

# YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 28

*The search for a solution should be as much fun as finding it...*

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## Play With Ideas to Innovate More...

*The Palaeolithic hunters who painted the unsurpassed animal murals on the ceiling of the cave at Altamira had only rudimentary tools. Art is older than production for use, and play older than work. Man was shaped less by what he had to do than by what he did in playful moments. It is the child in man that is the source of his uniqueness and creativeness, and the playground is the optimal milieu for the unfolding of his capacities.*

Eric Hoffer



Drawing at Altamira [[MatthiasKabel](#)]

*Do you allow yourself and your team the opportunity to enjoy tackling challenges as much as finding the solution?*

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On our recent holiday in a game reserve we went in search of a leopard. We drove for miles in an open top Land Rover, knowing there was a leopard around but not knowing quite where. We didn't find it, but we had a great time looking!

It struck me as we drove around that we spend a lot of time tackling challenges in our work. Finding the solution is rewarding, but we spend a lot more time searching than finding, so wouldn't it be great if we could enjoy the "hunt" too?

This relates to "Value Play", one of the twelve precepts (or principles) for fostering creativity in

an organisation that [John Martin](#) writes about in the Open University course on [Creativity, Innovation and Change](#) (click for further details of the course).

"Value play" means (in my words) to allow yourself and others to be childlike (not childish) and play with ideas. This attitude can encourage people to seek connections between apparently unrelated ideas. For example, this week I attended a course in which we negotiated between different parties trying to disarm fighters in a war zone.

I played with the concept and realised the situation was analogous to negotiating between the different factions in a major project, which led to other ideas I could apply to my business. What allowed me to do that was the lack of pressure on me, a fresh environment and the time I had available to think.

### SO

What might you do to encourage people to play with ideas? Does everything in your organisation work to deadlines? Is the deadline

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strictly necessary or is it artificial? Could you delay it, set up some time for people to bounce ideas around and enjoy the search process?

One organisation I read about (Richer Sounds) encouraged their staff to go to the pub once a month and talk about work, giving them the money to buy a couple of drinks as well.

## ACTION

Think about how you might encourage yourself or other people to be more playful at work.

## TO CLOSE

Though we never found the leopard, along the way we viewed rhinoceros from a few feet away, saw wild dogs feasting and enjoyed the glorious African scenery. If you allow people time to play, might you find some good ideas that you were not looking for?

Perhaps that seems like a waste of time, but if everyone in your industry is metaphorically “looking for the leopard”, perhaps “finding the rhinoceros” could be more rewarding?

May you have happy hunting this week!

*[.John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.](#)*



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