

Childhood Toys

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Each of us may have vivid or vague memories about the toys that occupied our playtime as children. Some of those toys may have been purchased; some may have been lovingly crafted by family members; some have been ordinary objects that we spontaneously converted to toys—e.g., a stick or a rock. And some of us have had more expensive toys in adulthood. In this workshop, we will talk and write about some of the toys that each of us has had, reflecting on the role of toys in our lives and the lives of other family members.

Some Thoughts about Toys

- “Being there for a child is the most notable thing a toy can do.” —Woody, *Toy Story 4*
- “A toy has no gender and no idea of whether a girl or boy is playing with it.”—Letty Cottin Pogrebin
- “We are kids. The only difference is the toy we have.”—Pablo Larrain
- “To a real child, anything will serve as a toy.”—John Cowper Powys
- “Give children toys that are powered by their imagination, not by batteries.”—H. Jackson Brown, Jr.
- “Toys are made in heaven; batteries are made in hell.”—Tom Robbins
- “As men get older, the toys get more expensive.”—Marvin Davis

Questions for Discussion and Writing

1. What is your earliest childhood memory of playing with a toy?
2. What toy was there for you when you were a child?
3. What toys from your pre-school years do you remember most vividly?
4. What was your favorite toy when you were a pre-schooler?
5. Do you still have any toys from your childhood? What are they?
6. If you still have any toys from your childhood, how do they make you feel when you look at them or hold them in your hands?
7. Have you shopped on eBay for any childhood toys that got lost along the way?
8. What memories do you have of sharing toys with siblings or friends?
9. When you were a child, did you treat any ordinary objects as toys? For example, did you use sticks or stones or tractor tires as toys?
10. As you think about toys from your childhood, what roles did they play in your cognitive, social, or psycho-motor development?

11. Do you any of your childhood toys make you think of people in your life?
12. Did family members make any of your childhood toys? What are your memories about receiving any of those toys?
13. When you were old enough to buy your own toys, what did you purchase?
14. What was a toy that you wanted as a child but never possessed?|
15. When you were a child, were there any toys that you coveted but turned out to be disappointments once you got them? Think about the secret decoder ring that Ralphie gets in *A Christmas Story*.
16. What friends' toys did you most enjoy playing with when you were a child?
17. What toys did you play with in high school?
18. If you have children, what toys did you buy or make for them? Why did you choose those toys?
19. If you have grandchildren, what toys did you buy or make for them? Why did you choose them?
20. What do you consider to be your toys today?
21. Are/were there any objects in your workplace that you have treated as toys?
22. If you could design the ideal toy for you when you were a child, what would it be?