



Re-designing Dialogue

By [Carlo Spellucci](#)



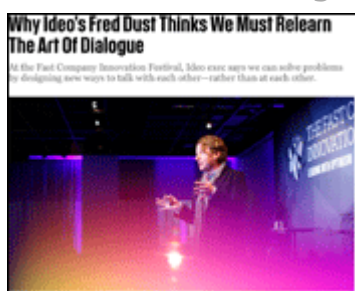
"It was 1953 when C.A. Swanson & Sons started mass-marketing quick-cooked meals in convenient trays designed to let us sit in front of the boob tube at dinner time...that was the moment we invited technology to our dining room table that's when we gave up 'us' as the host of our dinner time." (Fred Durst, President of IDEO, in *Fast Company*).

Back in my childhood in the 80s the battle was raging on. In my household of 5 we had just one TV set, and to my Dad's dismay, it took over most of the dinner time; on the other hand, my Mom managed to keep her terms and only fresh cooked meals were served.

Today research shows that the average number of connected devices per consumer is 3.64, so in a household of 5 people you would have between 5 to 10 different devices. And adults have an equally difficult time as youngsters at reducing screen-time. Many couples, friends, families in cafes, restaurants, at home are spending more time looking at their smart phones than at each other.

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• The Art of Dialogue



"Dialogue is as old as the human race, but in the last couple years we've been getting it wrong. Technology, politics, and media are undermining the conversations that have traditionally helped industries and governments and the communities they serve."

Recently IDEO President, Fred Durst, in a *Fast Company* article announced the challenge to re-design dialogue in the face of how technology has changed the way we communicate. "How might we craft more constructive exchanges with customers, partners, and even adversaries to tackle the systemic questions that hold vulnerable communities hostage?"

Professionally, I practice the art and craft of designing and facilitating LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP). **I engineer dialogues.** Naturally I immediately wrote to Fred that LEGO SERIOUS PLAY certainly can help create meaningful dialogues without borders across industries, government and communities.

The way LSP works is that a group of people agree to invest time with a facilitator, who guides them through a set of customized questions to reach their goals.

But if repairing dialogues is the challenge, could I use LSP to evoke a spontaneous dialogue without been given a clear mandate to do so?

• An Experiment



The result: In tangible LEGO constructions, we could see plenty of brick metaphors to spark the family conversation for the rest of the day. Their

To test this, I decided to run an experiment in a family setting when visiting a friend I hadn't seen for a long time. He is an engineer, his wife a lawyer and they have two children, a son, 16 and a daughter, 12. When I arrived the children were not much for talking.

When they asked me "what do you do for work", I presented them each with a bag of LEGO bricks. We did some introductory exercises to get familiar with the LSP technique, and then I introduced the questions they had to answer by building:

stories offered many insights on what the kids - and their parents - would like to do in an ideal life scenario.

"If you could choose freely without having to worry about how to sustain yourself and take 1 year off;

What would you want to LEARN?

Who would you want to HELP, by doing WHAT?"

- Re-designing Dialogue

My answer to Fred! We can craft more constructive conversations with our stakeholders by amplifying the bandwidth in dialogues. LEGO SERIOUS PLAY - grounded in **constructivism** principles - is a process to explore yourself and others in a deep yet relaxed way. It allows each actor to become a curious listener and a better storyteller, and it demonstrated it is interesting enough to prevent screen hijacking.

It is not just the bricks that work this magic. It is the process of constructivism that makes it happen.

Sincerely, Carlo Spellucci

Wishing you a prosperous 2018 with many meaningful conversations,



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Rasmussen Consulting specializes in using LEGO SERIOUS PLAY to effectively harvest an organization's collective intelligence to enhance strategic behavior for better and faster decision-making. We are based in Denmark with offices in US, Japan and Singapore. www.rasmussenconsulting.dk.

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