



BUILDING BETTER AGILE TEAMS THROUGH PLAY

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HUMAN INTERFACING IS MY
FAVORITE THING
MY PRONOUNS ARE SHE/HER

HI, I'M JENNY

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GAME PLAN

- ▶ What is play?
- ▶ Why do we play?
- ▶ Question break!
- ▶ How do we play?
- ▶ How do we start playing?
- ▶ More questions!





FIRST,

WHAT IS PLAY?

ACTIVITY THAT IS DESIRED,
INVOLVES AN IMAGINARY
SITUATION, AND ALWAYS
INVOLVES RULES.

“The Role of Play in Development” - Vygotsky
(1978)



ANIMALS PLAY TO
LEARN SKILLS

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**THOSE WHO HAVE THE MOST
TO LEARN PLAY MORE**



so

WHY DID WE STOP PLAYING?

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so

WHY SHOULD WE START PLAYING AGAIN?



PLAY IS

A TEAM ACTIVITY THAT IS FUN,
COLLABORATIVE, AND BONDING



so

WHY SHOULD WE START PLAYING AGAIN?

WHY SHOULD WE START PLAYING?

- ▶ Play helps those with the most to learn.
- ▶ Play creates and reinforces the social bonds we need to operate as a team.
- ▶ Play is good for professional development.





PLAY HELPS THOSE WITH THE
MOST TO LEARN

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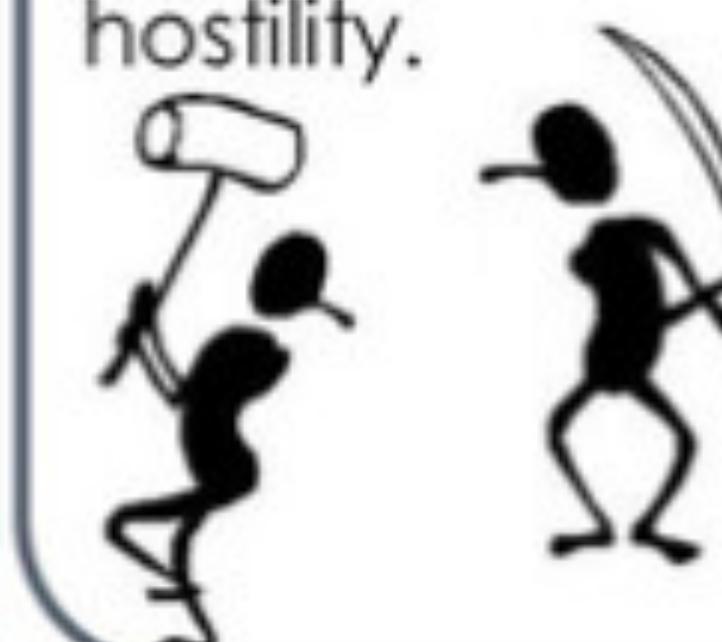
Forming

Team acquaints and establishes ground rules. Formalities are preserved and members are treated as strangers.



Storming

Members start to communicate their feelings but still view themselves as individuals rather than part of the team. They resist control by group leaders and show hostility.



Norming

People feel part of the team and realize that they can achieve work if they accept other viewpoints.



Performing

The team works in an open and trusting atmosphere where flexibility is the key and hierarchy is of little importance.



Adjourning

The team conducts an assessment of the year and implements a plan for transitioning roles and recognizing members' contributions.





PLAY HELPS THOSE WITH THE
MOST TO LEARN

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TROUBLEMAKER

At night, the Troublemaker may switch the cards of two *other* players without looking at those cards. The players who receive a different card are now the role (and team) of their new card, even though they don't know what role that is until the end of the game. *The Troublemaker is on the village team.*



PLAY CREATES AND REINFORCES THE SOCIAL
BONDS WE NEED TO OPERATE AS A TEAM



**PLAY IS GOOD FOR
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**NEXT, WE'LL BE
TALKING ABOUT HOW
WE PLAY AND HOW TO
START PLAYING.**



BUT FIRST, DOES
ANYONE HAVE
ANY QUESTIONS
SO FAR?

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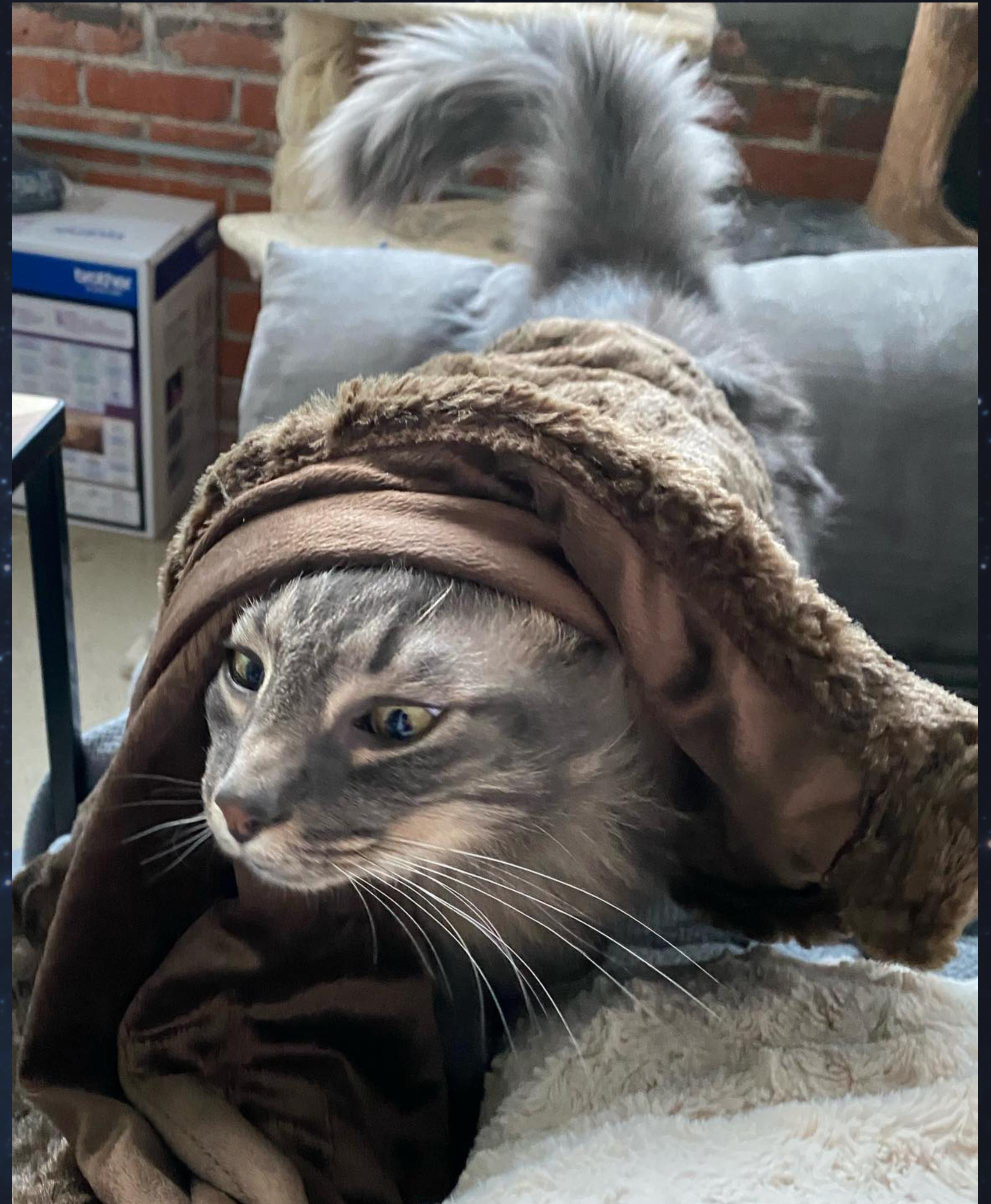


HOW DO WE PLAY?

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HOW DO WE PLAY?

- ▶ Agile ceremonies
- ▶ Wolf Time
- ▶ Team outings and happy hours
- ▶ Learning play





FIRST: A QUESTION

**HOW DO YOU END YOUR
STAND UPS?**

HOW DO YOU END YOUR STANDUPS?

- ▶ Power clap
- ▶ We toss a stuffed animal, and clap when it hits the table (tiger, Desk Fox, marmot, otter)
- ▶ On a whim: snaps, claps, or wave.
- ▶ Team chant (here here here go!)
- ▶ Slap an inanimate object
- ▶ Someone says "scrum on!" And we all groan and shake our heads.
- ▶ Put our hands in the middle and yell GO TEAM
- ▶ A random person is picked to say some words to clap it out on. It has ranged from "What Eric" to "Do all the things!"
- ▶ The Panda Snap
- ▶ Say "Thaaaaat's standup, folks!"
- ▶ Stand up clap to a dramatic musical score
- ▶ Force everyone to talk about the latest Harry Styles news.
- ▶ "I want to end standup with a rose ceremony like The Bachelor".
- ▶ We chant our team's initials and a random word.
- ▶ We all shout a random word of the day.
- ▶ Air high five with sound effects.
- ▶ Someones tells us the holiday of the day and an ASCII cow art of the day.



HAVING A TEAM TRADITION FOR
ENDING CEREMONIES IS PLAY



**NEXT, LET'S TALK ABOUT
WOLF TIME**

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ACTUALLY, LET'S TALK ABOUT
FLOW FIRST

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**FLOW TIME
WOLF TIME**

WOLF TIME

- ▶ Semi-structured
- ▶ Regular (once a sprint, usually)
- ▶ Limited to an hour or less
- ▶ Often has one person in charge of arranging it



WHAT DO YOU DO FOR WOLF TIME?

- ▶ A team member hadn't seen the movie Alien, so we watched it over 2 sessions
- ▶ Played board games
- ▶ Went on a scavenger hunt in the office
- ▶ Built Lego sculptures
- ▶ Painted ornaments for the tree
- ▶ Played Drawful2
- ▶ Giant Jenga tower games
- ▶ Made sushi together
- ▶ Rolled D&D characters
- ▶ Did Jackbox games
- ▶ Made gingerbread houses





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TEAM OUTINGS AND HAPPY HOURS

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WHAT DO YOU DO FOR OUTINGS?

- ▶ Team Trivia
- ▶ Scavenger hunts
- ▶ Social games
- ▶ Escape rooms
- ▶ Giant Jenga
- ▶ Stump
- ▶ Co-op games
- ▶ Smash Bros competition





LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

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DATA QUALITY ASPECTS

Functionality Aspect: Data moves in, through and from your app. It can get stuck, lost, scrambled and duplicated.

1 Input, notation, visualisation and the storing of data concepts, such as dates and money values, can become confusing, especially in international contexts.

2 Data flows can get convoluted. Is there a way to put data in limbo? An aborted transaction might do the trick.

3 Input of data is usually incredibly important and often equally fragile. There's tons of rubbish we can try to input into our systems, but how does it handle it?





I HAVE A LIST OF ABOUT 20
GAMES LIKE THAT



HOW DO YOU START PLAYING?

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Zone of Proximal Development

What
is
Known

Skills too difficult for a child to master on his/her own, but that can be done with guidance and encouragement from a knowledgeable person.

What
is not
Known

Learning



START SMALL

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TO RECAP:



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FIND ME ONLINE!

- ▶ jenny.bramble@gmail.com
- ▶ <http://twitter.com/jennydoesthings>
- ▶ <https://linkedin.com/in/jennybramble>
- ▶ <http://jennydoesthings.com>
- ▶ Willowtree!



RESOURCES

What Exactly Is Play, and Why Is It Such a Powerful Vehicle for Learning?: https://www.psychologytoday.com/sites/default/files/what_is_play_published.pdf

All Work and Some Play - Scott Crabtree & Kristen Toohill
<https://us.amazon.com/All-Work-Some-Play-Future-Proof/dp/B085KJ7245>

GAMES

Tech Debt Game (refactoring, feedback loops): <https://www.tastycupcakes.org/2019/04/technical-debt-game-for-non-technical-people/>

99 Test Balloons (requirements gathering): <https://www.tastycupcakes.org/2009/06/99-test-balloons/>

Create A Postcard (requirements gathering): <https://play14.org/games/postcards>

CONCEPT (communication): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concept_\(board_game\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concept_(board_game))

Hard Choices (tech debt, shortcuts): <https://resources.sei.cmu.edu/library/asset-view.cfm?assetid=28919>

Human Pipeline (optimize feedback): <https://www.ministryoftesting.com/dojo/lessons/human-pipeline-optimize-your-feedback>

Quality Jenga (testing, feedback): <https://www.ministryoftesting.com/dojo/lessons/quality-jenga>

The Great Canine Follicle Debacle (problem solving, attention to detail): <https://www.playingwithmurder.com/great-canine-follicle-debacle-p-784.html>

The Planning Game is one that I got from someone at a conference. I'm not sure I'm allowed to hand it out, but I can ask him! It's about running errands and making sure you get everything done on time.

GAMES

Power point karaoke (thinking on your feet, communication): <https://powerpointkaraoke.com>

TestSphere Arena (testing, story telling, logic): <https://www.ministryoftesting.com/testsphere/arena>

TestSphere Bingo: someone draws a card, reads it out. Anyone with a story slaps the table--first to be heard gets to tell their story. If it is relevant to the card, they win the card. Goal is to collect one of each color or 5 of a kind.

TestSphere RiskStorming: <https://www.ministryoftesting.com/testsphere/riskstorming>

Choose Happiness @ Work (like Cards Against Humanity for soft skills problems. A bit expensive.): <https://www.happybrainscience.com/product/choose-happiness-at-work/>

There's other games and exercises on <https://tastycupcakes.org> though the quality may vary. I find a lot of them to be good starting points.

Agile Airplanes (planning, testing, iterating): <https://agilefaq.wordpress.com/2018/11/25/paper-plane-game/>