

A Whole New Mind: Part III Play & Meaning

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Play: When you are playful, you are activating the right side of the brain, says Daniel Pink. Southwest Airlines' mission statement states "People rarely succeed at anything unless they are having fun doing it." Have you ever flown Southwest? The flight attendants certainly look like they enjoy their job. I have heard hilarious announcements from them. Last time I flew, I asked to use the lavatory before take-off. The flight attendant said, "Sure. But make sure you yell FLUSH before you do, so it won't spray the mechanic."

Pink says that play manifests itself in three ways: games, humor, and joyfulness. Did you know that the video game industry is larger than the motion picture one? I'd rather go to a movie. I also don't have fun when I am being smeared in a game. Just ask me after a terrible day of fantasy football. But seriously I love to play games. We play them at my family reunion with all ages together and we laugh and have fun. Humor represents one of the highest forms of human intelligence. But we are not talking about sarcasm or negative humor. How many of us were criticized and then told, "I was just kidding"? Laughter reduces stress. Joyfulness is unconditional and from within. As little children we could laugh a lot, it is good to reclaim that part of ourselves. Laughing people are more creative.

Application: Try to lighten up. Watch funny movies or tv shows. (I watch Bones, Seinfeld and Frazer) Read the comics. Laugh. Play games.



Meaning: Pink writes about Victor Frankl's experience in a concentration camp and how he found meaning. If you have not read his book, Man's Search for Meaning, you must do so. I have never forgotten (although I am foggy on the details now) a story Frankl tells in his book about a man who came to see him. The man was elderly and could not shake the depression that had settled on him 2 years ago when his wife of 50 years or so had died. So Dr. Frankl asked him, "Do you think your wife would have suffered like you have, if you had died first?" The man replied, "Oh yes. We were so close all our lives. She would have been

devastated like me." Then Frankl asked the man, "Can you see how by outliving your wife, you saved her from this pain and suffering?" The man's whole face changed. It brightened and he straightened up and with a smile reached out shook Frankl's hand and said "Thank you". He now had a purpose to his suffering. We all need meaning and purpose and it runs through our right brain just like spirituality.

Application: Walk a labyrinth. Practice gratitude. Dedicate your work to someone.