

**WEEK 3** MEDICINE & THE ARTS – MIND, ART AND PLAY  
AN ARTIST’S INTERPRETATION OF MIND, ART AND PLAY

So as an artist, if I am given a title like, Mind Arts, and Play, my first thing is to do with what you'd do with LEGO blocks - break it down. I would separate the elements of mind, play, and the arts, and look at what my spontaneous understanding or grasp of that would be.

In this context, this week's theme, when I think about the mind in relation to play and creative expression, I think about the ability to conceptualise, to create a strategy, to strategise around a plot, a story, a kind of storytelling or sense-making that's really coming from an intellectual root.

I think this is also where none of our minds are empty. So we come in with projections and associations. And the moment someone says a word, or gives you a task, or speaks with a certain accent, all kinds of things come rushing into that machine that is the mind or the brain.

And then when I think about play, the fact that it's a lot more loose. The playground is a lot wider. The possibility for spontaneity, for mistakes turning out to have magic to be a process of exploration, just like you'd have intellectual exploration.

In this case, a little more fluidity around there being the possibility of revelation, of things that are not known, that are not learned, that are not initially perceived or schooled in your response to a situation. And for me, that's the kind of intersection between play and the arts, and a step away from the mind in a sense, giving yourself permission to play.

Play is a fundamental or foundational aspect of creative process. Absolutely, there is an emptying and a creation of space, a blank canvas for what it is that you're going to manifest. And if you think about the clear canvas mentally, the best we can do is think about it as setting an intention and creating a place for visualisation, which is a creative process, but based in the mind.

So from my perspective as an artist, as a naturally creative expressor, as an applied artist, I'm interested in the interconnectedness, very much, between these elements, because I have to draw on those resources in whatever creative context I work in. Whether I'm facilitating, whether I'm performing, whether I'm creating new work that then can be used as source material for another, I have to be thinking about where I shift those parameters or boundaries to give myself the experience of visualisation and conceptual development

as well as the freedom to play, to be surprised by what I thought I knew I was working with, to have that magical inspiration and intuition come into the process. And to help others to access that, because that is precisely a potential therapeutic, and in my words, medicinal element to the arts and creative expression - an inner resource that's inherent to all humanity. We may not be all great artists, but we do have the capacity for creative expression.

And in this week, you've also probably heard Professor Mark Solms talk about it being a human instinct to have this impulse to play. So it's not something that's learned necessarily, or outside of ourselves, or accessible only to a few. This interconnectedness and tapping into that resource for therapeutic and well-being benefit is where the arts are absolutely a superb resource because there are multiple media that have different impact in different contexts, at different stages in a person's healing process, at different stages in a developmental process. And so it has this sense of abundance – many, many ways that we could access solutions or resolutions.



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