

In Praise of Play!

Rev. Dr. M'ellen Kennedy March, 2014, Revised October, 2014

1. **Welcome and Statement of the Purpose** of the Group: an opportunity for friendship and spiritual growth.

2. **Opening:** Please read the following aloud. *“From the solemn gloom of the temple children run out to sit in the dust, God watches them play and forgets the priest.” Rabindranath Tagore*

3. **Check-In and Ground Rules** Check-in sharing briefly what You're leaving behind to be there today. .

4. Theme for the Meeting:

Play!!!

Many great spiritual teachers throughout time have emphasized that play is essential for our overall well being, and especially for our spiritual well-being. Let's explore why and how play is so important. Here are a variety of quotes on the theme of play to get the ball rolling.

“Each day, and the living of it, has to be a conscious creation in which discipline and order are relieved with some play and pure foolishness.” May Sarton

“It's better to play than do nothing”. Confucius

“We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing”. George Bernard Shaw

“A child who does not play is not a child, but the man who doesn't play has lost forever the child who lived in him and who he will miss terribly.” Pablo Neruda

“The true object of all human life is play. Earth is a task garden; heaven is a playground.” G. K. Chesterton

“Life is a song - sing it. Life is a game - play it. Life is a challenge - meet it. Life is a dream - realize it. Life is a sacrifice - offer it. Life is love - enjoy it.” Sai Baba

“And forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair. Khalil Gibran

“I work very hard, and I play very hard. I'm grateful for life. And I live it - I believe life loves the liver of it. I live it.” Maya Angelou

“The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play.” Arnold J. Toynbee

“It is utterly false and cruelly arbitrary to put all the play and learning into childhood, all the work into middle age, and all the regrets into old age.” Margaret Mead

“The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves.

Without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of the imagination is incalculable.” Carl Jung

“If you want creative workers, give them enough time to play.” John Cleese

“If animals play this is because play is useful in the struggle for survival: because play practices and so perfects the skills needed in adult life.” Susanna Miller

“Play is the exultation of the possible” Martin Buber

“Whoever wants to understand much must play much.” Gottfried Benn

*“Play is the only way the highest intelligence of humankind can unfold.” Joseph Chilton Pearce,
Contemporary American scholar*

“The opposite of play is not work. It’s depression.” Brian Sutton-Smith

“Play is training for the unexpected.” Marc Bekoff

“Human beings need pleasure the way they need vitamins.” Lionel Tiger

*“Those who play rarely become brittle in the face of stress or lose the healing capacity for humor.”
Stuart Brown, MD*

5. Questions for Reflection: Which, if any, of the above quotes do You like and why?

Do You think play is or is not important for your well-being? How so?

Do You make time to play? What kind of play? What’s it like?

6. Check-Out (Likes & Wishes) What You liked in the meeting and what You would wish for.

7. Closing: *“Be aware of wonder. Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint
and sing and dance and play and work every day some.” Robert Fulghum*