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As a rule, I am all for in-house events. And other kinds of events too. That said, I want to zoom out to the bigger picture. It's become fashionable to talk about employee engagement as if it were adult day care. The more activities and surprises the better.

HR departments are rebranding themselves as "people care specialists" and are looking for fun new way to prove that they care. But the HR didn't start the trend. Look at all the day camps, retreats, theme parks, and coloring books for grown-ups.

We really hate being adults, don't we?

It didn't turn out the way we thought it would. We are burnt out and stressed. And we want to go back. We want to do something easy and fun for a change. Something we can't fail at. And if we did fail, we wouldn't sweat it. Nobody would. What's wrong with that?

Nothing. Except it's not employee engagement. Employee engagement is when people feel this way about work. When they are excited and not afraid. So, if an event helps bring the "game zone" into the workplace, then it's the right event. However, if it's only a brief escape from boredom and fear, then maybe we can do a little better than entertain?

Maybe we have to.

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