

ICF CONVERGE

OCTOBER 23-25, 2025 • SAN DIEGO



with
Paul S. Sanbar, MCC

Building Upon Our Collective Intelligence*

Using LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Methods

*** Hold off on opening your kit, pls!**



AGENDA

- ❑ Understanding LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Methods
- ❑ Thinkering Styles Activity
- ❑ Building Upon Our Collective Intelligence
- ❑ Coaching with Hands-on Thinking Theory & Demo
- ❑ Hands-on Thinking Coaching Exchange

THINKER ~ SPACE BETWEEN ~ COACH

If I can SEE it,
I can ASK it

If I can FEEL it,
I can BE it

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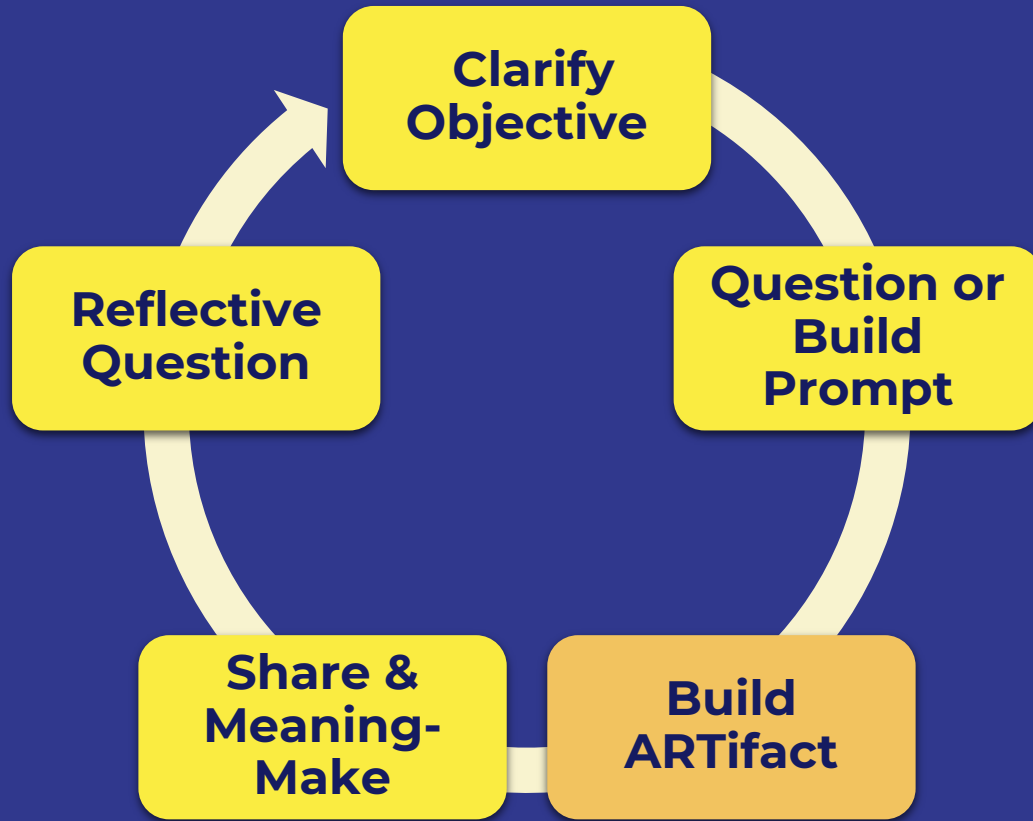
UNDERSTANDING LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® METHODS

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) methods is a communication technology that combines a multi-modal engagement (visual, auditory, and tactile) into one uniquely powerful approach to creating a shared language between and amongst thinkers.

LSP is a quite different than how you might have played with LEGO® when you were a kid and very different than following an instruction booklet. **When building with LSP, you are the instructions.**



QUESTION FRAMING with LSP



Clarify Objective - The Client (builder) clarifies (or re-clarifies) the objective: a challenge; opportunity; desired state; new way of thinking.

Question or Prompt – An open-ended question that forms the **build prompt** to evoke new thinking

Build (ARTifact) –a reflective space in time for the client to pause and think with their hands and build their response to the Question and/or Build Prompt.

Share & Meaning-Make – The client **taps on build areas** and explains what they constructed in a narrative format, often meaning-making in real-time

Reflective Question – Coach (or facilitator) asks a reflective question based off the recent share or data

KEYS TO PURPOSEFUL PLAY



- ❑ Everyone Builds
- ❑ Tap to Talk
- ❑ Tell Your Story,
And Stay on Topic
- ❑ Listen Generously
- ❑ Question the Build,
Not the Builder
- ❑ Have Hard Fun

BRICKS AS DATA

ARTifacts

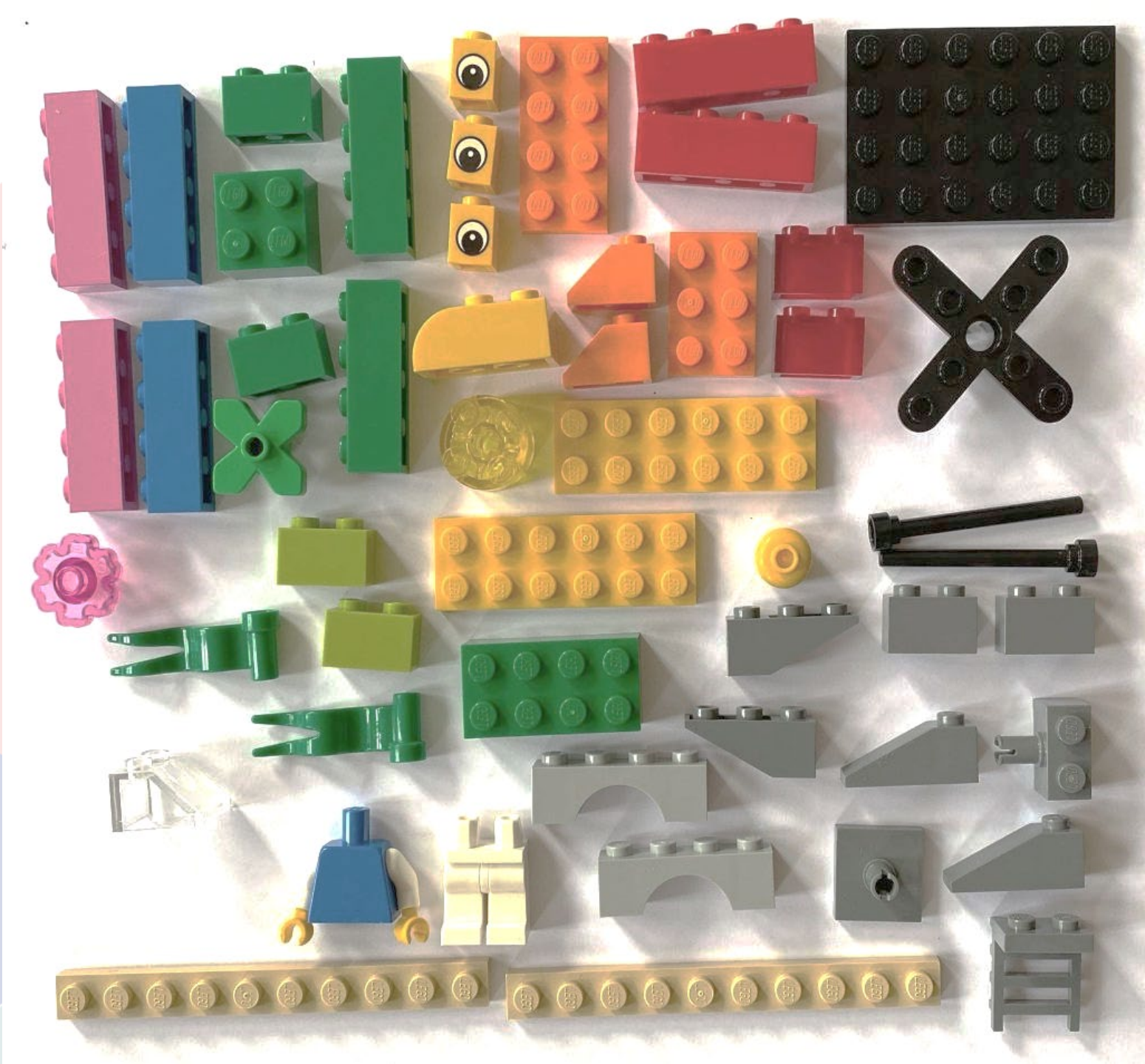
ar·ti·facts | 'är-ti-fakts

Made by human agency or skill
Often unearthed from just below the surface
Tells a story about culture or everyday life



The background of the entire page is composed of large, overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in muted colors: a light teal shape in the top left, a light pink shape in the top right, and a light purple shape in the bottom left. The text "LEGO® WINDOW EXPLORATION BAG" is centered in the upper half of the image, rendered in a bold, teal, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in four lines: "LEGO®" on the first line, "WINDOW" on the second, "EXPLORATION" on the third, and "BAG" on the fourth. The "LEGO®" text is slightly offset to the right compared to the other lines.

**LEGO®
WINDOW
EXPLORATION
BAG**

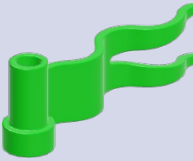
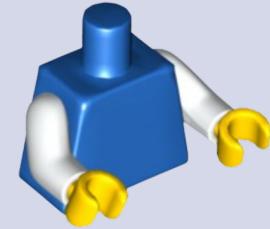
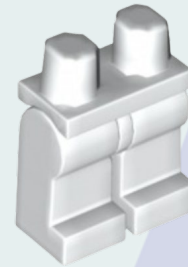
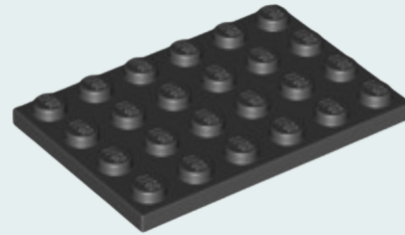
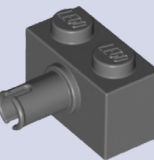
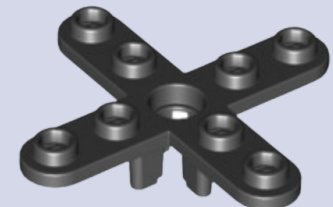
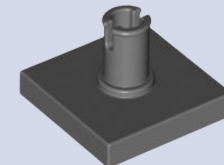
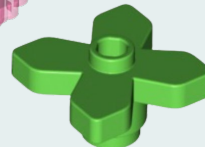
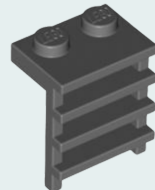
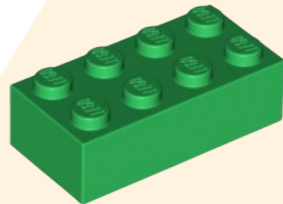


SKILL BUILDING

Thinking With Your Hands

Let's get down to some Serious Play...

- ☐ Find your black plate
- ☐ Put together Minifigure You
- ☐ **Prompt: Build a Tower**



HOW YOU BUILD ANYTHING Is How You Build Everything

Measure & Pace

Did you feel or think you had: **not enough time?** Or Did you **not really think about time/** have **too much time?**

◀◀ NOT ENOUGH TIME

◀◀ IN BETWEEN ▶▶

TOO MUCH TIME/ DIDN'T THINK ▶▶



Order & Disorder

Did you empty the bag and feel the urge to **start sorting** the bricks? By shape, by color, or by size?
OR Let the bricks **fall where they may?** Or somewhere in between? *If between, closer to which side?*

◀◀ STARTED SORTING

◀◀ IN BETWEEN ▶▶

FALL WHERE THEY MAY ▶▶

HOW YOU BUILD ANYTHING Is How You Build Everything

Thought & Action

Did you pause for a moment (even a second) to start building it **in your mind first**?
OR **Dive right in** and figure it out as you build? Or somewhere in between? *If between, closer to which side?*

◀◀ IN MIND FIRST

◀◀ IN BETWEEN ▶▶

DIVE RIGHT IN ▶▶

Quantity & Quality

Did you **maximize or form a goal/desire** in your mind to use most or all the bricks in the time allotted?
OR Use **only what you needed** or felt was necessary? Or somewhere in between? *If between, closer to which side?*

◀◀ MAX OR FORM A GOAL/DESIRE

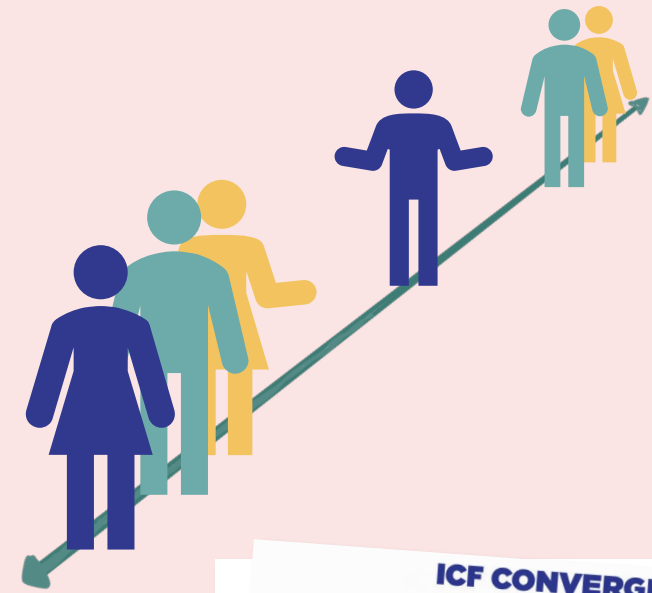
◀◀ IN BETWEEN ▶▶

ONLY WHAT YOU NEEDED ▶▶

After locating yourself on the continuum, use your ARTifact to discuss these questions with someone(s) nearby:

How does **WHAT YOU BUILT** relate to how you show up as a person?

How does **HOW YOU BUILT** relate to how you show up as a person?



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THINKING STYLES ACTIVITY RESPONSES WORKSHEET

Below each question, make a mark along the continuum where you feel your ARTifact belongs

Did you feel or think you had **not enough time**? Or Did you **not really think about time**? have **too much time**?

NOT ENOUGH TIME | IN BETWEEN | TOO MUCH TIME/DIDN'T THINK

Did you empty the bag and feel the urge to **start sorting** the bricks? By shape, by color, or by size? OR Let the bricks **fall where they may**? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to which side?

STARTED SORTING | IN BETWEEN | FALL WHERE THEY MAY

Did you pause for a moment (even a second) to start building it **in your mind first**? OR **Dive right in** and figure it out as you build? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to which side?

IN MIND FIRST | IN BETWEEN | DIVE RIGHT IN

Did you **maximize or form a goal/desire** in your mind to use most or all the bricks in the time allotted? OR Use **only what you needed** or felt was necessary? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to which side?

MAX OR FORM A GOAL/DESIRE | IN BETWEEN | ONLY WHAT YOU NEEDED

Did you feel compelled to **follow the prompt** and make it a tower (or even tower-ish)? OR Simply **take it as a suggestion** & build whatever you wanted? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to...?

FOLLOW THE PROMPT | IN BETWEEN | AS A SUGGESTION

Did you make it a choice or have a desire to build it as **high as you could**? OR Have **no pattern or solid foundation**? Or somewhere in between? Or Neither?

HIGH AS YOU COULD | IN BETWEEN OR NEITHER | STURDY OR SOLID FOUNDATION

Did you try to **create a pattern/design**? eg. symmetrical or uniform or consistent OR Have **no pattern or design** at all? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to which side?

CREATED A PATTERN | IN BETWEEN | NO PATTERN OR DESIGN

Did you build this tower with your **head - heart - or - gut**? Or if two of three, which came first?

HEAD | HEART | GUT

How does what you built relate to how you show up as a person/leader/professional, etc.?

How does how you built relate to how you show up as a person/leader/professional, etc.?

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HOW YOU BUILD ANYTHING Is How You Build Everything

Direction & Choice

Did you feel compelled to **follow the prompt** and make it a tower (or even tower-ish)?
OR Simply **take it as a suggestion** & build whatever you wanted? Or somewhere in between? *If between, closer to...?*

◀◀ FOLLOW THE PROMPT

◀◀ IN BETWEEN ▶▶

AS A SUGGESTION ▶▶

Stature & Stability

Did you make it a choice or have a desire to build it as **high as you could**?
OR Make sure it has a **sturdy or solid foundation**? Or somewhere in between? Or Neither?

◀◀ HIGH AS YOU COULD

◀◀ IN BETWEEN OR NEITHER ▶▶

STURDY OR SOLID FOUNDATION ▶▶

HOW YOU BUILD ANYTHING Is How You Build Everything

Balance & Uniformity

Did you try to **create a pattern/design**? eg. symmetrical or uniform or consistent
OR Have **no pattern or design** at all? Or somewhere in between? *If between, closer to which side?*

◀◀ CREATED A PATTERN

◀◀ IN BETWEEN ▶▶

NO PATTERN OR DESIGN ▶▶

Objectivity & Subjectivity

Did you build this tower with your **head – heart – or – gut**? Or if two of three, which came first?

▼ HEAD

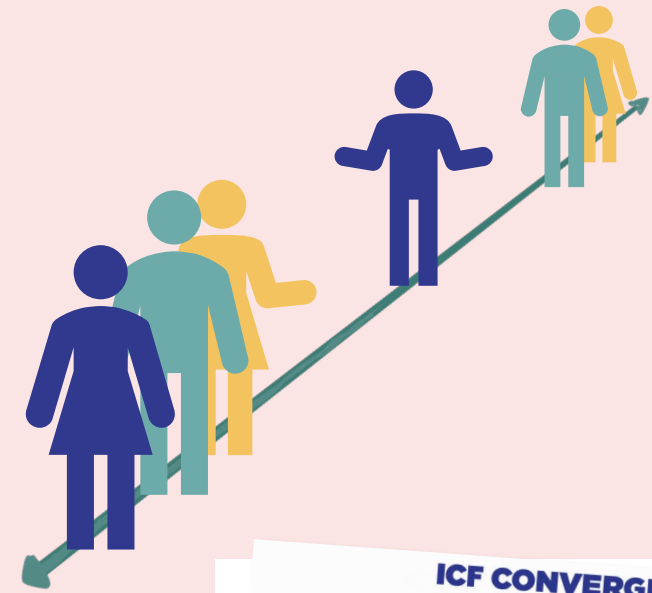
▼ HEART

▼ GUT

After locating yourself on the continuum, use your ARTifact to discuss these questions with someone(s) nearby: :

How does WHAT YOU BUILT relate to how you show up as a person?

How does HOW YOU BUILT relate to how you show up as a person?



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THINKING STYLES ACTIVITY RESPONSES WORKSHEET

Below each question, make a mark along the continuum where you feel your ARTifact belongs

Did you feel or think you had **not enough time**? Or Did you **not really think about time**? have **too much time**?

NOT ENOUGH TIME | IN BETWEEN | TOO MUCH TIME/DIDN'T THINK

Did you empty the bag and feel the urge to **start sorting** the bricks? By shape, by color, or by size?
OR Let the bricks **fall where they may**? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to which side?

STARTED SORTING | IN BETWEEN | FALL WHERE THEY MAY

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IN MIND FIRST | IN BETWEEN | DIVE RIGHT IN

Did you **maximize or form a goal/desire** in your mind to use most or all the bricks in the time allotted?
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FOLLOW THE PROMPT | IN BETWEEN | AS A SUGGESTION

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HIGH AS YOU COULD | IN BETWEEN OR NEITHER | STURDY OR SOLID FOUNDATION

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HEAD | HEART | GUT

How does what you built relate to how you show up as a person/leader/professional, etc.?

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USE IN TEAM COACHING

Measure
& Pace

Thought
& Action

Direction
& Choice

Balance &
Uniformity

Order &
Disorder

Quantity
& Quality

Stature &
Stability

Objectivity &
Subjectivity

THINKING STYLES ACTIVITY RESPONSES WORKSHEET

Bricks as Data

HOW DOES **Measure & Pace** Show Up In or On Your Team?

How? What Now?

HOW DOES **Thought & Action** Show Up In or On Your Team?

How? What Now?

HOW DOES **Direction & Choice** Show Up In or On Your Team?

How? What Now?

HOW DOES **Balance & Uniformity** Show Up In or On Your Team?

How? What Now?

HOW DOES **Order & Disorder** Show Up In or On Your Team?

How? What Now?

HOW DOES **Quantity & Quality** Show Up In or On Your Team?

How? What Now?

HOW DOES **Stature & Stability** Show Up In or On Your Team?

How? What Now?

HOW DOES **Objectivity & Subjectivity** Show Up In or On Your Team?

How? What Now?

Did you feel or think you had: not enough time? Too much time? Time, what time, I didn't think about time.

NOT ENOUGH TIME I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT TIME TOO MUCH TIME

Did you empty the bag and feel the urge to start sorting the bricks? By shape, by color, or by size? OR Let the bricks fall where they may? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to which side?

STARTED SORTING IN BETWEEN FALL WHERE THEY MAY

Did you pause for a moment (even a second) to start building it in your mind first? OR Dive right in and figure it out as you build? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to which side?

IN MIND FIRST IN BETWEEN DIVE RIGHT IN

Did you maximize or make it a game to use all the bricks in the time allotted? OR Use only what you needed or was necessary? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to which side?

MAXIMIZE OR MAKE IT A GAME IN BETWEEN ONLY WHAT YOU NEEDED

Did you feel compelled to follow the prompt and make it a tower (or even tower-ish)? OR Simply take it as a suggestion and build whatever you wanted? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to ...?

FOLLOW THE PROMPT IN BETWEEN AS A SUGGESTION

Did you make it a choice or have a desire to build it as high as you could? OR Make sure it had a sturdy or solid foundation? Or High and Solid (Both)? Or Neither?

HIGH AS YOU COULD BOTH OR NEITHER STURDY OR SOLID FOUNDATION

Did you try to create a pattern/design? eg. symmetrical or uniform or consistent OR Have no pattern or design at all? Or somewhere in between? If between, closer to which side?

CREATED A PATTERN IN BETWEEN NO PATTERN OR DESIGN

Did you build this tower with your head - heart - or gut? Or if two of three, which came first?

HEAD HEART GUT

How does what you built relate to how you show up as a person/leader/professional, etc.?

How does how you built it relate to how you show up as a person/leader/professional, etc.?

Measure & Pace Order & Disorder Thought & Action Quantity & Quality Direction & Choice Stature & Stability Balance & Uniformity Objectivity & Subjectivity

How?

What now?

STORYTELLING & The Meaning-Making Mind



- ☐ Grab your **bigger plate** and **starting on the side opposite your name plate**, build your story using this prompt:
 - ☐ **As a coaching professional, where do I come from?**
- ☐ *You can be literal... figurative... anything you want*
- ☐ Don't forget to add yourself (Minifigure You) to the build somewhere!
- ☐ *If you don't know where to start,
let your hands be your guide*

STORYTELLING & The Meaning-Making Mind

- ❑ Find someone **NOT** at your table; **Next** – at your table
- ❑ Introduce yourself – **As a coaching professional, where do I come from?**
- ❑ Take no more than about **two minutes** to share
- ❑ **SHARER:** Hold up your **ART**ifact and **Tap & Talk** - Use it as you share by pointing to specific areas and bricks
- ❑ **LISTENER:** Ask a question of the **ART**ifact not the sharer
ex. What meaning, if any, do the pink bricks have?
- ❑ **BOTH:** Listen for the bells – Two Bells: switch sharer



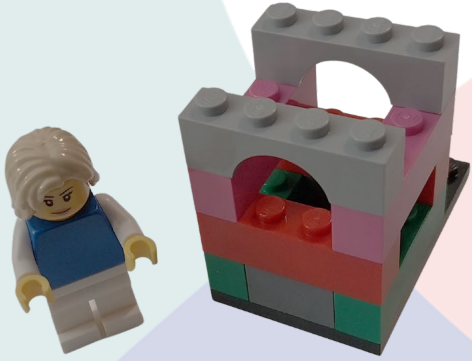
THE 'WHAT' OF HANDS-ON THINKING

- ❑ Conceptual Metaphors aren't just isolated linguistic devices that support us to understand our clients; they're systematic and deeply ingrained in our thinking, structuring how we perceive and interact with the world.
- ❑ Humans are Meaning-Seeking Creatures. We have an unquenchable desire to understand how the world is connected. Our quest for meaning derives from our capacity to plan for long-term future needs.
- ❑ The Hand-Mind Connection – Our hands actively participate in our cognitive process by allowing us to interact with the world and shape our understanding through touch and gesture, essentially acting as an extension of our conscious mind

**BUILDING
UPON OUR
COLLECTIVE
INTELLIGENCE**

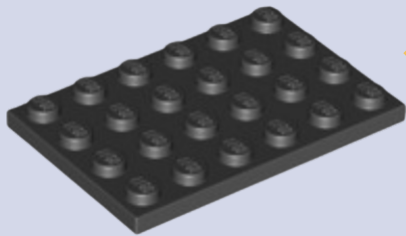


BUILDING UPON Our Collective Intelligence



- ❑ Set your **recently build ARTifact aside** and using your original black plate and the **bricks from bag on the table**, build your response to this prompt:

❑ **As a profession, what does the future look like for us?**



- ❑ *Build one idea or hypothesis per 4x6 stud plate. If you have a 2nd one in mind, use another 4x6 plate*
- ❑ Prepare to share aloud at the table and discuss

SHARING ABOUT Our Collective Intelligence

- ❑ Starting with the person with the **brightest** colored top at the table, briefly, share your response(s) to:
- ❑ **As a profession, what does the future look like for us?**
- ❑ **SHARER:** Show your **ART**ifact and **Tap to Talk** - Use it as you share by pointing to specific areas and bricks
- ❑ **LISTENERS:** Notice what they built and how they share
- ❑ **EACH PERSON:** In a few words or a phrase,

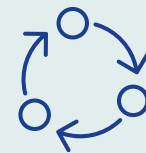
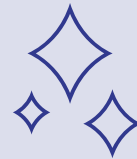


TALKING THROUGH Our Collective Intelligence

❑ **ACTIVITY:** Collaborate as a group to arrange your **ART**ifacts (w/ their captions) in the middle of the table to **tell a collective story** about:

❑ **As a profession, what does the future look like for us?**

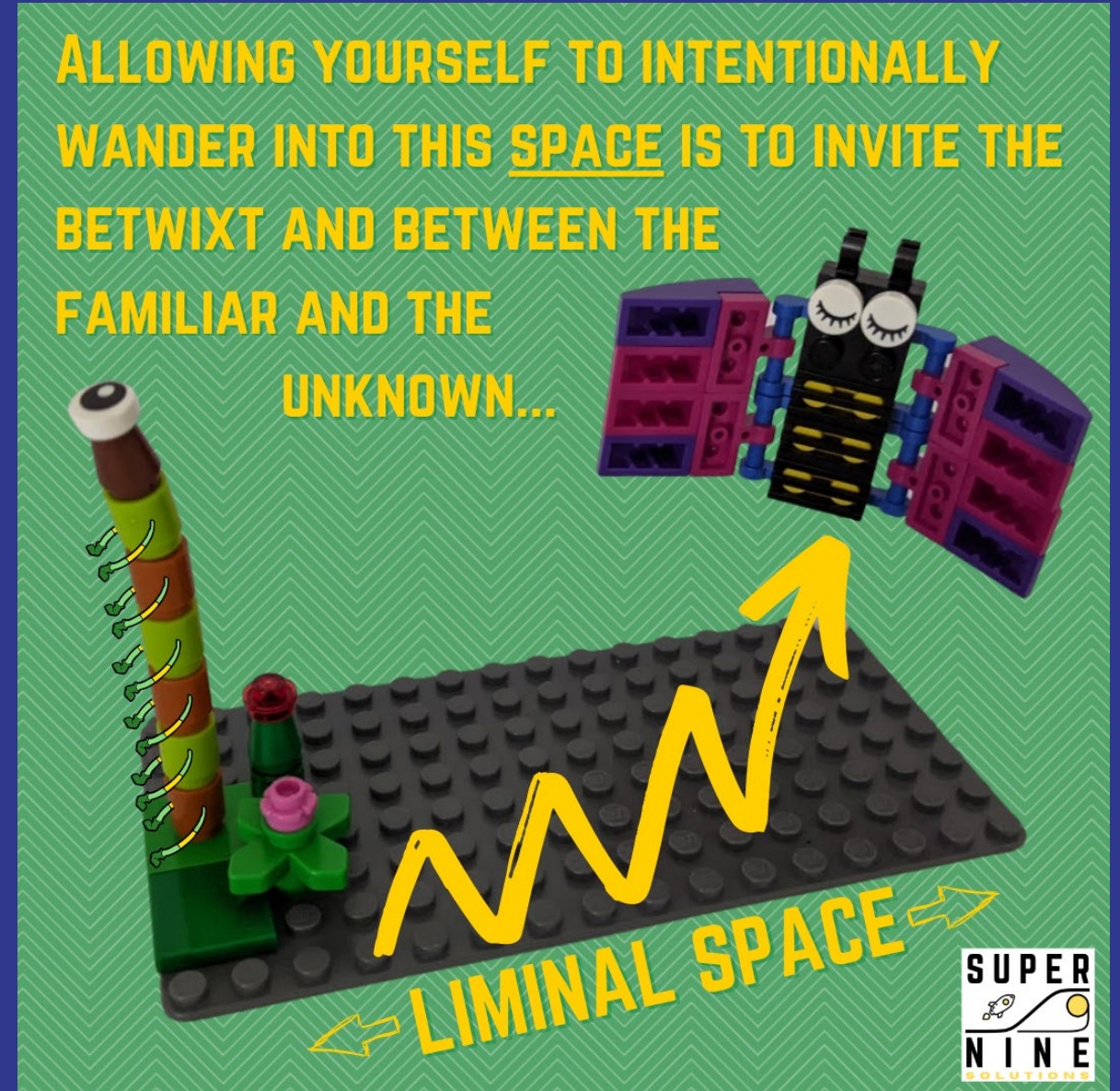
❑ **Arranging Ideas:** Affinity Map; Journey; Timeline; Hierarchy, ?



❑ **THEN DISCUSS:** What do you notice? If the parts of the story could speak, what would they say? And what about the whole (the Gestalt)? What's needed? What's missing? What does it say about us?

COACHING WITH HANDS-ON THINKING

Liminal Spaces
The Five Principles
with Gestalt Theory
& Coaching Demo



Coaching with LEGO® Serious Play®

It allows people to slow down, think with more than just their heads and better communicate and make tangible their thoughts/desires.

With hands-on thinking and reflection, the builder builds and shares what they see while also making meaning of what they notice through their embodied awareness and visual-spatial intelligence.



Coaching with LEGO® Serious Play®



By engaging their mind-body in this multi-modal thinking, they might figuratively, and literally with LEGO® bricks, develop a better grasp of the mental models and complex systems at play in both their inner and outer world.

And like ourselves, the **ART**ifact is constantly evolving, adapting and restructuring based upon our new awareness and meaning or sense-making.



THE LIMINAL SPACES FRAMEWORK

Liminal – from the Latin word ‘limen’, meaning *threshold*

Liminality – the *psychological process of transitioning across boundaries or borders*

Liminal Space – any point or place of entering or beginning

In all great coaching, with a well-formed contract, a liminal space is formed.

It is the space between ‘**what is**’ and ‘**what if?**’

It is a place of transition, a season of waiting, and not knowing.

It is where all transformation takes place, if we learn to wait and let it form us.

The Five Principles of Coaching with Hands-on Thinking

Using LEGO®
SERIOUSPLAY® Methods



THE Five Principles of Coaching with Hands-on Thinking

using LEGO® SERIOUSPLAY® methods

1. Question the builder **AND** the **ART**ifact - the **whole** and the **parts** have different voices
2. All LEGO® bricks can speak if we're **still enough** to hear them and **brave enough** to ask them what they know
3. If a LEGO® brick moves or changes, the builder has also shifted - **be curious about the here-and-now**
4. The builder **OWNS** the **ART**ifact and its meaning - with permission, **engage in safe experiments**
5. The **ART**ifact is **OK** exactly as it is, unless the builder wants to change it, and **change is inevitable**

#UseYourHandsToChangeYourMind



DEMO: Coaching with Hands-on Thinking

Using LEGO®
SERIOUSPLAY® Methods

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ☐ What did you notice that worked well?
- ☐ What could have been 'even better if'?
- ☐ How was it different to also see what the client was thinking?
- ☐ What process questions do you have for the client? (time permitting)

DISCUSS AT THE TABLE

LISTEN FOR THE BELLS

Two Bells: Midway through



Four Bells: Wrap up

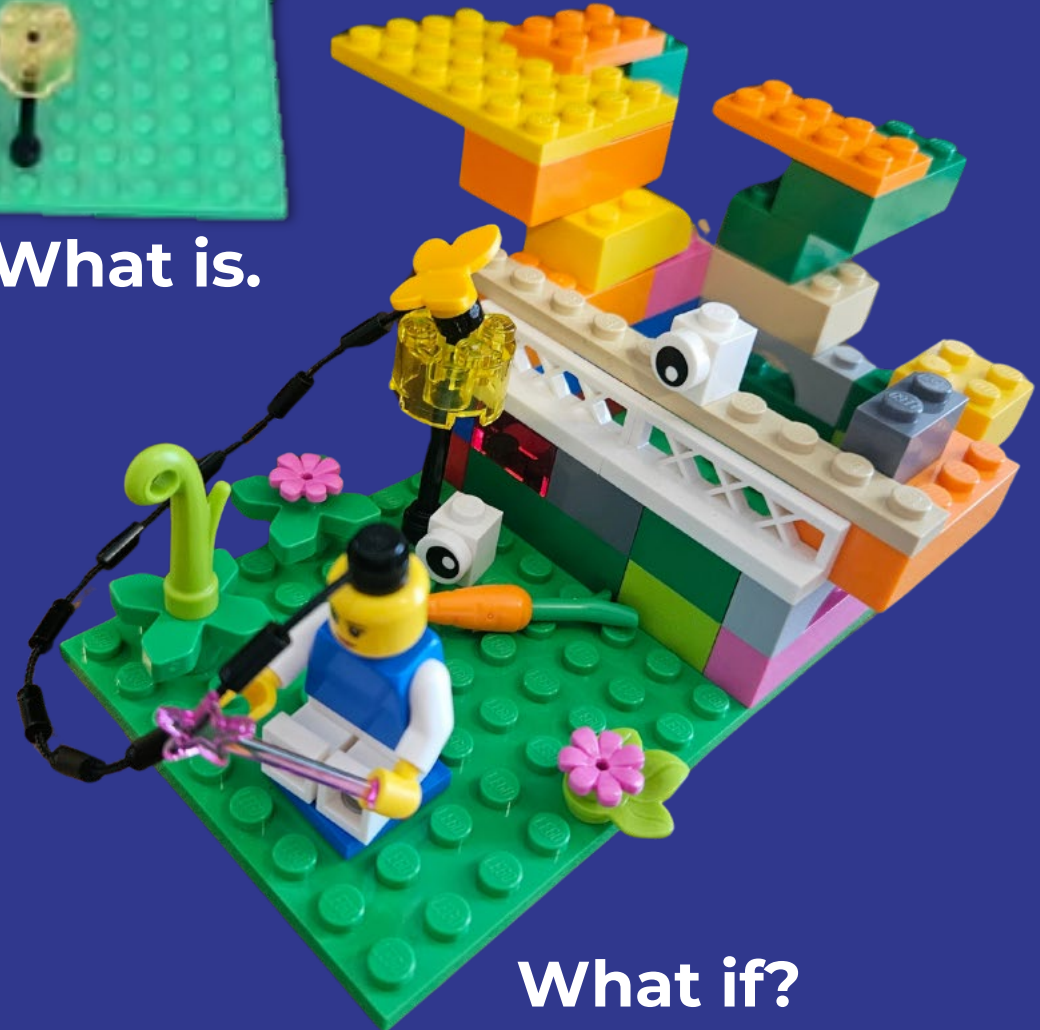


Coaching Exchange: Coaching with Hands-on Thinking

Using LEGO®
SERIOUSPLAY® Methods



What is.



What if?

FROM WHAT IS. To What if?

- ❑ **BUILDER:** Using your prior build: **What is - Where do I come from?** Continue building into the future – *the other side of the plate*. Using the rest of your bricks (or any other in the table bag), reflect on the question below and reconstruct your **ART**ifact in any way that you see fit.
- ❑ **What if? – As a coaching professional, where am I going?**
- ❑ **CONSIDER:** Where does Minifigure You belong on this journey?
- ❑ **NOTE:** Already built bricks you've given meaning to, should keep their same meaning to you. Ex. Red brick=fear. **Prepare to share.**

COACHING EXCHANGE

With Hands-on Thinking

- ❑ Find the person at your table whom you shared your 'Where do I come from?' build and sit side-by-side
- ❑ **COACHEE:** Briefly, **Tap & Talk** – Share what you have reconstructed based upon the follow-up Q – Don't forget you can add-move-remove – **Engage with your build!**
- ❑ **COACH:** Notice both **WHAT** they share and **HOW** they share – use the questions in the handout
- ❑ **BOTH:** Listen for the bells –
 - Two Bells:** Start wrapping up!
 - Four Bells:** Switch sharer



Coaching with Hands-on Thinking

Using LEGO®
SERIOUSPLAY® Methods

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



- ☐ With respect to everything we've explored, what impacted you the most?
- ☐ What excited you?
- ☐ What challenged you?
- ☐ What questions might you still have about Coaching with Hands-on Thinking?

Join the public **Hands-on Thinking Coach** community to learn more and/or connect with me on LinkedIn @ In/paulsanbarmcc



International
Coaching
Federation



coachingfederation.org