

# For the Love of Games

Introduction by Rossella Buono and Anne Mallen

Why do games and activities matter?

Many of us enjoyed games as children, and as adults we often still do. From cards, board games and charades, through to all manner of online games, play remains an important everyday activity.

Games can be engaging and fun, but they are more than just a way to pass the time pleasurably. In playing, we learn many skills: co-operation and connection with others, strategic planning, how to win and lose gracefully, some practical maths, creative expression, persistence, trying new things, risk-taking, how to cope with getting things wrong, observing people around us, negotiating how other people observe us in turn and much more.

Games and activities can also be an extremely helpful part of teaching and learning the Alexander Technique, especially for teachers who like to work with groups. Experiencing something in the context of a game or activity can add an element of fun to a learning process, and this can take it out of the 'right/wrong' paradigm and into a learning experience less conditioned by habitual patterns of use. What we often remember weeks, months or even years after attending a class or workshop is not what the teacher said, but what engaged us, what we experienced and enjoyed, and what we figured out for ourselves. Through games, people can explore their own habits and coordination in an enjoyable way, discovering a principle of the AT autonomously, rather than having the teacher tell them the principle and then demonstrate it.

There is also a social element to games and activities. In fact, some people prefer to learn in groups. It allows them to observe not only themselves, but also the other people in the group. As well as providing a great source of reflective feedback, this gives people a chance to take themselves helpfully out of the centre of attention if they wish, enabling them to decide their own degree of participation. And finally, a well-planned group class with a variety of activities can bring about enjoyable social connections.

As teachers who love working with groups, we are constantly on the lookout for new games—and inventing or adapting our own. The games in this book come from our AT training, from workshops we attended, from conversations with other teachers, from games we played as kids, and from our own practices as AT teachers. The origins of some of the games are lost in the mists of time, but where possible we have tried to attribute each game to the teacher we learned it from.

When we realised we had amassed quite a few games, we decided it would be fun to make a small book as a resource for teachers who loved working with groups, as well as for those who enjoy using activities with individual students. Although most of the activities here are designed for groups, there are also plenty that can be used in individual lessons.

This book is dedicated to all teachers who work with groups, or are planning to start. We hope you enjoy using the book and making the games your own.