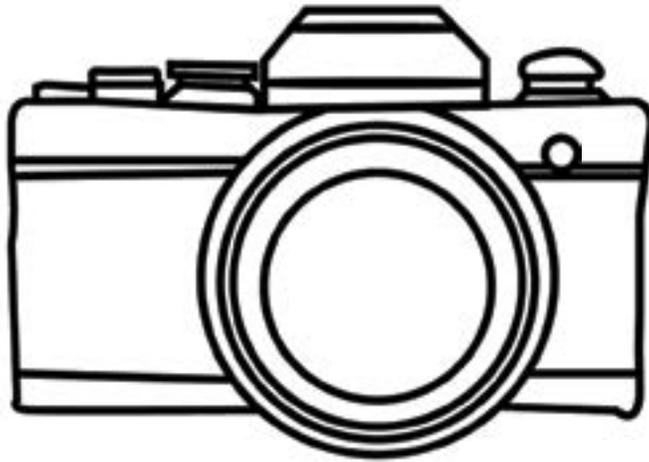


THE *play* PROJECT



A MONTH OF FUN FOR ANYONE
(ESPECIALLY WRITERS AND OTHER CREATIVES)

The Play Project: A Month of Fun for Anyone

(especially writers and other creatives)

Authentic play comes from deep down inside us....It emerges from the imaginative force within. That's the adaptive power of play: with a pinch of pleasure, it integrates our deep physiological, emotional, and cognitive capacities. And quite without knowing it, we grow. ~ Dr. Stuart Brown, Play (126)

Use these pages to help you generate ideas for everyday play, more involved play, and writing-specific play. Other creatives like fine artists, photographers, performers, and bakers can adapt these ideas to suit their creative pursuits.

Step One: Make Your Play List

Everyday Play

Everyday play ideas are ideally quick to pull off in the middle of an ordinary work day, so list things that don't require a lot of equipment or time. Think of simple activities you enjoy, that relax you and feel fun, like doodling, baking brownies, playing solitaire, jumping on a trampoline, or folding an origami swan.

EVERYDAY PLAY IDEAS TO DO ON MY OWN:

EVERYDAY PLAY IDEAS TO DO WITH OTHERS:

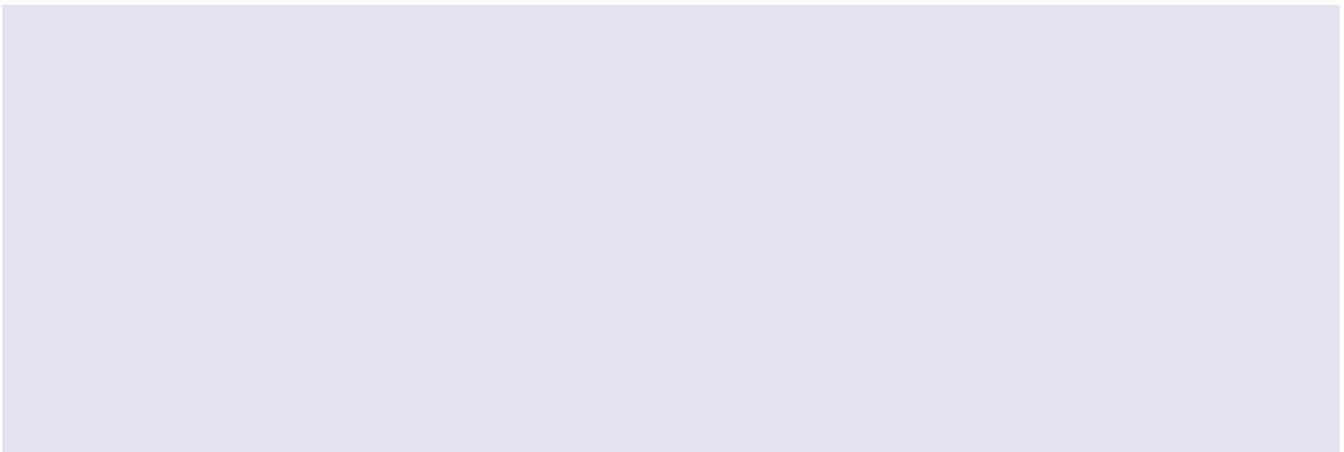
More Involved Play

This list can include activities and outings that might require more resources and planning, like ice skating, hiking, or visiting an art museum. For these, you may have to block out an entire afternoon, reserve a weekend, or shell out some cash.

MORE INVOLVED PLAY IDEAS TO DO ON MY OWN:



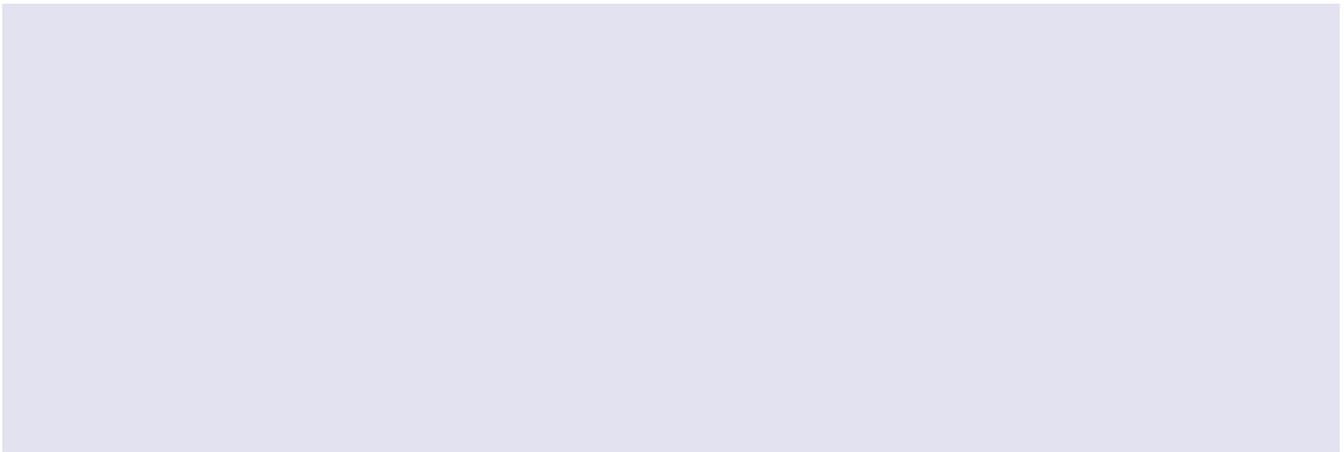
MORE INVOLVED PLAY IDEAS TO DO WITH OTHERS:



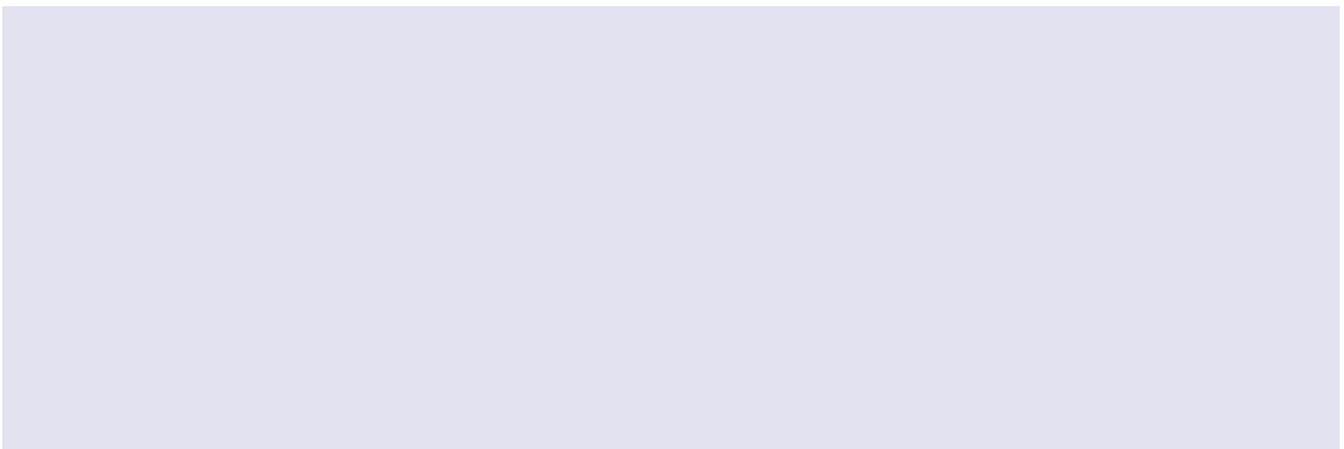
Writing-Specific Play

Writers can play with their actual writing projects. This might mean diving into an existing piece with a playful “assignment,” like working required vocabulary words into an article or switching POV in one chapter of a novel as an experiment. Writers can also play with words with writing warm-ups, like writing a poem from a prompt or penning letters to a friend in the voice of a long-lost aunt. You could write a story with others, each person adding a few paragraphs to move the plot along.

WRITING-SPECIFIC IDEAS TO DO ON MY OWN:



WRITING-SPECIFIC IDEAS TO DO WITH OTHERS:



Play for Creatives of All Kinds

Play can energize not only writers but creatives of all kinds who need a burst of inspiration. Reduce pressure to produce and remember what drew you in the first place. Mix things up by tapping into a different medium or learn a new technique without any intent to change what you already do well. If you're a dancer, add a different style music to a routine. If you're a musician, grab a different instrument or invite some friends over for a jam session.

PLAY IDEAS INSIDE MY CREATIVE AREA TO TRY ON MY OWN:

PLAY IDEAS OUTSIDE MY CREATIVE AREA TO TRY ON MY OWN:

PLAY IDEAS INSIDE OR OUTSIDE MY CREATIVE AREA TO TRY WITH OTHERS:

Your Play History

Dr. Stuart Brown, author of Play and founder of the National Institute for Play, recommends we take our “play history.” If we can identify childhood joy, we can re-create it to some extent in our current life. Think back to what excited you as a child.

ACTIVITIES I ENJOYED AS A CHILD (ON MY OWN OR WITH OTHERS, FROM BAKING COOKIES TO BUILDING MODEL AIRPLANES):

HOW I FELT:

FAVORITE TOYS:

HOW I FELT:

GAMES I LOVED TO PLAY (ON MY OWN AND/OR WITH OTHERS):

HOW I FELT:

PLACES I WAS FREE TO PLAY (TREE HOUSE, WOODS, PARK):

HOW I FELT:

BASED ON THESE THINGS THAT BROUGHT ME JOY IN CHILDHOOD, I CAN TRY THESE PLAYFUL IDEAS AS AN ADULT:

The 8 Play Personalities

Dr. Brown identified eight play personalities. People may have tendencies toward more than one type but generally have a dominant play personality. Read each description and decide if one of them sounds like you:

- **The Joker:** The class clown who makes others laugh, you may find the most fun in playing practical jokes.
- **The Kinesthete:** Always on the move, you might be an athlete or you might want to play Twister—but more to be moving around than to win.
- **The Explorer:** Whether physically exploring by traveling, emotionally exploring by searching for a deeper feeling, or mentally exploring by learning something new, you want to go where you've never gone before.
- **The Competitor:** You enjoy a competitive game, and you want to play, to fight, to win, whether playing alone or on teams.
- **The Director:** You organize, plan and execute events and activities, from parties to outings.
- **The Collector:** You collect objects, like coins, or experiences, like visiting every national park; you may collect on your own or with others.
- **The Artist/Creator:** The key to play for the artist/creator is to make something, regardless of whether you show it to someone or not.
- **The Storyteller:** Imagination is key, and because of this, they can bring play to almost any activity; storytellers love writing novels, plays, performing, lecturing.

Which of these play personalities seems most like you?

Seeing that personality's tendency, you can begin to understand why some things simply don't feel like fun to you. Your close friend invites you to go out for coffee, but you want to go for a bike ride; your sister wants to go to a wine and canvas event, and you crack jokes the whole night.

You start to see that certain kinds of activities are especially fun. For example, if you're a collector, make sure you work in some outings that fit your fun—visit antique stores to find the next button for your collection or buy another model car to expand your display. If you're a Kinesthete, plan to jog, dance, and climb a tree. Recognize your dominant type to build in plenty of activities and outings that you'll truly enjoy.

MY DOMINANT PLAY PERSONALITY TYPE IS:

IDEAS SPECIFIC TO MY PLAY PERSONALITY:

Step Two: Plan Your Play

Pencil an activity into each of the 31 days below (weekends highlighted). Look for an open weekend to schedule a more involved activity. Phone to reserve your spot at the skating rink, pottery class, or recording studio. Schedule it on an electronic calendar as an event and turn on the notification. When it beeps and flashes on your phone or desktop, commit. Check them off as the month progresses.

January 2016

| | Activity | Notes |
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Step Three: **Play!**

The official #PlayProject begins in January, but you can play whenever you like. As your days unfold, feel free to undertake a different activity or outing from what you originally recorded. Grab an eraser or Whiteout and write what you actually did. Then check off that box.

CIRCLE OR STAR THE ACTIVITIES THAT BROUGHT YOU THE MOST JOY AND LAUGHTER, TO REMIND YOU TO INCORPORATE MORE OF THAT IN YOUR LIFE.

Step Four: **Document and Share the Fun**

Document your play! You can photograph it or write about it, posting in a public place like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Tumblr. Tag it with #PlayProject so we can find each other and celebrate (#PlayProject images to pin or post provided at annkroeker.com). Maybe you'll inspire others to live a more playful life!

Bonus: In a separate journal or on the second line next to the activity, make a note of the effects of the play:

- Did it give you physical or mental energy?
- Do you feel more alert or creative? To what degree?
- How did it affect your relationships and your level of happiness?
- Are you feeling frustrated at play interrupting more pressing matters?
- Is your play having minimal impact? Or is it transforming your days? Describe in a sentence or two.

Inspire Your Play

The quality that work and play have in common is creativity.

~ Dr. Stuart Brown, *Play*

Source: *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul* (127)

The highest form of research is essentially play.

~ Neville V. Scarfe

Source: *Childhood Education*, Volume 39, Issue 3, "Play is Education" <http://quoteinvestigator.com/2014/08/21/play-research/>

For humans, play is a refuge from ordinary life, a sanctuary of the mind, where one is exempt from life's customs, methods, and decrees.

~ Diane Ackerman, *Deep Play*

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/books/first/a/ackerman-play.html>

It is not only possible to say a great deal in praise of play; it is really possible to say the highest things in praise of it. It might reasonably be maintained that the true object of all human life is play. Earth is a task garden; heaven is a playground.

~ G. K. Chesterton

Source: *All Things Considered*, "Oxford from Without" https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/All_Things_Considered/Oxford_from_Without

Authentic play comes from deep down inside us...It emerges from the imaginative force within. That's the adaptive power of play: with a pinch of pleasure, it integrates our deep physiological, emotional, and cognitive capacities. And quite without knowing it, we grow.

~ Dr. Stuart Brown, *Play*

Source: *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*

Above all, play requires freedom. One chooses to play. Play's rules may be enforced, but play is not like life's other dramas. It happens outside ordinary life, and it requires freedom.

~ Diane Ackerman, *Deep Play*

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/books/first/a/ackerman-play.html>

If your life has become barren, play brings it to life again.

~ Dr. Stuart Brown, *Play*

Source: *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul* (218)

Play is an activity enjoyed for its own sake. It is our brain's favorite way of learning and maneuvering. ~ Diane Ackerman, *Deep Play*

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/books/first/a/ackerman-play.html>