

Hi guys! My name is Anna Kipnis and I work as a Senior Gameplay Programmer at Double Fine Productions.



**Psychonauts**



**Brütal Legend**



**The Cave**



**Once Upon a Monster**



**Costume Quest**



**Broken Age**

Just a quick **introduction**. I've worked at Double Fine for **13 years now**, on Psychonauts, Brütal Legend, Costume Quest, Once Upon a Monster, The Cave, Broken Age,



Amnesia Fortnight Prototype

I also designed a **prototype** for a **narrative simulation** game, Dear Leader.



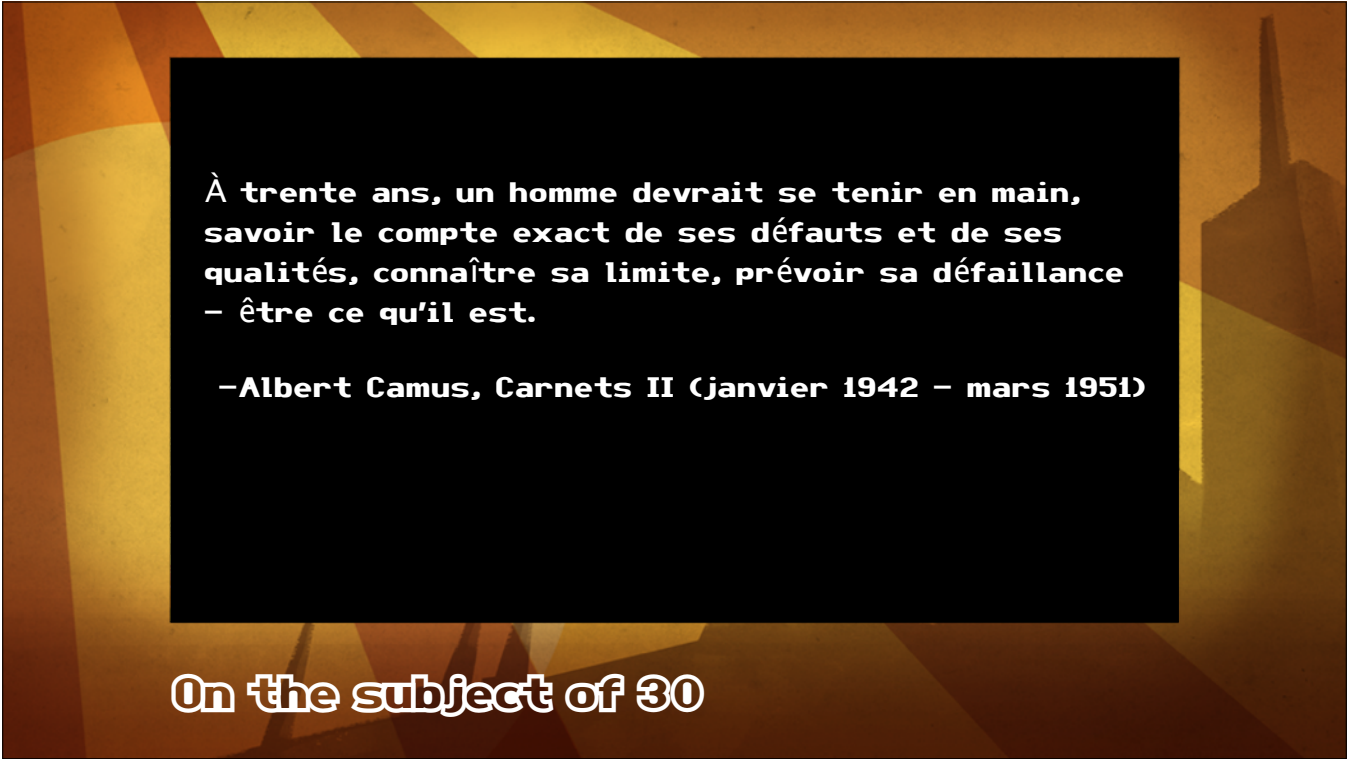
**Headlander**



**Rhombus of Ruin**

and now I'm working on **Headlander** and **Psychonauts: Rhombus of Ruin**.



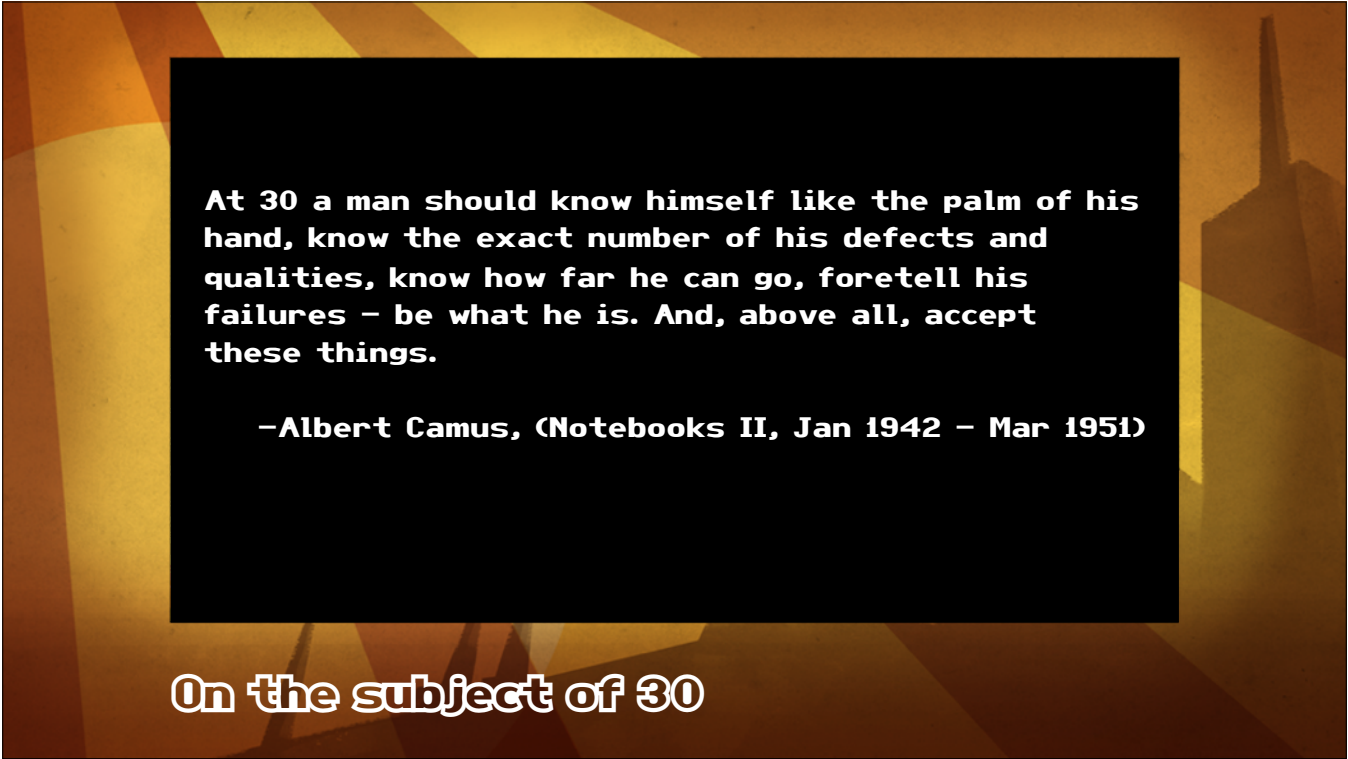


**À trente ans, un homme devrait se tenir en main,  
savoir le compte exact de ses défauts et de ses  
qualités, connaître sa limite, prévoir sa défaillance  
– être ce qu'il est.**

**–Albert Camus, Carnets II (janvier 1942 – mars 1951)**

**On the subject of 30**

The very first thing I thought of when I heard the theme (30 years) was this quote by Albert Camus

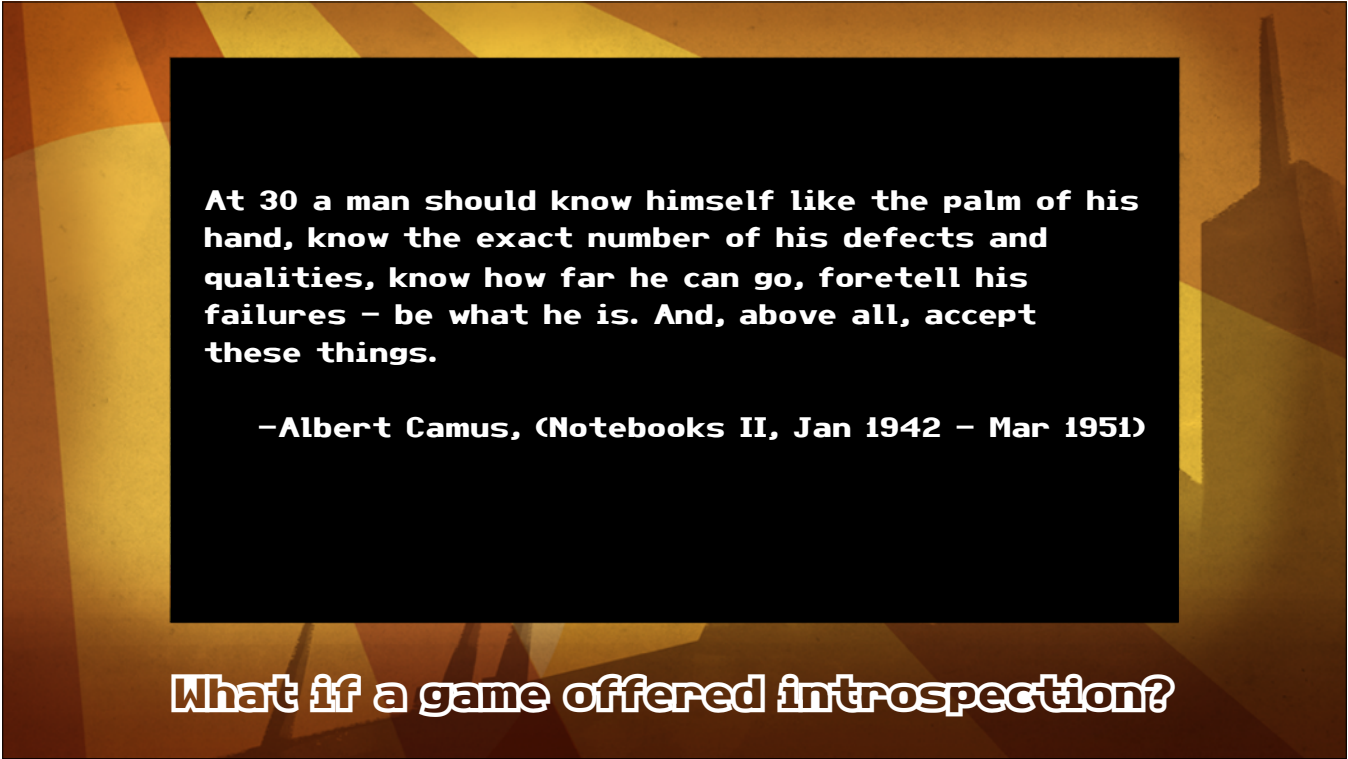


At 30 a man should know himself like the palm of his hand, know the exact number of his defects and qualities, know how far he can go, foretell his failures – be what he is. And, above all, accept these things.

–Albert Camus, (Notebooks II, Jan 1942 – Mar 1951)

On the subject of 30

Here it is in English (read). This is something that I **thought a lot about** in my 20s, nearing that **notorious milestone**. And to be honest, I'm **not sure** that I quite **succeeded** in answering these questions for myself, which is why the idea of **basing a game** on this **quote** is **so appealing** to me.



At 30 a man should know himself like the palm of his hand, know the exact number of his defects and qualities, know how far he can go, foretell his failures – be what he is. And, above all, accept these things.

–Albert Camus, (Notebooks II, Jan 1942 – Mar 1951)

**What if a game offered introspection?**

What if a game could help you **gain insight** into yourself, in **the way** that **Camus** talks about here, by **playing it for 30 years**?

To be, or not to be,  
that is the question:  
Whether 'tis Nobler  
in the mind to suffer  
The Slings and Arrows  
of outrageous Fortune,



**Hamlet, written in 1599 – 1602**

It's a **challenge** to **keep a game relevant** for 30 years, but the **quote** I chose as inspiration **helps me** here, because even **400 years ago**, **self-introspection** was just as relevant.

To be, or not to be,  
that is the question:  
Whether 'tis Nobler  
in the mind to suffer  
The Slings and Arrows  
of outrageous Fortune,



Art by Kate Beaton, btw

It seems to be kind of **timeless**, a **critical part** of the **human experience**.  
into oneself?

But how do I **capture** that in a **game**? And anyway, what **offers** insight





**Precedent for self-reflection?**

Initially, I looked at precedent in **electronic** interactions. It's interesting because **computers** have **not been around** all that **long** and most of us only **got to start using the internet** in 1995 -- **only 20 years ago**.



This is the **best example** I could find. This is an **app** where you **take one second of video every day** for a **year** and at the end of the year it creates a 365secs or so video for you. It sounds simple but the **result is** quite **extraordinary**.



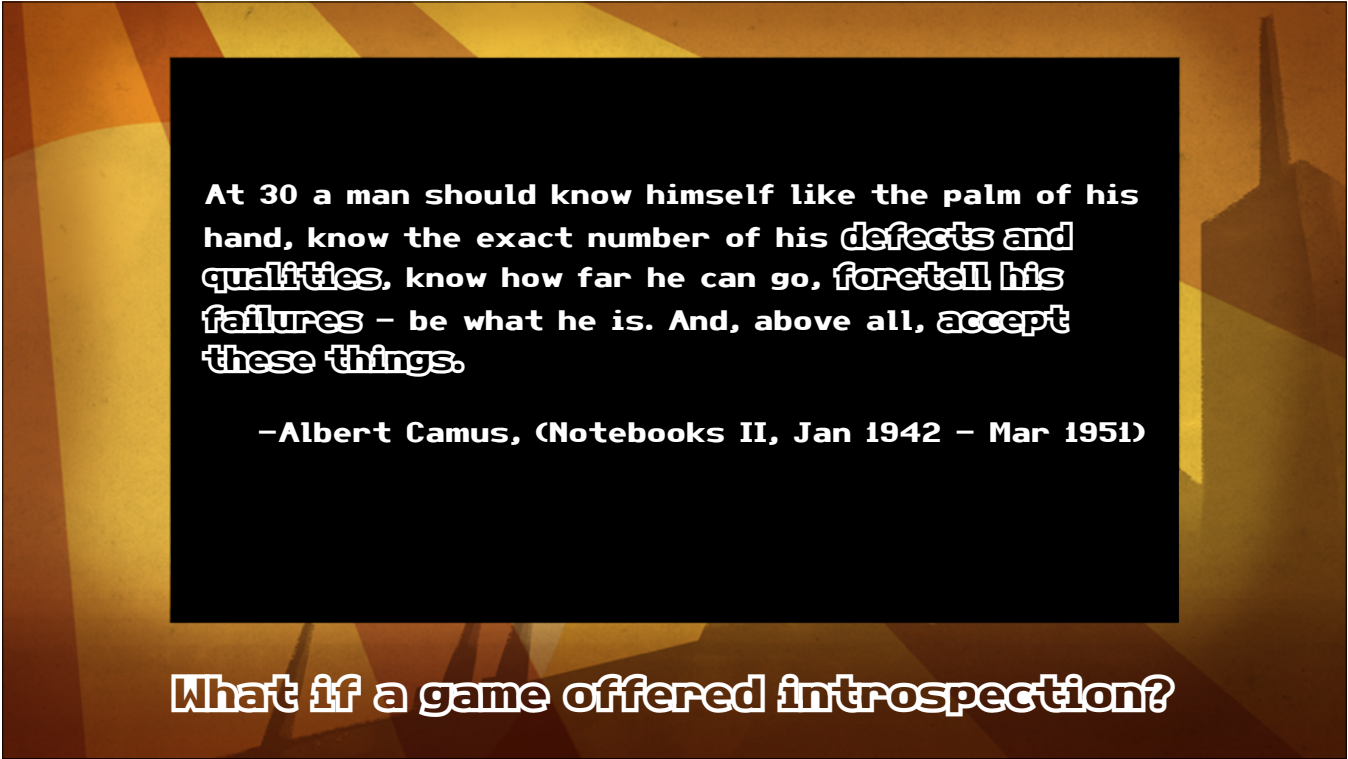
Videos by Jess and Ben Burbank



I remember when I **first watched this video** I was **struck** by **how moving** it was -- and **these aren't even my kids or my life**. This is what **my friend Jess** who took the video **said about it**: "It has served as a cheesy, but **real reminder** that **you only live once**. You **only have that one day** to capture what you did. It has made me **stop and really NOTICE** the little things that make just an **average day special** and **capture that moment** when **the dog is making a funny face** or **the kids are dancing in the kitchen** to a song. The **day wasn't remarkable** for some **special event**, but just BEING was remarkable. And then **that day is gone** and **you can't get it back**, so **find what made that day special**."



So this app was a **huge inspiration**. But although doing 1 second videos provides a **gorgeous** and **profound** record of your life,



At 30 a man should know himself like the palm of his hand, know the exact number of his defects and qualities, know how far he can go, foretell his failures – be what he is. And, above all, accept these things.

–Albert Camus, (Notebooks II, Jan 1942 – Mar 1951)

**What if a game offered introspection?**

it falls a **bit short** for **my theme**, well for one thing because it's **not exactly a game**, but also because it **doesn't offer** that **crucial feedback** about yourself: what are your **best qualities**? What are **your faults**? How do you **come to accept them**?





## The List Game

I want to tell you about this **kind of vulgar game** I used to **play in college** with my friends **one on one**, when we were **very bored late at night** over **coffee at diners..**



## The List Game

What you do is **pick two names** of people **not currently present**,



The List Game

and then take turns asking "**whom would you rather bone?**" I think **we've all played** this kind of game,



but the twist was that you **keep** asking these, taking into account **how your friend answered**. The **preferences** were **often very surprising** and **intriguing**, and the **art was** to **ask your friend questions** in a way that was **entertaining for them** --





## The List Game

**don't annoy** them by only asking about **people they don't like** at all, **don't bore** them by only **easy choices**, or choices **between people** they **felt nothing** towards. **Mix and match unappealing** people of the **sex they were attracted to**, with **hot people** of the **opposite**.

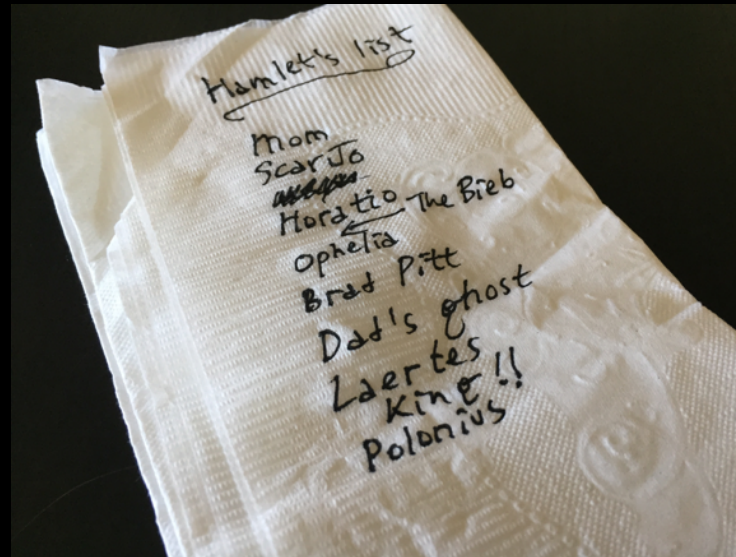




Slip in **celebrity crushes** to get a sense of just **how appealing** these **real** people were to them. The **important thing** was to try to **challenge them** in **interesting** ways while keeping things **running smoothly**.

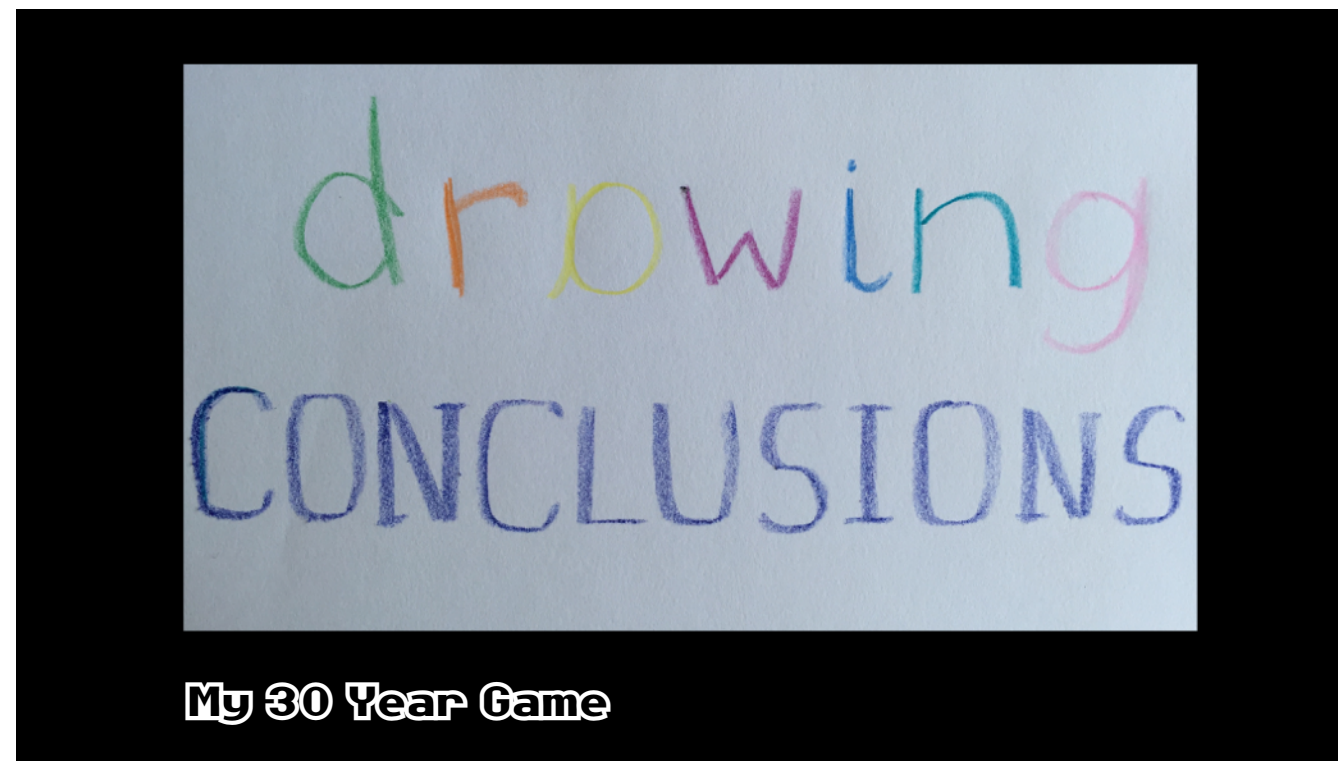


There was a **thrill of confessing** these very **private things** to another **living person**, but you **learn a lot** about your friend and yourself, and that was the real pleasure of the experience.

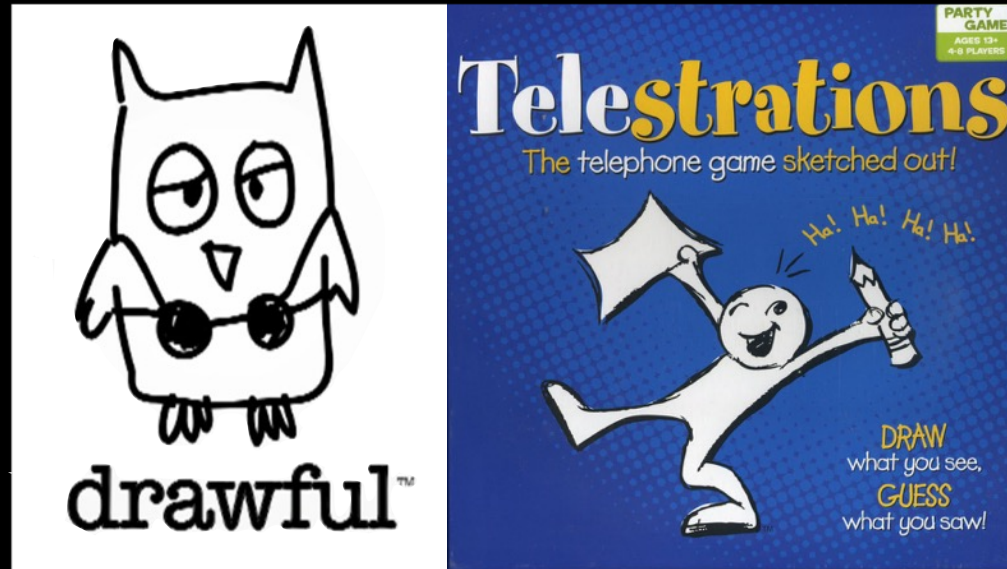


### Insightful Artifact

At the end of the night, you **each get a list**, scrawled on a **diner napkin**, of **whom you truly like**, even with some **insights** about **how much**.



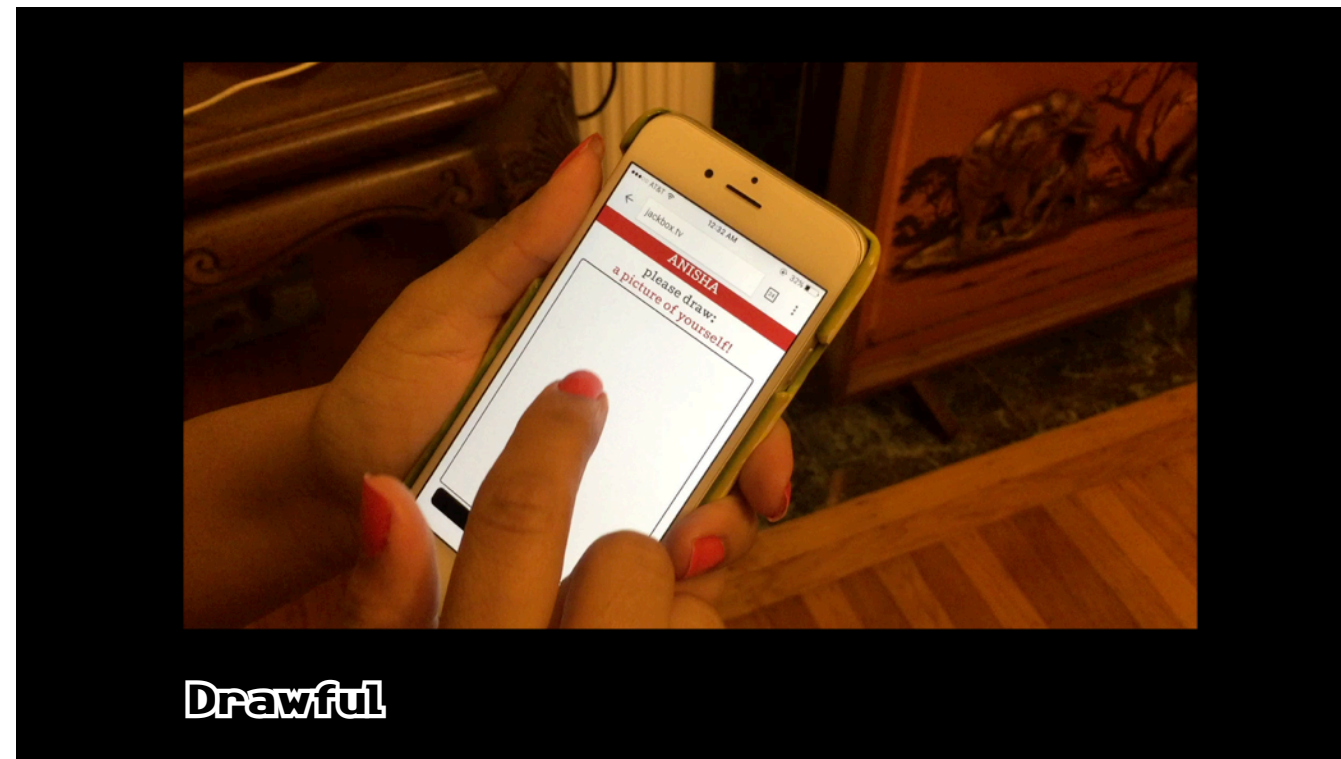
The **game I came up** with for the challenge, **Drawing Conclusions**, takes a lot of **inspiration** from **The List Game**,



**Inspiration**

and also from some of my **favorite party games**, like Jackbox's **Drawful** and **Telestrations**.





**Drawful**, in particular, **has** this wonderful **low barrier to entry** — the phone **screen** that you're **drawing on** is **so small** that there is a **very low chance** of your **drawing** actually **turning out well**. It means that your **friends** who **don't** think they **have any art talent** aren't **intimidated** by it. That **impediment** is the **great equalizer**.

**Radiolab Podcast Articles**

## Happy Birthday, Good Dr. Sacks

Tuesday, July 09, 2013 - 05:00 PM

[f](#) [t](#) [e](#)

00:00 / 00:00

[▶ Listen](#) [+ Add](#) [↓ Download](#) [<> Embed](#) [⌂ Stream](#)



One of our favorite human beings turns 80 this week. To celebrate, Robert asks Oliver Sacks to look back on his career, and explain how thousands of worms and a motorbike accident led to a brilliant writing career.

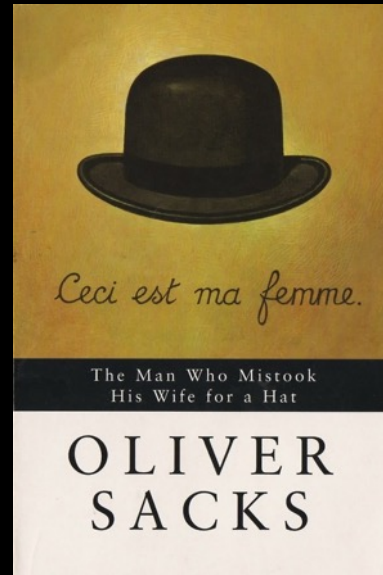
More Oliver:

*"The Joy of Old Age. (No Kidding.)" Oliver Sacks reflects on his life, and turning 80, in the New York Times*

Oliver Sacks (Andy Mills)

**Radiolab**

This past month I came across this incredible **story on** the **Radiolab** podcast about the late **Dr. Oliver Sacks**, talking about the **unique approach** he took with his work.



Dr. Oliver Sacks

He was a **neurologist** who **wrote case studies** in **prose** about his patients' **mental experiences**.



Let me **play** you a **little bit** of the **segment** [hit play and wait]. When you read Dr Sacks' case studies, you **get the sense** that he was really **trying to understand** his **patients' mental experiences** and **convey them to the reader** in a way that **encouraged empathy** and **helped you relate** to them. It offered this incredible insight into **what being them was like**. I thought this was so **perfect** for what **I was trying to do** with my **game**.



## Step 1 = the curator

So without further ado, the **game** I'm proposing **works like this**. You, the **curator**, **draw a picture** in the **form of a question**. Basically, just a **drawing** that **needs a response**.



**Step 1 – the curator**

To **make** the **question clear**, you **put a question mark** somewhere in the drawing.





## Step 2 = the player

Then, you **hand** this question **to** the **player**. They **answer your question**, by **modifying the drawing** you made (preferably in a **different color**, so you can still tell what the original question was).

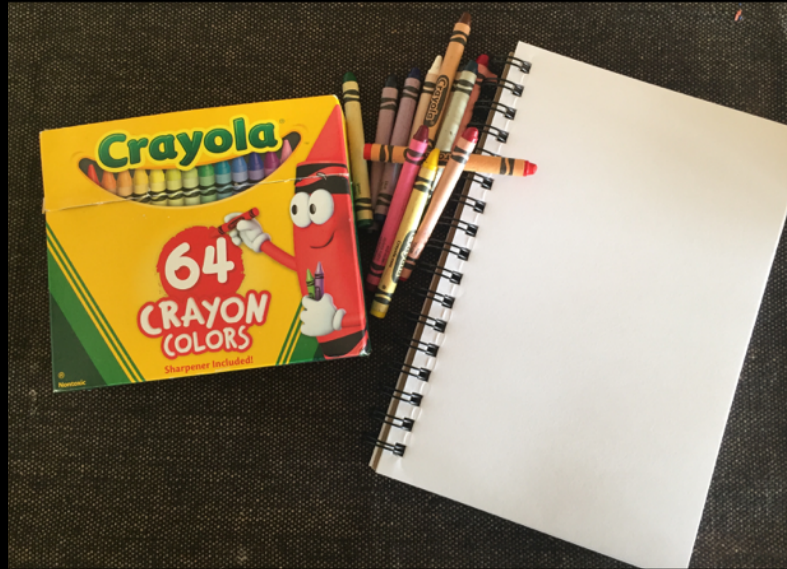
The object could be  
meat? Or a bottle  
of liquor. More likely  
it is a bottle of liquor.  
The figure is ready to  
dig in with gusto - the player  
seems to feel that  
pleasurable food and drink  
comes with immediate(?)  
~~not~~ delayed(?) negative(?)  
effects.

### Step 3 = Oliver Sacks insight

Step 3, the **player hands back** the **drawing** to the curator. The curator **looks at** the **answer** and tries to **come up** with some **analysis** based on the player's answer. Here I was **directly inspired by Oliver Sacks** and his **observations** about the **people in his care**. You can **write as much** or **as little** as you like, but the **idea** here is to **really try to think** about how the player answered and **with compassion**, give them **some insight into themselves**.

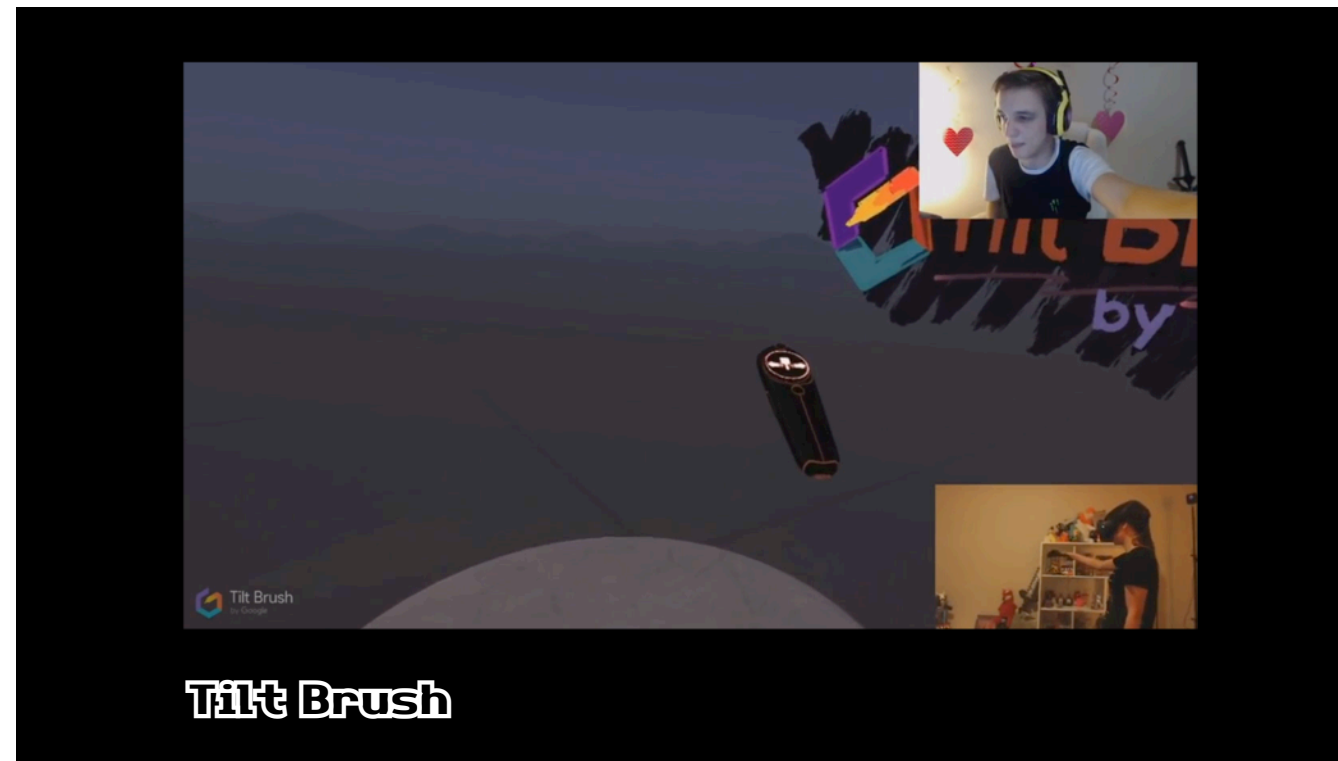


You can **take turns being curator and player** or do **questions** for each other **simultaneously** if you prefer. You can do a **whole bunch** of these in **one night** or **spread it across days or weeks**. The **important thing** is that you **save the drawings** (either the physical copies or some electronic version) so that you can **look back at them** at a **later time** and **reflect** on yourself.



**Play simultaneously!**

A couple of things are important to make this game fun. First, using **technology** in a way that **removes the barrier to entry**. In my **playtests**, I chose to use **crayons** and a **small sketchbook**. It **keeps** the **drawings simple**, which is more fun anyway, and **removes** the **pressure** of trying to draw something well.

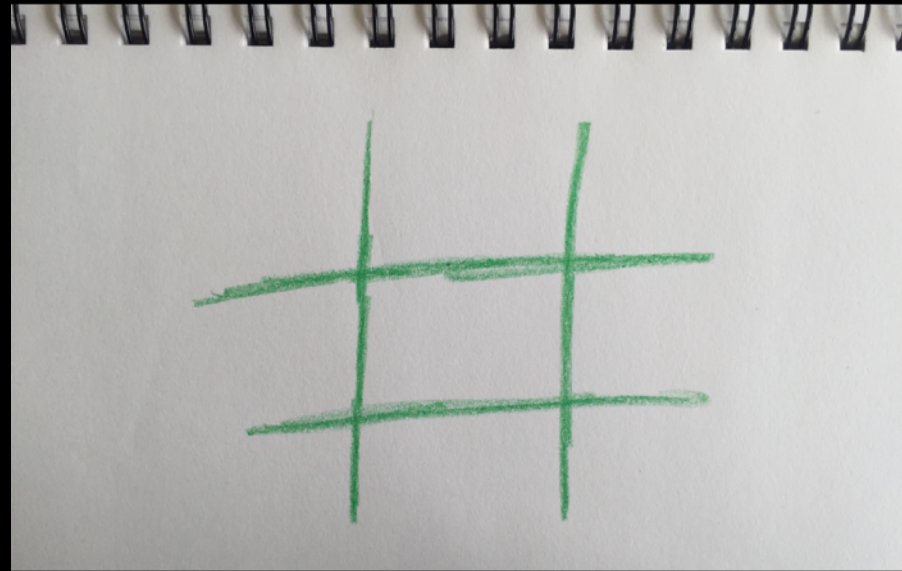


If in 10 years' time the human race stops drawing in 2D altogether and we only do 3D art, the same constraints have to apply. The drawing tools for the game have to be simple enough for a child to use, to help preserve that playfulness and low barrier to entry.



The other important detail is the question mark. It has to be clear that the drawing wants a response.





**Tic Tac Toe board**

It's sort of like if someone drew a tic tac toe board, you would know that they wanted to play tic tac toe with you,



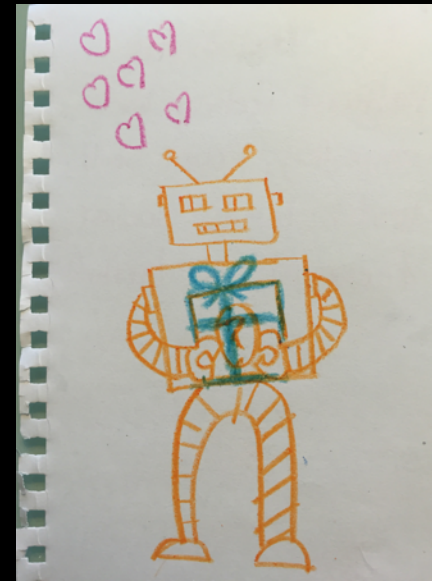
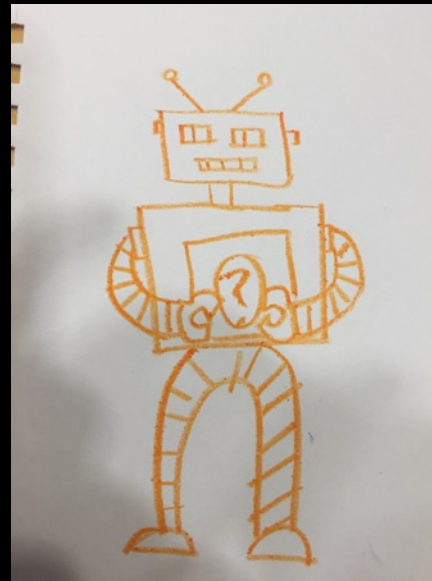
?

seeing a drawing with a question mark would be a signal that they'd like to play this game with you, and it would be fairly clear what you need to do, at least at the start.



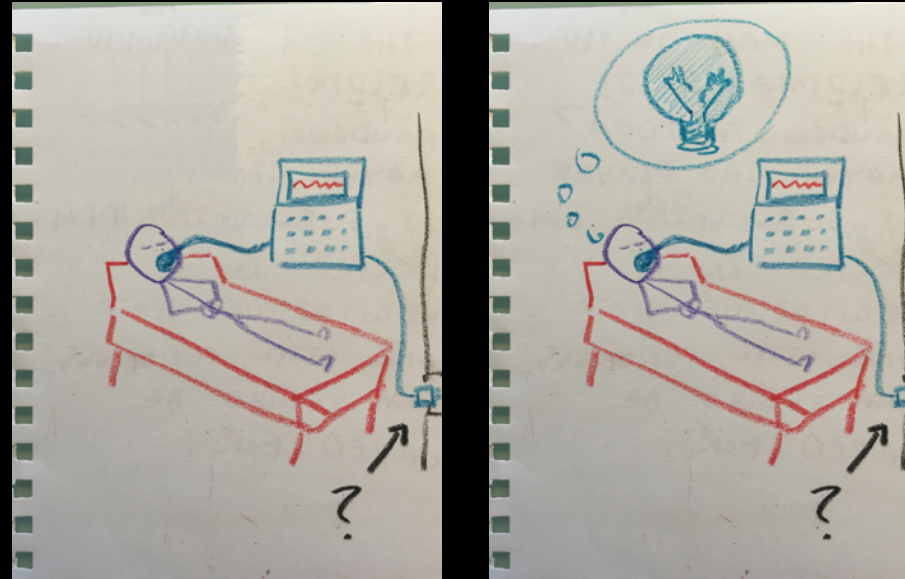
Playtests!

I did a few playtests of this game with some friends and I want to just show you a couple more examples.



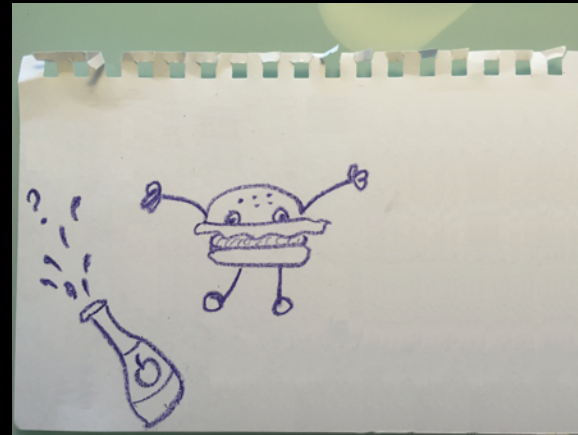
Playtests!

Analysis: player seems to say - even though it's without feeling or empathy, Robot still understands social decorum with regard to birthdays.



**Playtests!**

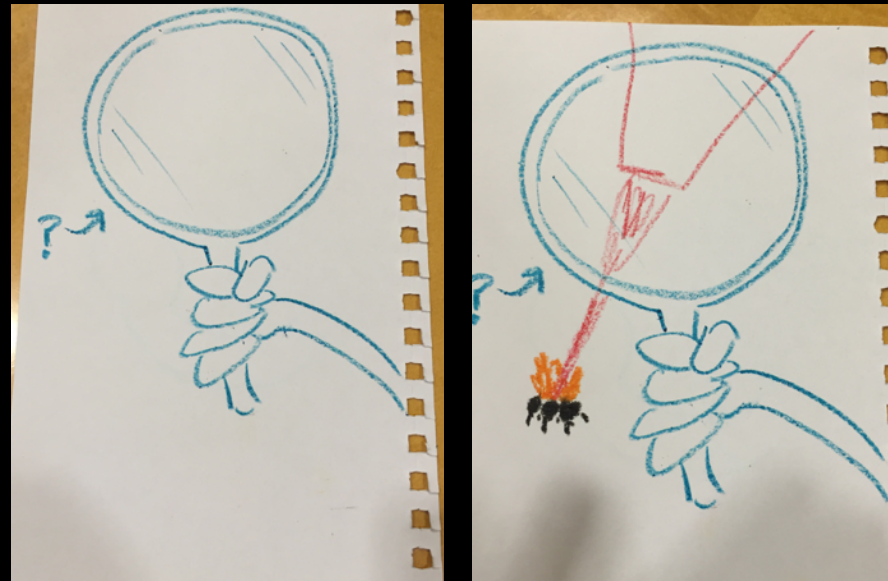
Analysis: The man on the respirator is having an idea? Maybe the player is suggesting that people in a vegetative state are still conscious and should be cared for.



**Playtests!**

Analysis: The player identifies with Mayor McCheese, who is represented here as being lost and adrift in a vast and empty universe.





**Playtests!**

Analysis: player is saying "I choose destruction over introspection." (It was a mirror!)



## Playtests!

Analysis: Wow, this question and player's answers yielded a lot of insight here. I was really surprised to see that babies were in first place. I guess this person is a humanist and/or a parent. Next is space or universe! It's like the player recognizes that you do need to look beyond yourself, even though babies are important. Then next, it's art! Curious to see how far down the list love was. Maybe the player is not that into romantic love. Filial love does appear strong.



**drawingconclusions.info**

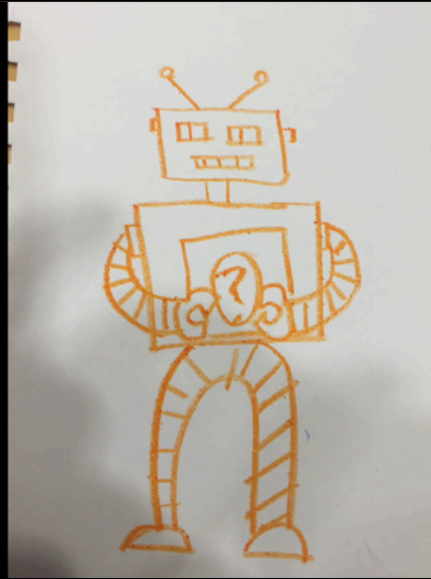
**Tweet at @doubleanna!**

So there you have it. I've posted some others at this URL. Note that many of them are quite raunchy. If you'd like to try and play this, tweet the question, answer, and analysis to me and I'll add them! Maybe I can even do an analysis for you! No promises.



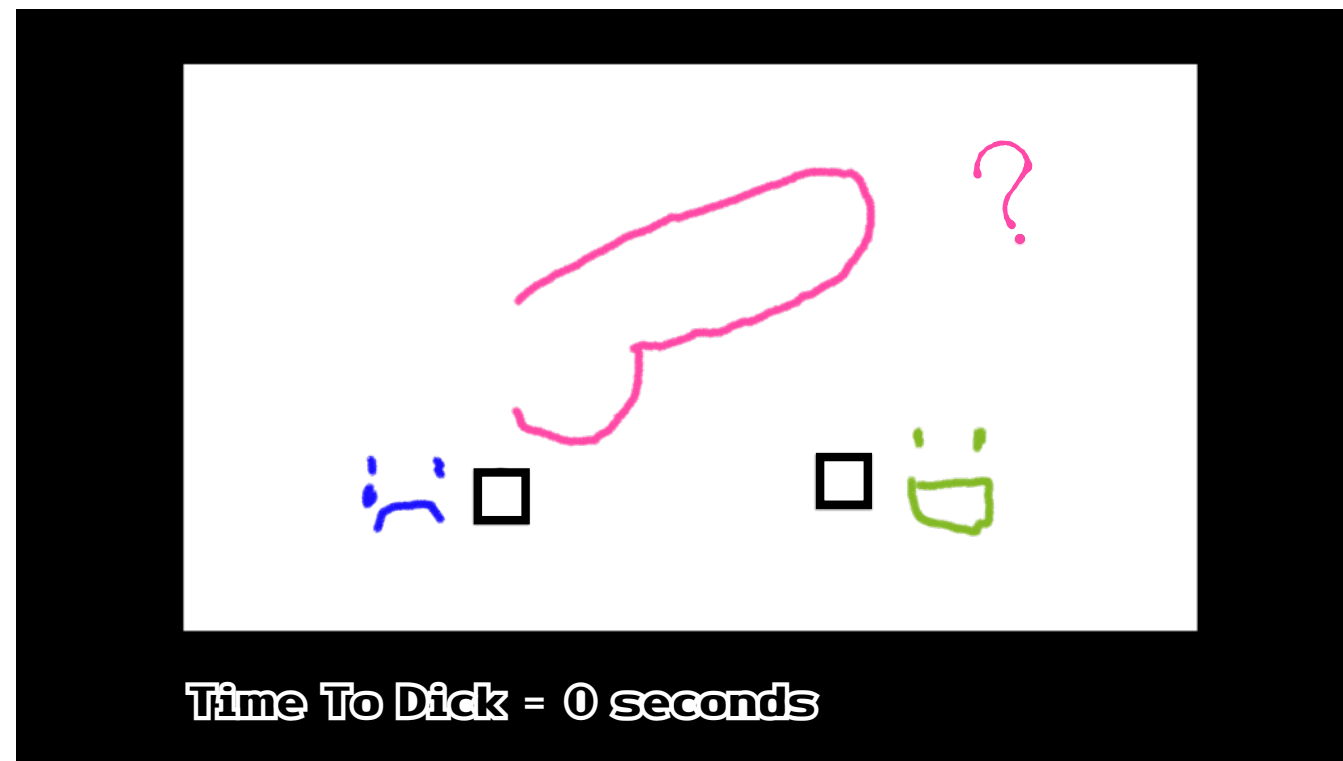
**Each player = 1 color**

After play testing a bunch, it became clear that each player should use only one color to make it clear which was the question and which the answer



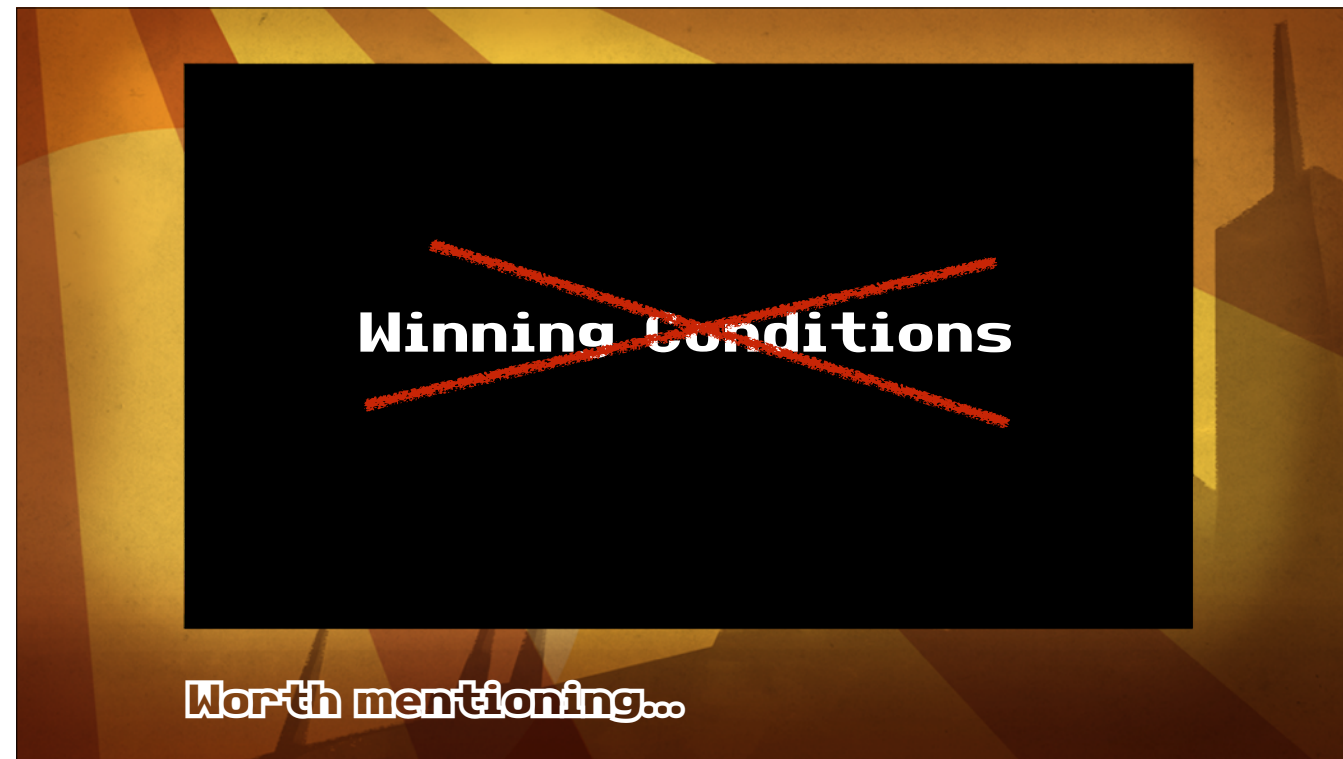
**Adapts as a video game!**

An electronic version of this game would work too! The drawings might be easier to save and it would be cool to flip back and forth between the original question and the answer. In fact, the very first drawing I made with this game was purposely done in a crappy paint program.

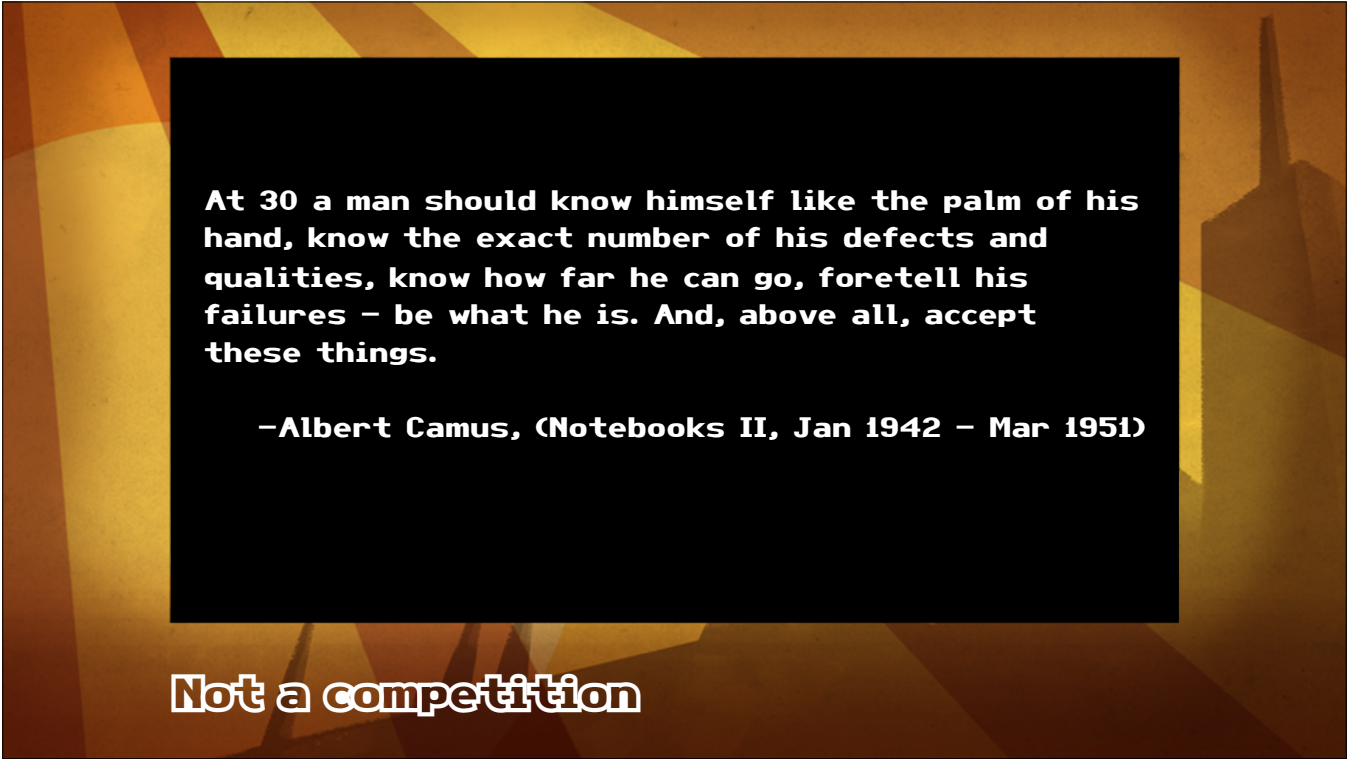


And if I'm going to be honest about my design process, here it is.





I think it's important to mention that there are no official winning conditions in this game.

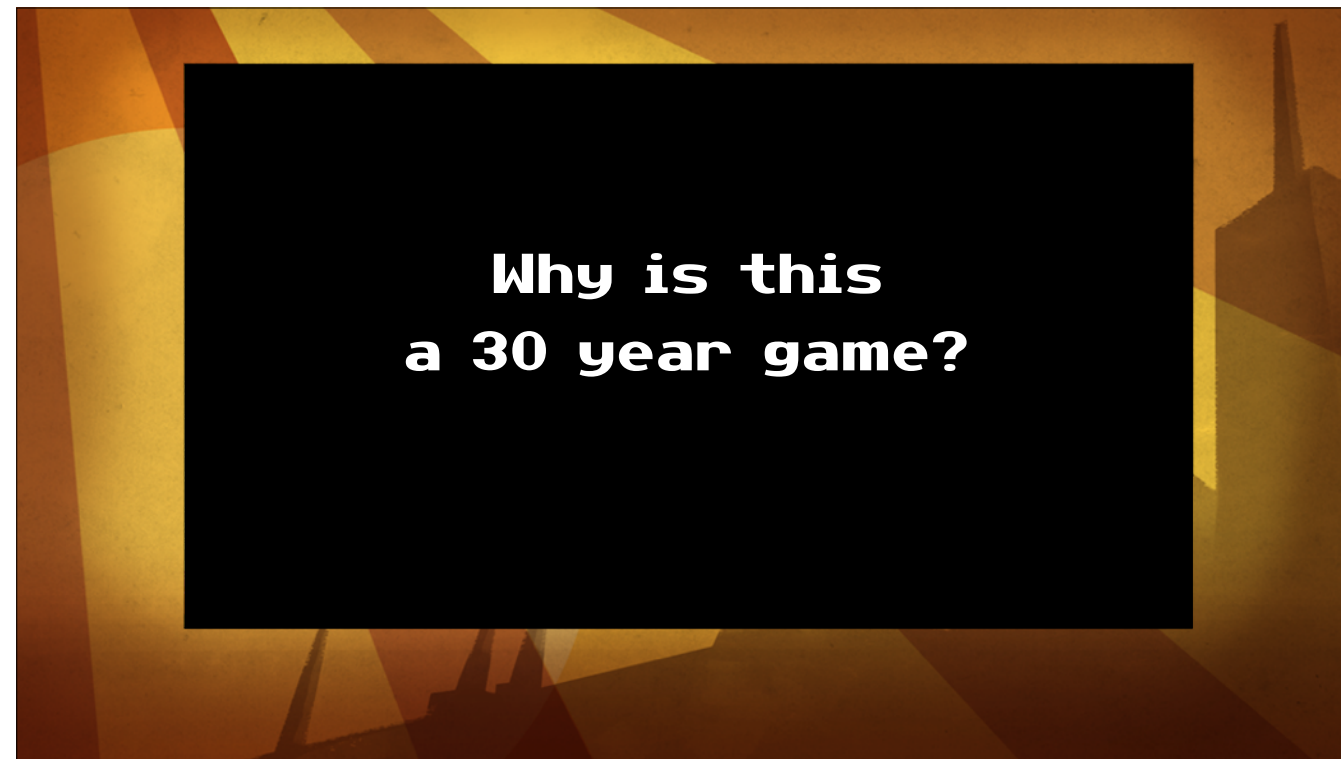


**At 30 a man should know himself like the palm of his hand, know the exact number of his defects and qualities, know how far he can go, foretell his failures – be what he is. And, above all, accept these things.**

**–Albert Camus, (Notebooks II, Jan 1942 – Mar 1951)**

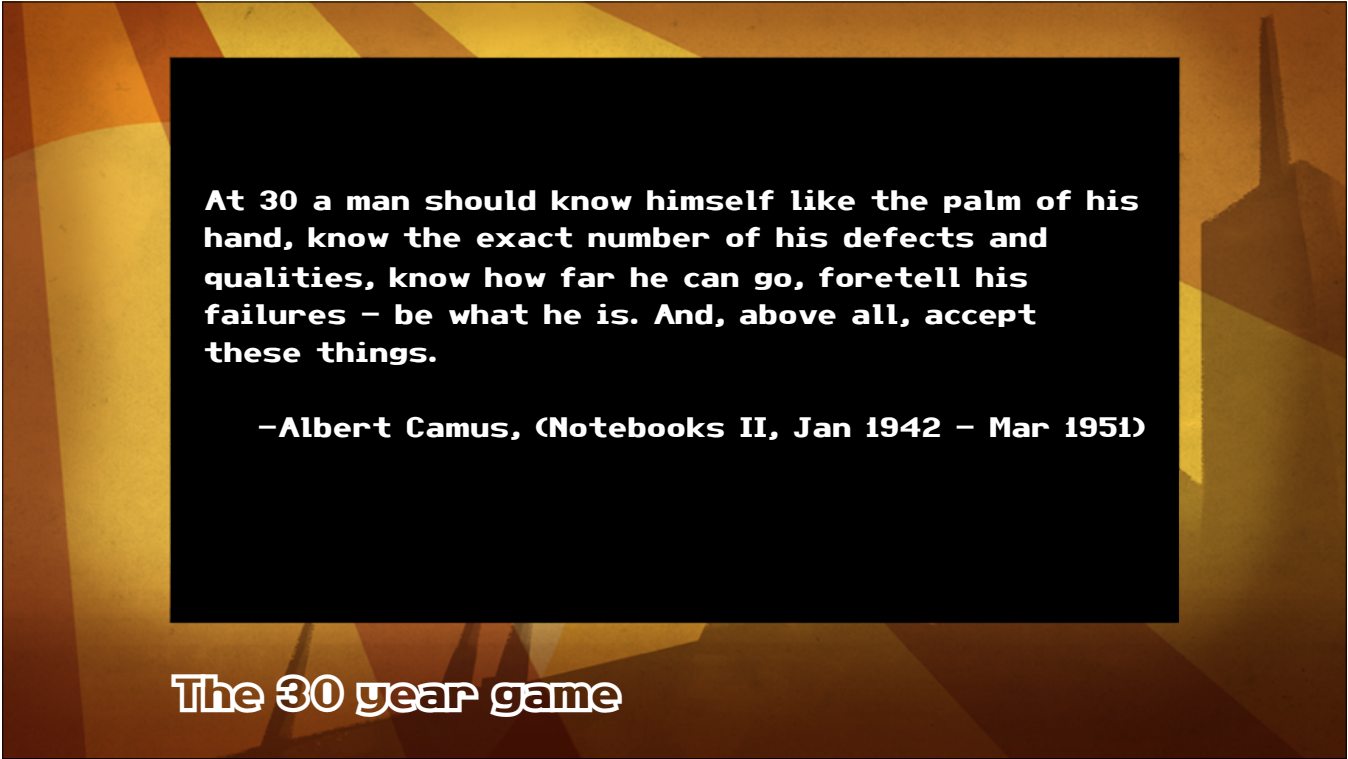
**Not a competition**

I suppose you win if you can answer this about yourself, but it isn't a competition.



So why is this a 30 year game?

[Personal insight takes a really long time, it's not something you're going to gain after just one evening with this game. But if you keep playing it on and off over the course of say, 30 years, you will build up some record of these drawings, with the analyses about your answers, maybe it will help you with your journey of self-reflection.]

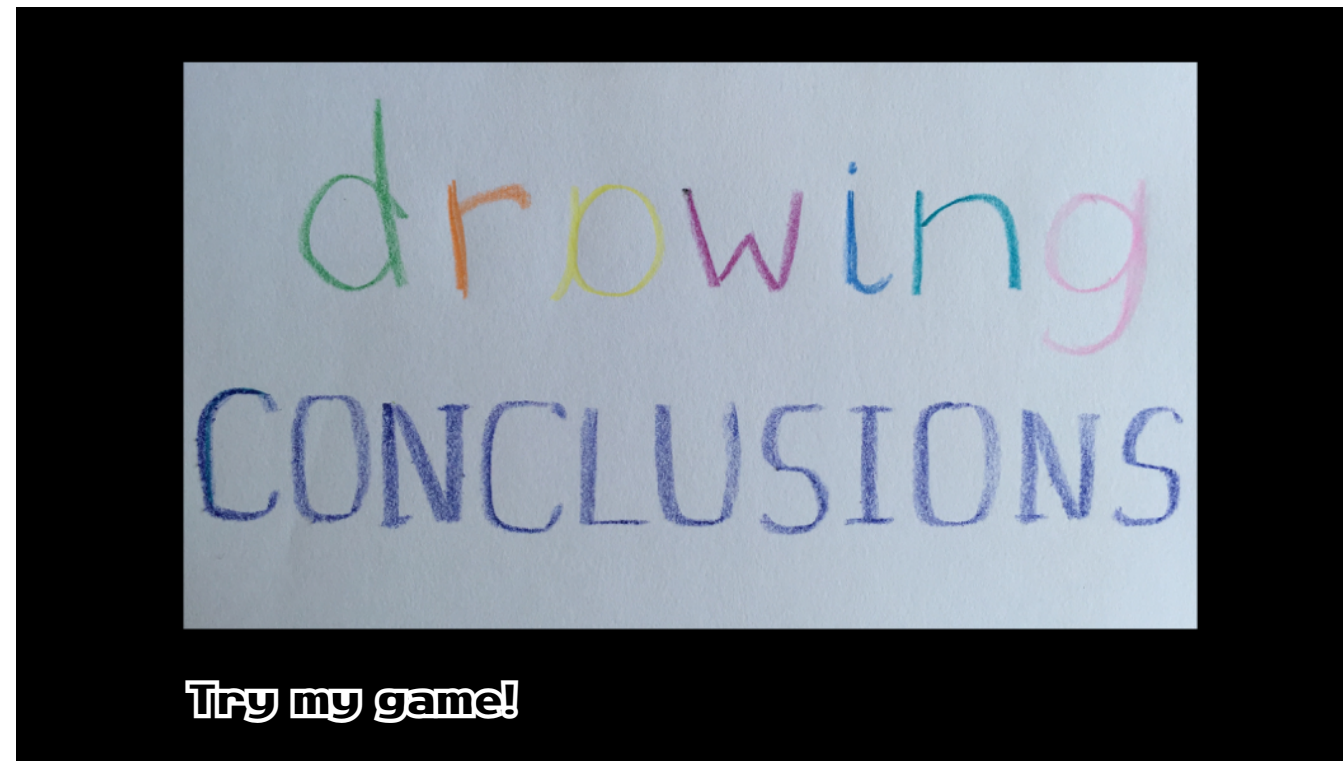


**At 30 a man should know himself like the palm of his hand, know the exact number of his defects and qualities, know how far he can go, foretell his failures – be what he is. And, above all, accept these things.**

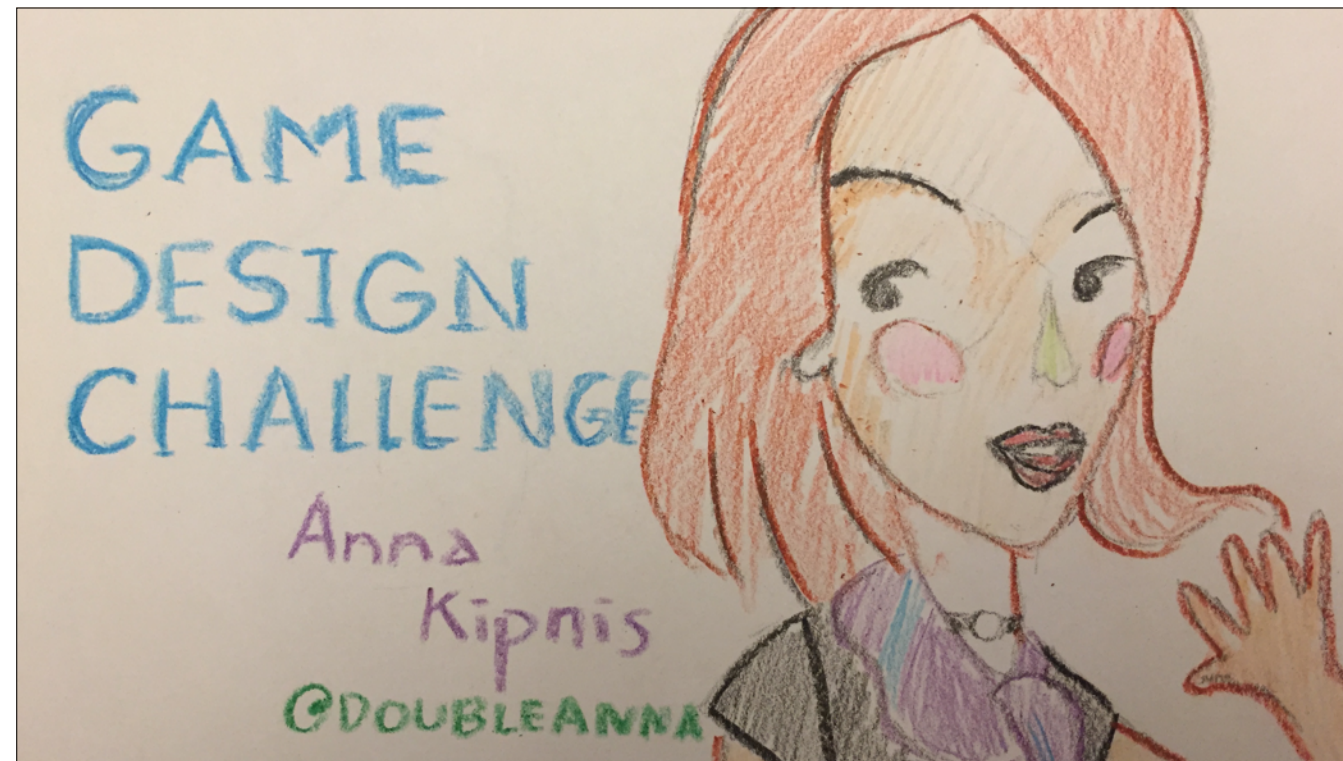
**–Albert Camus, (Notebooks II, Jan 1942 – Mar 1951)**

## **The 30 year game**

Well, as Camus said, the process of gaining insight into oneself is not something that happens in a day, a week, a month, or a year. It takes a lifetime, or at least a generation. It's important to take time every once in a while, to do things that offer you a look into yourself..



and I think playing a game like Drawing Conclusions can give you some of those insights in a playful way.



Thanks!



The background of the slide features a stylized, low-poly illustration of a city skyline in shades of brown and gold. A large, solid black rectangle is centered on the slide, containing the website address in white text.

**drawingconclusions.info**

**Tweet at @doubleanna!**

(end slide)