"So this brings us to the end of my search?" asked the young man.

"Yes, we have covered everything that you need to know," responded Hugh. He paused for a moment and then continued. "Do you remember when you started your search," asked Hugh?

“Yes,” responded the young man. “I wanted to know if I could have fun at work. I wanted to know if work could be something more than toil and drudgery. I didn’t want to hate the place where I spend over one-third of my life. I knew there had to be something better.”

“And what did you find,” asked Hugh?

“I must admit that I found more than I would have ever expected,” confessed the young man. “Not only did I find a model to make work more enjoyable, but I found a model which I can use throughout my life.”

“And what did you learn,” continued Hugh?

“I learned that I can play at work,” responded the young man. “I learned that there are six components of play. I learned how to apply these components to the workplace and to my life. I learned how I can enhance the workplace for my employees as well as myself.”

Hugh changed his line of questioning. "Do you remember the story about the three boxes of life?"

Having learned his lessons well, the young man responded. "When I was young, I was in the box of play, preparing for the box of work. When I entered the second box, the box of work, I was taught not to play any more. And then after a
lifetime of work, I am again expected to reenter the box of play when I we retire."

Hugh completed the young man’s thought as he pointed to a plaque hanging on the wall behind him. "It seems rather odd that we spend two-thirds of our lives at play and like the missing link in the middle of the chain, play has no value to us in our work," continued Hugh.

"I agree," noted the young man.

Moving on to his next point, Hugh continued. "Some experts focus on play in our youth as preparation for adult life. Others focus on play as recapitulation where we relive our cultural past through play. Still others focus on the need of play to rest us from the toil and drudgery of a day's work. And, still others suggest that we need play to use up the surplus energy which we didn't use during our day's work."

"Granted, people study play for a lot of reasons, but why is play important to us," asked the young man?

"Play is important in our lives for two reasons," added Hugh. "First, play is a basic human experience. Simply, it is important to us because it is so basic. Everyone plays. People may forget that they play or they may unlearn the notion that they play as they grow older. Still, everyone plays. It is that simple."

"So it is something which we all do and it is as important to our existence
as food, water and shelter," summarized the young man.

"Correct," agreed Hugh. He pointed to another plaque on the wall. Etched on it was a simple sentence composed of two simple words: 'everyone plays.'

“Simple but true,” the young man nodded his head in agreement. He paused for a moment as he contemplated the gravity of the statement. Then he continued. “And the second reason?”

"Play is fun," responded Hugh.

"That kind of says it all, doesn't it," added the young man, rhetorically.

"Yes it does," noted Hugh. "We incorporate play into all aspects of our lives. There is no reason why we shouldn't incorporate it into our work too."

"Not only is play fun, but it is a good motivator, and with directed play in the workplace that means increased productivity," summarized the young man.

"I couldn't have said it better," added Hugh as he pointed toward a plaque on the wall which stated 'not only is play fun but it is a good motivator, and with directed play in the workplace, that means increased productivity.' He beamed with a broad smile directed toward the young man.

The young man got an idea. He pulled out his tablet and wrote as he spoke.
“I think that we can apply the who, what, where, when and why concept to directed play.”

“Sounds interesting,” responded Hugh. “Tell me more.”

“First, is the ‘who,’” continued the young man. “In directed play, the who refers to the employees and their motivation. It refers to employees who are intrinsically motivated. It refers to employees who have objectives which are the same as those of the organization.”

“It sounds like you are describing employees who are like paid volunteers,” summarized Hugh.

“Next, is the ‘what’ and I will include the ‘how’ here also,” continued the young man. “The ‘what’ refers to the work which needs completion. The objectives tells us what is to be accomplished. The development of a strategy tells
us how we will accomplish our objective. The understanding of the rules also helps employees to delineate the ‘how.’”

“So, the ‘what’ and ‘how’ tells us how the objectives are implemented,” added Hugh.

“The ‘where’ is described by designer playgrounds,” added the young man. “Designer playgrounds define the space where directed play occurs and where the workgame produces the ‘what.’”

“Sounds good,” noted Hugh. “And ‘when’ refers to what.”

“When refers to when you step onto and off of the playground,” responded the young man. “It defines when you begin and when you end the directed play activity.”

“And the ‘why,’” asked Hugh.

“The ‘why’ is easy,” continued the young man. “Because it is fun! Directed play leads to an enjoyable experience.”

“It is really that simple,” added Hugh. “Remember one of the original questions I asked you when we first met.” He paused just long enough to catch his breath and to respond to his rhetoric question. “Do you want to have fun at work or not?”
“That was a simple question then and it is a simple question to answer now, also,” responded the young man. “I want to have fun; I want to enjoy what I am going to spend one-third of my day doing. The difference is that when I started my search, I knew what I wanted but I didn’t know how to obtain it. Now, I know how to apply specific techniques to my work environment to create directed play.”

Hugh added. “And directed play increases productivity.

They both looked at each other and on cue they both spoke together. “And in business, that’s the bottom line.”

After their laughter ended, Hugh handed the young man a small present wrapped in brown wrapping paper. Carefully, the young man unwrapped the package. Inside was a plaque similar to the ones hanging on the wall behind Hugh’s desk. The young man read the plaque out loud. “With directed play, our employees are like paid volunteers.”

After what seemed a long pause, Hugh continued. "I always like to give people something with which to remember directed play. The plaque brings closure to the riddle involving the volunteer.”

"Yes, in a sense we have come full circle," responded the young man. "From a question and a riddle to a statement on a plaque which summarizes the concept. This plaque is a reminder of the principles of directed play."
"Well put," noted Hugh in closing. "This ends your search. Now you know how to have fun at work!"

The End

As is the case in many fields, there are people whose research and investigation for new knowledge help advance the field. Johan Huizinga is one of those persons and his contribution toward the knowledge of play as presented in his classic *Homo Ludens* has helped provide the stimulation and backdrop for this book. This book reinterprets his principles of play and applies them to the workplace and concept of directed play. The central character Hugh is named in his honor.