Episode 264

Play as a Prism: Exploring Group Work, Conflict, and Human Connection

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workshops work

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The nutshell

In facilitation, "play" is a multifaceted concept that encompasses a mindset, tactic, strategy, and metaphor. It represents a complex approach to engaging with the world, far beyond its simplistic perception as a frivolous activity for children. Play is seen as a natural way to enhance performance, adapt to change, and foster a thriving environment, encapsulating the essence of being fully alive and at one's best.

"I cannot force you to play. If I force you, it's not play."

Number 1 Challenge

The complexity of play as a facilitation tool makes it challenging for facilitators to explain their work succinctly, as "play" can address various challenges and goals in a professional setting, including conflict.

Why workshops fail

If the facilitator isn't playful themselves and fails to create a safe playground where participants can freely opt in and out of the playful activity.

"When teams can play together, they can take risks together."
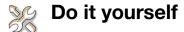
Nugget 1

Play offers valuable lessons for handling conflict by emphasizing the human connection and equality among team members. It fosters an environment where risks are taken without fear of judgment, leading to higher team performance and innovation.

Nugget 2

Engaging in play cultivates essential attitudes and abilities for resolving conflict: it nurtures curiosity, encourages the acceptance of different perspectives and solutions, and enhances our ability to process and understand situations on a more instinctual, physical level, not just cognitively.

Do it yourself

To foster a culture of play within an organization, celebrate creativity, experimentation, and even failure. Encourage bending the rules and exploring new ideas, seeing mistakes as opportunities for learning and innovation. The goal is to transform the organization into a playground where trial and error are part of the DNA, creating a safe space for risk-taking.