feelings,~~

~~Lead into the moment of engagement~~

~~Glee~~

~~Fascination~~