



THE CULTURE **PLAY**BOOK

A Reflection Tool for
Leaders & Teams

1 Million People **Playing** by 2030.



A lack of play should be treated like malnutrition, it's a health risk to your body and mind.

Dr Stuart Brown

Welcome

Discover how your team plays at its best

Every team has moments when work feels effortless, energy flows, and people feel genuinely connected. Those moments are your team's play state. This tool helps you uncover the conditions that create them so you can build more of that into your teams rhythm.

Each section is designed to guide meaningful conversation, helping your team move from what feels good to what truly works. You will leave with a clearer understanding of what drives engagement, connection, and culture. No theory. No performance talk. Just practical insight through the power of play.

STEP ONE

Individual **play** awareness

Help each team member recognise when and why they feel engaged, creative, and connected. This builds personal insight before exploring the team experience.



Leader Intro (read aloud)

Take a few minutes to think about the moments when work felt easy, energising, or enjoyable. The aim is to understand what helps each of us do our best work, not the specific tasks we like, but the conditions that make it possible.



Individual prompts

When did I feel most focused and involved in my work this year?

→ What was happening around me that made that possible?

What made that moment feel good or natural rather than forced?

→ Was it the people, the energy, the pace, or something else?

When did I feel least engaged or disconnected?

→ What was missing that usually helps me stay present or motivated?

What helps me shift back into a positive or playful mindset when things feel heavy?

What changes in me when I'm playing at my best, and how do I notice it?



Leader coaching note

After five minutes, invite each person to share one or two insights. Listen for patterns, repeated words, or conditions that overlap. These clues reveal what sparks energy or flow across your team.



STEP TWO

Team discovery

Identify the consistencies that appeared across everyone's reflections and agree on what defines your team when it plays at its best.



Leader Intro (read aloud)

We've already heard what helps each of us feel engaged. Now we are looking for the consistencies. This is about noticing the common conditions that keep showing up and agreeing on what feels true for us as a team. Think of it as finding the rhythm that sits underneath how we work and connect.

Spot the patterns

Invite the group to think about what they heard in each other's reflections.

Ask them to focus on the similarities rather than the stories. Capture repeating ideas or words on a whiteboard or shared document.

Ask

1

What themes keep coming up in our reflections?

2

Which moments or conditions seem to repeat for several of us?

3

What do those consistencies tell us about how we work and connect as a team?

4

Encourage the group to agree on three to five consistencies that feel accurate.

Outcome

A short list of shared conditions that describe how your team plays at its best. These will guide the next step as you define your team rhythm.

STEP THREE

Play rhythms

Capture and name the shared play triggers that define how your team works and connects at its best, then agree on simple ways to practise them.



Leader Intro (read aloud)

We've identified the consistencies that show how our team finds flow and connection. Now let's turn them into our play rhythms. These rhythms are reminders of what helps us play well together. For each one, we'll decide how we will keep it alive daily.



Review the consistencies

Look back at the list from Section 2 and confirm that these still feel true for us.



Name the rhythm

Give each consistency a short, natural name that sounds like your team.

Examples of Play Rhythms

1. **Reset Laugh** – We stop to laugh together when things get tense so we can find focus again.
2. **Morning Mini Challenge** – We start each morning with a quick playful task to lift energy.
3. **Fresh Air Fix** – We step outside between projects to clear our heads and reset.
4. **Friday Flow** – We finish the week by sharing highlights and celebrating wins.
5. **Move and Think** – We walk or stretch during meetings to keep ideas moving.
6. **Idea Jam** – We throw ideas on the table fast to see what sticks and spark creativity.
7. **Cheer Check** – We check in and cheer each other on when the pace is high.
8. **Replay and Learn** – We take five minutes after an event to talk about what worked.
9. **Music Mode** – We play background music when we need focus or momentum.
10. **Permission to Pause** – We stop and take a short break when pressure builds.



Agree on practice

For each rhythm, ask:

- ✓ How will we bring this rhythm into our week or projects?
- ✓ What will we do when we notice we've lost it?
- ✓ Who will help keep it visible or on track?

Record your play rhythms

Rhythm Name	What it Means	How We Will Practise It

Read your rhythms aloud together and agree to check in on them regularly. These are the cues that bring your team back to play when pressure builds. Use them to start meetings, reset after challenges, and celebrate progress.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

If you're ready to take this reflection further, the next step is to explore the Play Principles. This program helps you turn your rhythms into lasting cultural habits by linking them to the four foundations of play – Periodic Play, Connection, Accountability, and Balance. It's where your rhythms move from insight to practice, transforming everyday moments into the building blocks of a strong, playful culture.

LEARN MORE



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