Something to Play: Zen Counting

In Zen Counting the idea is for a group of people to try to count from 1 to 10 together.

If you’re running this game, if you’re using it to get a group to start playing together, then ask everyone to sit or lie down close to each other and close their eyes. And then, when someone is so moved, she begins the count: one.

Someone else then continues to the next number, whenever he is moved: two.

The trick is to get to ten without two or more people saying a number at the same time. If they do, you have to start over from one.

It's not easy. And importantly, it's no one person's fault when it doesn't work. It's more an opportunity for people to play with the silence between the numbers. To grow more sensitive to it so they can anticipate when just the right amount of time has elapsed for the next number to be spoken and then to say that number first.

It can get frustrating. But it takes two to be wrong, so it's never something you need to take personally.

It’s not about imagination as such, but it’s about being together and responding and thinking and listening, and it’s a wonderful game to help people to start to feel comfortable with being together and playing together and the places that might lead.