

Over the year my opinion on the need to love games to be a good gamification designer has fluctuated. In the early days, I was more flexible on the idea. It was all about psychology in a nearly pure form, understand behaviour and use that understanding to encourage the behaviours that you want. The “game” aspect was less important as gamification is not making games!

However, as I work on more and more projects it becomes clear that this is rubbish. Anything beyond the most simple of applications of gamification needs a solid understanding of games. It is not necessary to be a games designer as such, but having a good idea of what makes games work is an essential. If I was not a gamer, I would not be able to do my job at this level! I would have no inspiration for a start. After that, I would have no idea what worked and why. Finally, I would not have the love of play that is so desperately needed in good gamification implementations.

As I look at more and more examples of projects that have been successful, they all fall more in common with games than with “traditional” gamification. It is rare to find a good case study that relies on a completely non-gamelike experience.

So play games, study games, understand games, read game design books (Art of Game Design and A Theory of Fun especially!), make games and most of all enjoy games!

On a sort of related note, my latest SlideShare of the next set of Core Principles is now available.

Gamification Elements and Mechanics.

[Gamification Elements and Mechanics](#) from [Andrzej Marczewski](#)