

Connections between playing games and finding your own voice

Luis María Pescetti, introduced by Daniel Goldin
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To develop one's own voice, beyond creativity, means not feel out of place.

Conditions of games and one's own voice

One condition is that it has to be "true" (it is frustrating to play games with someone who is not playing for real). Nothing serious happens with making mistakes. Players can choose each other, and what game they play. There is no canon on "good playing", perhaps it has to do with following certain rules, letting go (floating consciousness), and having a good time with the other. Different is to have a match: one rarely speaks, you seek the most effective shots, and there is a goal.

Those same conditions or status, are needed to find our own voice.

Indicators of one's own voice

- Enthusiasm.
- Relief.
- Sense of ease.
- Desire of sharing, that it is contagious.
- It makes you feel alive.

Five exercises to one's own voice

- 1) What caught your attention yesterday?
- 2) What magical wish would you like it'd come true?
- 3) What things make you feel out of place?
- 4) What makes you feel welcome, at ease in your being?
- 5) Name something external you admire, and something your own you could show to others.



Daniel Goldin: Good morning to all of you, and welcome to this auditorium teeming with people, excited, happy, and very good morning too to all those who are following us online through our streaming service, anywhere on this planet, and this troubled country...

It is my turn, now, to introduce a dear friend, not just mine, but of many people here, even if they have never shaken hands. It is well known that Luis is a close friend of many people and many children have had the chance to listen to him and say thanks, thanks Luis, thank you, and felt like he had been a part of their lives, their intimate and family life. Luis María Pescetti.

Luis Pescetti: Mexican by heart.

DG: He is Mexican by heart. Born somewhere in Argentina, not Buenos Aires, and at some moment he went to Buenos Aires, at some moment he studied Music Therapy, at some moment, by chance or fate, he traveled to Cuba and met Germán Dehesa, right?

LP: That was a few years later, first I met Andrés Bustamante.

DG: Andrés Bustamante, who is also great, and Andrés said, "Why don't you come to Mexico?" And so he spent twelve long years; for him very big and very important and memorable for many others. Luis is a Music therapist in origin, he is a kind of educator in the most literal sense of the term, a person who guides and accompanies the children. He is a writer, a novelist, he is a humorist for children and adults, and all that stuff... He is a singer, a songwriter, a composer, and from three years ago he is also twice a father... And really cool one! For many years he lead a radio show here which I loved listening, I was really fascinated by how he could empathize and engage children and get them to talk. And it still amazes me. So when I introduce Luis, I say that like few others in this field, of literature for children and youth, he is a creator of an audience. There are some others who have created an audience, but he has also created an audience that is very diverse. Not too long ago, I had the pleasure to take my little boy to the Auditorio Nacional, and realized only a lunatic as Luis could invite the whole audience to attend to the show in the Auditorio Nacional dressed in their pajamas. And they were all in their pajamas! Luis will tell you that only in Mexico can he do something like that, and maybe it's true. So I want to thank Andrés Bustamante for bringing him to Mexico, for changing his life, and for consequently changing the lives of so many others. Luis has asked me to make me a side when he starts. I'm going to do right now, I'll yield the floor to Luis but first I'll say it clear: Luis, it is very heartwarming that you're here with us, that you delight us with your words, that you make us reflect, that you make us play. Well, thank you on behalf of... the people of Mexico (*laughs*). Thank you.



LP: Thank you very much. I am very happy to be here. I'd like to clarify that I didn't ask Daniel to step aside, but I could have, because every story, every form of speech, somehow begins on whom it is addressed to. And Daniel is a presence for many, and for me, so strong, so important ... given the combination of his work, his career. Susan Sontag said that what she admired in people was the intensity of the consciousness. I thought it was a beautiful definition: the intensity of consciousness. And it is too much to be so close to Daniel, although it sounds like praise, it is true.

Today's talk is about developing our own voice. In lectures like this one power point presentations are often used, I will use two musical examples as an introduction to talk about playing games, creativity and some things that help finding that creativity in oneself, or in children, but more than creativity: our own voice.

What I call one's own voice is the opposite of what it is to feel *out of place*.

That is the beautiful title of a book by Edward Said [\[1\]](#), a reflection of what he went through.

When I speak about developing the "own voice", what I mean is that children don't feel out of place. We neither.

(Luis starts playing a guitar riff and stops to tell the anecdote)

Once in kindergarten there was this restless child, and so the teacher spoke to his mom: "This is the situation... I noticed this..." Her answer was: "The thing is that I didn't have such a regard with him, I couldn't have much regard..."

And that stuck with me. *(Luis pauses)* That ...

Did you notice the silence that grew here now?

The same happened to me inside *(Luis makes reference to the silence that came in the room, a silence associated with the feeling of space with depth, and what he felt. He sings)*

*My daddy doesn't look at me, [2]
my mommy doesn't look at me,
I am invisible.
At school nobody looks at me,
my friends do not look at me,
I am invisible.
I bring something there they leave it,
not open, not celebrated.
As a toast without the bubbles
I just don't move the needles.
What happens to these people
who treat me indifferently,
as invisible.
I do not understand why that is
that even the air is unmoved,
as impassive.
I stretch and twist,
make all efforts,
to find something they love
and become interesting.
Maybe they'll come in a kite,
That person, way concrete,
for whom I'll shine.
I must have confidence
everything in life is reached
it's not impossible.
I am here really available,
In sight, accessible,
for I am lovable.*

That was my first power point presentation. *(Laughter)* And now, my second and last. I was going down the street and ...

(Luis interrupts himself and makes a comment on what he's just sung)

... I showed that song because **we are more invisible when we can't find our own voice**. It doesn't matter if we make very loud or very boisterous or showy things, and we get attention - we are not visible if it is not us who speak, if we speak for a cliché, or speak from behind a mask, or speak... somehow, then, the work of visibility of oneself goes through finding one's own voice. **Not just the own voice, but also the adequate public**. You can't do that whatsoever before no matter who, because one is exposed. The oeuvre is not infallible, nor is welcome at all times and in all places.

Part of the art of finding our own voice is to find whom is one addressing. Pretend it's like a hug. And then **the job of finding one's own voice is to find visibility. Or being less invisible.**

One last power point presentation: I'm doing my daily walk and suddenly I see a woman following a child. (You see Daniel? I have to look at you... – *Luis giggles- stay, stay*). In these days, these kind of things catch your eye. I'm near a school, and I see the child somehow like escaping and rushing. I get a little worried, what do I do? And then the child turns around: "Bye, Mom", she stops and says: "Alright, but I'll give you a kiss... at least" - "Bye, Mom", and he dives into the school. There I got the picture. The kid didn't want his friends to see him with his mother.

When writing songs what I do is to take scenes of everyday life. I don't do humor about children but about family coexistence. You take a scene and give it back, you don't have to sermonize. "Oh, how ugly it is, to reject your parents ", "Oh, rather ugly it is to keep treating your son as a toddler in front of his friends, can't you see you are embarrassing him?"

That would be ineffective, above all things, to begin with, it would be inefficient, that kind of preaching.

That's why when I find out of a situation like that, or when I witness one, I try to reproduce it. It's like making a model of what you just saw. Only I do a model a little more enlarged, so that what I saw is more evident.

Like, have you noticed how in every holiday party, in companies or schools, someone makes an impression of the principal? Well, it's like that. But expanded. It's for you to see the features, like in the cartoons, in order to highlight the features.

So I wrote a part for the children (and I do it during the show) and another part for the parents. Children have to sing (I will only play the first part of the song), they must sing this first part while dancing, standing, and with their hands on the waist:

Mom, it's not that I'm ashamed of you (sort of an 80s sound) [\[3\]](#)
Mom, it's not that I'm ashamed of you
It's not that I'm ashamed of you, Dad
I just don't want you to come with me
Leave me a block away, I ask you
Moooooom
Don't keep staring at me
with that face like a kiss, an excess
let me cross the street alone, I'm not dumb
don't keep spying on me, loving

In that first part of the song , children play that role. Next, there comes the second part in which parents stand up, and they have to sing:

Son: I am your mother
Daughter: I'm your dad
I'll take you by your hand to the door and I'll stay looking, (*laughs*)
Give me a kissy

And then children have to scream "*Ahg!*"
(*Applause*)

End of the presentation. And so a fun relief overcomes in the theater. For the kids shout, and parents say... "It's not fair you get embarrassed, I want to see you, man." Didn't you feel that, the first time you took your child to kindergarten, when the teacher said: "Thank you" as saying "Please, leave" - "What? ¿I'm gonna leave him alone with you?"

What do I look for? I try to get the two sides to see themselves lovingly, one and the other - "Well, it's like that", "That's how I was when I was a kid", "That's how you're like now that you're a kid, but when you're a dad it may happen to you."

I mean, lovingly, that they see themselves from the outside and then, when one of those situations happen, as I have been told, both will look at each other and sing: "*Moooooom, ...*". And the embarrassment which can cause guilt and discomfort was averted.

One of the basic conditions of playing games is to be true. It's frustrating to play with someone who's not really playing with us, right? Geneviève Patte, the french librarian, said at a conference a very nice thing: when children listen to an adult reading to them, the first thing to which they pay attention is whether what that adult does is true, not if the story is fiction or fantasy: if the act of reading or playing is true.

Once they feel it's true, they let themselves enjoy what happens and how it's told. The same happens when we play: if someone is playing with you and you feel they're not connected, attentive to something else... it's like hugging, the example again: you don't feel it... hugging is not just about someone leaning on you. (*Laughs from the audience*)

One of the basic conditions of playing games is to be true. It's frustrating to play with someone who's not playing with us for real.

Another is that players can choose each other and what game they play. That's almost a condition for democracy. That we can choose who we play with and what game we play. Also to play with interest, for us and for the other. Not to play as charity ladies, "Well, okay, let's do it" (*Luis mimics a condescending tone*). Neither to play begging for affection. There is parity.

Another substantial point for the condition of playing games is **convincing**: the fact that it is true for you means you are convinced, because you have to convince the other that the game you're playing is a good one, **that your game has a proposal the other finds attractive.** If you feint, like kids who say "chase me!" - it has to be attractive in order to convince the adult to pursue the chase, if that's the game or any other game that occurs between children.

Other condition for the existence of games as such, is that **nothing serious can happen with making mistakes**, nothing happens.

There is no dogma on good playing, perhaps it has to do with following certain rules, and loosing oneself. **When you play you are conscious, but in a more relaxed way of attention, of alertness.** It is not being conscious in the most alert way of attention but more like a "floating" consciousness as a... but just for using an image, as a soft state of flotation. You are here in the present, you're like when playing with toy cars, you are in some other world, here beside. It is very similar to writing time, creation time, or composition time, you're there and you're also in a certain state of flotation, somehow committed. All this is metaphoric, none of this tries to be some kind of new age instructive – but they really are different degrees, different qualities of consciousness.

That's why it's counterproductive to correct while writing, or writing "corrected". You shouldn't write corrected nor compose corrected. First, because if you work like that you face the wrong interlocutor, who is your critic. No need to do that. But afterwards, because those are different qualities, different states of consciousness: in the one you are fully alert, checking up what was written, not relaxed, letting the character's voice flow. The two states don't coexist, they don't get along well.

Having a good time with the other may be the core of playing games.

Unlike all this is to make a match. In a match rarely you talk to your opponent. You aim to the most effective shots, and there's a goal – to win.

The game playing of which I speak is more like the previous warm-up in ping pong. You know how there's always that previous time when one often gets the body moving, when you just hit some shots. And you can talk to the other player, try new shots, and there is no goal...

Those same conditions set on creating. What's next? When the match starts, that is interrupted, and you aim at the most effective shots and you stop chatting with the opponent.

I'm not judging "good" or "bad", it's a picture, one example between playing games and finding your own voice. Because those same conditions stated above for playing games, that state, are what's necessary to find one's own voice.

Mexico helped me strengthen my own voice. I wanted to become a professional artist, to act in theaters, the most important ones possible. I knocked the door in "Alas and Raíces" [\[4\]](#), and they welcomed me. But what they had to offer as stages were the farthest colonies you can imagine – but farthest from where? For if there is no "center" is not "far from"... but to my purpose of becoming an "important artist", those were the farthest: there were no signs, no lights, the shows were during the day, no press, nor promotion. Some old lady coming from the market went by, with her dogs following her, right in front of the stage, and I was there singing and feeling: "Oh, momma, fame is fading away".

But on the other hand it was a job, and I needed a job, and I didn't want to be ungrateful towards who gives you bread. And so I spent four years performing, every weekend, in places far away from any circuit or any "artistic consecration".

What happened? Faced against that, given that I was not going to be famous, I said to myself: "Well, I'll have fun, then". And I started playing with people. I started playing games the same way I did at school with my students when I was a teacher. Or someone from the audience told me something and I answered like when I was a comedian in hotels, or in pubs, or when a dog went by I said: "Hold on everyone, the dog is going through", or whatever.

I chilled out: well that's it, this is not the artist's way to fame, I'm going to have fun.

But it was, and I appreciate that, my best school. I would have never got to what I've achieved as an artist. Thus was born "El Vampiro Negro", my first album.

I got four years to try out new acts away from the spotlight (those strong lights on stage), four years to rehearse and test off camera. And as I tried material, some stayed in the repertoire.

If I had had a critical eye, which had defined my artistic career, I would have not dared in such a relaxed way to give it a try. I would have shown something that I would have imagined of more brilliance, more effective.

When you feel like the listeners to whom you address matters a lot for their review or assessment, unless you have competitive spirit, it's harder. You're in real trouble. Because you'll want to charm them, dazzle them in a way that is inverted, for you're going to try to dazzle them according to your views on them. It is the exact opposite to finding your own voice. You'll want to charm them with what you imagine that they love, whereby one becomes some kind of well-meaning buffoon.

And the other example was (and here ends the autobiography) when I wanted to do radio. Again, in the quest for an artistic path I thought "I'm going to make a program". Not because I wanted to do radio, but to be known. I liked a station that was on Radio Mil, which was classical, many years ago. I looked for their number in the guide, and went there: "Hey, I like your radio a lot, I do material for children, I would like to host a program". You know: the whole night before, the whole day preparing the speech, *(Laughs)*. So I arrive, and the director was pregnant, a lovely lady who answers: "Alright, do it, anyways this station is closing its doors". *(Laughs)*.

Picture it: "I want to be captain", "Go ahead, it's sinking". *(Laughter)*

And she asks: "And how long would you like to do the program?" "Half an hour", "No, do it an hour long". And it scared me, because one hour of radio air time is a long, long time.

But check out how lucky I was, had that been a very successful radio I would have not been received. If I had felt I was in the most successful place in the world, facing the most critical audience in the world, for how I am, at least, and I mean this because I assume that the conditions necessary for highly competitive sports are completely different, but I'm talking about the development of one's own voice and creativity - for how I am: I would have frozen. So, in that precarious situation, if you will, I also said to myself: "Well, let's learn how to do radio", I played the game. Suddenly someone came to answer phones, and I saw that the thing was working. The station was closing, but the owner invited me to be in another. Later that one was also sold... I was like Donald Duck, when the mountain starts fading. So I was left with nothing, I called Radio UNAM and was lucky to be accepted there. In Radio UNAM, I confess: I started out terrified: "The audience is so academic... I'm dead". In the first show I had a trembling voice, the audience I pictured was very critical, very sharp, very brainy. After some time you find out academicians also have children... *(Laughs)* they breed and don't give birth to other academicians, but children *(laughs)*. They were grateful there were nursery rhymes and stuff like that.

Because of one of those chance failures, UNAM's antenna was heard a lot in Ixtapalapa, reason why it was very successful there... or in other terms, it wasn't heard in the rest of the city. We had a lot of fun. With which I had years and years of extremely generous trial and error, beyond all possibility that a failure would mean the end of my career or a wound difficult to overcome... (Early successes are not recommended). I got years and years of very generous rehearsal time.

The right to identity in its most basic form is the documentation and correct affiliation of who are your parents, and your nationality. **But in its highest form, the right to identity is the right to find and build up our own voice.**

Once UNESCO commissioned Jean Piaget to develop the right to education [\[5\]](#). He made a book setting forth what meant the right to education. Among the things from which he began was that the State must ensure transportation for children to go to school... Wonderful! "Let's see, what's the right to education"? What does that imply?

¿What is the right to identity? What does that imply? For me it implies that children, students, younglings, ourselves, can reach our own voice, which in other words it's like that Cuban graffiti said:

"Love your home country even if you were born elsewhere" [6] .

(Laughter)

In this train of thought, playing games is a kind of ecological indicator, you see? As butterflies are in connection with fumigation: if there are butterflies it means the area is being fumigated less or not at all.

Where there's playing, or where playing games is welcomed, the conditions are given for the expression of one's own voice, or the birth, or the finding of one's own voice.

I get many letters and messages of thanks with all kinds of anecdotes of which you can imagine, of all kinds.

In the blog, or Facebook, or in paper at shows, tons. Almost all say something Daniel has just mentioned: You're one of the family, which is much appreciated. "My mom says that how did you see what happens at home." *(Laughs)*.

Or everyone points towards how funny that moment was. The joy, the familiarity, and how we are friends.

That we are friends means that the child feels the relationship leveled "one to one".

Yesterday I sang here, in the green areas, the song about Spider-man. *Spider-man is with his mom, the news broke, the news broke, the news broke*, because of a kid dressed up as the Spider-Man, I saw once, deep asleep one night on the shoulders of his mother. And in the midst of yesterday's crowd, a mom lifts her child above her head, around four years old, dressed as Spider-man, who's doing like this *(Luis points at his chest, imitating the kid pointing at his disguise)... (Laughs)* as saying "Yes, it's me" *(Laughter)* Once again, it is a relationship leveled "one to one", it was really funny. "There you are," I said, "there you are", and he did like this *(Luis repeats the gesture)*, as saying "Yes, it's me, it's me", like he couldn't believe it. I sang *Spider-man is with his mom...* and he was still... *(Luis repeats the gesture again) (Laughs)*.

That burst of vitality has to do with the joy and especially with the huge relief and release of energy that occurs in a space that gives them back anecdotes from their own life without drama, without penalty, and with laughter. When you can see yourself in a lovingly way.

One of the rules of practical humor is: I never joke about things I don't like, about what I don't have an affinity.

If I don't like someone I don't do humor, I write an essay. *(Laughter)*

That's true. I can write an essay or a poem expressing what I don't like - but I don't do humor. Because humor means too much loving for me. It's like Sartori... "Sartori", was it called Alexis Zorba's musical instrument? He said: "One must not play it always, only when he wants it".

That enormous release of energy that occurs when feeling recognized. They recognize themselves there, but in a lovingly way, with relief. When I'm singing this *Moooooom, it's not that I'm ashamed of you...* what I take is the real situation and return it, but without judging: "It is wrong to feel ashamed". I say so in a way that it is not a penalty and that makes people feel "actually, yes, we feel that, but everyone laughs, I see that happens to others... it's fine".

It's okay, right? It's like when you go to antepartum courses. (*Laughter*) My list of fears at delivery was huge. But later I heard anecdotes, and the fears of others did nothing but bring me calm. "Oh, well, I'm not the only one that is frightened, I'm not the only one who is afraid of not knowing how to solve things, oh!"

Relief, relief, relief.

The show starts in the ears, in the stories I hear before. When I saw that lady following the child in front of the school, in that real scene of that day I was walking, there began the song. In what I saw, in what caught my attention. When I see that joy bursts as it did yesterday, and there's such vitality and playing and wants to have fun, and go dressed as superheroes, and play with the children, or as a family, it is a confirmation of something that has to do with the recognition of oneself: another way of naming what one's own voice is.

Something like finding your home country even if it's not where you were born... like the joke in the graffiti: "Love your home country if you were born elsewhere."

That's it.

Say the words of affection although they were not what you received.

That is your native country.

If I imagine myself in front of a group of children, teenagers, and I have to give them indicators to where finding your own voice is... it is so difficult, so delicate, subtle, in the work of a creator, to say "When you are finding your own voice... ", I can think to some indicators.

"Keep an eye on..."

Keep an eye to what makes you feel enthusiasm.

Be aware of what gives you relief.

If you find something that is your language... (yesterday's burst occurs because we have found a language). They find songs that mirror themselves, in language that reflects them.

One of the indicators of the right language, is relief. Produces relief. Gives the feeling of naturalness.

It is **contagious**, it has you wishing to share it. You come home and you want to reenact the game, you want to do the dancing part again.

The relief of which I speak is similar to the one you feel after talking for a long time in a language that is not the mother tongue. If you are in another country, and you have been a long time speaking in a language that you master moderately, and suddenly someone speaks in your language: you feel relief. That relief felt in the head, in your whole body, is because of the familiar language, the effort to translate, to adapt ends.

Pretty much like the relief children feel when they stop being surrounded by the condition of learning, just learning, and incorporating, incorporating, things they find new and strange.

In that sense I say children are like immigrants: it is tiring and very hard to be foreigner all the time, immigrant. To be learning and everything new, full of rules, and that there are more rules than what you know. It is an exhausting task.

That is a very clear picture of how children experience, and necessary one when developing our effectiveness in communicating with them.

Education is not kryptonite (something which acts directly, on contact). The Quijote is not kryptonite. It will not work by itself. There is a moment to read it, to connect with it. Values and content we want to convey don't act by themselves: "Expose the child to one pound of kindness three times per day for... "

Even less in this era when there are so many strategies of communication and entertainment. It's naive to think that we, teachers, professors or artists, don't have to improve our communication strategies. Those whom we speak to have the choice to make.

As we explained about in game playing conditions, at the beginning of the talk: they can choose whom to play with, and what to play.

And if they cannot choose, we must redouble our strategies, or act as if he could choose.

Because when someone has a choice: we try to convince or seduce, we do not take for granted that we are their only option. When they can't make a choice we relax. "Bad luck, now you're stuck with this" (*Get used to this, because you have to get through it anyway*).

Kids today, our students, the general public, can choose us from among a huge amount of learning material and entertainment.

And those who have no choices at their reach, but extreme cases of isolation, know they should be able to choose, they are aware that others can, and that works mightily.

Anyway, it is an ethical obligation by the artist and the educator, to act as if we could be chosen.

Let's review the indicators, those feelings that come up when we hit our own voice:

- **enthusiasm, expansion**
- **relief**
- **the feel of naturalness**
- **desire to share, that it is something contagious.**

We could imagine a vocational test that instead of focusing on the skills, it did on those experiences.

When I refer to playing games, at least in my show, there are conditions. I don't conceive playing as an "Oh, let's get rid of all rules"... that is a poor way to solve some system oppressing you, of rebelling if you are bound to any code, whether it is family, work. It oppresses you so much that when imagining yourself released, you only think of a binge.

When I imagine playing games, regulated or free: I think there are ways and craft in playing, and in good playing.

In my case, in the game that occurs during the show and which seems so free, messy and tousled, it has very rigorous conditions in which it succeeds and others when it fails.

It starts with the repertoire: I take a lot of care with the repertoire, which I choose for every occasion, I do a sort of pre-script, and once I get to where the show is going to happen (I did that yesterday), there I finish the polishing. "Magical thought", call it whatever you want, but just then, and being in the stage, as I did here today, is when I finish sorting the script... for how I feel, for the faces I saw when coming, and that guides me in the end.

I never do shows just for kids. The show I put on is for families. There have to be adults. And just in case, for some reason, I am asked especially to go to a school, I make sure there is an adult for every four children, not to control them if they misbehave, it's for when they make a mess... (Laughter) no, I'm joking. It's because the game which happens, does it in heterogeneous ages, and it's contagious. A joke may not be understood by the little ones, but the older laughed, and so they are touched by that emotion and are attentive. Another joke is celebrated by the little ones, but it would have been naive for an adult audience... however they see little children laugh, and the emotion is spread.

One starts to navigate through different emotions, naiveties and insights of attention. And later on, because few things are as instructive, and a kid can treasure it for a lifetime, as seeing their parents play. For any parent, seeing our children play is pure joy; but you can't imagine how powerful it is for a child to see their parents play.

That's why I never allow performances in which parents stay out or go wait in the coffee shop, it's been years since the last time it happened. It happened to me some time, in Spain for example, to explain: "It has nothing to do with the theater being safe or not, you have to stay and accompany your child..." That is the way children read it: "Where did my dad bring me, for he does not care?" In fact, I have a two-page document with conditions and requirements for the shows. "If it is outdoors, such and such cares must be taken", and so, to look for or create game-playing conditions.

Translated to your field, in the scope of creation or school: "playing games" is not a value in itself all-mighty, you must create the conditions in which you can feel comfortable playing.

Not always, not in any way, not in front of anyone... playing is not the exercise of a right, "I have the right to play, I'll do it": that will go wrong, don't face it like that.

Playing games flourishes best if you don't feel an examining gaze. If you feel that, first check kindly the feeling in yourselves (perhaps you always feel an examining gaze on you, so: it's you, see if you can work on that). But maybe it is in front of *certain* people. Don't expose yourselves. Don't play there. Playing games is not an overcoming exercise. "I have to overcome that fear." No, you head like that towards what you love and should be more natural.

Now that said, "you may always feel an examining gaze on you", I thought that maybe you like a game (an art, a craft) but not to expose it professionally.

When I went to a literary workshop I encouraged everyone to write books. Then I noticed that sometimes, when I encouraged others: "Look, you can do this, and present it there..." it sometimes made them feel uncomfortable. Until I realized: they didn't want to publish books, they wanted to write. That was their pleasure, and they preferred to keep it away from a professional look. Great!

I have a friend who likes to paint, he is an excellent painter. He panics at the idea of an exhibition. So, he doesn't have to do them.

That's what I suggest in vocational talks: "Separate what could be your profession from whatever it is you love. It may be the same thing or not. See if you want to do something professional out of what you love, there is no obligation."

When I went to the wonderful Vasconcelos Library, where Daniel honored me with his invitation, I had been there once but I didn't know it at its current size, now that it has its signature. So... we are walking along the corridors and there were some kids rehearsing choreography, way pop, in

front of a glass door. Given that it was brighter outside, they were reflected, and could practice. I thought it was a good example. They do the same as they would in a TV show or in a dance contest: a space completely safe; but not so hidden that nobody will see. They found a perfect spot. They are available for the eye, in one of the main corridors of the Vasconcelos Library. Whoever wants to look at them, does it. Almost every one of us is forced to see them; but nobody has the right to walk over and say: "Hey, your dance...", that is not welcomed, it would be impolite, nobody asked for your opinion.

Thus, they achieved a perfect distance between exposure and the "we just came here to do this." Not so exposed that any examining glance would crystallize them, nor so hidden that nobody will see them. Pretty much like the like warm-up state I meant before.

That state of looseness, and where things are not crystallized or a final judgment. It's very necessary, that is where playing and finding your own voice look alike.

One unintended consequence of some apps or browsers is that they are intrusive with exploration. You join one of those automatic online academies or courses, very generous, you choose the subject, level, and according to that they offer daily exercises and training, five minutes, ten, whatever you want. You can choose the amount and complexity, many options. And when you start with the first exercises, if you find obstacles, just click on the video and it explains. I signed up, wrote my e-mail, and begun, I loved it as a model of education that is possible nowadays. What happened? It's been a month I've been getting messages, "you didn't make any progress this week". I wanted to explore, look into it, not that like an aunt it reminded me every week, (*laughs*) what I'm doing, what I'm not doing at all. It's like confirmation loops produced by algorithms used in search engines, like YouTube. "You watched this video, those who watched this video also watched this one and before that they had watched..." I don't want to be pursued by my past, my friend! (*laughs*) I came to live in Mexico! Picture it, there it is, that's the example - I move to Mexico and the director of the school where I stopped working follows me and reminds me: "Back there you used these resources", I came to try something new, not to be reminded again and again! Someone should correct the algorithm, and make a "didn't read", "never read", "those who read this have never read these things."

Heading towards the end, I'll give another example: Imagine that the husband or wife is going out with friends, for a coffee, and the couple presents to them a form saying: "objective of the rendezvous", "friends /colleagues met:", "field", "development of the appointment", "ending of the activity", "scheduled return time". No, right? This, which is a joke here, is everyday teaching at schools. (*Luis sees that many in the audience nod profusely, and jokes*) ... you're going to hurt your neck doing that (*laughs*), get hold of yourselves (*laughs*). Few professions are so overrun as teaching. Let's recognize, mates, that it is sometimes our own fault – we feel too lazy to do the day's schedule... or we may not be reliable as teachers, who knows what we've done to get there.

I don't know a profession as tutored, childish and strictly supervised. It is invaded with planning, it feels like drowning – the control, the monitoring, and the reports. That is the opposite of a space able to contemplate emerging, working with improvisation, and the development of creativity models.

(Luis stops and reflects)

I have a dearest friend who is a teacher and she would say, "No, Luis, it is not like that, you have a ton of time and moments for yourself." But she has a special love for teaching, and infinite patience for planning, which, as a teacher, I never had. But what she can't deny, even her, is that it consumes too much time and she is tired of being a teacher. It's not fair. That's it, remember the

indicators listed above? Those, to me, are vital indicators, really. In my own life, they are. Well, the indicator "I'm tired of..." is trying to tell you something.

When an institution or a company emphasizes obsessively on control mechanisms, it fails, or favors failure. In that sense the answer is to give more autonomy to the teaching profession. With which you could say, "But you don't know the kind of teachers there are out there..." If so, you must correct it from a different angle; but if you train professionals you must trust them. Don't be mentoring, and don't suffocate them with planning to control their every-day. Imagine you did that to a doctor.

Another example: Parents call a meeting and tell the teacher:
"Jimmy (their son) doesn't lend the toys to his brother."
The teacher would say, "And what's that got to do with me?" (*Laughs*).

There's a joke. But it's what school does with parents, the teacher calls the parents:
"Jimmy talks too much".
"And what's with that? We love that at home". (*Laughs*). "That's a problem between Jimmy and you, who is his teacher."

I really mean it, it seems like a joke but it's true. What will you ask from me? That I assume the role of...? If I'm not asking you to help me make Jimmy accept the little brother who was just born... don't you ask me to assume school's tasks.

The risk of humor, when you say things with humor, is for the content to get lost.

What I mean by this, and in a real example: a kid talked a lot, he spent his time making up conversations, characters, and his family enjoyed it. They had a meeting with the teacher, who pointed out that same thing, and changed regarding that happiness of their son to something where he doesn't fit. They started seeing their son with the eyes of the institution. [\[7\]](#)

We should not assume what the teacher, a professional, must solve, as we can't either protect our children every time they meet someone short-sighted. "Look, that he talks a lot we find it more to be a talent, we encourage that, it produces us enormous happiness - what do you need? Because we wouldn't like to change that".

At the same time, we must teach our children that even with our gifts there is a "when" and a "how". That one must be careful and not to expose oneself. Not all ladies are our mom. Don't go onstage everywhere as "Welcome Pescetti". Check first if you're welcome and afterwards act like welcomed.

A rule to teach is what the guys from Vasconcelos did: to play with those who enjoy their playing, or to play in a safe scope. As the dancers in front of the door in Vasconcelos, because not all places are this house and our family, not all ladies are our mom. "You go checking around, friend: you're welcome here, go ahead. Here, you're not welcome ". At the same time offer to invent a radio show, give him a microphone, go visit a radio. (*Laughs*) I really think you have to do those things, how do you know who is in front of you? Go visit a radio... and wait until this year finishes and change the teacher, no doubt. (*Laughter and applause*)

To conclude, a couple of exercises for this that wades between playing games and the development of one's own voice.

No matter the resources, whether it is in the poorest school or the one in the wealthiest neighborhood (which has other forms of blunders and poverty), the first exercise is to ask the kids, every day, without judging, without looking for a purposeful utility:

1) What caught your attention of your yesterday? [\[8\]](#)

This exercise is very difficult, because the first thing people tend to look for is something that cannot become subject of mockery by the rest of the mates - something to please the teacher.

Once I went to a rural school and while chatting with the kids (I was already a well-known author), I asked "What do you like best?", and they told me "Studying", "Oh, I see, well, and what do you like to play?" - "Studying". (*Laughs*) Ok, I realized that they only answered based on what they thought they should say to me.

So in this "what caught your attention" exercise, throughout the year and according to how often we do it, we have to train in what catches our attention in the purest way and not trying to impress anyone. Very difficult. But to the kids we won't present it with such complexity. We just say: "Whatever caught your attention yesterday, this week." We hear, and don't make comments.

2) What magical wish would you like to see fulfilled? [\[9\]](#)

A magic wish you'd like to come true. Everyday. It turns out that even when it comes to magic wishes not all of us want the same impossible. And the magic wish can be the expression of an area of our emotions containing a great wealth. They are so revealing of our true selves as those settled in real things.

So: what struck you yesterday, what wish would you like it to come true. Every day works great, also, so that the wish doesn't have to be all-inclusive nor as important: it can be a silly thing, a tiny wish.

3) What makes you feel out of place?

Pay attention, in yourself, within you - what things make you feel out of place? Yesterday: was there something where you felt left out, was there any time when you felt out of place, not a main character, as taking an exam, judged, as if you'd betrayed yourself, or as an illegal immigrant, or petitioning against an authority, or trying to do something good but just to impress someone else? Yes, a lot of words for a single feeling. Was there any time when you felt that? Don't change it, don't judge yourself, just pay attention. Did that happen? Recognize that.

4) What made you feel welcome?

Pay attention, in yesterday, in last week: was there anything that made you feel welcome, that what you were doing was right, that made you feel at ease into your being, relieved, excited? Many words for the same feeling.

5) Anything you want to see in exchange for something you want to show

It's not fair to find something you'd like to incorporate without finding something you'd like to teach, and vice versa. It is an exercise. "Well, I'll grant you permission (... picture that, it's crazy), I'll let you admire something, but I'll trade it for something you'd like to show as valuable ". Or the contrary: "I'll let you feel admirable if you find something to admire"... It's a game!

Perhaps it's more graphic with YouTube or a blog. What things have you seen recently that caught your attention? And, in return for that: walk around your place, what you know, the people you live with, and what they do and know (crafts, dishes), and imagine what you would post on a network, or in a small video. For each made by others that you like, please indicate one of your own you'd show.

Those, to me, are the indicators - the guide and meeting point between playing games and finding one's own voice.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)



DG: Thank you, Luis, for this walkthrough, and for finding the voice and finding the place. I would like to start by taking into account a little bit to the seriousness of the words with which you started. You said: "Finding one's own voice is to make possible, to make one feel something that seems essential to me (and which we don't always, unfortunately, not always feel), to make one feel they are not misplaced". And in that sense, yes I gather, too, that huge graffiti in Cuba, "Love your home country even if you were born elsewhere". These are things you tell us like that, and sound like joke and, like all jokes, also make you laugh for not to making you cry.

In other words, a lot of people, for years, years, years, until we arrived, we have not felt in our place, until suddenly someone looks towards us. You said words so beautiful: "I didn't have such a regard", a mother said to a child, right? "I couldn't have such a regard". So I would like just, beyond all things, to keep thinking how there are so many children whom the teacher, the librarian, the organizer serving them, can make them feel, by listening, that they finally have a place. Suddenly, remembering or finding the homeland even there, where they had not been born. That's got to be one of the most powerful things of the work you do, that you've done as a creator, that some, that all of us here have tried to do or have done when teaching classes, when opening a space for children, when listening to them. That duality between looking and listening, and and also to remember the connection between looking and listening which is, and allows the other to start playing.

Another thing you said that kept working in my mind, and which I was thinking right there in the garden of Vasconcelos is: those fumigated gardens, where if there are butterflies then it means that it's not a fumigated garden, right? And you said: "A garden where there is playing is not a fumigated garden". So we'd like to feel that all gardens, all kindergartens, classrooms, homes, are places not so fumigated, right?

There's a third image, of the many I took note here, which I also found interesting, and which you also said as a joke and recall a bit: you spoke of the schedule in a lover's meeting, where the child, if we compared that meeting with the encounter between a child and an adult, or that place where things are happening, as is in a relationship where the objective of going out is the meeting of the couple. And that part, funny as it is, makes us sadly remember something also very present, and you said it, that few stages, few places are as overlooked by the other, set by the other, and I think there's some point where we must rescue a little confidence, and save... the will to play.

I also believe that you've pointed out many examples where you talk about yourself as a creator, but I think that behind all that there is also an idea of you as a child, and of you as an adult who searches in his profession, in his world, in his life, somehow, to find his own place, and invite to play games so that all can develop, play, and find a place of their own.

These are things I took note of, finally, thinking it is not a summary, just appropriations of things you shared, and which I find extremely valuable.

LP: During the talk, the other day, Friday, you said that the things you do, you do them to feel alive. I'd like to bring that back: let's consider that another indicator, that every day you teach classes, work, you keep at least one memory that made you feel alive, an activity, a moment. You and the kids.

Thank you a lot.

(Applause)

Transcript: Eric Barenboim

www.luispescetti.com more content of "[Digital Workshop](#)", [click here](#)

[1] "Out of Place: A Memoir" (Edward W. Said, Vintage)

[2] Available at: <http://www.luispescetti.com/categorias/canciones/>

[3] Available at: <http://www.luispescetti.com/categorias/canciones/>

[4] program for children, CONACULTA, Mexico

[5] "The right to education in today's world, Jean Piaget" (Ed. Aula, 1973, Montevideo)

[6] Pible, Cuban comedian.

[7] Sometimes I turn to the idea of postcolonialism, by Edward Said. He talks about when the colony takes on itself the way the Empire looks at it: The Empire had a plan and a look at a society that had been colonized, and whether its presence continues or not, the natives of that community still look at themselves through the eyes of empire. It is a graphic image to what happens when we give up our own judgment and look, exchanging it by that of a group, or whoever to which we attribute authority. This becomes who validates who we are and distributes the rules; the "I am", identity, visibility and voice no longer in our hands.

[8] See this exercise developed in "Creativity workshop": <http://www.luispescetti.com/desarrollar-la-propia-voz/>

[9] ídem previous.