Exploring positive psychology with LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®
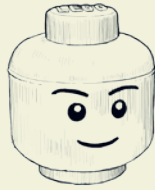
A Hands On Thinking™ Guide

Mads Bab & Ilona Boniwell

This book belongs to:

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION TO
LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) is a facilitation tool designed to enable meaning, learning and creative collaboration.

It is a facilitated meeting, communication and problem-solving process in which participants are led through a series of questions, probing deeper and deeper into the subject. Each participant builds his or her own LEGO® model in response to the facilitator's questions using specially selected LEGO® elements. These models serve as a basis for group discussion, knowledge sharing, problem solving and decision making. The use of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® helps the facilitator, leader, teacher and many others accelerate insights and learning related to areas like positive psychology and well-being, business performance, strategizing and goal setting, team building, and last but not least agile methodologies.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a technique which improves group problem solving. By utilizing visual, auditory and kinaesthetic skills, the method requires participants to learn and listen, and it provides all participants with a voice.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® serves as a shared language regardless of culture or position. It is appropriate for children, teens and adults and may be used in a variety of settings ranging from corporate workshops, classrooms to group based counselling sessions.

Participants in all domains come away with improved skills to learn collaboratively, to engage their imaginations and underlying beliefs more effectively, and to approach their area of interest with increased commitment and insight.

Using LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® should never be the purpose of a workshop, teaching situation or session but a tool to enable the participants to reach a deeper level of understanding in relation to the topic they are exploring. By combining the tangible LEGO® with the Hands On Thinking™ method, described in this guide, you can expect the tool to help you as a facilitator in your effort to enable more creative collaboration.

HISTORY

From the Seriousplay.com website:

The idea of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® originated in 1996 when the two professors Johan Roos and Bart Victor at IMD in Switzerland and LEGO Group CEO and owner Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen were exploring alternative strategic planning tools and systems.

They developed an understanding about the value of employees and the concept of evolving, adaptive strategy that included using LEGO elements as three-dimensional models of business issues and challenges, which later became known as LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®. Together they formed a company called Executive Discovery Ltd., which developed and launched the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® concept. In 2004 the company merged into the LEGO Group, which took over the ownership, concept and distribution of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® materials. In 2010 the LEGO Group decided to offer the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology in a community based model and the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® materials are now available for purchase on LEGO.com. It is today the only community-based business model using LEGO® materials that is officially approved by the LEGO Group.

WHAT IS LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a tangible and interactive tool that can be used in multiple ways to explore various aspects of business life and life in general. The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology taps into our human ability to imagine – to describe and make sense of the challenges we face or the potentials we seek to realise. By enabling deeper learning, it can initiate personal and systemic change and improvement.

The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology is a facilitated technique which unlocks the potential of all the participants in the workshop. At its core, it is about understanding complexity and using emergent thinking to solve sticky problems and create real change.

Central to the use of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is the use of narratives and metaphors that makes it easy for participants to share complex insights. The shared narratives enable collaborative learning and constructive discussions that again fuel creative thinking, ideation and motivation to change.

All LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshops are group processes and designed around a relatively limited number of powerful core concepts. These conceptual modules can be configured in multiple ways to best meet your needs. A workshop based on the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® materials and methodology varies in number of participants and time depending on the topic. Usually a one full-day session is effective. At its shortest, a session takes two to four hours; the longest sessions may extend to several days. In many cases the use of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is combined with other methodologies and learning goals.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® can be used as the central tool in a workshop or as a single part of a larger and more complex process. Regardless of the length, purpose or complexity of the session a successful LSP workshop is based on a set of core principles and application techniques outlined in the book "Building A Better Business Using The LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Method". Here the core principles and application techniques are evolved and combined with the research-based Hands On Thinking method™ (HOT)

HANDS ON THINKING™ METHOD FOR LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

The Hands On Thinking™ method is the core of a range of tangible and visual facilitation methods. The six elements of the Hands On Thinking™ method provides a framework and language that helps participants relay what they know, hope for and seek to do. More importantly it also ensures a structure that enables learning and creative collaboration in groups.

The Hands On Thinking™ method was developed by the Danish expert in organisational learning and development Mads Bab. Through his own action research and supporting research from the science of learning, well-being and positive psychology as well as neuroscience the method outlines the DNA of "thinkering" - The creation and understanding of concepts in the mind while tinkering with the hands.

Hands On Thinking™ extends the open source aspects of LEGO® Serious Play® as outlined on seriousplay.com. It takes a holistic approach to the method by providing a framework that helps the facilitator look beyond LEGO® bricks onto the purpose and content of the workshop.

By learning how to use the Hands On Thinking™ method as a facilitator you not only learn how to leverage the use of LEGO® in workshops but also how you may use other tangible and visual tools to ensure collaborative learning and sustainable change.

The Hands On Thinking™ (HOT) method consist of these six elements:

• **Purpose** of the session;

• **Framing** the model building;

• **Sharing** narratives and metaphors;

• **Exploring** and reflecting together;

• **Combining** and connecting to identify patterns and shared stories;

• **Capturing** insights and moving forward;

Purpose of the session

Fundamental to any LSP session is the purpose of using the tool. Generally speaking, LSP should never be the goal or purpose of the workshop but "only" the means to explore a topic relevant to you and your participants.

Framing the model building

Framing the model building is a fundamental part of any LSP session. A good framing helps focus attention in the right direction and aligns group members towards the same general idea. Good framing ensures open, insightful and interesting conversations that help participants understand the challenge at hand.

Sharing narratives and metaphors

"Everyone builds – everyone shares" is a core principle of a LSP session and really is the moment in a workshop where the group starts seeing each other's opinions.

Exploring and reflecting together

While the metaphors that have been modelled are shared it is generally advised just to listen and reflect silently. As a facilitator you may, however, ask exploration questions or encourage other participants to do this. This part of the Hands On Thinking™ method is in many ways what separates a good LSP session from a great one. You can use the LSP Exploration Questions (LSP-EQ, appendix 1) to do that.

Combining and connecting models to identify patterns and shared stories

The connective aspect of LEGO® invites participants to not only connect individual building blocks but also whole models. These can be aligned into a combined narrative, connected to explore systems or organised into themes allowing participants to explore patterns and emergent properties of the challenge at hand

Capturing insights and moving forward

A LSP process enables divergent thinking but every LSP session must end with users moving from simulations to the real world. Capturing the most important insights and develop a way to keep these in the attention of the users is fundamental to ensure a longer lasting effect of a LSP session.

The VIA character strength of love
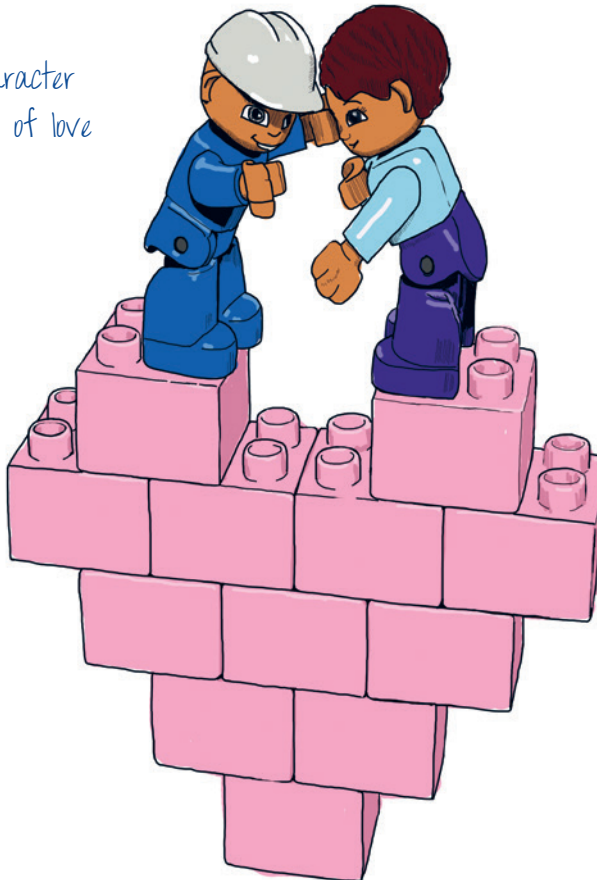
WHY DOES
LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® WORK?

THINKERING

"Thinkering' is a word coined by Michael Ondaatje in his novel The English Patient. It expresses the creation and understanding of concepts in the mind while tinkering with the hands. When we physically engage with things, especially with our hands, we generate a great variety of sensory images. These sensory images help us understand our immediate realty and serve us in our personal and shared meaning making.

Seymour Papert explores how people construct knowledge and learn things faster when the learner is consciously engaged in constructing a tangible object external of one's self – for example with clay or LEGO® (Papert & Harel, 1991). When people construct things out in the world, they simultaneously construct theories and knowledge in their minds. This new knowledge then enables them to build even more sophisticated things out in the world which yields still more knowledge, thus creating a self-reinforcing cycle of learning and creating. Papert further noticed that when people are creating tangible objects, they get in a deeply engaged state of mind similar to that of flow (Papert, 1994). In this case flow is described as an optimal state of intrinsic motivation, and is the level of engagement that people often reach when they are in a 'hands on' process.

The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget named this learning theory, constructivism and it can be summarized as "learning by making" or "thinking with your hands". LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® was developed on the idea of constructivism – that we can use our hands to construct models of knowledge related to learning, well-being and engagement issues. Using the hands to build understanding in three-dimensional representations of knowledge, ideas and feelings opens up a new path for free, creative and expressive thinking.

A surprisingly large part of the human brain is dedicated to controlling the hands. Therefore, when people construct things with their hands they simultaneously construct theories and knowledge in their minds. When we "think with our hands" we create more new neural connection thus unleashing creative energies, new modes of thought, and novel ways of seeing what most adults have forgotten they even possessed. The no-

tion of "learning by making", or "thinking with your hands", draws on neuroscience, the use of play and expressive arts in therapy. It bring out insights and learning that intellectual reasoning alone might not be able to discover.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® has shown that adults can regain their ability to play, which offers creative possibilities because it emphasizes freedom and plays down responsibility, self-consciousness and shame. This non-judgemental environment of play is more likely to foster surprising and innovative ideas

GROUPTHINK AND HOW THE MINORITY DEFINES THE MAJORITY

Often a minority consisting of a few individuals set the tone and culture of a meeting. They speak more frequently, define key concepts more often and conclude with stronger determination. The minority take up the majority of the time, leaving a large group of participants standing on the side line realising only a small portion of their potential.

This not only challenges the quality of the session itself but also the sustainability of the sessions outcome. If few people define the majority of the sessions discussion points the majority of the individuals leave with only little determination to change.

One of the common challenges when working with groups is the way the above mentioned group dynamics influence individual behaviour, attitudes, and opinions. One group member may not personally agree with something the group does or says, but nevertheless just go along with the norm and publicly agree with the group and keep private beliefs to themselves.

This can happen because the person might feel unsure of his or her own opinion, or because he or she is afraid of being different from the majority of the group, or simply because the person has not formed a solid and clear understanding of the topic at hand. Research shows that people tend to go along with the majority view, even if that view is objectively incorrect or even contradictory to one's own beliefs. This phenomenon is what researchers call "groupthink" and it refers to faulty decision-making in a group. Groupthink dominates personalities and reduces innovation, as it prevents the group from exploring all alternatives. One of the important features of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is that it helps to create an environment in which participants feel safe and comfortable sharing whatever they have on their mind. There are no right or wrong answers, and individual differences are considered a benefit rather than an obstacle.

At the same time the participants get space and time for reflection during the building process without interruption. The result is a response not based on a hasty and superficial answer, but a deeper reflection represented in a physical and visual outcome - the LEGO® model. This model cannot change during the sharing process, which makes LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® an ideal method for encouraging a more open and honest reflection. It creates a more comfortable and safe environment for those who tend to be introverted and reluctant. This does not only strengthen individuals, but also the group as a whole, because everybody's opinion is heard. Thus the social capital and collective intelligence of the groups increase.

The use of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® reduces situations where dominant and extroverted participants immediately start talking, taking over the agenda and the angle from which the content is discussed. LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® enables a democratic process that ensures every participant's voice and their obligation to use it.

According to a study co-authored by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Carnegie Mellon University and Union College group intelligence may not be quantified as the sum or average of the cognitive abilities of its members (Woolley, Anita Williams, et al, 2000). By studying small teams of randomly assembled individuals, researchers discovered that groups featuring the right kind of internal dynamics perform well on a wide range of assignments, regardless of the sum or average individual cognitive abilities of the group's members.

Further, a group's intelligence, or its ability to complete a series of demanding multifunctional tasks, is positively linked to higher levels of "social sensitivity," as well as a more equal distribution of member participation levels, and even the number of women in a group.
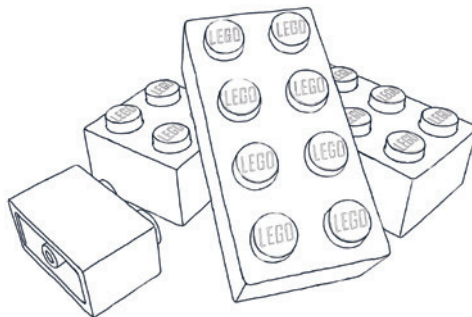
LOOKING AT LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® FROM MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

From the perspective of narrative psychology, there is no single self, but rather many versions of it. Everything will depend on the perspective we assume when telling the story of our life and experiences.

From a narrative perspective, how we construct the story of our experiences and opinions has a great impact on the way we think, we feel, and how we stand in front of the world. Our stories, and more particularly, the way we choose to tell our stories, play an important role in how we see ourselves, and experience our relationships with others and the environment.

Problems might grow bigger or we might find several and different solutions for a problem, depending on the way we structure our thoughts and the way we use the words in our language to communicate our experiences. Narrative practice is therefore focused on how someone defines their purpose, values, dreams, hopes, and commitments, as well as their view of the problems that trouble them (White, 2004).

Applying this to facilitation, coaching, training or even therapy, the main objective of narrative practices is to enable personal agency of clients, in order to develop their capacity of decision taking and acting deliberately, as well as taking ownership of their lives. This is achieved by identifying and working with metaphors, stories and identities.

Metaphor

Our behaviours, and perspectives on situations and actions, are often guided by habitual metaphors. For instance, when referring to a child who is hyperactive in a class we chose to use a metaphor of "a frustrated, anxious monkey in a cage who is going to destroy everything if not liberated", we are more likely to see the issue as a repression trouble, and we are more likely to try to focus on the child's environment to "solve" this problem, rather than adjusting teaching practices.

The Mexican expert in narrative psychology, Margarita Tarragona presents another example: "An example of this is when we say that anger was building up inside us like steam in a pressure cooker and that the steam has to be let out or the cooker will explode. Someone who is guided by this metaphor would probably encourage the person to "vent" and express that anger to release the growing pressure."

Whilst the use of metaphors (or analogies) is extremely frequent, we are rarely aware of the fact we are using them, or the implications of the choice of metaphors we adopt.

Stories

Given that narrative psychology is focused on the fact of how people give meaning to their experiences, the way one tells their story (supressing or amplifying elements) has many implications. Each living experience could be transformed into a meaningful story while someone is sharing it. The interrelation of different experiences that are linked together by a particular plot, is what gives a special personal meaning to each story.

We can go as far as to state that we become the stories that we use to tell our lives. Talking through the experiences that make up our lives, we are not only telling a story, we are not only relating a series of events, but we are creating a new experience itself.

What we think and what we feel about the story we are telling are part of the construction of our story. We create a whole world by the way we tell the story. We might find more problems, or more solutions, depending on the way we present the events in the story. So, it is not only how we think before we tell the story, but the way we think and feel during and after telling a story, from our experience.

We could tell the same story from several different perspectives and the result of that would be a change in attitude and feelings which could have an enormous impact in our life. The different variety of ways of telling a story influences how life is experienced. If we were to ask different people to tell the story of our, or of others' lives, all those people would have a different way of telling the story. Depending on personal ideas, experiences or beliefs, each person will choose to tell a story focusing on some or other events, creating, at the end, a grand variety of similarly 'true' stories. This sort of edit is common practice as all of us tend to highlight the events that are more related to our own ideas or stories about themselves. In other words, the story is seen through individual filters of life experiences.

Even though all people have different ways of telling stories, and they may differ dramatically from one to another, there is common ground dictated by culture, which makes some stories more similar than others. We can call these cultural influences templates that we learn as we grow up, and that might guide the way we highlight or shade our events when describing them. This doesn't mean that our stories would always stay the same. Stories can vary in time, and space, as they are as dynamic as language. They are always alive and we can decide to edit some stories in order to tell them from a new perspective, opening up new possibilities.

Identity

Just as with our stories, our identity is not something singular, but rather an on-going multi-dynamic identity that modifies and retells stories all of the time. In fact, we have as many identities as the types of stories we tell. There are some of these identities that we might dislike, because we are not happy with the way the story is being told, and some others that we might prefer. Margarita Tarragona calls them preferred identities, explaining that we may have different versions of each one and that may favour certain ways of being and telling, based on our own values, hopes and commitments. Seen from this perspective, this is an opportunity to choose the type of person we want to be.

Face the world with courage (sword) and attention for all the good things (diamond)
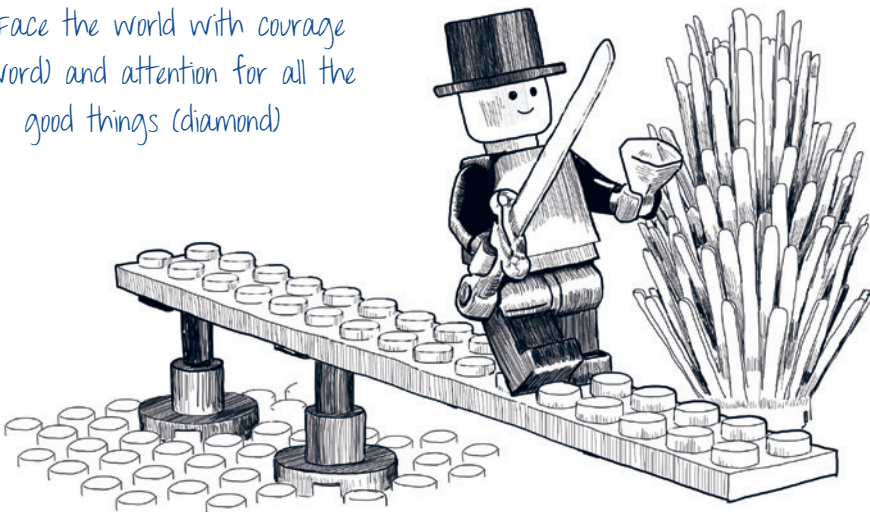
We might also have an identity that is more dominant than the others. This identity will create the majority of the stories in our life, and thus we may develop our personal dominant template, as well as dominant stories. These dominant stories might help us in identifying endless possibilities, or instead narrow down our list of options. "When our focus is too narrow and we only include certain types of experiences and leave out others, we create a dominant story that may have detrimental effects for us." Margarita Tarragona, 2013.

The practical application of narrative psychology is to be able to identify some of the less helpful dominant stories, modify them by trying an alternative story and consequently change the way we relate to that story or that part of our life. We all have these possible alternative stories that show us a different part of our lives and ourselves. However, these stories seem to be floating at the back of our experiences and we don't connect them to the general plot with the same facility that we connect the dominant ones. To make these alternative stories more connected to ourselves, we need to focus and discover them, and tell these stories over and over again, in order to "thicken the plot", building up sufficient evidence for their pertinence.

CONSTRUCTING MEANING TOGETHER

Conversation, dialogue and even words can create reality by the way we share them, being able to produce different signification and possibilities. Collaborative practices take the problem-solving approach, inviting people to work together in order to find a solution to a problem through telling, constructing and reconstructing their own stories together.

Collaborative practices, similar to the narrative ones, work with how we tell stories. In a collaborative work-practice, a facilitator encounters people who are involved in a problem or situation. In this session, the facilitator asks people to tell stories about their experiences, making a thick description of details in order to see the possibilities that exist in solving the issue. As Chalmer (2001) says, the conversations are deconstructive, in a way that the facilitator asks the participants questions about their stories in order to uncover assumptions, cultural and institutional prescriptions; everything that might favour some ideas over others. The idea is to let people see how their beliefs are strongly involved in the way they tell their stories and how these beliefs might hide other possibilities that may

offer a solution to the problem. "By uncovering those effects, the conversations invite participants to consider and express their preferences regarding those effects."

While the participants are able to see their patterns, beliefs and values, as well as their dominant stories, the collaborative practices work as an alternative mirror in which the participants can compare and see their preferred dominant stories. In addition to their alternative stories, helping them to be open to new possibilities, and new solutions that were not clear before.

Contrary to common psychological evaluation, which tries to find a troubled person or a person with a trouble, in collaborative practices the problem(s) are seen as events that distress the person, and are not deeply linked into each other. The problem is not part of the person, the person does not have a problem, the problem is out there, and causes distress to the person in one or several ways.

Real life, for collaborative practitioners, is an enormous field of resources and details that need to be told in a very detailed way - not in a simple way. Each person has a huge amount of stories and experiences to share. We cannot leave the details out of the stories we are telling, or we might lose something that might be important for the change in perspective that might lead us to finding the solution to the given problem. The details in the stories are full of potential meanings in which we can find the clues to alternative solutions. The facilitator is there to encourage the participants to tell their stories with as much detail as they can to "thickening the plot". This gives the participants the chance to find new and novel solutions to their own stories which are at the centre of their attention. Collaborative practices search to "engage participants in describing the situation more richly, in context, with full recognition of the multi-determined, multi-storied nature of life. From such "thick" descriptions, problems can be resolved in ways that may have been otherwise inaccessible."

The outcome of collaborative practices is, ideally, the solution to a problem. This is achieved through sharing of dominant and alternative stories, enabling participants to see different ways of dealing with negative effects that their problem might have caused. Thus giving them the opportunity to choose to act differently from the way that they are used to. Collaborative practices are used in order to deconstruct judgements and beliefs and find other ways of looking at and telling stories, seeing them from different perspectives while sharing personal experiences in detail with the group and facilitator.

So the idea is to widen the stories in order to find new possibilities and a single "truth" (instead of narrowing the stories). The "collaborative" here suggests "a team of people working together, all of them influencing and being influenced by the situation in various ways." (Chalmer, 2011, p.14)

I SEE, THEREFORE I THINK

Every day, our brain processes a huge amount of information that is received through our different senses. Most of it is processed through visual means, as almost a 90 percent of all this information received by our brain comes from different types of non-verbal stimuli and communication (Mehrabian, 2009). Our sensory cortex is largely to vision, as the part of the brain that is used to process language in terms of words is smaller than the part that is in charge of visual images (Plotnik and Kouyoumdjian, 2011, 2014).

Given that words have an important abstract component, retaining that kind of information is a more difficult task for our brain. Doctor Lynell Burmark (2002) explains that our words, concepts and ideas are processed by our short-term memory which can only retain around seven bits of information, but that on the contrary, images, go directly into long-term memory where they stay permanently imprinted. Images, and all other non-verbal or visual elements are therefore more likely to be remembered.

Lets consider an example:

> *"Think about your past school days of having to learn a set of new vocabulary words each week. Now, think back to the first kiss you had or your high school prom date. Most probably, you had to put forth great effort to remember the vocabulary words. In contrast, when you were actually having your first kiss or your prom date, I bet you weren't trying to commit them to memory. Yet, you can quickly and effortlessly visualize these experiences (now, even years later). You can thank your brain's amazing visual processor for your ability to easily remember life experiences. Your brain memorized these events for you automatically and without you even realizing what it was doing."* (Kouyoumdjian, 2012)

In "Digital Images and Classical Persuasion" Kevin LaGrandeur (2003) explains that visual elements produce a stronger and faster reaction than words. Visuals help people feel emotionally involved with the informational contents. This can be used for posi-

tive impact or negative impact. Cigarette boxed advertising against smoking is a clear example of a practical utilisation of this concept; the image is deliberately shocking to highlight the damage one is exposed to by smoking.

The ease of memorisation is also the reason why different visual examples can be used as effective learning tools: photos, illustrations, icons, symbols, sketches, figures, and concept maps to name only a few (Kouyoudjian, 2012). Indeed, Longo et al's (2002) study demonstrated that students who used visual thinking strategies for learning science had a significantly higher mean gain score on the problem solving criterion test items than the control group that used writing strategies. Multiple other studies have looked into using visuals to engage students in the learning process, and images to stimulate their critical and creative thinking (Aisami, 2015). Moreover, visual thinking can also be conceived as a learning style by which students learn better and retain more information when abstract words are associated with images. Teachers and instructors often hear statements from their students like these: "I am a visual learner. I need to see it. Can you show me?" Such demands are even more frequent by online students who often struggle in an isolated learning environment where visuals and interactive multimedia can, to a degree, compensate for the social interaction of a traditional classroom.

According to Rogers (2011), another objective of visual thinking is to create a common language, metaphors and analogies in order to communicate, document and solve problems and share common stories. He emphasizes the fact that pictures help simplify the way we typically approach problem solving. From his perspective, thinking through visual, is using the visual approach to clarify the thought and ease the problem solving process; this because visual thinking works by discovering and exploring the different possibilities existing in order to make stories clearer and simpler for others (and oneself) to understand.

PLAY IN ORGANISATION

Play is our natural way of adapting and developing new skills and can contribute to effective learning and understanding. Play can be defined as a limited, structured, and voluntary activity that involves the imaginary. That is, it is an activity limited in time and space, structured by rules, conventions, or agreements among the players unforced by authority figures and drawing on elements of fantasy and creative imagination.

This appliance of play in a "serious" setting is termed "Serious Play". Serious Play is, however, not only an idea of applying the theory of play to a serious setting, but also a method that combines three-dimensional media (LEGO®) with the mode of play to create the context in which informants build models of knowledge with their hands.

The state of play in LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® releases creativity as it facilitates a freer type of thinking without constraints. There are no right or wrong answers, which influences the participants to try novel things without being limited by the fear of being wrong. This is important when dealing with personal and underlying issues within the field of positive psychology. The playful environment that emerges when using LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® helps to set the right frame of mind for a comfortable and non-judgemental experience where the participants feel they are more equal, can talk freely, and where all opinions are appreciated.

At the same time the state of play in LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® adds value to the social bonding in groups. Not only because of the free and more playful environment, but also because it fosters understanding between participants as the players have to communicate and collaborate.

In her paper "Play in organizations" (2010) the Danish social scientist Ann Charlotte Thorsted explores the phenomenon of play in organisations.

She writes:

> *"Play in an organization creates a unique space within other limits than a normal work day. It is a safe room for individuals and groups to experiment and reflect. It mediates moments of trust, honesty and empathy. While playing, people feel more present and joyful as long as play is based on a free will and prepared with respect for adults. It produces energy and opens for creative and dynamic processes freed from rational bonds and functional pressure. People communicate from a more profound level in play. Hence, it becomes easier to collaborate and be open. Play creates golden moments, where novelty and new understandings occurs and it helps us to learn and remember. For some people, play becomes a personal Bildung - for others it is "just" great fun."*
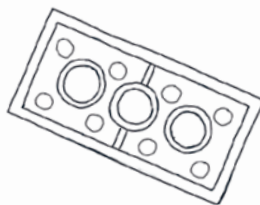
Play can be a powerful way for individuals to develop the cognitive and emotional functioning. When we play we experiment with possibilities and explore how we can overcome challenges facing us and how we might realise certain potentials. Play helps us increase our awareness of the path that leads to a desired future.

It is the belief of many researchers in the field of learning and play that play has strong learning capabilities in organisations. Learning could potentially be the most beneficial strategy for adapting to the demand of constant change.

"While organizational development and organizational learning have been mainly concerned with how to build, nurture and sustain reflective learning processes, our recent experiences suggest that companies are now facing a new set of challenges that require a new source of learning"(Senge & Scharmer, 2006, p. 203).

Senge and Scharmer (2006) raise a perspective concerning not only how to learn from our experiences from the past, but to learn from the future through a heightened state of attention and awareness.

One of the world's leading scholars on play Huizinga (1955)saw play as one way to create different scenarios of reality, which could lead to a change in behavior. Huizinga's contribution to the concept of play has led to an acknowledgement of play seen as a central factor for the development of a culture, which spans across all ages, genders and world views.

This culture defining aspect of play creates a social bonding, which is essential to collaborative practices and group alignment.

SYSTEMS THINKING

Systems thinking is about understanding complexity by examining the linkages and interactions that comprise a defined system. Systems thinking provides a means of understanding, analysing and talking about the design and construction of an organisation as an integrated and interconnected system.

An organisation as an entity can suffer systemic failure. This occurs when there is a failure between elements that need to work together for overall success. Factors in systemic failure may include confused goals, weak system-wide understanding, flawed design,

individual incentives that encourage loyalty to sub-ordinate (rather than super-ordinate) goals, inadequate feedback, poor cooperation, lack of accountability, etc.

Systems Thinking is seen by Barry Richmond in "System Dynamics/Systems Thinking: Let's Just Get On With It" (1994) as the art and science of making reliable inferences about behaviour by developing an increasingly deep understanding of underlying structure. Cultivating this "art and science" leads to routine use of correct mental models that see the world as a complex system whose behaviour is controlled by its dynamic structure.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a way of thinking about, and a language for describing and understanding, the forces and interrelationships that shape the behaviour of systems.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® helps participants individually and as a group to understand the properties of a relevant system. The method encourages probing, sensing, and responding to the system and its complexity. With the world constantly becoming more and more complex it is crucial for today's organisation to improve their ways to flourish as individuals but collaborate as a group.

Tearing down the wall that holds us back
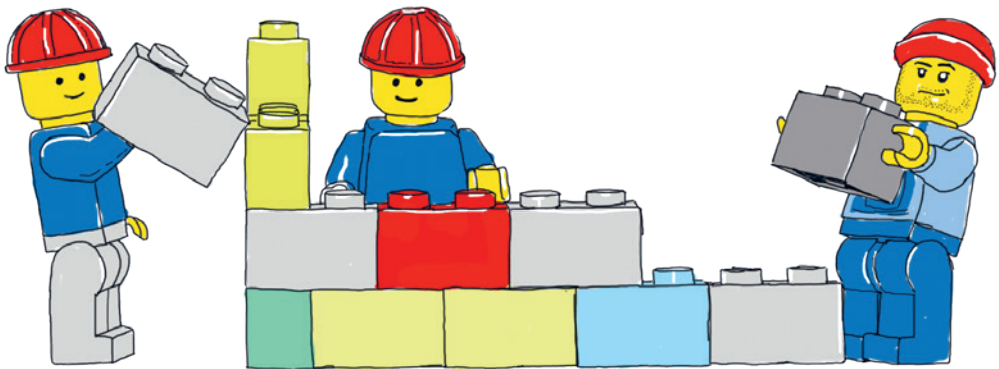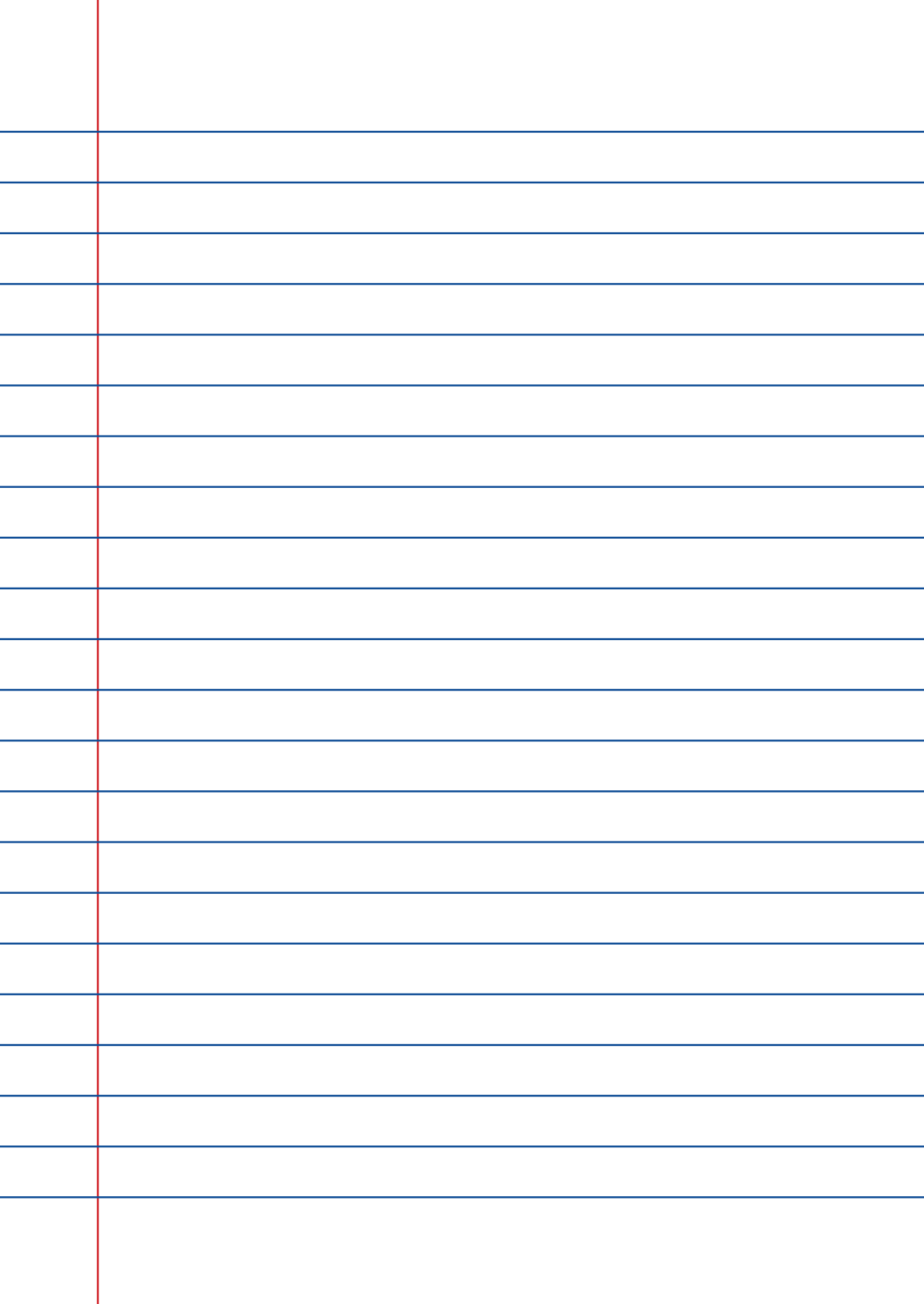
LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®
AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

WHAT IS POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

Positive psychology is a science of positive aspects of human life, such as happiness, well-being and flourishing. It can be summarised in the words of its founder, Martin Seligman, as the "scientific study of optimal human functioning that] aims to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals and communities to thrive".

The difference between traditional psychology and positive psychology is that this particular approach focuses on the potential of each human being. It is not targeted at finding issues and fixing problems, but is focused on researching the things that make life worth experiencing. In other words, positive psychology focuses on the things we can add to our lives in order to develop and feel more complete, instead on the negative things that stop us feeling complete. Positive psychology started as a response to the "negative or disease focus" that was frequently adopted by traditional psychology. This state of affairs was not the original intention of earlier psychologists, but came about through a historical accident. Prior to the Second World War, psychology had three tasks, which were to:

1. cure mental illness;

2. improve normal lives;

3. identify and nurture high talent.

However, after the war, the priorities of humanity changed due to the crisis, and the last two tasks somehow got lost, leaving the field to concentrate predominantly on the first one - learning about and treating psychological illness and psychopathology - where most of resources allocated.

This is how psychology earned its place by working as a disease model. Nevertheless, this model has proven very useful. The victories of the disease model include, for example, fourteen previously incurable mental illnesses (such as depression, personality disorder, or anxiety attacks) being now successfully treated. However, the costs of adop-

ting this disease model include the negative view of psychologists as 'victimologists' and 'pathologisers', and the failure to address the improvement of normal lives through the identification and nurturance of high talent. Positive psychology intends to learn about normal and flourishing lives, rather than lives that are in need of help. The idea is to gather knowledge about strengths and talents, high achievement (in every sense of this word), the best ways and means of self-improvement, fulfilling work and relationships, and a great art of ordinary living carried out in every corner of the planet. It is important to remark, though, that positive psychology is still psychology, but that studies different topics and asks slightly different questions, such as 'what works?' rather than 'what doesn't?' or 'what is right with this person?' rather than 'what is wrong?'

For the last twenty years positive psychology has been developing its place in the research field. Several different researchers from different fields carry out solid empirical research in areas such as well-being, flow, personal strengths, wisdom, creativity, psychological health and characteristics of positive groups and institutions.

Positive psychology operates across three levels: the subjective level, the individual level and the group level.

At the subjective level is the study of positive experiences such as joy, well-being, satisfaction, contentment, happiness, optimism and flow. This level is focused in the sensations, and so, is about feeling good, rather than doing good or being a good person.

At the individual level, the objective is to identify the elements of a 'good life' and the personal qualities and values that are necessary for being a 'good person', through studying human strengths and virtues, future-mindedness, capacity for love, courage, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, wisdom, interpersonal skills and giftedness.

At the group, or community level, the emphasis is on team work, positive relationships, collaborative problem solving, nurturance, altruism, civility, tolerance, work ethics, positive institutions and other factors that contribute to the development of good places to work and communities.

POSITIVE NARRATIVES, METAPHORS AND INTERVENTIONS

How can you implement some of the positive psychology findings into your own life? Accumulating evidence suggests that well-being interventions involving intentional activities can be effective in increasing and sustaining our positive emotions, life satisfac-

tion and other desirable states. A definition of what constitutes a positive intervention is suggested by Sin & Lyubomirsky (2009, p. 467), to include "treatment methods or intentional activities aimed at cultivating positive feelings, positive behaviours, or positive cognitions" Seen as applicable to both clinical and non-clinical populations, positive interventions have been demonstrated to enhance well-being and reduce depression.
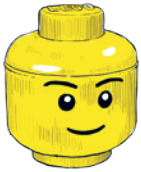

In the past years the field of positive psychology has made considerable progress in testing relatively simple positive interventions through Randomised Controlled Trials (RCT). Considered the gold standard of applied research, RCTs involve the random allocation of participants to two or more groups and comparing the proposed intervention with another exercise intended as a placebo.

Positive Psychology Interventions (PPIs) include such wellbeing-enhancing activities as writing a gratitude journal, being kind to others, identifying personal strengths and replaying happy memories. These are simple strategies, but they can require a substantial effort because such activities as expressing gratitude or positive self-talk may not come naturally to a lot of people. Positive narratives constitute an internal part of many positive psychology interventions (such as positive reminiscence, best self, another door opens) and focus on enhancing positive aspects of life permitting the person to develop his or her narratives from a positive perspective, highlighting the positive aspects of the situation. It also puts the attention on how one tells their story, by attaching the importance to what is already working well for each person, thereby developing the growth potential in each person.

The merger of positive psychology with narrative psychology allows us to further tap into the huge transformational potential within each human being. It permits us to focus on the qualities that we already have and on actions under voluntary control which we can put into practice in order to develop sustainable flourishing.

From this perspective, there is innumerable importance attached to the ways we speak, the way we tell our stories to ourselves and others, and the focus we choose to adopt. Language is then key for positive psychology. The use of diverse forms of language for expressing our positive aspects is an indispensable tool. Visual, non-verbal and verbal languages, when working together for the same objective, which in this case is human flourishing, permits us to reconstruct our stories and perspectives, identify and explore our positive capacities and find new and positive solutions together.

Bridge over troubled water?
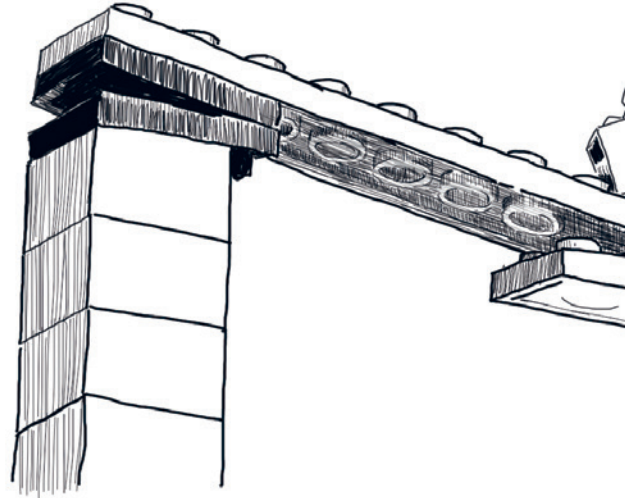
WHY USE LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® WITH POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a visual and very interactive tool that can be used in multiple ways to explore divergent aspects of everyday life. As positive psychology focuses on the development and enhancement of positive aspects, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® comes in handy as a stimulating tool.

Through the creation of models, metaphors and narratives, we can explore strengths and other positive qualities, and employ LEGO® to implement positive psychology interventions for positive storytelling in the wide sense of this word. When doing this, we may expect a positive impact on the following outcome variables:

• **Intrinsic motivation.** Ryan and Deci (2000) posit two fundamental types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. An intrinsically motivated person is moved to act for the fun or challenge involved in the task rather than for external urges, pressures, or possible rewards. Using components of plat is frequently associated with fun, thus potentially tapping into one's intrinsic motivation.

• **Confidence.** When there is an undeniable danger of low confidence and negative mindset. LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® can be used to identify and talk through existing evidence of previous achievements, which is the most important means of developing confidence.

• **Creativity.** Based on our previous experience of techniques such as visual brainstorming, image brain mapping and visualisation, we are confident in stating that the
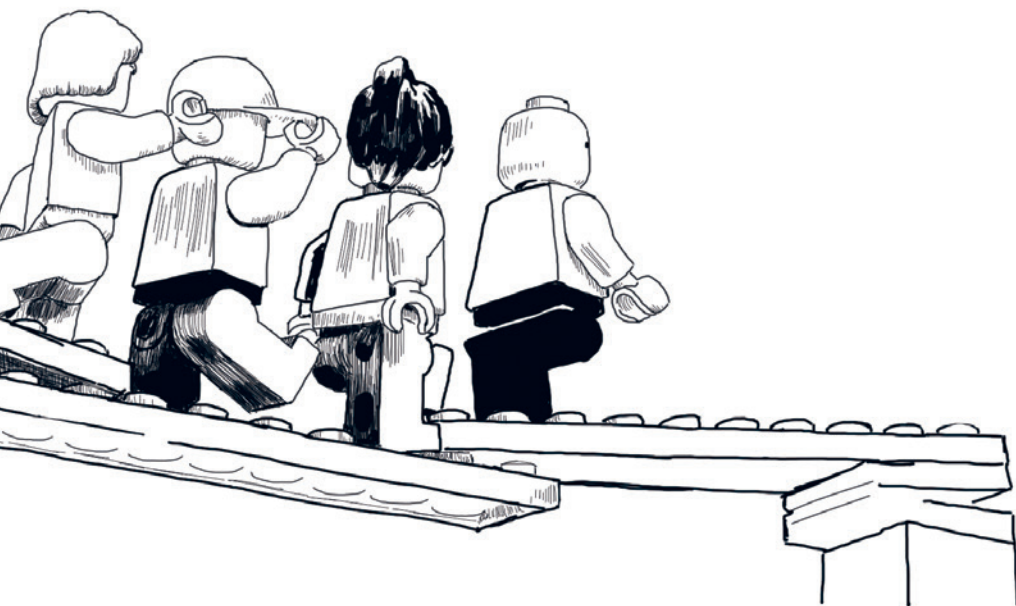
use of LEGO® facilitates and dramatically improves creativity and problem solving. Constructing novel shared stories around the same situation is another possible means of creativity enhancement.

• **Strengths use.** Models and metaphors, when helping the construction of positive stories, can be used to illustrate and contextualise our strengths. A person who is able to identify and put their strengths into daily use will build a strong, healthy relationship with him/herself and others. Strengths rhetoric also legitimates a more positive approach to relationships development.

• **Teamwork.** When used in groups, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a helpful intervention for team building. Inviting others to take a part in the creation of a new perspective or finding a solution together, generates a spirit of sharing and belonging, developing interpersonal and group skills.

• **Metaperspective acknowledges that everything has a positive and negative side.** It allows us to see both the benefits and downsides of strengths and competences. Metaperspective is a mature approach to personal development, resulting in: balance, acceptance, tolerance and development of the whole person. Creating stories through visual means, may enable us to adopt a more holistic approach to the situation and put it in perspective.

And much more… so give LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® a go and see what happens!

USEFUL APPLICATION AREAS

WHEN TO USE LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

When you, as a facilitator, know the answer to the question you want participants to explore, LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is not the right option. The method is far more effective when there is more than one possible right answer, and when the group seeks to utilise all available knowledge in order not only to find the best possible solution but also to get the strongest commitment possible.

There are many reasons to use LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® but the ten most common and strongest application areas are listed below:

1. There are no obvious answers to the challenge at hand.

2. When the group is challenged by negative groupthink, where few people dominate the majority and where a significant part of the group tend to modify their responses in an inauthentic way. In short when you want to create a level playing field for discussion.

3. When the subject is complex and multifaceted and there is a need to grasp the bigger picture, find connections, identify options and potential solutions as well as explore emergent properties of the challenge at hand.

4. When the subject is abstract, like a vision or mission, and you seek to make this more concrete and comprehensible, as well as create a shared understanding of the subject.

5. When everyone in the group has an interest or stake in the agenda and when reaching a decision that everyone commits to, honours and actively pursues after the meeting, is crucial.

6. When you want participants to be more mindful about their own and the behavioural patterns of the group. When you seek to heighten awareness of new possibilities.

7. When you want to increase the learning capacity of the group helping them gain new learning, insights and new ways of thinking.

8. When you have a topic that potentially is rich on the narratives and these narratives need to be expressed, aligned in the group and maybe even communicated outside the group.

9. When you want to deal with issues that are tough, complex or emotional in a constructive atmosphere.

10. When you want to enhance the groups thinking agility and enhance the solution focus of each participant.

TEN IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER AS A LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® FACILITATOR

Because of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY's® novelty, the playful atmosphere it provides and the potential it holds to leverage the creative collaboration of the group it is easy to forget key facilitator principles.

A good facilitator is a person who contributes structure and process to interactions so groups are able to function effectively and make high-quality decisions. A helper and enabler whose goal is to support others as they achieve exceptional performance.

A good facilitator is the leader of content and process. Content meaning what tasks, subjects, problems are being addressed. Process meaning how things are discussed, including: methods, procedures, format and tools, style of interaction, group norms, group dynamics and group climate. In general LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® should always be seen as a method to reach a certain learning goal, not the goal in itself.

There are many general recommendations for facilitators to heed while using LEGO® SERIOUS® PLAY®. Many of these are the same as when facilitating without the use of LEGO® but the following ten issues are crucial to be aware of.

1. Know your purpose but stay agile

As mentioned before, the use of LEGO® SERIOUS® PLAY®, should never be the purpose of a session but the means to achieve a certain learning oriented goal. As a facilitator it is important that you stay aware of the purpose of the session. Knowing the purpose or goal of a session does, however, not mean that you rigidly pursue this goal, but you act consciously in regards to this goal.

Maybe side tracking on a specific topic is relevant, because a topic or insight surfaces in the group. Having the agility to pursue these potential learning opportunities is crucial.

2. Serving everyone's interests

Facilitators of LEGO® SERIOUS® PLAY® help participants to focus on the interests of all stakeholders when exploring emergent solutions. They understand that to remain effective, groups must maintain their ability to work together and meet individual as well as collective needs of the group's members.

3. Approach rather than avoid

Good facilitators shift from focusing on placing blame to focusing on desired outcomes. Rather than focusing on what to "avoid" they apply a more "approach" based style of motivation. This not only reduces the "blame game" but also enhances the participant's mental capacity to form new ideas, collaborate and implement a self-determined follow-up behaviour.

4. Think in systems, connection and co-dependency

A key facilitation skill is to be able to frame your current meeting and the discussions at hand in the larger context of your organization and other relevant contexts. Without the ability to keep the larger perspective in mind, the range of thinking can inadvertently be truncated. Focusing on the bigger picture strengthens meaning making and novel thinking.

5. Creating Conditions for Learning

Learning happens when members identify the core values and beliefs that guide their behaviour, understand how some values and beliefs undermine their effectiveness, and learn how to act consistently with a more effective set of values and beliefs. As a facilitator you encourage and facilitate the session so participants take the most control of their learning process. You are less of a trainer or teacher and more of an organiser providing resources and support to learners. In turn, the participants learn with and from each other as they identify and implement solutions to challenges, problems or other developmental issues. They might also set their own objectives and be responsible for learning assessment.

6. Know your role and make it clear

As a facilitator your role can vary between the role of a facilitator, teacher, instructor and maybe even as a manager or leader. The reality of this mix of roles can become confusing for participants and if you are not clear in communicating the multiplicity of

your roles you can expect the group to function less optimally, generally falling out of flow and communicating less authentically.

Having a single role as the neutral facilitator is on the surface level most beneficial, but in reality you may, at times, have important insights, goals, values or other critical principles that you would need to share with the group.

It is crucial that you share these, but you must do so with a strong degree of awareness on how it influences the group. Maybe "now" is not the right time to switch from facilitator to teacher – understanding timing in your use of roles is of utmost importance.

7. Forgetting where your participants are

With LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® being a playful and creative tool it can sometimes be perceived as less serious or too challenging. "I am not creative" is a common objection heard from participants. It is therefore important that you stay mindful of your participants and remember that the purpose is not to play or use LEGO® but to explore an important challenge.

Another thing to remember is to make use of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Warm-up with new users, since this helps participants familiarize themselves with the method, the bricks, and the use of metaphors and narratives.

8. Never rush a LSP workshop

"The fastest way to get there is to slow" - this line from the Danish singer Tina Dickow's song "Count to ten" serves as an important reminder to the facilitator, who pressured on time might speed up the process with negative consequences.

The nature of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® requires time in the short term to achieve the impacts relevant for the long term. In order to get to the deeper held understandings and assumptions, sufficient building, sharing and exploration time needs to be applied. The good facilitator is very aware of this and takes a serious approach to prioritizing time to ensure deeper and richer discussions rather than many different discussions.

9. The zone of proximal development

The nature of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® pushes people out of their comfort zone. Learning outside our comfort zone is all about balance and interaction we have with other learners. The zone of proximal development (sometimes abbreviated ZPD), is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help.

Frustrated participants may look for someone to step in and give instructions or simple solutions to a problem. Acting on these stress responses can be beneficial for the present emotional nature of the group (from frustrated to satisfied) but it can be detrimental to learning. Accepting the unpleasant sides of learning and staying mindful in these moments is crucial.

There is not one solution on when to intervene and when to simply accept frustration. One general guideline could be to pause the use of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® and tune in to the present experiences and emotions. From this state of collective mindfulness, the group, can be aligned for the next step.

10. Setting ground rules

Setting ground rules is a key component when facilitating with LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® and many times a too loose framework challenges the group's ability to learn collaboratively.

These five ground rules are the five most important rules to heed as a facilitator:

1. Emphasize the need to being open to suggestions and building on what is there

2. Not knocking down ideas, criticizing the models of other participants

3. Allowing others space (to speak or express themselves) thus ensuring mutual respect

4. Rules of engagement such as time-outs and procedures that will be adopted – especially the principle that everyone builds and every one shares

5. The builder defines the metaphor and the narrative. Even though a certain model can be perceived in another way it should generally be avoided to open up for other interpretations.

THREE CORE APPLICATION AREAS

Learning from the past

Insanity is doing the same things and expecting different results. So solving problems and challenges demands a change of procedure or circumstances influencing the system in which the challenge plays out. Understanding these areas of relevant change requires learning more than a new plan.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a strong tool to do a range of different retrospective explorations. It can be used to share and align "lessons learned" by having the group reflect on how things went and what influenced a certain outcome. From here the group can make a more informed decision on what changes they want to make in the next iteration.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® can be equally used to explore challenges from our past but also the nature of our success and progress.

The negativity bias refers to the notion things of a more negative nature (e.g. unpleasant thoughts, emotions, or social interactions; harmful/traumatic events) have a greater effect on one's psychological state and processes than do neutral or positive things. In other words, something very positive will generally have less of an impact on a person's or group's behaviour and cognition than something negative. LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a neutral tool not seeking a "negative" or "positive" analysis.

It can however help balance out the negative side effects of too much negativity bias and help participants make the more positive exploration about learning rather than "feeling good".

The building of models and creation of narratives and metaphors helps participants separate their problems and negative experiences from themselves. This process of externalization allows individuals and groups to explore their relationships with problems, thus the narrative motto: "The person is not the problem, the problem is the problem. The same goes with strengths or positive attributes which are also externalized, allowing people to engage in the construction and performance of preferred identities.

The richness of the dialogue created with the LEGO® models also help the group move away from "just" using the exploration of positive experiences to induce "feeling good". Instead the exploration of narratives, metaphors, connections and patterns helps the group learn from positive experience, thus building an individual and collective efficacy.

Examples of possible usage:

• Retrospectives

• Identifying and learning from best (and worst) practices

• Understanding adaptive and maladaptive behaviour and emotional patterns

• Creation of timeline overviews and the interaction of different instances

Learning from the present

Life and learning unfolds in the present but we live in a world that contributes in a major way to mental fragmentation, disintegration, distraction and less coherence. In many cases the effects of these mental challenges makes it difficult to align ourselves or the group in the present.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® helps cultivate a non-judgmental awareness of the present that bestows a host of benefits to the individual and group. First and foremost a benefit is an increased awareness of behaviour that hinders or helps the group learn collaboratively.

"Everyone agrees it's important to live in the moment, but the problem is how," says Ellen Langer, a psychologist at Harvard and creator of the psychology of possibility. "When people are not in the moment, they're not there to know that they're not there." Overriding the distraction reflex and awakening to the present takes intentionality and practice.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® gives the facilitator tools to help a team or a group, in a fun way, to construct and imagine their realities, access and voice subconscious knowledge and insight that might otherwise be harder to bring forth.

An awareness of the present with a glimpse into the future is fundamental to prototyping and experimentation. Prototyping and experimentation is about moving an idea or innovation into a concrete next step and creating an early draft of what the final result might look. LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® helps the process of prototyping and experimentation because you can visualise and create the abstract idea you want to express. It helps because what you can't build you can tell, and what you can't tell often can be told by the model and it's complex set of metaphors.

Examples of possible usage:

• Pretotyping, prototyping and the creation of experiments

• Understanding and defining values, principles, personal strengths and opinions

• Aligning teams and team building through increased awareness of other team members

• Defining core concepts to align ideation and brain storming

Moving towards the future

Understanding the future and building the determination to move towards a desired future is a core application area of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®. The abstract nature of the future, of goals, dreams, visions and possible scenarios makes LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® a strong tool to help make the future more comprehensible and manageable.

This future navigation is called prospection. Coined by, among others, the positive psychology pioneer Martin E. P. Seligman, prospection refers broadly to the mental representation and evaluation of possible futures. Prospection may include planning, prediction, hypothetical scenarios, teleological patterns, daydreaming, and evaluative assessment of possible future events.

This ability to represent possible futures fundamentally shapes human cognitive, affective, and motivational systems. Prospection is a ubiquitous feature of the human mind. What you intend to do is based on what happened in the past; what you actually do is not. Becoming aware of these mental challenges when moving toward the future is a key.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® serves as a catalyst of the prospection process allowing a multi-dimensional exploration of the future. The use of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® helps the group to free itself from constricting mindsets and the limits they place on our thinking.

Examples of possible usage:

• Goal setting

• Creation of vision and mission

• Creation and analysis of scenarios

Get rid of
the sceletons in the closet
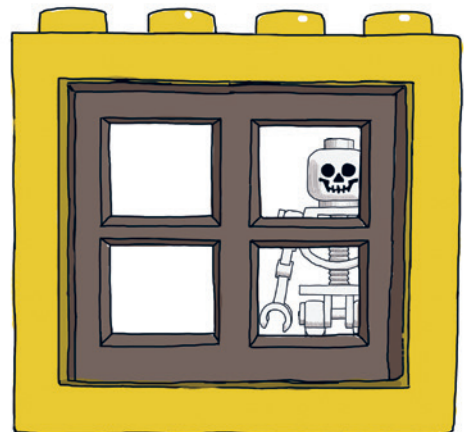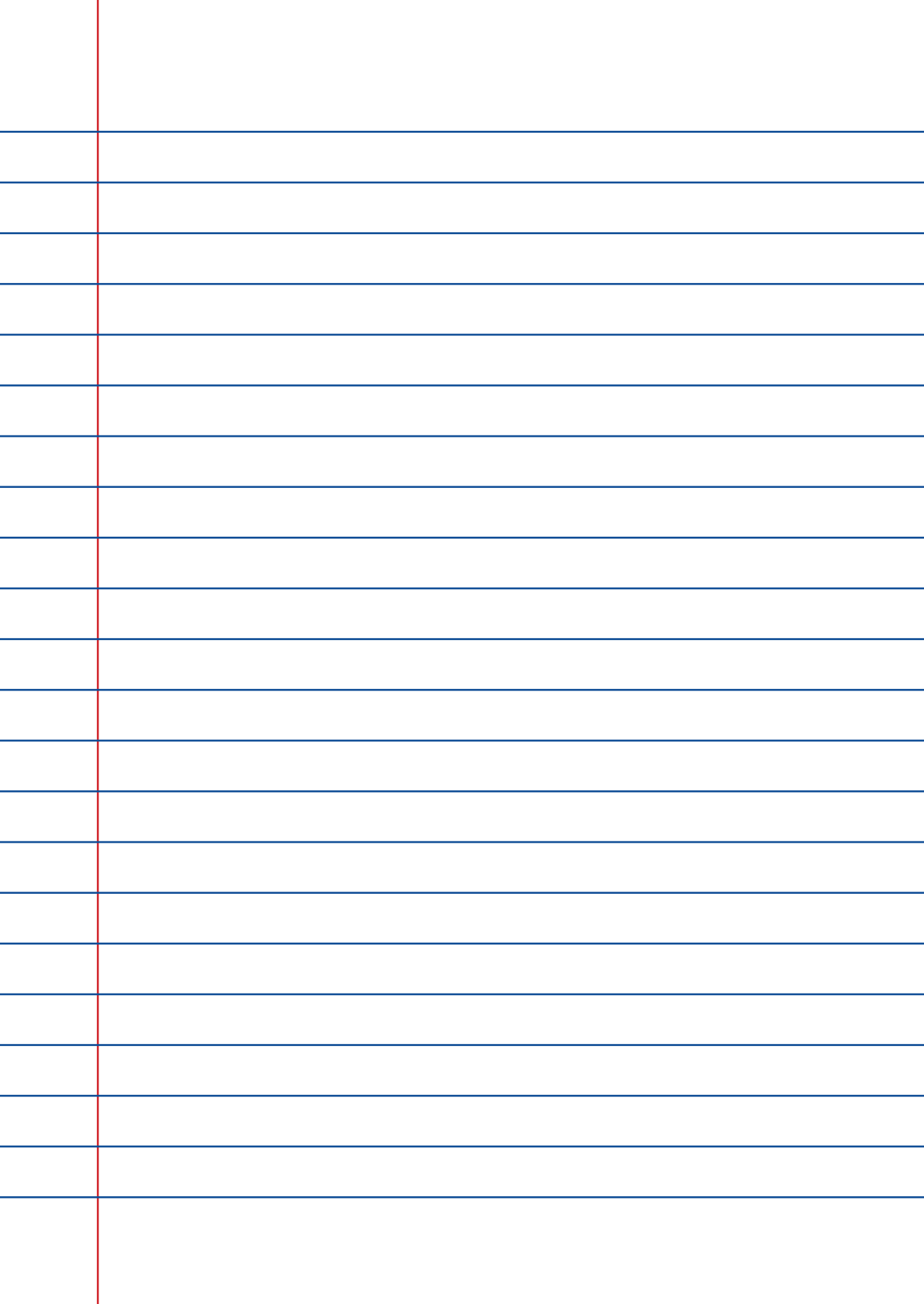
PRACTICAL APPLICATION

If you are working with a group who are experiencing LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® for the first time it is important that you follow the warm-up steps. It can be tempting to exclude this warm-up and jump straight to the more "interesting" challenges. This is, however, not a good idea.

The warm-up has been created to make participants comfortable with the LEGO® building as well as narrative and metaphor creation and sharing of these. So in short, if you have a new group and little time you should reduce the time spent on the core topics so you still have the 30-40 minutes necessary to complete a thorough warm-up.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® WARM-UP

Warming-up should always be the first part in a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® session when participants are using the method for the first time. The warm-up consists of some lightweight building challenges that increases the participant's skills in using the method rather than just rushing to the actual building process.

In this way the participants become familiar with LEGO® and the democratic process of building, sharing and reflecting. At the same time the participant's experiences some of the key features like the hands-on-thinking method and the use of metaphoric models and narratives.

The skills building must be taught to participants hands-on. It cannot be conveyed verbally to the participants by simply telling them about the method and what they are supposed to do. The participants have to experience the real use of LEGO® in order to come into flow with the method.

The warm-up should always consist of these three steps:

1. Introduction to the session and its purpose

2. Completing the tower challenge or the bridge challange

3. Constructing metaphors and sharing narratives

Introduction to the session and its purpose

How you present the purpose of the session depends on a number of issues. The composition of the group; the number of attendees; the overall idea and the purpose of the session.

Make sure you present the purpose in a clear and straightforward manner. Also find a good way to introduce the use of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® and why you think it is a good idea.

Complete the tower- or bridge challenge

The tower-challenge is an easy and very effective way to introduce participants to LEGO® and get them into flow. It takes advantage of gamification elements like winners-and-loosers, it is timed and has an easy comprehensible framework of rules.

Before starting the challenge is it important that you make sure everyone has the same bricks available. If this is not possible you can use the bridge-challenge instead.

Presenting the tower-challenge
We are going to be using LEGO® to explore the topics of today's session. In order for this to be natural and fun we need to warm our hands up a bit. And speaking of hands, let's get started.
I would like you to unpack your LEGO® and get an overview of the bricks you have been given. (continue when everyone has their bricks in front of them)
Using the bricks in front of you, you have to build a tower-like construction on the table in front of you. The purpose is to build the highest tower possible making sure it can stand on its own. You have four minutes. Set your timer and let people know when half the time is gone.
Count down from 10 to 0 and tell people to stop building.
Go around the room, and measure the height of the tower in a light-hearted manor creating a fun and playful atmosphere around this competition.

Presenting the bridge-challenge
Make sure there is a sufficient amount of bricks available and within reach of all participants.
We are going to be using LEGO® to explore the topics of today's session. In order for this to be natural and fun we need to warm our hands up a bit. And speaking of hands, let's get started.
Build a bridge on the table top and make it is a high and wide as you want. You must however be able to pass a hand under it, and there has to be a mini-figure standing somewhere on the bridge.
You have five minutes.

Facilitation notes

Focus on this outcome:

• Get participants acquainted with LEGO® and how it connects.

• Increase confidence by people completing a challenge.

• Maybe reflect on how they might get good ideas by looking at others and what they build.

Take care:

• To help people who might not know how to connect LEGO® bricks and make sure they are comfortable completing the challenges.

Shared reflection:

• Talk about the difference in their construction. The end result is different even though the starting bricks were equal to all participants.

• Maybe ask how the bricks helped themselves and others get engaged.

• Maybe ask what the time-frame did to them.

• In a playful way try to destroy a couple of towers or bridges and ask how this "feels". Often people comment that they get a little sad. Relate this to how we need to respect each other's models and of course treat them with caution.
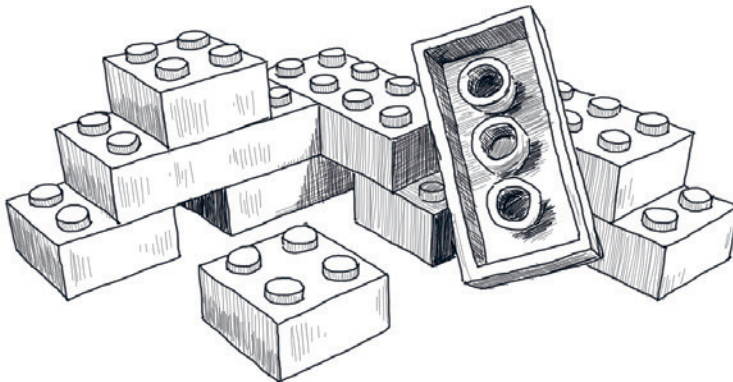
Complete the "constructing metaphors" challenge

The metaphor challenge serves two key purposes. First to get people acquainted with the idea of creating metaphors but also letting them experience how they can build quite cool models without an instruction (something many adults are not accustomed to). This last purpose challenges the idea that some adult participants hold because these people often perceive themselves as less creative, low on imagination and not proficient LEGO® builders.

Presenting the "constructing metaphors" challenge

Ok, after you guys did so well with the tower/bridge it is time to turn the difficulty notch up a bit here in our warm-up.

If you use the window-kit or starter-kit use this instruction: (See appendix 2)
Please build one of the models shown on the pictures. It is the only time we are going to ask you to build something specific, so please just play along.

> *- Use the images from appendix 2 if you are using the window-kit (app. 5 minutes)*
> *- Use the images from the booklet if you are using the starter-kit (app. 8-10 minutes)*

If you use shared bricks use this instruction:
Please build a means of transportation. It can be boat-like, plane-like, car-like, even ski-like, as a matter of fact it can be anything-like. It is your choice. (app. 5-8 minutes)
If you need help, just let me know.
When you are done, please keep this model intact and wait for everyone to finish off.
When everyone is done tell them to adapt their model.
We now need to put life into the model by exploring how your creations can be a metaphor for something.
You will do this by adapting, customizing or modifying your model so it captures something related to (you choose which topic and let participants only know this choice):

> *- You at your best*   *- A challenging thing you are facing*
> *- Something important to you*   *- A strength you enjoy using*
> *- A good day at work*   *- Communication*
> *- Other topic you find relevant in light of the sessions purpose*

Emphasise that there is no right or wrong and they are free to go crazy in their modifications.
They have 2-3 minutes to complete their modifications.
Let people take turn sharing their metaphor and the story behind it.

Facilitation notes

<u>Focus on this outcome:</u>

• Get participants even more acquainted with LEGO® and how it connects.

• Increase confidence by people completing a challenge to create something recognisable.

• Understand the nature of metaphors and how they can be simple or complex.

• How metaphors help us understand the ideas of others.

• How metaphors help us remember what other people share.

<u>Take care:</u>

• To help people who might have difficulty building a specific model.

• Help people who might struggle with creating a metaphor and narrative which is too complex. Help them by suggesting they focus on small part of the topic you chose.

<u>Shared reflection:</u>

• Talk about metaphors and their impact. Maybe have participants close there eyes and ask them to recall the models and narratives they just heard.

• Tell them that LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is not about building pre-determined models but to create their own models, metaphors and narratives.

• How metaphors vary in expression and how some models contain several metaphors combined.

• How it is not about building something beautiful or cool.

• How talking about something abstract becomes easier with the tangible model
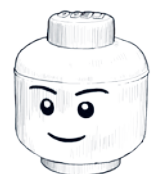
HANDS ON THINKING™ METHOD FOR LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

To run an effective and successful LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® workshop requires that you follow the Hands On Thinking™ method for LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®. This section presents a step by step methodology to guide you in this process.

It can help to have the Hands On Thinking™ diagram (see appendix 3) handy when reading this section.

Purpose of the session

You should start by reflect upon the overall purpose of the session. You should ask yourself a few questions such as:

• What is the purpose of your workshop / session?

• How does this purpose relate to relevant challenges the group faces?

• What message would you like your participants to reflect on?

The idea behind this reflection is that the more you get attached to the purpose of your workshop, the better you can facilitate it. Your audience will have a powerful experience and most likely learn more.

Identifying purpose is the essence of your workshop, however it is almost equally important to reflect upon: Why the use of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is relevant? This reflection helps you present the method in an inspirational way.

Framing the model building

The first task of framing the model building is about breaking the purpose of the session into smaller pockets of reflections. It can be helpful to do this by asking yourself 3-5 questions that deals with the purpose. If, for instance, you were working with a group who wants to define a goal, the overall purpose could be "Defining an inspirational goal for the team to strive towards"
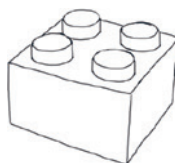
Breaking this overall purpose into questions could sound like:

• What are inspirational goals for the team?

• What does it mean to define a goal?

• What does "striving" imply?

From these three purpose-questions your task is to plan the workshop so participants cover each of the questions. Consider whether LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is the right tool for all parts or if it might be better to mix the use of LEGO® with other facilitation techniques. From your purpose-questions you can now lay the overall schedule for the session.

Besides creating the road-map you can also use the purpose-questions to phrase out the specific words you will say when you ask participants to build their models. These words are called building-phrases. Doing this in the right way connects the overall purpose with something relevant and easy to understand for the participants. The building-phrase also helps participants create strong narratives and metaphors that again strengthens the insights gained and the conversations the group will have.

When you work on your building-phrase it is important not to be too vague or to concrete. Phrases that are too vague make it difficult to build meaningful models and phrases that are too specific can cause discussions to be too focused, thereby not producing new insights.

Explore the apps to see how this can be done. The Great Goals step by step guide deals with the goal setting example mentioned above.

Sharing narratives and metaphors

Tell participants the idea behind LSP "Everyone builds – everyone shares". Let participants know if they can ask follow-up questions and how they should do this. Ask someone to go first and consider whether you will let everyone share, before you start exploring their narratives and metaphors, or if you will explore them as you go along.

After the first participant has shared his or her narrative ask who feels like going next. Instead of letting the next in line (usually the person on the right) have a go, ask who has something to share that relates to what has just been said. By doing this you allow for connections to be made as you go along.

Exploring and reflecting together

Depending on the group, and the individual participants, you will experience different levels of how much each person shares in his or her narratives. Something you will also experience is the level of abstract vs. concrete thinking in what they share.

Regardless of the purpose of the workshop it is almost always beneficial for you as a facilitator to explore what the participants share with follow-up questions. To help you do this we offer the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Exploration Questions, also called LSP-EQs. (please see appendix 1)

Combining and connecting to identify patterns and shared stories

As the individual LEGO® pieces connect, so do the models built by individual participants and the groups as a whole. These combined models are built by organising or rebuilding sections of individual models into one model.

By combining models it becomes possible to identify patterns of underlying assumptions and stories that run through the models. By combining models it also becomes possible to explore the issues at hand through a more systems thinking approach. Last but not least the collaborative creation of a shared models based on the thoughts of the individual, is a powerful process, where the group as whole, literally creates a shared understanding.

Generally speaking, there are three ways to combine or connect models:

1. Patterns (individual and shared)

Using patterns means to organise models on a tabletop without building the models together. Through this organisation it becomes possible to explore how models and their inherent stories relate to each other.

It can either be done only using the models made by each individual or all the models created by everyone in the group. If you are only using the individual models, the participant would place his or her models in a meaningful way on the table in front of him- or herself. Maybe something in one model comes before something in another model. It could also be that each model holds special themes that can be grouped in various way. If you are using all the models created by the group, the process is done with all the models. Here participants would place all their models on a table followed by an exploration stage where all models are organised into patterns, themes, or other meaningful principles.

The process of constructing and exploring patterns:

A. Individual patterns: Individual models are organised by placing them in pattern / order on the table in front of the participant. The models are placed in a way that makes sense to the individual participant. The pattern is shared and explored.

Frame this part by saying something like:

Your task is now to organise all your models into a pattern or in an order that makes sense to you. Maybe different parts relate to each other or the models link in a special way. Move them around and explore different ways they connect. After app. 5-10 minutes you should be able to share a little about the pattern you have created.

Walk around and help the participants if they get stuck. After the designated time has gone ask someone to share their creation and explore this as you would explore a single model. Take turns and remember to explore all the patterns in the group.

B. Shared patterns: All the models created by all the participants are organised by placing them on a cleared table to begin with. The group collaborates by moving the models around, exploring different ways to organise them into relevant and meaningful patterns.

Frame this part by saying something like:

Your SHARED task as a group is to organise all the models on the table into a pattern, into themes or in another way that makes sense to everyone in the group. Maybe different parts relate to each other or the models link in a special way. Move them around and explore different ways they connect. After app. 15-20 minutes you should be able to share the pattern you have constructed.

Once you have framed the exercise, step back and let the group work on their own. Observe the group closely, especially in the beginning. If they have a hard time getting started kick-start their exploration by offering light suggestions on how patterns might be created. Again, step back, after suggesting a pathway. Be careful not to "take over" their process.
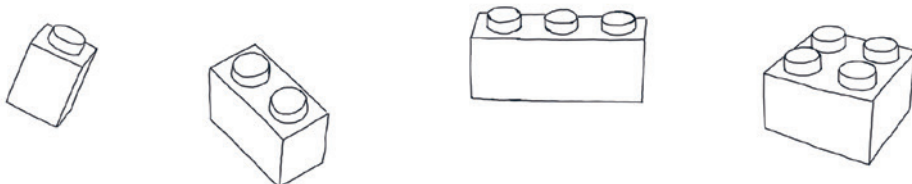
2. Super-models (individually and shared)

Using super-models means combining individual models or sections of the models into a new overall model. Through this new model it becomes possible to create new insights and deeper meaning making. If the super-models are created on behalf of all the group's models it also serves as a way to achieve a higher degree of buy-in.

Generally speaking it is almost always necessary that the individual or group has developed a pattern before they construct a super-story. The pattern serves as the overall structure of the super-model making the re-construction easier.

The process of creating super-models

A. Individual super-models: If the individual is building his or her own super-model the process is pretty straightforward.
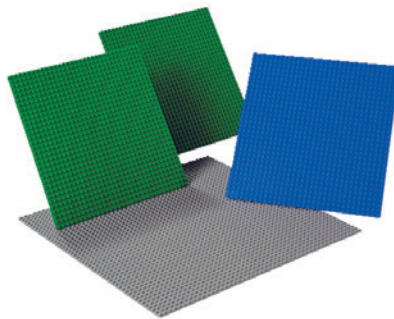
Give them a larger building plate (like on the picture) and frame the exercise in the following way:

Take a look at your models and remind yourself of the different meanings they hold. Your task is to create a super-model, which combines the most important parts of your individual models. Take a section at a time and move it onto the larger building plate. Your task is NOT to create a copy of all the individual models, but to re-organise the models into a new coherent super-model. After app. 15-20 minutes you should be able to share your new model.

Walk around and help the participants if they get stuck. After the designated time has gone ask someone to share their creation and explore this as you would explore a single model. Take turns and remember to explore all the super-models in the group.

It can sometimes be relevant to remind the participants that they need not use all the different parts and sections of their individual models – only the most relevant. You might also let them know, that they can re-construct some of their models to either make them smaller, larger or connected to something else.

B. Shared super-models: If the group is to build their shared super-model, give them a large building plate like the one on the picture (38x38).

Frame the exercise in the following way:

Take a look at all the models and remind each other of the different meanings they hold. Your SHARED task is to create a super-model, which holds the most important parts of your individual models. Take a section at a time and move it onto the larger building plate. Your task is NOT to create a copy of all the individual models, but to re-organise the models into a new coherent super-model. After app. 15-20 minutes you should be able to share your new model.

Once you have framed the exercise, step back and let the group work on their own. Observe the group closely, especially in the beginning. If they have a hard time getting started, kick-start their exploration by offering light suggestions on how patterns might be created. Again, step back, after suggesting a pathway. Be careful not to "take over" their process.

It can sometimes be relevant to remind the group that they need not use all the different parts and sections of their individual models – only the most relevant. You might also let them know, that they can re-construct some of their models to either make them smaller, larger or connected to something else.

In this exercise, it is important to be aware of group dynamics. When everyone builds and everyone shares, all have a turn to bring their ideas to the table. When building a shared super-model the group very often "elects" an informal group leader or a smaller group takes charge of the building exercise. If you expect this to happen, you can have each participant select the models / sections of models they find most relevant to build into the super-model.

Give each participant 3-8 smaller bricks that distinguish themselves visually from the individual models. Follow this by framing the task by saying something like this:

> *Take your small bricks and place them on models, yours or others, or sections of different models as a way to highlight what you believe is important to integrate into the new shared model.*

Following their "votes" you can use this when framing the building of the shared super-model.

3. Systems (Individual and shared)

Creating systems means building physical links between previously built models. These connections are created by using special LEGO® bricks that hold different connective properties. See the table below to understand different connection types.

Creating systems through connections can be done through three different ways:

A. The nature of the connection – exploring the relationship between two or more models

B. The flow in the connection – exploring what kind of flow there is between models

**C.** The impact related to the connection – exploring the impact one model has on another

Creating systems, whether it be type A, B or C is a challenging task for participants. If you have good time for this part of the process, it will however, serve as a goodway to understand interconnectivity between the abstract concepts and stories underlying individual models.
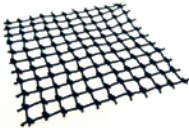
The process of creating systems

No matter if you wish participants to make connections between their own model or the models in the patterns they have created the following six reminders are very important to heed:

1. Make sure to introduce the idea of connections and systems, explaining why you believe this to be a relevant exploration for the participants to try. Give them examples by using the examples on the table regarding connection types, together with the models on the table.

2. Make sure you frame the instruction carefully and make it clear whether you are exploring the nature, flow or impact in the connections (or a combination).

3. Make sure they understand that they have to create the connection/s literally, not just talk about them.

4. Always start with one connection and then move over to more. One model can hold multiple connections.

5. Continue the process until you and the participants are satisfied with the insights and meaning they have explored.

6. If you work with all the models in the group, the final result is a system where most of the models are connected in one way or the other.

For practical examples on how to create systems see the section on LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® step by step guide.
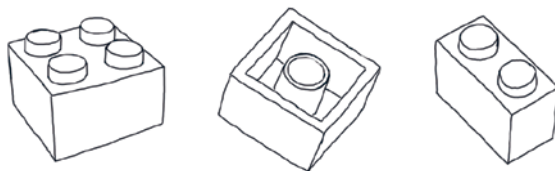
TABLE OF CONNECTION TYPES FOR CREATING SYSTEMS

Tube
This tube connector holds flowing properties.
It can help show something moving from A to B.

Strong connection
The lack of flexibility makes this connector strong.
Perhaps even rigid.

Net
The net serves as a connector that holds multiple properties
ranging from flexibility to network.

String
The string connector is a very flexible and rather strong
connector.

Add on connector
The add-on connector is equally strong and rigid as the strong
connection but also invites to new connections.

Chain
Much like the string, the chain holds much of the same
flexibility and strength. Maybe a little less flexibility and a
little more strength.

Flexible axis
The axis connector is very flexible and bendable. It can,
however, be difficult to connect.

Ladder
The ladder offers ideas related to step-by-step connections.
Something leading to something new through a series of steps.

Capturing insights and moving forward

The majority of the learning and the strongest insights usually happens during a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® process. It is while the models are built, shared, explored and connected that insights emerge. The visual and tangible side of using LEGO® also helps participants retain a larger degree of these insights, making relevant commitments stick for longer.

Despite of these benefits it is very important to finalize a session with LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® by capturing the most relevant insights.

How to specifically follow up on the session depends on a range of things from purpose to number of participants. The following are recommendations for you to take into consideration:

1. Learning – talk about individual insights and learning.

2. Curiosity – talk about what the session has made each participant more curious about.

3. Key principles – talk about key principles that have emerged during the session.

4. Individual next step – how might the individual follow up or take action from the session?

5. Group next step – how might the group follow up or take action from the session?

6. Group support – how might the group support each other in order to stay on the path started in the session?

Whether you chose one or more of the above you can also choose whether this follow-up discussion is done with or without LEGO®. Generally speaking, all the questions related to the points above can be built in LEGO®, shared and explored on their own. The process of doing this is exactly the same as other building exercises. It is also perfectly OK to have a break from building and talk about these insights in other ways suitable for the group.

Besides the above pathways, a couple of practical things can be used to retain important insights and action points from the workshop.

1. Let participants keep their models

It is usually recommended that participants get to keep their models. Especially their super-models and in particular super-models created by the group.

2. Take pictures or videos of models

If it is not feasible or practical to let participants keep their models, make sure to take pictures of the models or have the participants do this themselves. Offer to record a short video of the stories related to super-models and maybe patterns. These videos serve as a good reminder.

3. Create small reminder models

Have participants build a small model that reminds them of their insights, curiosity points, or next steps. Carry out this task in the same way as in all other model building.

If possible you can purchase a LEGO® key ring for all participants and have them attached just one reminder brick on the key ring.
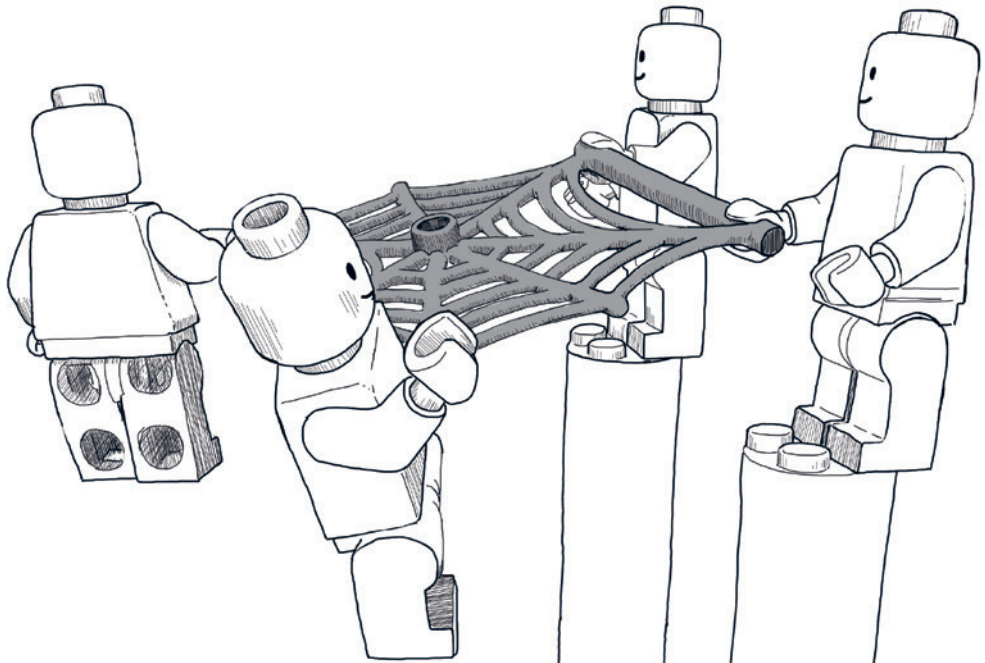
A strong network is a system
where we "hold" each other.
We can loose our foothold,
but still stay strong from
the support we get.
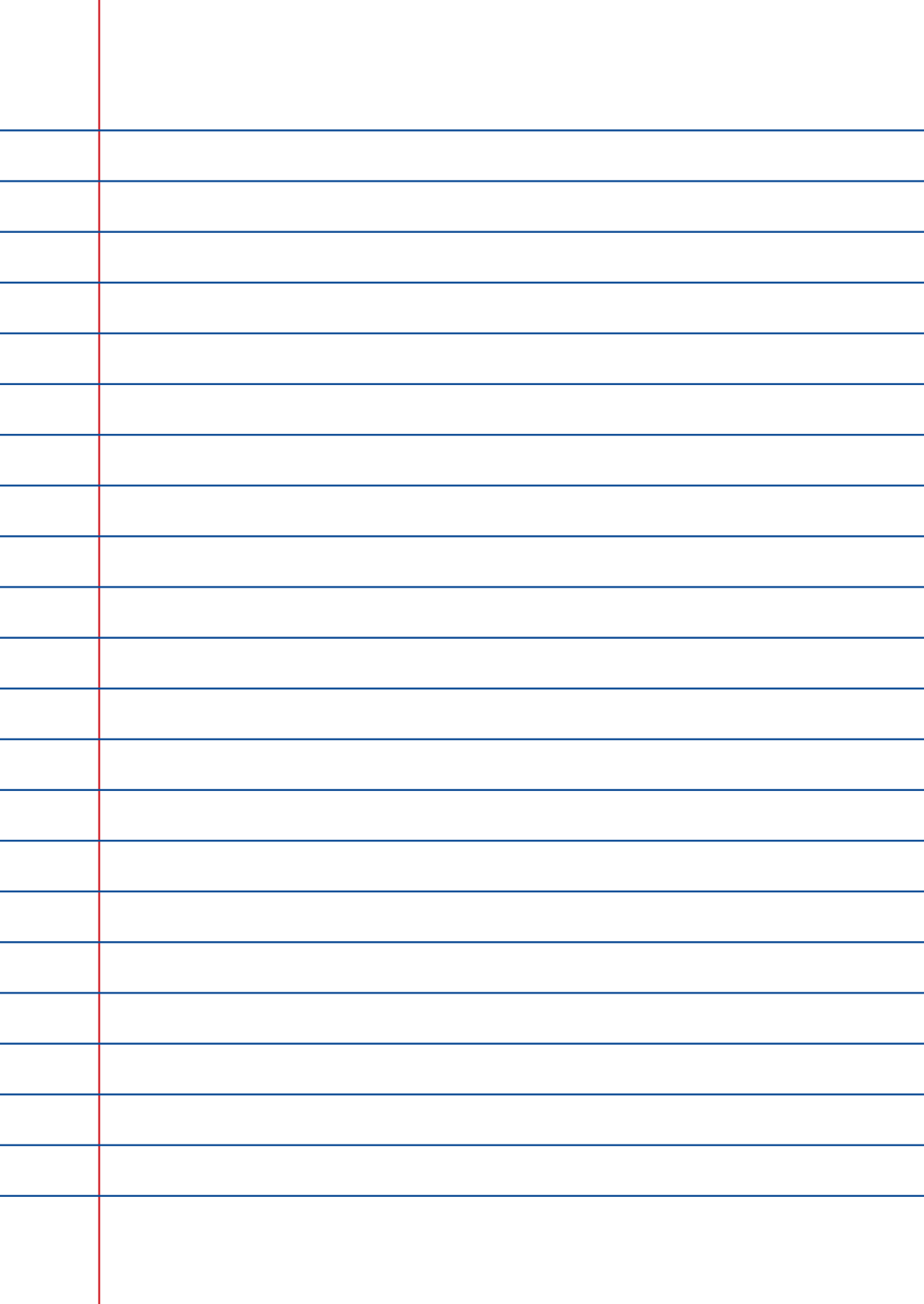
GENERAL GUIDELINES

GROUP SIZE

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® works best in group sizes of 3-10. More than 10 people slows down the sharing process and it becomes difficult to keep the energy and focus in the group. If you wish to use LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® with more than 10 people you would need to organise participants into two or more groups.

When doing this, you could run sessions with hundreds of people. Doing this, you should consider:

• How will the individual groups keep focus and follow the process when you, as a facilitator, are not present all the time?

• Maybe consider a less complex process. Especially patterns, super-models and systems tend to be difficult to carry out in large group. Especially when each group is without a dedicated facilitator.

• The building tasks will have to be easy to understand, very short and concise. You do not get the same chance as with a small group to polish your task once the groups have started building.

• You would need to think about a solution for managing the created knowledge to make sure that the ideas won't get lost and it would not be "just another conference fun icebreaker".

Its about honesty,
you can trust me and look right
through me, and that is what
I expect of you too.
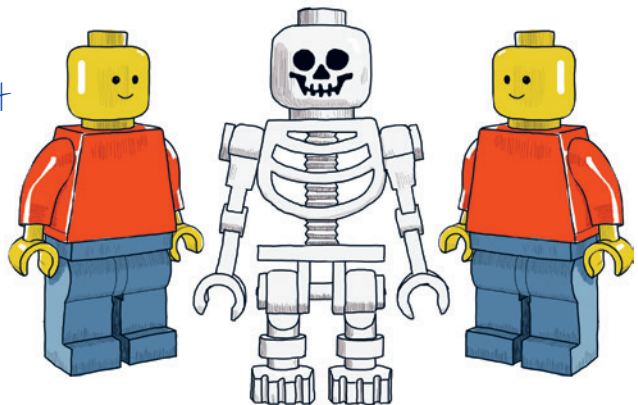
ROOM REQUIREMENTS

You should go for a room with amble space. The best solution is a room where you have a table to build models. A table to place models in order to create patterns and super-models and a table to place the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® materials.

PRODUCTS

LEGO® has developed dedicated sets for LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®. Those four dedicated sets may be purchased via LEGO® online shop:

• LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Starter Kit (2000414)

• LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Set of 100 Exploration Bags (2000409)

• LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Identity and Landscape Kit (2000430)

• LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Connections Kit (2000431)

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND LINKS TO LEGO® ONLINE SHOP PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.LEGO.COM/EN-US/SERIOUSPLAY/MATERIAL

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Starter Kit

As the name implies, this is the basic LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® set that provides the best toolkit to get started as an individual LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® player. Starter Kit comes with 214 pieces and it is a perfect companion for somebody looking to work with LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® for the first time. It gives plenty of rich discussions for ca 2-4 hours. If you plan to work in a group, then you need one Starter Kit per each participant. The link above provides detailed inventory of the contents of the Starter Kit.

100 Items of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Window Exploration Bags

Window Exploration Bags are primarily for short sessions or as cheaper solution to the starter kit. They work well for 15 minutes up to 2 hours. The most frequently applied function is to order a box full of 100 Window Exploration Bags for short seminars or conferences. Each individual bag consists of 49 pieces: a minifigure, a flag post, a ladder, two flowers, a wheel, a propeller, a horizontal and a vertical brick with rotor snap, several small bricks and plates. See the contents of Window Exploration Bags at the link to the left.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Identity and Landscape Kit

The Identity and Landscape kit comes inside a large cardboard box. It includes 2561 pieces of LEGO bricks, full of different metaphors, including animals, plants, buildings, people, regular bricks and base plates. One Landscape and Identity Kit works well per group of 10-12 participants. It can be used for 1-5 days of group workshop that is aimed at building shared understanding of a new strategy, a complex problem, new identity or to brainstorm for out-of-box creative ideas. Look at the detailed inventory of Identity and Landscape Kit at the link to the left.

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Connections Kit

Connections Kit is particularly useful when you need to work on team strategies, identities and resolve complex problems. It has also abundant in parts with 2455 different bricks included. It adds to the Identity and Landscape Kit - for building connections between buildings that you have constructed. The Connections Kit has rods, tubes, ladders, bridges and strings. There are also 10 identical bags of special bricks for so-called "pencil box" exercise. Look at the detailed inventory of Connections Kit at the link to the left.

LEGO® tends to have an irregular supply of the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® kits. On the Serious Play Pro website an alternative solution for a DIY kit is provided. Please visit this link for a step by step method to create this: http://seriousplaypro.com/2013/08/25/diy-lego-serious-play-kit/

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®
PREPARATION CHECK-LIST

PRIOR TO SESSION

☐ I have all relevant materials ordered and they have been delivered

☐ I have secured a suitable room for the session

☐ I am aware if the participants are first time users of LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® thus having to do the warm-up exercises

PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

☐ I have a clear purpose for the session and its different parts

☐ I know how this purpose relates to relevant challenges the group faces

☐ I know what message I would ask my participants to reflect about

☐ I have formulated three explanations for why LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is relevant

FRAMING BUILDING EXERCISES

☐ I have broken the purpose into relevant subtopics that serve as a focus point for the building exercises and talks I will have in my workshop

☐ I have created a schedule for the session and allowed good time for each section

SHARING NARRATIVES AND METAPHORS
AND EXPLORING AND REFLECTING TOGETHER

☐ I have studied the LSP Exploration Questions (LSP EQ, appendix 1) and have chosen some questions I plan on using to explore models

COMBINING TO IDENTIFY PATTERNS AND SHARED STORIES

☐ I have thought about if and how participants might combine their models into patterns, super-models and/or systems

FOLLOW-UP

☐ I know how I might follow-up on the session (next steps, support, photos, reminder-models)

Get clear about the elephant in the room
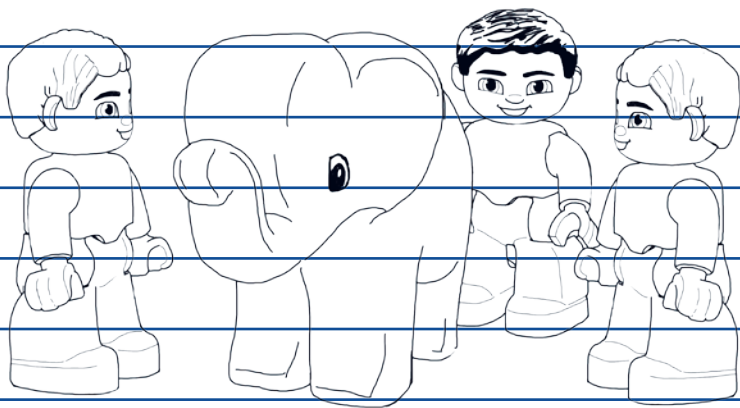
STEP BY STEP GUIDES
STRONG STRENGTHS

TIME:	1 day
PARTICIPANTS:	4-10 people
MATERIALS:	One LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Starter kit or exploration bag per participant plus one set of the Identity and landscape kit

Purpose:

Suitable for a session where you want the individuals and the group to better understand the keys to their strongest self and how they can bring these things out in each other. The session is also a good way for people to be introduced to their VIA character strengths.

Expected outcomes

Expect a higher level of awareness between group members. Especially a better understanding of what motivates each team member and how each team member can support each other.

The science behind the step by step guide

The Strong Strengths LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® step by step guide is based on the science of strengths and especially character strengths.

Character Strengths are the positive parts of our personality. They impact how we think, feel and behave and are the keys to our strongest self. When applied effectively, character strengths are beneficial both to the individual, to the groups they belong to and society as a whole. Character strengths are different than your other strengths, such

as your unique skills, talents, interests and resources, because character strengths reflect the "real" you — who you are at your core.

Today numerous scientific studies have shown the effect of knowing, understanding and using one's character strengths. Whether it is a child leveraging their strengths in learning or an adult applying their strengths at work, the method ensures a higher degree of self-determination, higher degree of resilience and a stronger belief in one's own ability to succeed. This step by step guide can be used together with the VIA Character Strength framework as well as Gallup's Strength Finder, CAPP's R2 other approaches. It can also be used on its own, meaning that it does not have to be connected with an existing strength methodology.

Facilitation guide

1. Organise the materials prior to the workshop.

2. Explain briefly what the purpose of the session is and give as much background on strengths that you find suitable in the specific situation. The following points are important to emphasise:

a. Strengths in this case are less about what we are GOOD at and more about what engages us.

b. That we will be looking at the use of strengths in a certain domain – choose private, work, studies or something relevant for the group.

c. That the session will provide them with insights on their own strengths and the strengths of those in their group.

d. Make sure you emphasise the concept of strengths being the features that characterise you when you are in your right element.

3. Carry out the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® warm up if you are working with people new to LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 1 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES.

Being in the right element

4. The first building exercise has the purpose of getting the participants thinking about themselves when they use their strengths.

Frame the model building:

Your task is to build a model that enables you to answer the question "When am I in my right element at work"

You have 20 minutes.

5. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories.

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES (INCLUDING A BREAK)**

The VIA Character strengths

6. Pass around a VIA Character Strength description. You can either make your own or use this one: http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Portals/0/Graphic2014.pdf

7. Briefly introduce the VIA Character Strengths to the participants. Spend as much time as you find appropriate considering the group you are working with.

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES.**

Strengths spotting

8. Group participants in pairs and tell them, they now have to identify which character strengths are present in their model.

Frame this by saying something like:

Two and two I would like you to identify 2-5 character strengths present in the model. I would like you to work together, because it sometimes helps to have other people's eyes to see your strengths. Mark the identified character strengths on the paper and be prepare to share this. Spend 2 x 5 minutes on each model.

9.   Have each participant share their identified strengths by having them point out the areas of the model that relate to this strength.

<div style="background:#1a4a8a;color:white;padding:4px">TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 3 HOURS.</div>

Zooming in on strengths

10.   The next building exercises is like zooming in on a Google map. It is about looking into the details around specific strengths.

Frame the exercise something like this:

Your task is now to build a model that shows how you understand one of the spotted strengths.

Choose the spotted strength that you are most curious to explore.

Your task is now to build a model that enables you to answer the question: "How do you understand this strength"

You have 15 minutes

11.   Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories.

<div style="background:#1a4a8a;color:white;padding:4px">TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 3 HOURS AND 45 MINUTES.</div>

Seeing strength in others

12.   The next building exercises is about seeing strengths in others. This will be done by each participant building a character strength they really appreciate in another person.

Frame the exercise something like this:

Your task is now to identify, build and share your thoughts on a character strength or pair of character strengths you see in the person sitting left of you.

Spend a couple of minutes looking through the list of 24 character strengths and choose one strength or two strengths combined that you really appreciate about the person.

Your task is now to build a smaller model that enables you to answer the question: "How do you understand this strength or these strengths if you chose two"

You have 10 minutes

13. Have people share their model by looking at the person that have focused on. Ask them why the appreciate this strength in the person. Let the builder hand over the model to the observed person and ask how it felt hearing this story.

<div style="background:#1c5a9e;color:white;padding:10px">TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 4 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.</div>

Connecting strengths

14. Strengths do not just influence us on their own. They work in combination with other strengths and understanding these combinations can help us understand ourselves and other people better.

Frame the exercise something like this:

You task is to explore how the strength you zoomed in on and the strength that was given to you combine. To help you do this we have a set of connecting bricks (talk about the connection bricks outlined earlier in this guide. Provide examples)

Connect the two models by applying the connection bricks you find relevant and be prepare answer the question "How do the two strengths work together?"

You have 5-10 minutes

15. Have each participant share their connections.

<div style="background:#1c5a9e;color:white;padding:10px">TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 5 HOURS.</div>

Enabling strengths

The next task moves focus away from the strength and looks at which conditions and what behaviour is needed to ensure a better use of strengths in a specific situation.

Start this part of the session by aligning all participants towards a relevant goal and tell them that they will now explore what they need to keep in mind in order to apply these strengths in the specific situation.

16. Frame the building exercise by saying something like this:

Your task is now to build a model that enables you to answer the question: "What can you or someone else do so this strengths plays a bigger role in light of the situation we are focusing on?"

You have 10 minutes.

17. Have everyone share their models on what can be done.

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 5 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.**

Reflection and moving forward

18. Make sure you have at least 30 minutes to capture insights, take aways and learning from the session.

It can be useful to discuss all or some of these questions:

• What did you learn about yourself today?

• What did you learn about others today?

• What are your three most important take aways?

• What will you do tomorrow in order to have your strengths play a bigger role in your life?

• What can you do to help others play more to their strength?

19. Make sure all models have been photographed if they do not keep them.

The VIA character strength of bravery
   "The courage to speak up"
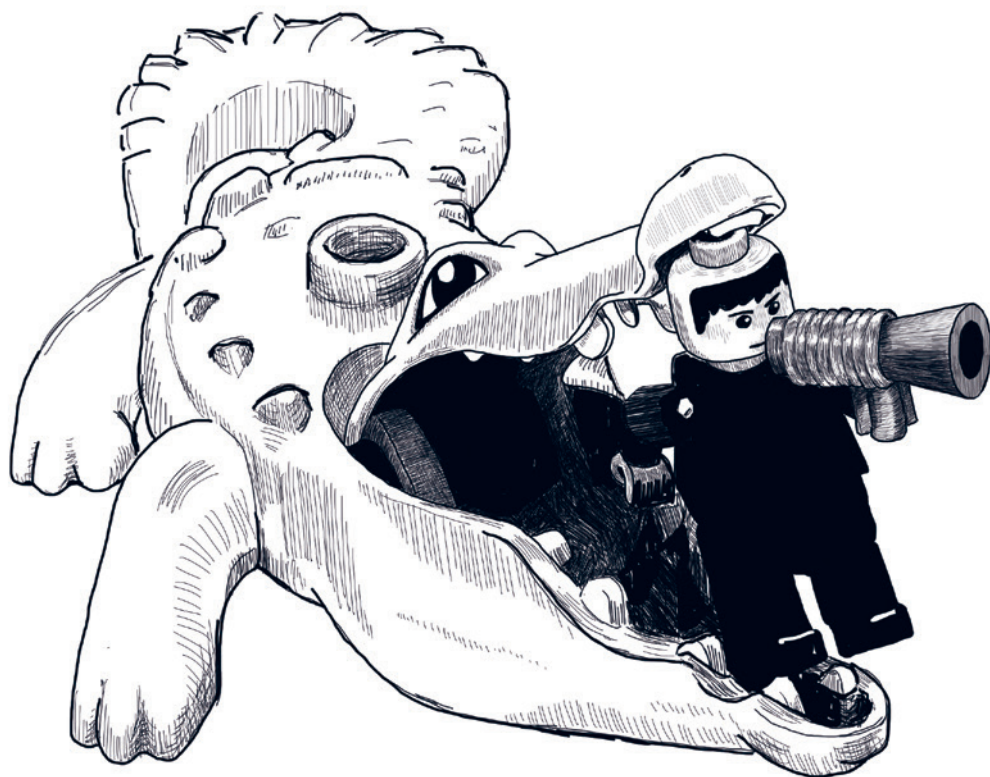
POWERFUL PURPOSE - BUILD YOUR WHY

TIME:	1 day
PARTICIPANTS:	4-10 people
MATERIALS:	One LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Starter kit or exploration bag per participant plus one set of the Identity and landscape kit

Purpose:

Suitable for a session where you want the group to explore, visualize and align themselves around their purpose, or as Simon Sinek would say – their "why".

Expected outcomes

Expect a better sense of shared commitment and collective engagement as the group deepens its understanding of the shared purpose behind who they are or what they do.

The science behind the step by step guide

The step by step guide builds on the ideas of Simon Sinek's WHY, which again relates to the psychological concept of purpose and meaning.

Your Why provides the group with clarity, meaning and direction. It is a filter through which you can make shared decisions. Where Simon Sineks Why Statement is one sentence that captures the teams unique contribution and impact. The contribution is the real actionable part of the Why. The impact is the condition you wish to leave the people and world around you. Together, these two components provide fulfillment for you and those you serve.

This step by step guide applies those ideas but expands the one sentence approach to a narrative about contribution and impact. These ideas tie into the psychological concept of meaning.

Reker and Wong (1988) define personal meaning as the "cognizance of order, coherence and purpose in one's existence, the pursuit and attainment of worthwhile goals, and an accompanying sense of fulfillment" (p. 221). A definition that aligns with Aaron Antonovsky's theory of Sense of Coherence, where meaning alongside comprehensibility and manageability explains the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic, feeling of confidence that one's environment is predictable and that things will work out as well as can reasonably be expected.

Another way to define meaning is in terms of the PURE model (Wong, 2010), which emphasizes the four essential components: Purpose, Understanding, Responsible action, and Enjoyment/Evaluation. Life would not be meaningful in the absence of any of these ingredients.

Functionally, these components entail the four major psychological processes for living the good life: motivational (purpose, life goals, needs), cognitive (understanding, making sense of life), social/moral (responsibility, accountability, commitment), and affective (enjoyment/evaluation, positive emotions).

Numerous studies have linked meaning in life with positive affect and life satisfaction (Chamberlain & Zika, 1988; King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006; Ryff, 1989; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). More recent research has shown that the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger et al., 2006) and the Life Regard Index (LRI; Battista and Almond, 1973) are also related to a variety of well-being and mental health measures (Steger, in press; Debats, 1998).

Meaning management refers to how we manage our inner lives, such as feelings, desires, perceptions, thoughts, and interpretation of life experiences. The quality of one's inner life depends on how we manage the basic processes of meaning, meaning-seeking, meaning-making, and meaning-reconstruction (Wong, 2007). Related to teams Meaning Management refers to how we as a group delibaretly seek meaning, make meaning and reconstruct meaning.

Facilitation guide

1. Explain briefly what the purpose of the session is and give as much background on Simon Sinek's WHY and the psychological concept of meaning that you find relevand. The following points are important to emphasise:

a. The Why is a purpose, cause or belief. The teams Why is the very reason it exist.

b. Maybe use Simon Sineks Golden Circle presentation that outlines the difference between What, How and Why (available on http://www.startwithwhy.com)

c. Meaning making and thus also this session is not a one-time event but a continuous process where a team aligns itself around a shared purpose

d. Knowing your teams purpose creates a sense of commitment. In order for this commitment to matter it must be transformed into actionable ideas.

2. Carry out the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® warm up if you are working with people new to LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®.

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 1 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES.**

Meaningful Situations

3. The first building exercise has the purpose of getting the participants thinking about situations at work where they were most fulfilled.

Frame the model building:

Your task is to build a model that enables you to share a story of a concrete situation where you felt fulfilled.

You have 20 minutes.

4. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories. Explore the specifics of the story.

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOURS.**

Meaningful Emotions in Meaningful Stories

5. The purpose of the next building exercise is to add emotional components to the model the participants just built. The reason for this is to explore the elements that fuel passion and commitment.

Frame the model building:

Your task is to adapt your model so it enables you share the emotional aspects of the situation. Where you get fired up, feel energized, get goose bumps etc.

You have 5 minutes to make this adaptions.

6. Have each participant share their model and explore the emotions they share.

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.

Meaningful interactions

7. The purpose of this building exercise is to explore situations where the team interacts with its customers, whether they are internal to the company or external. Agree with participants what their main customer is.

Frame the model building:

Your task is to build a model that enables you to answer the question "what does your customers achieve by working with you – in other words – what difference do you make in their life"

You have 15 minutes.

8. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories. Explore the specifics of the story.

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 3 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.

Add more meaningful components

9. Depending on the time available for the session as well as the detail of the models build in the steps above, you can choose to add more models related to meaning. Ask participants to build one more situation or another model related to meaningful interactions.

When you feel you have sufficient stories and detail it is time to explore patterns and themes

Patterns and themes

10. The purpose of this exercise is to explore themes and patterns in the models the participants have built.

Frame the exercise like this:

Your task as a group is to organise the models on a separate table in a way that makes sense to the whole group. As you place and move the models around you explore the various themes and patterns.

You have 20-30 minutes.

Stay present while the team organises the model. Step in if you feel they need help but step back as soon as they start to work themselves. Beware that you do not define their patterns and themes.

Finalize this section by exploring their work with different questions from the LSP EQ (appendix 1).

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 4 HOURS.

Building the shared WHY

11. The purpose of this exercise is to construct a shared super model of all the models built so far. The idea is for the team to consolidate themes, patterns and ideas into one model.

Frame the exercise like this:

Take a look at your models and remind yourself of the different meanings they hold. Your task is to create a WHY super-model. A model that holds the most important parts of your individual models. Take a section at a time and move it onto the larger building plate. Your task is NOT to create a copy of all the individual models, but to re-organise the models into a new coherent super-model. After app. 15-20 minutes you should be able to share your new model.

Walk around and help the participants if they get stuck. After the designated time has gone ask someone to share their creation and explore this as you would explore a single model. Take turns and remember to explore all the super-models in the group.

It can sometimes be relevant to remind the participants that they need not use all the different parts and sections of their individual models – only the most relevant. You might also let them know, that they can re-construct some of their models to either make them smaller, larger or connected to something else.

<div style="background:#1a4a7a;color:white;padding:8px;display:inline-block;">TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 5 HOURS.</div>

Reflection and moving forward

12. Make sure you have at least 30 minutes to capture insights, take aways and learning from the session.

It can be useful to discuss all or some of these questions:

• What did you learn today?

• What are you three most important take aways?

• What will you do tomorrow as a team to make your purpose come alive?

• What will you do tomorrow as an individual to make your purpose come alive?

13. Make sure all models have been photographed if participants do not keep them.
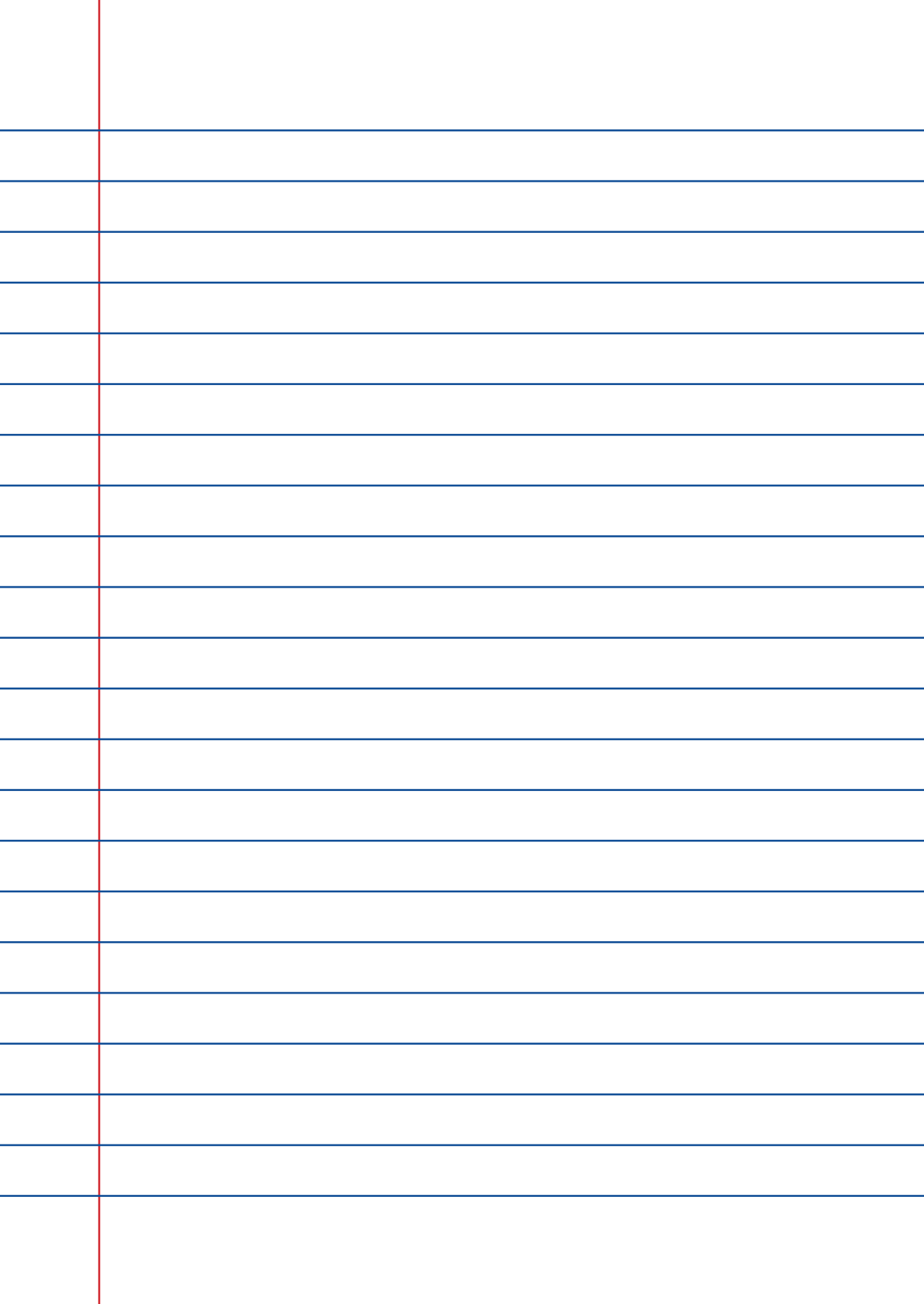
FABOULOUS FLOURISHING

TIME:	4-5 hours
PARTICIPANTS:	4-10 people
MATERIALS:	One LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Starter kit or exploration bag per participant plus one set of the Identity and landscape kit

Purpose:

Suitable for a session where you want the group to better understand the drivers related to their general well-being.

Expected outcomes

Expect a shared understanding of what drives the well-being of the team and how they can use this awareness to flourish more.

The science behind the step by step guide

The Fabulous Flourishing step by step guide is based on the Flourishing model of PERMA coined by Martin Seligman.

We all want to be happy. When we're happy, we're productive, we're good at building meaningful relationships with those around us, and we feel great!

The PERMA model was designed by Martin Seligman with five core elements of psychological well-being and happiness. Seligman believes that these five elements can help people reach a life of fulfilment, happiness, and meaning. The model is relevant for individuals as well a groups who seek to develop new cognitive and emotional tools as well as cultural practices that increase well-being.

1. **Positive Emotion (P)**

   For us to experience well-being, we need positive emotion in our lives.

2. **Engagement (E)**

   When we're truly engaged in a situation, task, or project, we experience a state of flow.

3. **Positive Relationships (R)**

   As humans, we are "social beings," and good relationships are core to our well-being.

4. **Meaning (M)**

   Meaning comes from serving a cause bigger than ourselves. We all need meaning in our lives to have a sense of well-being.

5. **Accomplishment/Achievement (A)**

   Many of us strive to better ourselves in some way, whether we're seeking to master a skill, achieve a valuable goal, or win in some competitive event.

It can be a good idea to get a better understanding of the PERMA model by reading Martin Seligman's book "Flourish".

Facilitation guide

1. The Fabulous Flourishing step by step guide can be used without the participants having any initial understanding of the PERMA model. Therefore, you do not need to start the session by explaining the model.

   The following points are important to emphasise:

   a. Talk about the purpose and how the session is about understanding what drives well-being and what can be done to increase it.

   b. Looking at what it means to flourish is not a one-time event but a continuous process where a team aligns itself around a shared idea.

   c. Knowing what drives well-being is important for awareness. In order for this awareness to matter, it must be transformed into actionable ideas.

2. Carry out the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® warm up if you are working with people new to LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 1 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES.

Flourishing Situations

3. The first building exercise has the purpose of getting the participants thinking about their well-being.

Make sure to frame well-being in relation to a domain like work, school, family etc. Frame the model building:

Your task is to build a model that enables you to share a story of what makes you feel good at work, at school, in your family etc.".

You have 20 minutes.

4. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories. Explore the specifics of the story.

You might ask: *"Sounds like a very important thing to you, why is this thing relevant for your well-being?".*

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOURS.

Introducing PERMA

5. Explain to the participants that the drivers of well-being can be divided into five categories. Write the five PERMA elements on post-it notes and explain each of the categories.

Make sure everybody understands the five elements of PERMA before you continue.

6. Have each participant reflect about his or her own model and which of the five PERMA elements are present in the given situation. Let each participant share their reflections.

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES.

Focused Flourishing

7. Next step is to look forward and find ways to increase well-being. Talk about which of the five PERMA elements is the most relevant for the participants in the coming three months. Decide on one or merge two into one.

8. Have each person build a model that shows what they believe needs to be done in order to strengthen the selected PERMA element. It can be the model already build with maybe some new components or a new model.

Frame the model building:

Your task is to either ad components or build a new model that enables you to share a story of what you believe needs to be done in order to strengthen the selected PERMA element".

You have 20 minutes.

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 3 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES.

9. Have each participant share their selection and explore their responses with the LSP EQ (exploration questions, appendix 1).

Building a shared idea of flourishing

10. The purpose of this exercise is to construct a shared super model of all the models built so far. The idea is for the team to consolidate themes, patterns and ideas into one model.

Frame the exercise like this:

Take a look at your models and remind yourself of the different meanings they hold. Your task is to create a WELL-BEING super-model. A model that holds the most important parts of your individual models. Take a section at a time and move it onto the larger building plate. Your task is NOT to create a copy of all the individual models, but to re-organise the models into a new coherent super-model. After app. 20-25 minutes you should be able to share your new model.

Walk around and help the participants if they get stuck. After the designated time has gone ask someone to share their creation and explore this as you would explore a single model. Take turns and remember to explore all the super-models in the group.

It can sometimes be relevant to remind the participants that they need not use all the different parts and sections of their individual models – only the most relevant. You might also let them know, that they can re-construct some of their models to either make them smaller, larger or connected to something else.

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 4 HOUR AND 30 MINUTES.

Reflection and moving forward

11. Follow-up on the discussion in a way that relates to the purpose of the session. You could:

- Ask what small thing they can do to make their well-being ideas happen;

- Define a more elaborate plan to enhance well-being based on their ideas.

12. Make sure all models have been photographed if they do not keep them.

THREE GOOD THINGS

TIME:	3-5 hours
PARTICIPANTS:	4-10 people
MATERIALS:	One LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Starter kit or exploration bag per participant plus one set of the Identity and landscape kit

Purpose:

Suitable for a session where you want to increase awareness on what works well and maybe emphasize the power of gratitude and positive emotions.

Expected outcomes

Expect a heightened level of energy through positive emotions and a better common understanding of what each group member appreciates from their life.

The science behind the step by step guide

The Three Good Things Step by step guide is based on science related to gratitude, awareness, and the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions.

Science indicates that gratitude is important for how good we feel psychologically and socially. It increases how much positive emotion we feel and decreases negative emotion. It raises our overall satisfaction with life and helps us find purpose and have an overall positive outlook.

Why does gratitude work? We have a natural tendency to focus on what goes wrong in our daily lives often going over and over these things in our head. We are quick to notice even the smallest of problems, yet we rarely spend any time at all learning from the good things that happen to us. This approach to feel grateful and learn about our best moments can be incredibly powerful.

This is because our emotions affect our long term well-being. Research related to the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions shows that experiencing positive emotions in a 3-to-1 ratio with negative ones leads to a tipping point beyond which we naturally become more resilient to adversity, more prone to connect with other people and better able to achieve the things we want.

Facilitation guide

1. Share relevant insights related to gratitude and positive emotions and link these to what you see as the purpose of the session.

The following points are important to emphasise:

a. Talk about the purpose and how the session is about increasing awareness on what works well

b. Talk about gratitude and how it can be linked to the everyday practices at work, in school or another relevant domain

c. Talk about the power of positive emotions adding insights from the Broaden and Build theory of positive emotions

d. Creating awareness of gratitude, positive emotions and what works well is beneficial. In order for these benefits to stick, they must be transformed into actionable ideas.

2. Carry out the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® warm up if you are working with people new to LEGO®

> TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 1 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES.

Gratefulness

3. The first building exercise has the purpose of getting the participants thinking about something which they are grateful for. Make sure to frame the question in relation to the scope of the session (work, a specific project, their co-workers, school, family, friends etc.).

Frame the model building:

Your task is to build a model that enables you to share a story of a situation here at work you are grateful for.

You have 20 minutes.

4. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories. Explore the specifics of the story.

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOURS.**

You can decide to let the participants build another model and repeat number 3 and 4. Otherwise go to number 5

Reminder

5. The purpose of this building exercise is to explore how the team can remember to look into what they are grateful for.

Frame the model building:

Your task is to build a model of what you and your team can do to remind you all to also to be focused on what to be grateful for.

You have 20 minutes.

6. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories. Explore the specifics of the story.

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.**

Patterns and themes

7. The purpose of this exercise is to explore themes and patterns in the models the participants have built.

Frame the exercise like this:

Your task as a group is to organise the models on a separate table in a way that makes sense to the whole group. As you place and move the models around you explore the various themes and patterns.

You have 20-30 minutes.

Stay present while the team organises the model. Step in if you feel they need help but step back as soon as they start to work themselves. Beware that you do not define their patterns and themes.

Finalize this section by exploring their work with different questions from the LSP EQ (appendix 1).

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 3 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.**

Building the shared REMINDER of gratitude

8. The purpose of this exercise is to construct a shared super model of all the models built so far. The idea is for the team to consolidate themes, patterns and ideas into one model.

Frame the exercise like this:

Take a look at your models and remind yourself of the different meanings they hold. Your task is to create a REMINDER super-model. A model that holds the most important parts of your individual models. Take a section at a time and move it onto the larger building plate. Your task is NOT to create a copy of all the individual models, but to re-organise the models into a new coherent super-model. After app. 15-20 minutes you should be able to share your new model.

Walk around and help the participants if they get stuck. After the designated time has gone ask someone to share their creation and explore this as you would explore a single model. Take turns and remember to explore all the super-models in the group.

It can sometimes be relevant to remind the participants that they need not use all the different parts and sections of their individual models – only the most relevant. You might also let them know, that they can re-construct some of their models to either make them smaller, larger or connected to something else.

<div style="background-color:#1a4a82;color:white;padding:8px;">TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 3-5 HOURS.</div>

Reflection and moving forward

9. Make sure you have at least 30 minutes to capture insights, take aways and learning from the session.

It can be useful to discuss all or some of these questions:

• What did you learn today?

• What are you three most important take aways?

• What will you do tomorrow as a team to make your purpose come alive?

• What will you do tomorrow as an individual to make your purpose come alive?

10. Make sure all models have been photographed if they do not keep them.

GREAT GOALS

TIME:	5-7 hours
PARTICIPANTS:	4-10 people
MATERIALS:	One LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Starter kit or exploration bag per participant plus one set of the Identity and landscape kit

Purpose:

Suitable for a session where you want a team to envision, plan and commit to a specific goal.

Expected outcomes

Expect a shared understanding of an attractive goal relevant to the team.

The science behind the step by step guide

The Great Goal step by step guide is based on a series of different scientific findings related to goal setting.

A great goal is a strongly desired result a person or a group envisions, plans and commits to achieve. Apparently a lot more happens in our brain when we set great goals, than we might realise.

According to the research of psychologists and neurologists setting a goal invests ourselves into the target as if we'd already accomplished it. That is, by setting something as a goal, however small or large, however near or far in the future, a part of our brain believes that desired outcome is an essential part of who we are – setting up the conditions that drive us to work towards the goal to fulfil the brain's self-image. This is called the "endowment effect" which happens when we take ownership of something and it becomes "ours", thereby integrating it into our sense of identity.

Setting goals as a team is also about creating a shared meaning within the team. Having

a shared meaning aligns team members and creates relatedness. Relatedness is a key factor in self-determination and enhances the grit of the team and it's team members.

By setting goals as a team, you are also able to track progress because you always have a fixed endpoint or benchmark to compare with. By applying a 'progress principle' research has shown that teams achieve a higher degree of effectiveness and well-being.

Facilitation guide

1. Share relevant insights related to goals and link these to what you see as the purpose of the session.

The following points are important to emphasise:

a. Talk about the purpose and how the session is about envisioning and commitment to a specific goal.

b. Spend as much time as you find suitable to share thoughts on why goal setting is important.

c. Talk about how the goal will be used for the team explore why it is relevant for them to have a goal

d. Knowing your teams goal creates a sense of commitment. In order for this commitment to matter it must be transformed into actionable next steps.

2. Carry out the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® warm up if you are working with people new to LEGO®

> TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 1 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES.

Ideal future

3. The first building exercise has the purpose of getting the participants thinking about an ideal future. Make sure to frame the question in relation to the scope of the session (work, a specific project, their co-workers etc.).

Frame the model building:

Your task is to build a model that enables you to share a story of your ideal future related to xx.

You have 20 minutes.

4. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories. Explore the specifics of the story.

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOURS.

What are we missing?

5. The purpose of this exercise is to add extra aspects to the ideal future that might have been left out in the previous round or to identify ideas that emerged while listening to the stories from other participants.

Frame the model building:

Your task is to build a smaller model that enables you to share a story of of something you think is missing from the ideal futures you have heard so far

You have 10 minutes.

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.

Patterns and themes

6. The purpose of this exercise is to explore themes and patterns in the models the participants have built.

Frame the exercise like this:

Your task is now to organise your many great ideas into no more than 5 themes - each tell something about ideal futures for this team. As you place and move the models around you explore the various themes and patterns.

You have 20-30 minutes.

Stay present while the team organises the model. Step in if you feel they need help

but step back as soon as they start to work themselves. Beware that you do not define their patterns and themes.

Finalize this section by exploring their work with different questions from the LSP EQ.

Building the shared GOAL

7. The purpose of this exercise is to construct a shared super model of all the models built so far. The idea is for the team to consolidate themes, patterns and ideas into one model.

Frame the exercise like this:

Take a look at your models and remind yourself of the different meanings they hold. Your task is to create a GOAL super-model. A model that holds the most important parts of your individual models. Take a section at a time and move it onto the larger building plate. Your task is NOT to create a copy of all the individual models, but to re-organise the models into a new coherent super-model. After app. 15-20 minutes you should be able to share your new model.

Walk around and help the participants if they get stuck. After the designated time has gone ask someone to share their creation and explore this as you would explore a single model. Take turns and remember to explore all the super-models in the group.

It can sometimes be relevant to remind the participants that they need not use all the different parts and sections of their individual models – only the most relevant. You might also let them know, that they can re-construct some of their models to either make them smaller, larger or connected to something else.

The next best step

8. The purpose of this building exercise is to explore what each participant can do in regard to reaching the GOAL. Not the plan for the GOAL, but the next best step for each participant.

Frame the model building:

Your task is to build a model of what you can do as your next best step in regard to reaching the goal. Not the big plan, but your personal next best step.

You have 20 minutes.

1. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories. Explore the specifics of the story.

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 5 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.**

Reflection and moving forward

9. Using LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® to set goals is not necessarily the fastest way to create a goal with an accompanying action plan. It is however the strongest way to ensure a goal with engagement.

Be aware, however, that you will need to bridge the gap from the narrative nature of using the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® with the more structured and practical aspects of goals and plans.

Depending on the nature of the goals identified in your session it might also be very important to prioritise or choose one of many. This process is very important if the group is to act immediately on a goal.
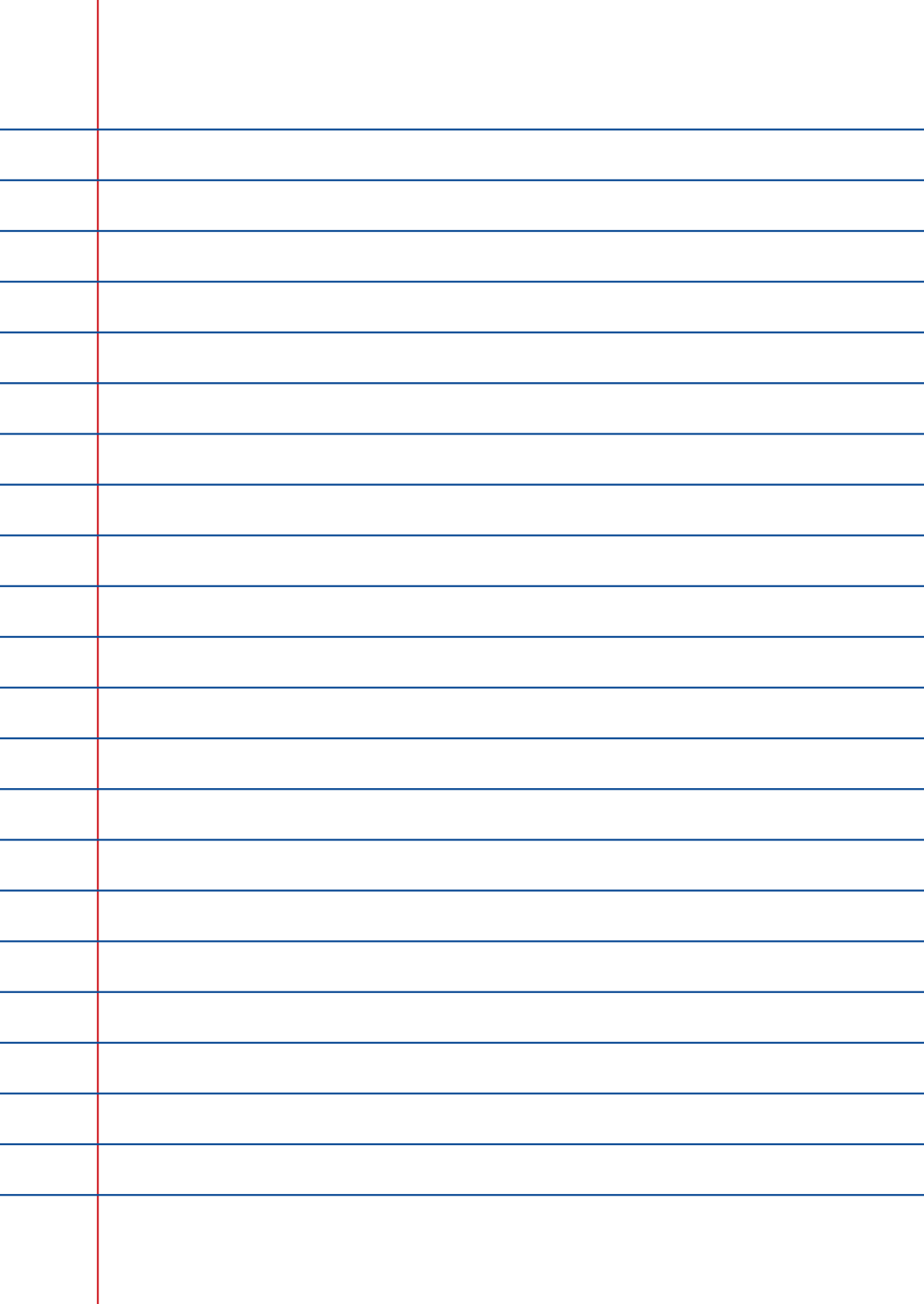
Last but not least, it can also be a good idea to explore the themes and goals identified in the session through questions like:

• What are some barriers that might make it difficult to reach each goal?

• How can those barriers be overcome?

• What are some things that you can do individually to help achieve the team goals?

• How should we recognize or celebrate when we reach a goal?

• How do we hold ourselves accountable for reaching each goal?

• How do we stay in touch with our goals?

• How can we make reaching our goals more efficient? Enjoyable?

11. Make sure all models have been photographed if they do not keep them.
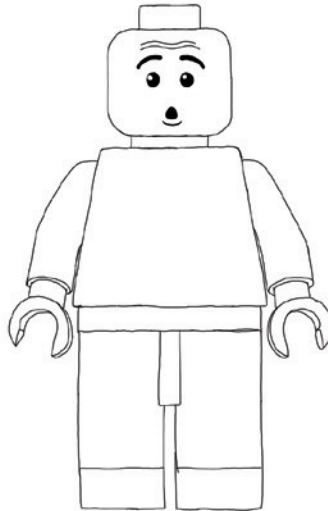
MIND YOUR MINDSET

TIME:	5 hours
PARTICIPANTS:	4-10 people
MATERIALS:	One LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Starter kit or exploration bag per participant plus one set of the Identity and landscape kit

Purpose:

Suitable for a session where you want the group to become aware of the two mindsets – fixed and growth mindset. What they mean and what role they play in their own lige. The session also looks at what can be done to grow a stronger growth mindset.

Expected outcomes

Knowledge of mindset theory and an awareness of one's own mindset that over time will develop a stronger growth mindset.

The science behind the step by step guide

People vary in the degree to which they attribute the causes of intelligence and other traits. Are they innate and fixed factors ("fixed" mindset) or are they variable factors that can be influenced through learning, effort, training, and practice ("growth" mindset)? A "growth" mindset is generally seen as more advantageous.

Carol S. Dweck, a psychologist on the faculty at Stanford University, proposed mindset theory as a way to understand the effects of the beliefs that individuals hold for the nature of intelligence. This in turn has implications for learning and education.

"Mindset" refers to to the stories people tell themselves regarding the nature of intelligent behavior; to the degree that individuals attribute intelligence to fixed traits, they hold a "fixed" story of intelligence (that is, a fixed mindset), and to the degree that they attribute intelligence to learning, effort, training, and practice, they hold a "growth"

story of intelligence (that is, a growth mindset).

Individuals with a fixed mindset believe that their qualities (such as intelligence and other personality traits) are "set in stone- You are what you are. One's traits are fixed — not something that can be practiced or developed. Individuals with a fixed mindset tend to be interested only in feedback on their success in activities to the degree that it serves to evaluate their underlying ability. They are not using the feedback to learn, since they do not believe that their success depends on their effort to learn. Rather, they believe that success depends on the level of innate ability that they have. Therefore, they dread failure, because it suggests constraints or limits that they will not be able to overcome.

Individuals with a growth mindset, on the other hand, believe that effort or training can change one's qualities and traits.

A growth mindset, attributes success to learning. Therefore, the individual is not terrified of failure, because it only signals the need to pay attention, invest effort, apply time to practice, and master the new learning opportunity. They are confident that after such effort they will be able to learn the skill or knowledge, and then to improve their performance.

Facilitation guide

1. If possible have people take the "Test Your Mindset" survey on Carol Dweck's website http://mindsetonline.com/. The purpose of doing this is to prime their thoughts on the topic and evaluate potential mindset changes by redoing the test after the workshop.

2. Explain briefly what the purpose of the session is and give as much background on Mindset Theory that you find suitable in the specific situation. The following points are important to emphasise:

   a. We do not have a permanent fixed mindset OR a growth mindset. They change and are dependent on context and situation.

   b. In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them.

c. In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.

d. Mindsets can be developed and nurtured by deliberate action

3. Carry out the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® warm up if you are working with people new to LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY®.

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TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 1 HOUR AND 15 MINUTES.

</div>

The Fixed Mindset

4. This building exercise is about exploring the nature of fixed mindsets from a real situations relevant to each participant.

Frame the model building like this:

Build a model of something that is really challenging in your life – a goal you have tried to achieve but failed at least once – maybe even several times.

You have 20 minutes.

Stress that even though this is not traditional positive psychology it is about awareness and the willingness to fail. You can also tell the participants that you will be creating examples of both fixed and growth mindsets and explore how these relate to each other.

5. After models have been built but before they are shared with the group provide the participants with three red bricks of a small size. They are now to highlight parts of their model where a fixed mindset might be holding them back.

Frame the exercise like this:

The three red bricks are fixed-mindset-highlights. Attach them to your model at places where a fixed mindset might be what holds you back or creates difficulties for you. If you cannot identify three places, just add the ones you can.

You have 2 minutes.

6. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories. Explore the specifics of the story.

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 2 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.

The growth mindset

7. This next building exercise is an exploration of a situation where a growth mindset helped overcome a challenge.

Frame the model building like this:

Build a model that lets you answer the question: What is an area in which you once had low ability, but now perform quite well?

8. After models have been built but before they are shared with the group provide the participants with three green bricks of a small size. They are now to highlight parts of their model where a growth mindset helped them overcome their challenge.

Frame the exercise like this:

The three green bricks are growth-mindset-highlights. Attach them to your model at places where a growth mindset might be what helped you overcome your challenge. If you cannot identify three places, just add the ones you can.

You have 2 minutes.

9. Have each participant share their model and use the LSP EQ questions to probe into their stories. Explore the specifics of the story.

TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 3 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.

Growth mindset vs. Fixed Mindset

10. The insights we get from previous examples of a growth mindset hold the potential to help us in a current challenges. Participants will explore these potential connections in this part.

Frame the exercise something like this:

You task is to explore how your model with growth mindset by help you in your challenge model. To help you do this we have a set of connecting bricks (talk about the connection bricks outlined earlier in this guide. Provide examples)

Connect the two models by applying three connection bricks you find relevant and be prepare answer the question "How might your growth mindset help you overcome your present challenge?"

You have 5-10 minutes

11. Have each participant share their connections.

> **TOTAL TIME SPENT: APP. 4 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES.**

Reflection and moving forward

12. Make sure you have at least 30 minutes to capture insights, take aways and learning from the session.

It can be useful to discuss all or some of these questions:

• What did you learn about yourself today?

• What did you learn about others today?

• What are you three most important take aways?

• What will you do tomorrow in order to build your growth mindset?

• What can you do to help others build their growth mindset?

13. Make sure all models have been photographed if they do not keep them.

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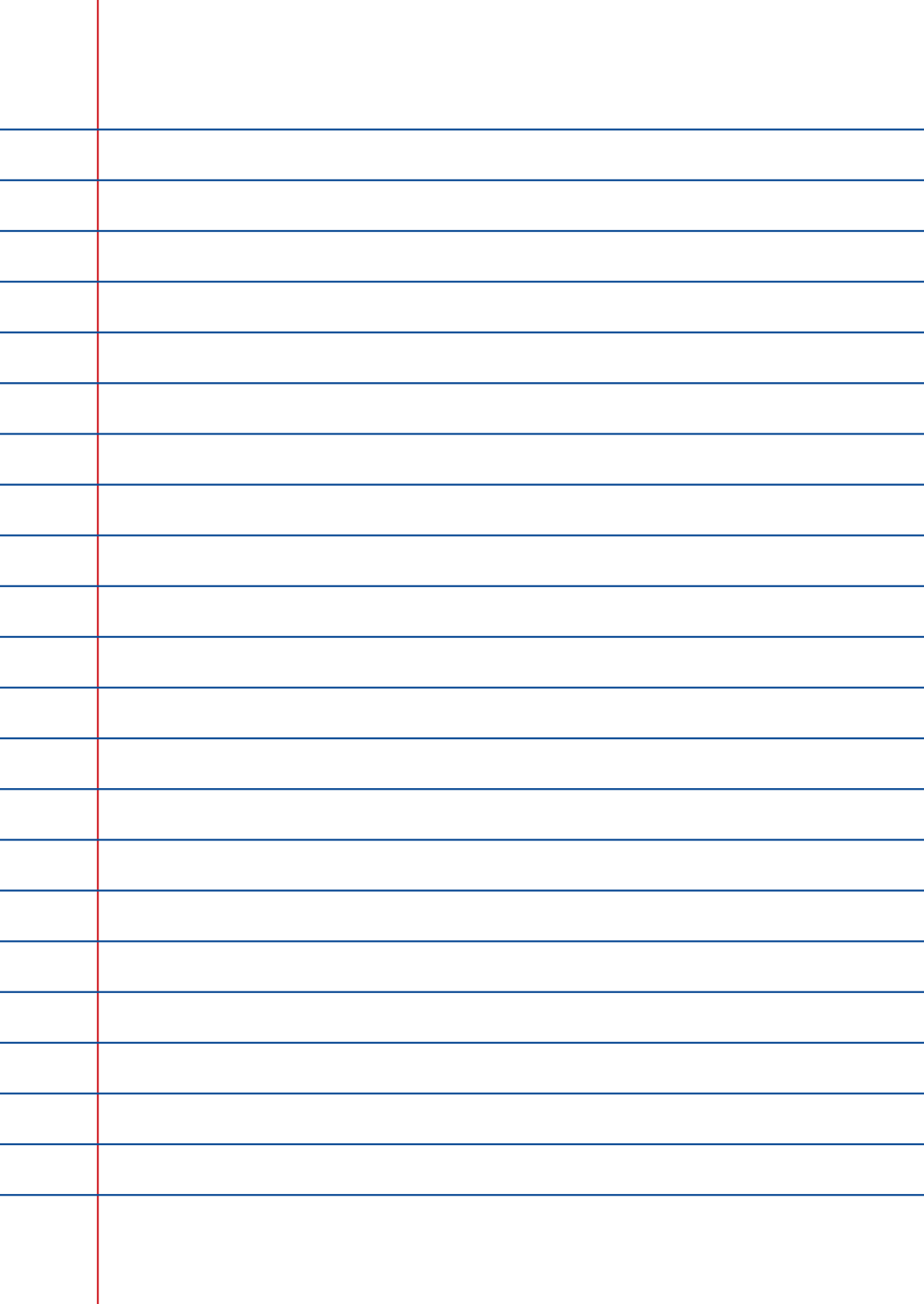
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MADS BAB

Mads Bab is an experienced user of tangible tools and a pioneer in the field of positive thinking. He has previously shared insights at positive psychology conferences in Europe, US, Japan and China on the use of LEGO® in organisational well-being initiatives. Mads has a masters degree in applied positive psychology and is a part time associate professor on the Danish MAPP program. Through his Danish based consultancy Gnist (the Danish word for spark) Mads works with medium and large organisations on issues related to mental health and well-being.

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Dr Ilona Boniwell heads the International MSc in Applied Positive Psychology (I-MAPP) at Anglia Ruskin University and consults businesses and educational institutions around the globe as the Director of Positran. She wrote or edited seven books, delivered over 150 keynotes/invited presentations, founded the European Network of Positive Psychology, and was the first vice-chair of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA). She is passionate about tangible positive psychology, and creates tools and games to promote a more "hands-on" understanding.
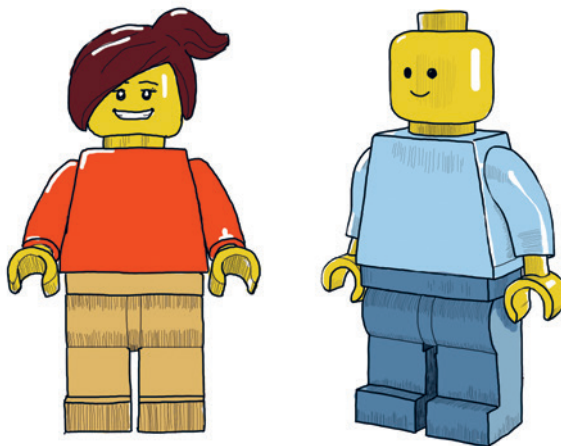
APPENDIX 1
- *LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® EXPLORATION QUESTIONS (LSP EQS)*

Asking good questions is an important skill to be mindful of in a LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® session. Asking a good question is something that serves two very important outcomes.

1. It ensures quality reflection
2. It elicits good conversations

The LSP EQs consists of two types of questions:

Chunking down
Sometimes the participant sharing a narrative will speak at a very high level, covering ideas and themes in a manner that is too general. If you wish to narrow the focus a bit, you can consider using the chunk down questions. Chunking down is about getting more detail by probing for more information about the high-level information shared. The goal is to find out more, fill in the empty gaps of the narrative, test the reality of the situation, and so on. The more you ask chunking down questions, the more detail you will discover. Be aware, though, that too much probing into details can result in a loss of the overall picture.

Chunk down by asking questions such as:
• How did you that?
• Why did that happen?
• What happened about...?
• What, specifically, ...
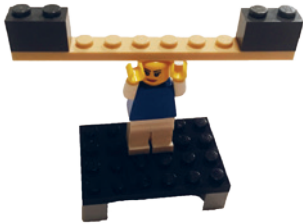• Tell me more about...

Chunking up

Sometimes the participant sharing his or her model and narrative might be very detailed. Some participants tend to focus in a very practical manner, which is something you might choose to challenge in order to help them see the bigger picture. To chunk up, you are doing the opposite of chunking down - looking for a more generalized understanding. This includes looking for overall purpose, meaning, linkages, etc.

Chunk up by asking questions such as:
• What does this mean?
• Let's look at the bigger picture...
• How does that relate to...?
• What are we trying to achieve here?
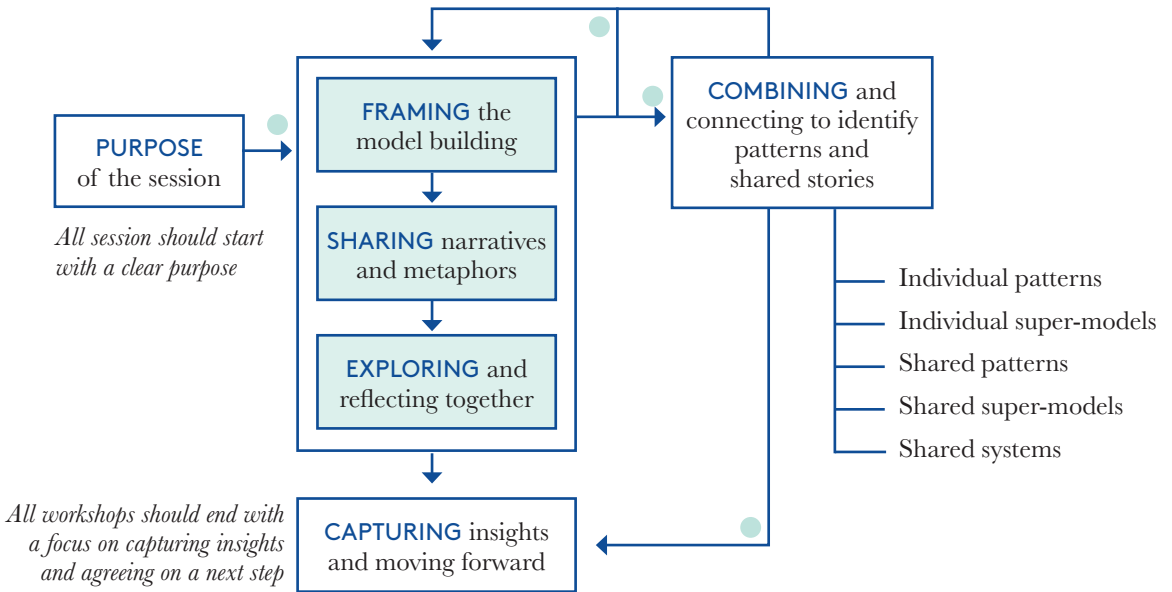• Who is this for? What do they really want?

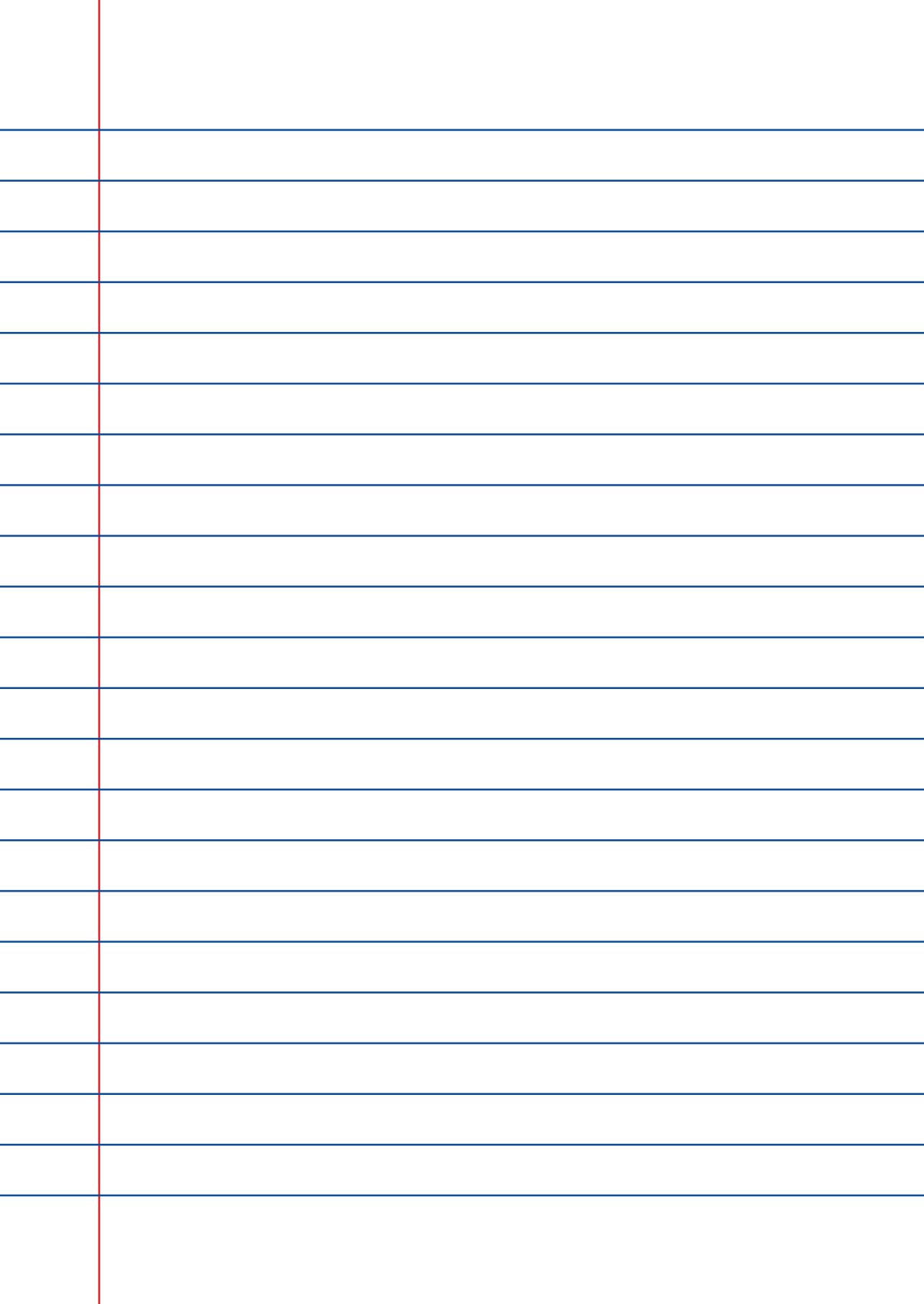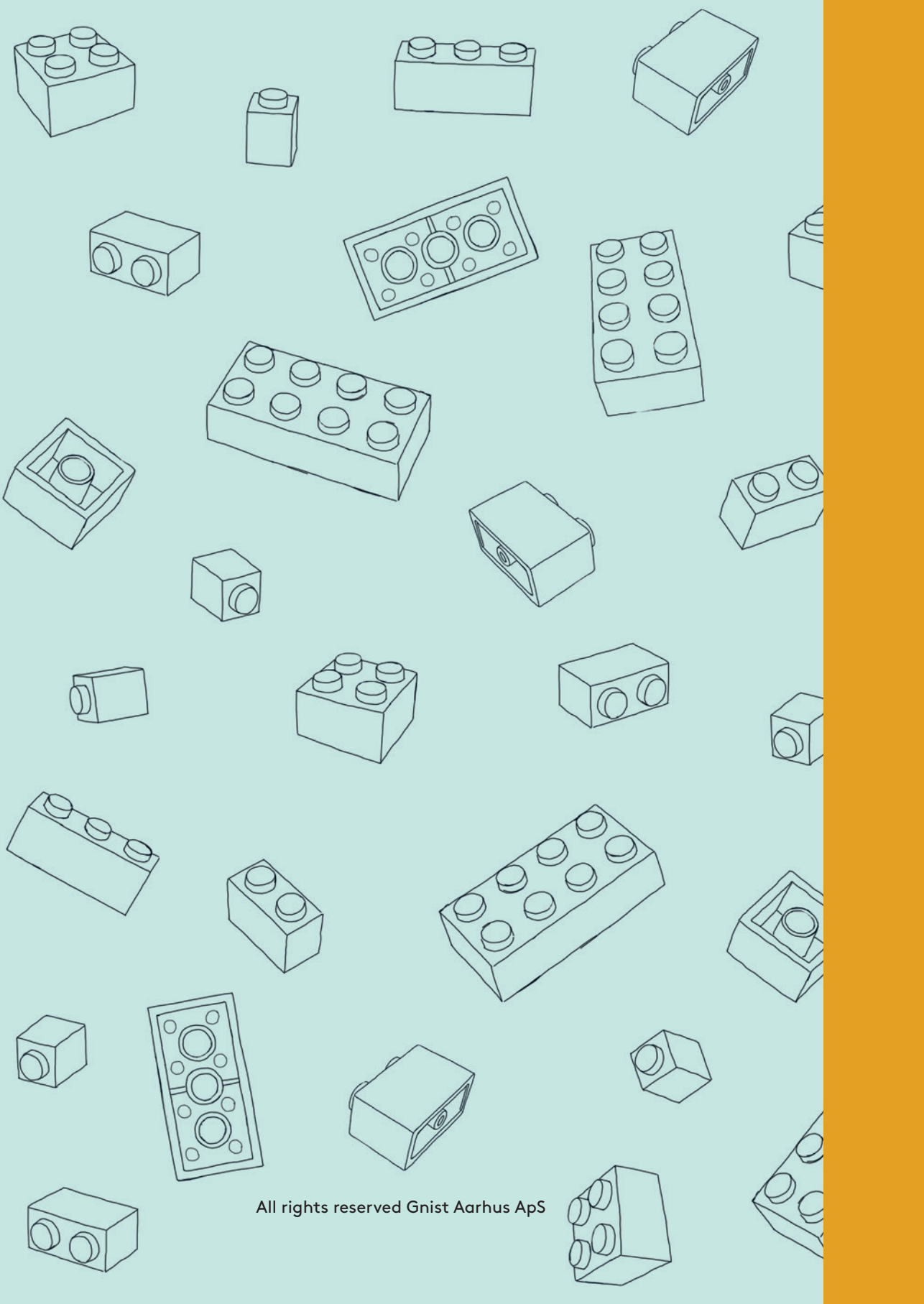# APPENDIX 2
- CONSTRUCTING METAPHORS

APPENDIX 3
- *THE HANDS ON THINKING™ DIAGRAM*

PURPOSE of the session

All session should start with a clear purpose

FRAMING the model building

SHARING narratives and metaphors

EXPLORING and reflecting together

COMBINING and connecting to identify patterns and shared stories

Individual patterns
Individual super-models
Shared patterns
Shared super-models
Shared systems

All workshops should end with a focus on capturing insights and agreeing on a next step

CAPTURING insights and moving forward

1. After defining and introducing the purpose of the workshop you either do the warm-up or proceed with individual model building through framing, sharing and exploring.

2. After all participants have shared their narratives and these have been explored you can repeat this process thus framing, sharing and exploring one or more models. (remember that everyone always builds and always shares).

3. After models have been explored you can finalize the session by capturing insights and agreeing on steps to move forward.

4. After individual models have been built, shared and explored you can choose to combine and/or connect these models before capturing insights and moving forward. There are generally three ways to combine models:

• Patterns; where models stay as they are but are organised in patterns.

• Super-models; where models are reconstructed into a combined model containing key elements from all models.

• Systems; where models are connected with special connectors and the system is explored.

5. After exploring patterns, super-models or systems you finalize the session by capturing insights and agree on steps moving forward.