

Thoughts on Play
Taken from Play by Stuart Brown
Devotions for The Blessings of Play
November 13, 2021; West Ohio and Iowa UMW Conferences

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

As we gather to play today, let us first reflect on some of the comments God has share with us about play.

First in the Second chapter of Genesis, He tells us... “And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.”

And in the 20th chapter of Exodus, God says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work...”

So, God wants us to rest from our work. Now let’s look at the scripture printed on our publicity for this event...In Proverbs 17, God advises that a cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person’s strength.

Can play create a cheerful heart? Let’s talk about “play!”

Let’s reflect back on our play as a child. What are some “play” things you did to relax or games you played?

Do you still do these “play” things or games? Why? Why do we lose the time to play?

Here are some thoughts.....

We get serious about our career, getting married, having a family, moving up the ladder at work, taking care of parents, taking part in community and religious duties, and working out to stay in shape and prevent health problems. Yes, we feel we are constantly being pulled away from any time for personal play.

If anyone goes without play for too long, grinding out the work that is expected of them, they will at some point look at their lives and ask, “Is this all there is? Is this what God is expecting me to do for the rest of my life?”

In addition to being **pulled** away from play, we are **pushed** from play, **shamed** into rejecting it by a culture that doesn't understand the human need for it and doesn't respect it.

Play is seen as something children do, so playing is seen as a childish activity not done in the adult world. If you are a serious person doing serious work, you should be serious. **Seriously?! Seriously?!**

We **CAN** enjoy our work. We **CAN** have fun!

There is no single simple recipe for bringing back a sense of play in your life and work. But physical activity – movement of any sort – has a way of getting past our mental defenses. Even a short walk can lift the spirits.

Other outdoor activities might include hiking in the woods, swimming at a nearby lake, or riding a bike.

Some indoor activities could be reading, listening to music, or playing (yes) playing board games.

Let's remember the feeling of true play as a child, and let those feelings be our guiding star to our adult play!

Let's pray together....

God, thank you so much for these Your children who have come to play today!
Guide us as we enjoy this time together – time with United Methodist Women sisters across several states. Now, please nurture us in our play. Amen

Prepared by Linda Miller, osucanningnut68@gmail.com