

Favorite Games

By Penny Calcina

One of my brother's favorite games growing up was Lincoln Logs. He would sit for long periods, contentedly placing one log after another, creating the forts and adventures of his dreams. I liked the idea, but the painstaking process of placing one after the other in careful purpose was more than my small patience could endure. I preferred "pretend" games, where I was the teacher of the classroom or the heroine (of course) of grand adventurous plays. I would swing on my beloved swing set for hours, singing my heart to the world. Or I would color – endlessly creating kaleidoscopic pages of various hues and pizzazz, staying meticulously within the lines; I was so good at that...

As I grew up and had my own family, I watched them play with great abandonment: skits and plays, dolls and crayons, and yes, Legos and Lincoln Logs. We had great fun creating and they amazed me as they labored, lining up cars over and over again getting them just right. Lego creations and Lincoln Log cities came forth well beyond my own imagination. They still were not my forte.

Then something happened. Ten years or so ago, I got out those crayons again, this time just for me. I began to color outside the lines, free spirited creations of colors that didn't "go together", squiggles and shapes no one else would recognize came forth by the reams and I rediscovered Lincoln Logs. No, not the game of my childhood, but the internal Lincoln Logs of my own life. How had they been arranged? Which ones had been chosen consciously and which ones were there without my conscious choosing? What were the emotions behind the choices of laying them out just that way? I began to disassemble those reality-building Logs and examined them one at a time. As I was ready, I placed them down again, now in the place of my choosing. They were shuffled, discarded, added to and rebuilt again and again – inside out, from the bottom up and the top down. With some inner trepidation, I saw the stark truth that many of them contained and I also began to wake up to the fluid nature of those pieces. If I put them there, I could just as well place them differently. It was, after all, my construction.

I am still remodeling the Lincoln Logs of my life. I realize we work with a set of unlimited pieces, unlimited possibilities. My desire is to place each one through conscious choice and evaluate all those I uncover that have been placed from a limited belief – those voices, inside and out, that say, "Well it has to go here, doesn't it?" Does it indeed?

I wish you a set of Lincoln Logs containing an infinity of pieces, never limited in their design capabilities, fluid and ever changing. See you on the playground!

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