

Understanding Your Play Style

Often due to societal expectations or other reasons, as adults we find it difficult to find time to play or engage in these activities — but it is important and good for our mental health.

Use this worksheet to understand your play style, what you want/need out of play, and most importantly, have FUN with it!

Below are the main eight play styles, what they are characterized by, and some questions you can ask yourself. You may find you gravitate towards one style or you embody many of them. Does any of the following resonate with you?

Collector

Enjoys collecting objects (i.e., cars, vinyls/CDs, trains, specific toy sets, etc.). This can be an activity they find joy in alone or with a group of people who share a common interest.

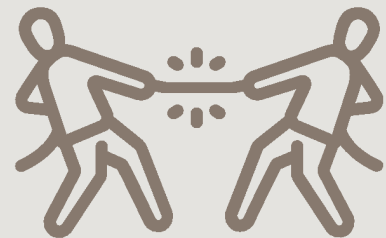


Consider:

- Is there anything you like to collect?
- Do you (or do you want to) engage in an activity like this on your own or with others?

Competitor

Enjoys play through competitive game with structured rules, with the goal to win them. This can be through one-player games or through games with others, or alternatively, merely watching and keeping up with the game (i.e., sports fans).



Consider:

- When you play games (i.e., board games, sports, etc.), is your main goal to win? More importantly, is winning where most of your joy comes from?
- Do you watch games with a strong connection to the team you're rooting for winning?

*Adapted from National Institute of Play, 2007-2024, Play Personalities; National Institute of Play, 2007-2024, Play for Adults



RELEARNING
HUMAN

Creator

Enjoys making things (i.e., painting, pottery, woodworking, sculpting, gardening, knitting, etc.). Sometimes they will show their work and other times they may not. This can also apply to making something work (i.e., replacing broken pieces, cleaning, etc.).



Consider:

- What do you create in your life? Do you find joy in it?
 - Are there ways you would like to be creative?
-

Director

Enjoys planning events or scenes, even if they may not know it. This can be seen in party planners, the planners of adventures, etc.



Consider:

- How often do you find yourself planning something (i.e., friend hang-outs, parties, etc.)?
 - Is this something you find great joy in?
-

Explorer

Enjoys exploring physically (i.e., going somewhere new) or emotionally (i.e., looking for new feelings through music, movement, or relationships).



Consider:

- How often do you find yourself exploring physical places or looking for new feelings?
- How do you see this show up in your life?

*Adapted from National Institute of Play, 2007-2024, Play Personalities; National Institute of Play, 2007-2024, Play for Adults



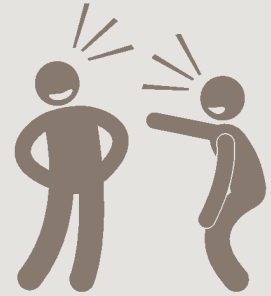
RELEARNING
HUMAN

Joker

Enjoys play through making people laugh in different settings.

Consider:

- When you were younger, were you often the one in class who made people laugh?
- Do you find yourself spending your social interactions with the goal of making others (and yourself) laugh?



Kinesthete

Enjoys movement in different ways (i.e., running, yoga, dancing, swimming, or other ways like old-fashioned hop-scotch). This often achieves a similar happiness and openness as play.

Consider:

- Do you enjoy moving your body as a way of play?
- Which ways have you used movement as a way of play recently?



Storyteller

Enjoys using their imagination for play either through creating their own stories (i.e., writing), or indulging in stories created by others (i.e., reading). This can include those performing the story. Individuals get joy out of the connection to the story and creating a world based off of it. Due to the depth of storytelling, it can really be tied to any kind of play.

Consider:

- How do you engage in storytelling in your life?
- How does this make you feel?



*Adapted from National Institute of Play, 2007-2024, Play Personalities; National Institute of Play, 2007-2024, Play for Adults



RELEARNING
HUMAN

How Do You Play or Want to Play?

Now that you have a better understanding of just how many options there are for play (many of which I'm sure you already engage in whether or not you were aware of it), you can work on building towards a more constant state of play and applying it to other parts of your life. Whether it be through competition — or finding the little joys of going to a playground and feeling like a kid again.

Take a moment to breathe in and consider which types of play resonated with you, if any? If you can't resonate with any of the above, think back to when you were younger. What brought you joy? Did you enjoy the slides and swings at the park? Did you play certain games with your friends?

Thinking about the past may help you understand what you may benefit from now. Use the space below to make notes if it's helpful to you.

*Adapted from National Institute of Play, 2007-2024, Play Personalities; National Institute of Play, 2007-2024, Play for Adults



RELEARNING
HUMAN

Play Goals

Set some goals. Similarly to applying other changes in your life, goals can be used to plan play too if it's helpful to you. Use this space to note any types of play you want to try out. Keep them realistic and doable. Maybe you resonated with the Storyteller type, and want to spend more time enriching yourself there? Maybe you want to branch out and try a new type of play? Or maybe you want to just get back to the playground?

There are no rules (at least to planning out play) and you can try whatever you want, whether or not you want to keep up with it. But, if you find something you enjoy, try to find ways to do it more often.

It doesn't matter where it leads you as long as you find enjoyment in it — you may realize you don't like a particular activity, and that's OK. But maybe, it can also broaden your horizons.

Now, go PLAY and have FUN!

References

National Institute for Play. (2024, May 20). Play personalities. National Institute for Play. https://nifplay.org/what-is-play/play_personalities/
National Institute of Play. (2024, May 20). Play for adults. National Institute for Play. <https://nifplay.org/play-for-you/make-play-part-of-an-adult-life/>



RELEARNING
HUMAN