

My Highlights from #Play14 Festival

Last weekend we attended the [#play14 Festival in Basel](https://play14.org/) organized by [Bernhard Sterchi](#). Thanks, Bernhard for organizing!

I don't know if "festival" is the right term, but I like to call events "festivals", where people are having fun, get together and do something together as a team. Actually it's an unconference as described here <https://play14.org/format/>. You find all about the general details on that page.



An impression of an Energizer.



The Unconference starts.

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by Peter Gfader - <https://beyond-agility.com/my-highlights-from-play14-festival/>

My pre-festival assumptions

It was my first #play14 event and I was a bit skeptic about just playing games a whole weekend.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzYx84EGX30>

Playing the Giant Witch Troll game

- How long does it take until I get bored by energizers?
- What do I learn by “just playing” Lego for a whole weekend?
- What “weirdos” spend their whole weekend just playing games?

TLDR: I was totally wrong ?

The Plan

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
We will start in the evening. We will learn to know each other and share a nice dinner all together.	We will start in the morning with the marketplace, and then we will play games all day long.	We will also start with the marketplace for a full day of games. Whoever needs to catch a plane can leave earlier.
18:00 Ice breakers	08:30 Breakfast	08:30 Breakfast
20:00 Dinner / Mingle	09:00 Warm-up	09:00 Warm-up
22:00 Beer at the pub	09:30 Marketplace	09:30 Marketplace
	10:30 Sessions	10:00 Sessions
	12:30 Lunch	12:30 Lunch
	14:00 Sessions	13:30 Sessions
	18:00 Retrospective	16:00 Retrospective
	19:00 Pizza & Beers	17:00 Farewell

It started Friday evening and we immediately jumped into playing games (mostly energizers and brain-twisters) as

a whole group. It was fun, we talked what the game is about and how to use it in another context (workshop, meeting, large group gathering, ...). Awesome!

Saturday and Sunday were also kicked off with full group games and from 9h-17h we did an unconference-open-space style game selection.

Sunday we closed off the event a little earlier so that everyone had enough time to head home

The Games

Here is a list of games I collected and could remember from my notes:

Friday

- Magic Triangle
- Giant Witch Troll
- Running Through Hands
- Squat in Pairs – Discomfort – What happens?

Saturday

- 1 Word Story Telling in Circle – **Energizer**, Associations
- Samurai – **Energizer**
- Count until 33 and clap for every 3 – **Energizer**
- Predator, Protector and your Position – **Complexity**
- „Hello Johnny“ – **Brain Teaser**, **Warmup** – <https://play14.org/games/hello-johnny>

OPEN SPACE Unconference

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The unconference plan of Saturday

- Transport Bomb
- Smelly Situations Role Play
- Game to learn about Technical Debt
- Gordian Knot
- Board Game Magic Maze
- 50min to build a game
- Theory U

Evening

- 2 Detectives (find the 2 rules in the “system”)

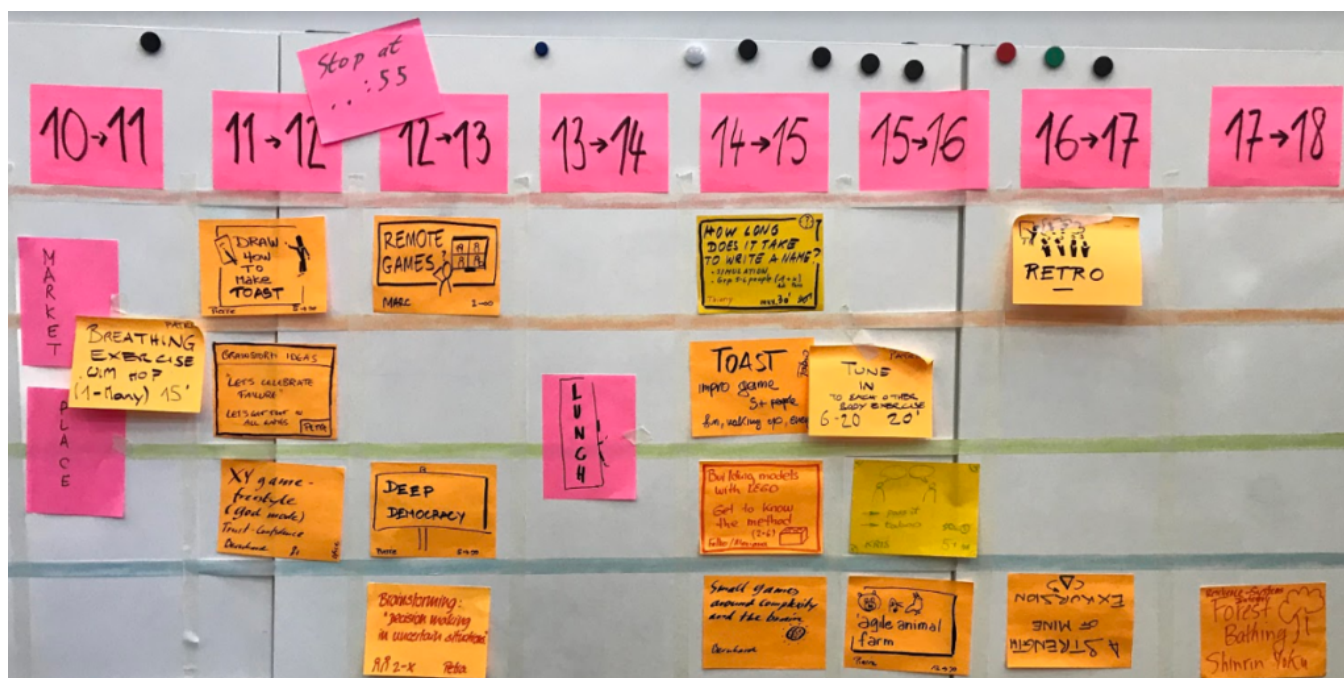
Sunday

- In pairs – Change 5 things
- Silent counting in Circle (only numbers)
 - 2 people say the same -> restart
- The Human Machine
- Flamingo Pinguins ...

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The plan for Sunday

- How to celebrate Failure
- Decisions in a complex environment
- Little Games for Complexity
- Taboo
- Draw Guess Draw and see what happens
- How long to write a Name
- Toast Improv Game
- Models with Lego
- Tune In (Body exercise)
- Agile Animal Farm

Ending

- Whole Group: stone paper scissors (with fans)
- Silent Goodbye

My Highlights

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I really enjoyed:

- The sessions about Complexity – Thanks Bernhard and all others
- The idea of “Experimental Games” where you leave instructions open (or unspecific) on purpose
- Taboo variation for workshop recaps – Thanks Kris
- Lots of great conversations! Sorry I don’t want to start to name anyone here
- Lots of little and great games to play with

The Experimentation



I didn't realize it and was not prepared for it, but the cool power of the event is the people and the notion of experimenting with your games, workshop formats or whatever you need a group of **VERY OPEN MINDED AND FUN people** for.

If I would have known that I would have taken my game collection with me. For example [“Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes” game](#) I have bought and never played.

I ran 3 experimental workshop games and we brainstormed ideas on how to improve these

#1 Smelly Situations

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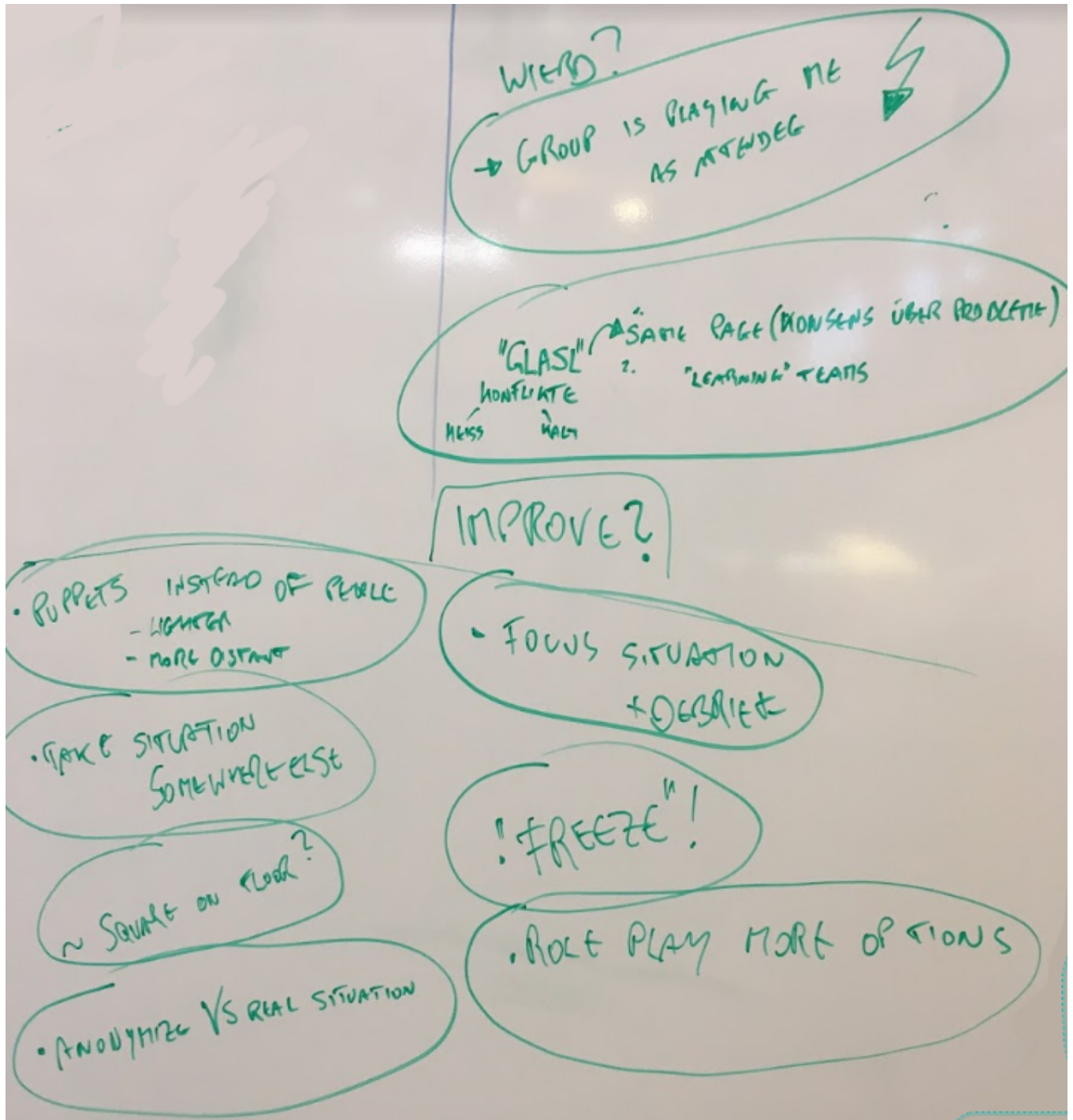
- Roleplay a weird situation from your office
- Change the behavior of 1 person in the play
- Experiment with situations
- Reacting to situations you find “smelly” / strange.
- How do you react as a Leader?



Situation: Boss and employees

I got lots of great input on what things to avoid and what things to make sure of. **Safety** is important!

Here the learnings for next time:



"Freeze" as a concept in an organization.

#2 Game to learn about "Technical Debt"

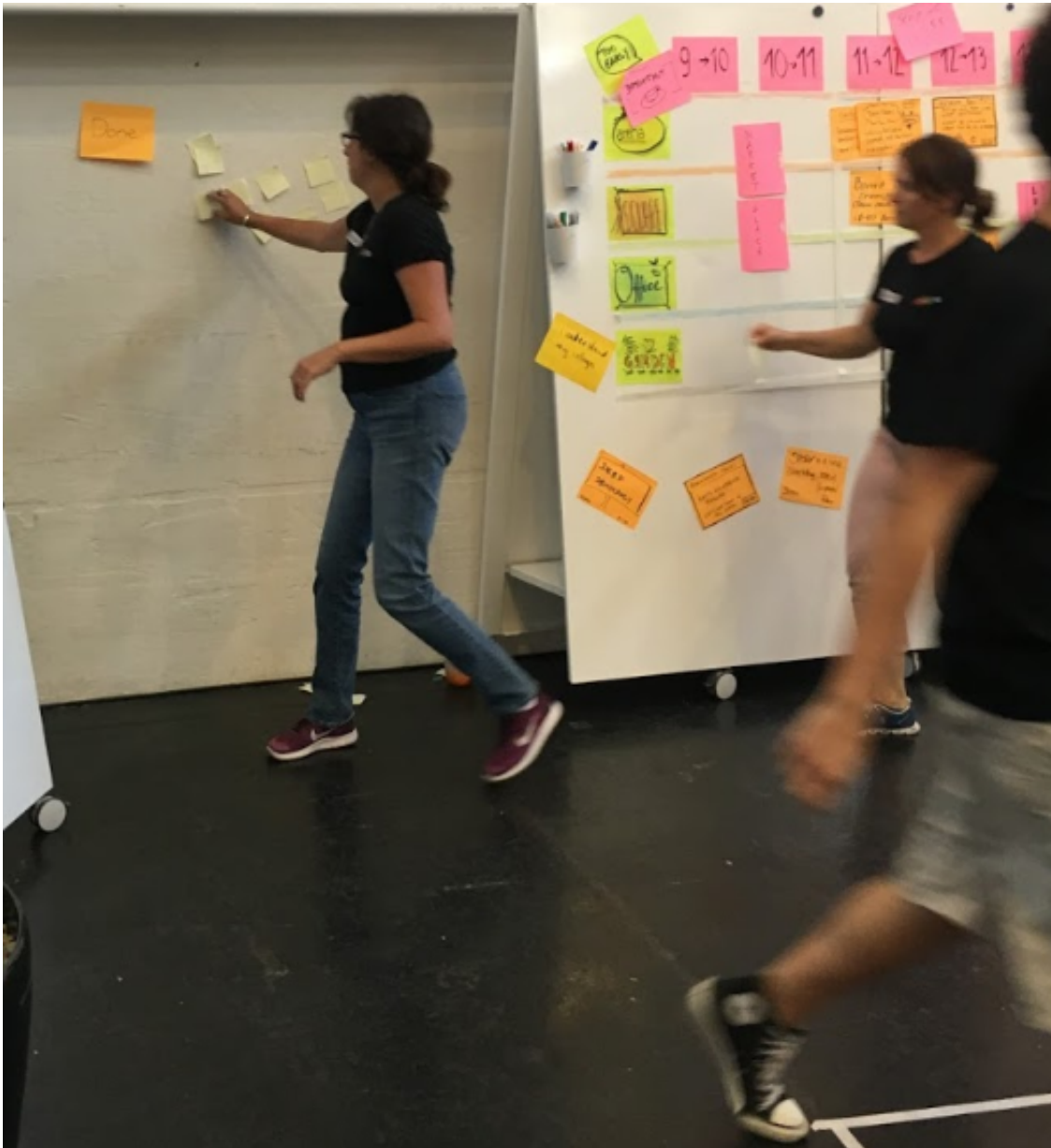
- A short Game from [Kris – Krzysztof Liszewski](#)
- Some theory around Technical Debt
- Lots of suggestions on how to improve the game:

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- The “Technical Debt metaphor” is not ideal for complex knowledge work -> How do you explain it then?
[Unhedged Call Option](#) might be another term ?
- Technical Decisions are taken by the Teams or by Management -> What is the impact?
- How to deal with uncertainty?
- Conscious VS unconscious decisions?
- Reckless VS prudent decisions?
- Strategies to deal with Technical Craft?

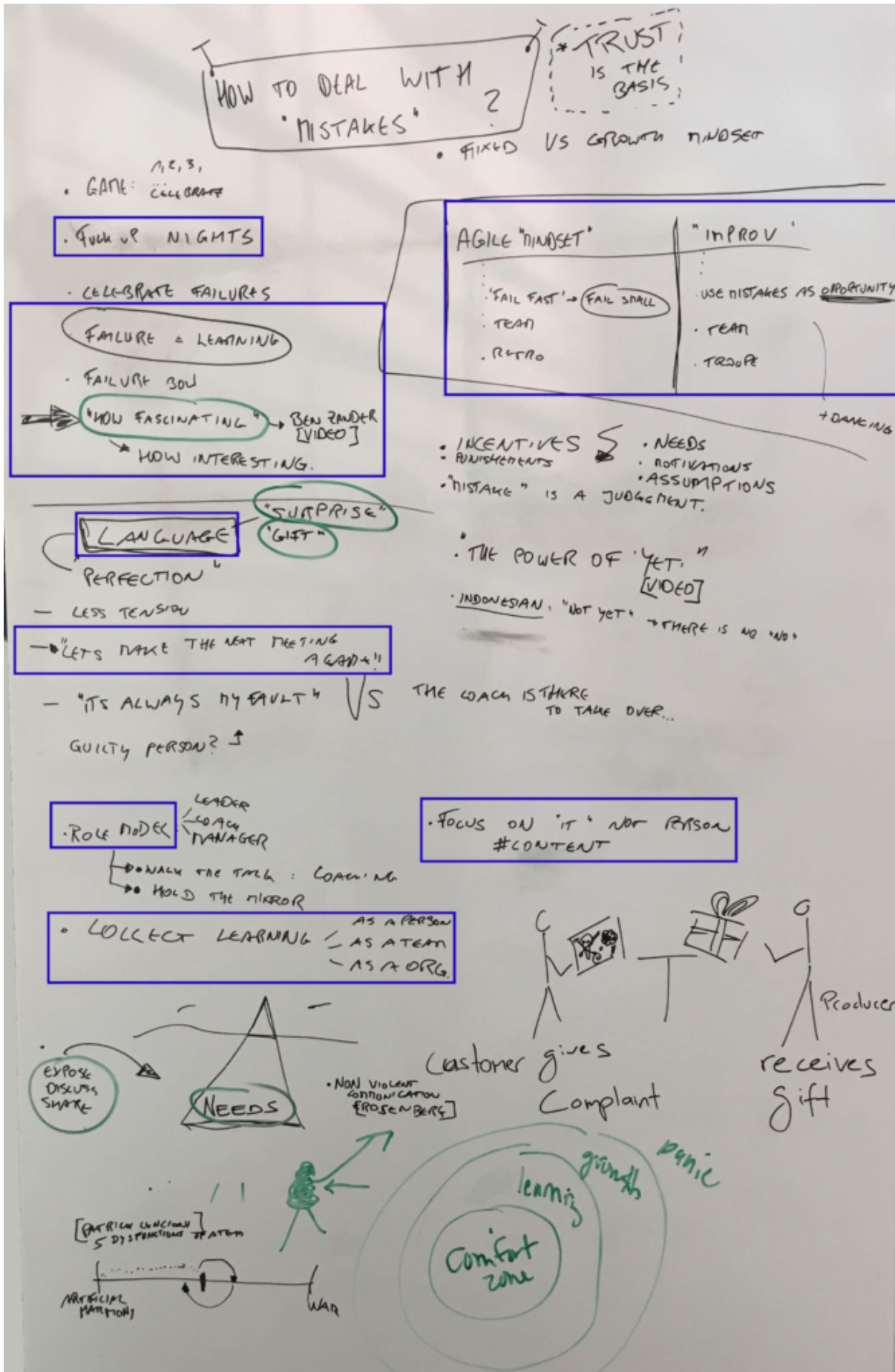




#3 The Celebration of Failure – Change

What played a short game and brainstormed around the question:

*How can we influence the behavior from
"I failed, head down, something bad happened"
to
"I learned, we learned, we help, let's move on"?*



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Lots of

inspiration. Thanks!

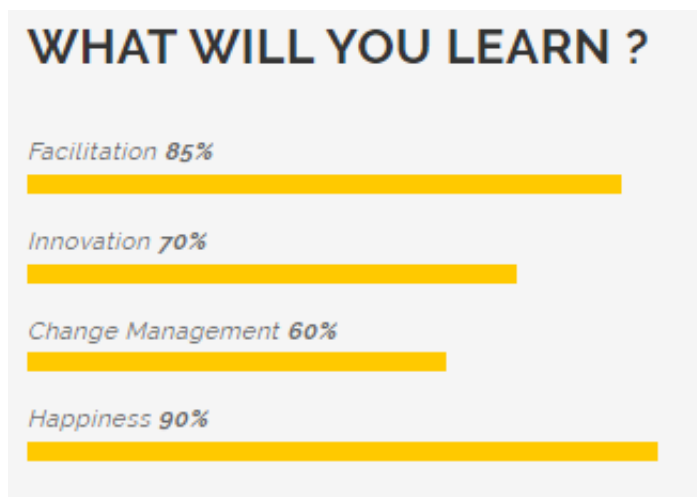
What Next?

I will play games to learn things ?

Inspire yourself [here on the game list page](#).

Check out when the next event happens near you <https://play14.org/events/>.

The next event in Basel will be [announced on the "Basel Games Meetup" page](#).
Sign up and have fun!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwuEqFYRYO0>

Have fun and trust the team ?

We Go Beyond Agile

Beyond Agility
Zürich - Switzerland