

THIAGI GAMELETTER: April 2009

SERIOUSLY FUN ACTIVITIES FOR TRAINERS, FACILITATORS, PERFORMANCE CONSULTANTS, AND MANAGERS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Masthead

Our mission statement, copyright notice, and cast of characters.

Framegame

UP AND DOWN

A card-and-board game.

Thought Experiment

BUYING HAPPINESS

Can money buy happiness?

Guest Gamer

Interview with Jay Clancy

He has 2020 HINDSIGHT.

Invitation

Thiagi's Summer Workshops in Switzerland

Five days near Zurich.

Bookshelf

Three Useful Books

One book on evaluation, two on happiness.

Say It Quick

Taking a Stand on Meetings by Brian Remer

Sometimes it may not be a good idea.

Discoveries

Story Matters by Brian Remer

A recorded webinar that demonstrates the power of storytelling.

Ideas

Priceless Stories by Brian Remer

Try DOUBLE EXPOSURE.

Activities

Be a Story Listener by Brian Remer

Listeners ask the right questions.

Check It Out

Positivity Ratio (<http://www.positivityratio.com/index.php>)

Are you on an upward spiral?

Single Item Survey

Topics and Situations for UP AND DOWN by Tracy Tagliati

What are your ups and downs?

Masthead

THIAGI GAMELETTER:

SERIOUSLY FUN ACTIVITIES FOR TRAINERS, FACILITATORS, PERFORMANCE CONSULTANTS, AND MANAGERS.

Mission

To increase and improve the use of interactive, experiential strategies to improve human performance in an effective, efficient, and enjoyable way.

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However, to prevent us from becoming bankrupt, we have decided to adopt a Busker

Protocol. If you like what you read, if you find it useful, and if you'd like us to continue publishing the newsletter, please feel free to chip in with any financial contribution. Our estimated annual cost for this newsletter is \$30,000. So we suggest an annual contribution of \$30 (which is less than one-third the subscription cost of Thiagi's earlier paper-based newsletter). We would appreciate any amount that you send us, but make sure it is less than \$30,000 (since we don't want to make a profit). You can mail your check to Thiagi, 4423 East Trailridge Road, Bloomington, IN 47408 or call us at (812) 332-1478 to charge the amount to a credit card. Or you can [charge your credit card online](#) , through The Thiagi Group, Inc. Please let us know if you need an invoice for financial record keeping.

Feedback Request

Thiagi believes in practicing what he preaches. This is an interactive newsletter, so interact already! Send us your feedback, sarcastic remarks, and gratuitous advice through email to thiagi@thiagi.com . Thanks!

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Framegame

UP AND DOWN

In the March issue of TGL, I published a game called [90 DAYS](#). This game enables players to explore events that help or hinder a new manager. 90 DAYS is a combination of a board game and a card game. During the first phase of the game, players create situation cards. During the second round, they play a board game using situation cards created by earlier groups of players.

Two readers reported that they have modified the game to create similar games on their own topic. This is not surprising since I used a framegame called UP AND DOWN to create 90 DAYS. (In case you are not familiar with the concept of a *framegame*, it is a training activity in which you can easily replace the original content with new content. A framegame is a template that helps you instantly create a new training game.)

ENTREPRENEUR: THE START-UP COMPANY GAME

The training content in 90 DAYS specifies situations that affect the progress of a new manager. We can use the frame to explore any procedure or process. For example, we created a game called ENTREPRENEUR that involves situations that affect starting up a new company.

Here are some sample situation cards that we used in this game:

You bought a software program that helps you write a business plan and typeset it in an attractive format.

Your father-in-law introduces you to a venture capitalist.

The bank that promised you a loan goes out of business.

The name you had selected for your company is already taken. A waste-management company in Alabama is using it.

Other UP AND DOWN Games

We have used the UP AND DOWN framegame with several other training topics. Here are some examples:

Forming a virtual team

Sample Situation Cards

Your company decides to change the browser it is using.

Team members complain about being woken up during the middle of the night in their time zone.

Team members insist on having a face-to-face meeting at a central location.

Team members do not use the standard format in writing their email reports.

Visiting an Asian country

Sample Situation Cards

Your laptop is confiscated at Customs because you did not complete the paperwork correctly.

Your spouse complains about ants in the hotel room.

You cannot find a doctor who understands what is wrong with you.

You cannot cash your traveler's checks because there is a 3-day national holiday.

Organizing a professional conference

Sample Situation Cards

Attendance is higher than you anticipated.

Presenter's LCD projector is not working. You have to rent one from the hotel for \$750.

There is a misprint in the program and all the scheduled events for Tuesday are listed for Wednesday.

You join forces with another conference organizer.

You receive an unexpected donation of \$1500 from a sponsor.

Presenter's room is not set up as they requested.

Attendees are not able to register on your web site.

Launching a new product

Sample Situation Cards

Good Morning America wants to feature your product on their show.

The cost of materials goes up unexpectedly.

Competitor launches a similar product before you.

You successfully negotiate a discount from the shipping company.

Your merchandise is stuck in port due to a strike.

Product arrives at your warehouse damaged.

You get a prime location as an exhibitor at a trade show.

The website for your company is featured first in Google searches.

Designing a training package

Sample Situation Cards

The rollout for the new training package is postponed three months.

Your SME quits.

The client changes their mind. They want the all-day course condensed to a three-hour course.

Your SME works in another country and there is a 9-hour time difference.

The CEO sends out a company wide memo in support of the training session.

All managers and supervisors will attend a training session prior to the rollout of your training design to learn how they can best support their subordinates.

Running for a political office

Sample Situation Cards

CNN reports you have a 6% lead in the polls. There is a 5% margin of error.

An unknown source provides you with compromising photographs of your opponent.

The news media mispronounces your name.

The local police department endorses you as their candidate of choice.

You mishandle an obnoxious heckler during one of your public speeches.

Working with evacuees at a hurricane center

Sample Situation Cards

Supplies are delayed because the delivery truck breaks down.

Fewer evacuees show up than expected.

One of the evacuees is an entertainer and she has brought her guitar.

An evacuee has the chicken pox.

A fight breaks out between two evacuees.

The hurricane is downgraded and the evacuees are eager to return home.

Generic Game Plan

Let's examine the structure of UP AND DOWN so you can use it to rapidly create other training games that incorporate your own content.

This table shows the generic structure of the UP AND DOWN game. It identifies the steps in the flow of the game and briefly describes what the facilitator and the participants do during each step.

Step	Facilitator	Participants
1. Brief the players.	Introduce the process explored in the game. Distribute sample situation cards.	Review the cards. Discuss the positive or negative impact of each situation.
2. Ask players to write situation cards.	Distribute blank cards and announce a time limit.	Work individually and write as many situation cards as possible. Try to achieve a balance among positive and negative situations.
3. Set up the game.	Collect situation cards from participants and give them a standard deck of cards. Distribute play materials.	Set up a game board and individual pieces for each player.
4. Select and discuss a discussion card.	Select the first player. Give instructions for handling the first situation card.	Pick up the top card and read the situation. Discuss the situation and assign appropriate number of positive or negative

		points.
5. Move the player's piece.	Ask the player to move their piece on the game board.	Move the piece up or down depending on whether the situation is positive or negative.
6. Repeat the process.	Ask players to take turns to pick a situation card.	Repeat the same process of discussing the situation, assigning positive or negative points, and moving the player's piece accordingly.
7. Conclude the game.	Stop the game when players run out of situation cards or when the pre-specified play time is reached.	Identify the winner. Participate in a debriefing discussion.

Generic Instructions

Here's a set of generic instructions to help facilitators conduct the UP AND DOWN game. You may modify the instructions to suit your game and your facilitators:

Introduce the topic. Specify the process that is explored in the game.

Distribute sample cards. Give the four sample situation cards to the playgroup. Have the players read the items on the cards and discuss the potential positive or negative impact of the situation specified on each card.

Ask participants to write situation cards. Give several blank cards to each participant. Ask participants to write a situation on each card that may impact the event being explored in the game. Encourage participants to write as many cards as possible, balancing between positive and negative situations. Announce a suitable time limit. Collect the cards from the participants at the end of this time.

Distribute play materials. Give a game board and a prepared deck of 40 situation cards to each playgroup. Give a player's piece of a different color to each participant. Explain that the situation cards are similar to the ones they wrote earlier.

Set up the game materials. Ask participants to set up the game board in the middle of

the table and the players' pieces in the middle of the board. Also ask them to shuffle the deck of situation cards and place them near the game board, with the printed side down.

Start the play of the game. Identify a player to start the game. She will pick up the top card from the deck and read aloud the situation on the card. The player will then place the card on the middle of the table so everyone can read the item.

Ask players to discuss the card. All players talk about the situation on the card and decide whether it has a positive or a negative implication. At the end of the discussion, players decide on a point value of 1 to 5 to represent the impact of the situation either on a positive or negative direction. The player who picked up the card participates in this discussion, trying to increase the point value (if the card contains a positive element) or to decrease the point value (if it contains a negative element). During this discussion, if the group does not reach consensus, any player may call for a vote. The majority of the players determine the point value.

Ask the player to move her piece on the game board. When players agree on the point value to be assigned to the card, the player who picked up the card moves his or her piece the appropriate number of spaces on the game board. If the card contains a positive situation, the play piece is moved up; for a negative situation, it is moved down.

Continue playing the game. The next player (seated to the left of the first player) uses the same procedure during her turn. Play continues in this fashion until players have used up all the situation cards or a specified period of time is reached.

Conclude the game. Ask each player to identify the location of their piece on the board. Congratulate the leading player. Ask players to discuss the relative impact of chance and skill in making progress in the process explored in the game. Also encourage players to brainstorm how they could have handled each situation more effectively.

How To Design Your Own UP AND DOWN Games

Check the suitability of the frame. UP AND DOWN requires players to anticipate different situations that impact their progress through a specific process. This game also requires players to examine these situations from different angles and to reduce their negative impact and increase their positive impact. Make sure that your training objectives can be supported by these play activities.

Prepare suitable cards. Although you ask participants to come up their own situation cards, you use a standard set of cards in playing the game. (This enables players to brainstorm likely situations and, at the same time, enables you to ensure a balanced coverage of situations.) In creating the situation cards, make sure that you have approximately equal numbers of positive and negative situations.

Select appropriate game flow. Review the generic game plan and instructions. Modify the flow of activity to suit your preferences and constraints. Prepare instructions for facilitators by modifying the generic set of instructions.

Prepare the prototype game. Prepare the final version of the situation cards. Obtain packets of blank situation cards. Create a game board (using the sample board) and collect players' pieces.

Play-test and revise the game. Try out the prototype version of your game with representative players. Observe their reactions, responses, and remarks. Revise the flow of the activity during and after the game.

Keep improving the game. Every time you conduct the game, your players would have generated their own sets of situation cards. At the end of each game, carefully review these cards and add the good ones to your standard set.

What Next?

The [single item survey](#) in this issue of *TGL* invites you to come up with topics (and sample situation cards) for your own UP AND DOWN adaptations. Use this opportunity to show off your talent.

I am working on a follow up game that uses the same situation cards but requires participants to go beyond merely estimating the impact of these cards. This sequel to UP AND DOWN will appear in a future issue of *TGL*.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Thought Experiment

BUYING HAPPINESS

If you can spare me 10 minutes, I'd like to conduct a thought experiment with you. If you like the activity, you can conduct it with your own participants. Because it is a thought experiment, you can use it with groups of any size since each participant in the group will be working independently.

Experiment 1

Imagine this situation: I give you \$50 (or 40 Euros, or 2500 Indian Rupees, 500 South African Rands, 60 Swiss Francs, 35 British Pounds, or an equivalent amount in your local currency) to spend it any way you like. The only stipulation is that you have to spend the entire amount on *yourself*.

Think what you would do with the money.

After you have decided what to do with the money, answer these two questions:

1. How happy would you feel as a result of spending the money according to your decision? Use a 10-point rating system in which 1 is *not happy* and 10 is *intensely happy*.
2. How long will your happiness last? A few minutes, few hours, few days, ...?

Experiment 2

Same scenario, but with a minor twist: I give you \$50 (or its local equivalent) with the stipulation that you have to spend the entire amount on *someone else*.

Think how you would spend the money.

After you have decided, answer the same questions:

1. How happy would you feel as a result of spending the money according to your decision? Use a 10-point rating system in which 1 is *not happy* and 10 is *intensely happy*.
2. How long will your happiness last? A few minutes, few hours, few days, ...?

Debrief

Compare the intensity and duration of happiness in the two cases. Is there a difference? If so, in which direction? Why?

Some people claim that money cannot buy happiness. Is this true in your case?

Some people claim that money can buy happiness as long as you spend it on others. Is this true in your case?

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Guest Gamer



*Jay Clancy has a master's degree in training and development, and has over 15 years of experience designing and facilitating programs in a variety of industries and topics domestically and abroad. He has spoken at many conferences on training design, and has been published in several newsletters including the **Houston Business Journal**. His website is <http://clancylearning.com/> .*

Interview with Jay Clancy

TGL: Jay, what do you do, and why?

Jay: I specialize in designing learning programs, mostly for businesses. Over the years I have developed an almost obsessive interest in developing engaging learning programs that have a high impact. I also pay a lot of attention to the end results that the learning programs are intended to achieve, which in my work are normally expressed as business needs. I believe that well-designed learning programs can have a dramatic, effect on desired results. After all, an organization's results are entirely dependent on the capabilities of its people. I also believe that well designed learning can help all of us maximize our potential.

TGL: How did you get into designing and using games?

Jay: A couple of years ago, Shell asked me to help them design Shell Project Academy.

This was a pretty serious program. It was sponsored by the CEO, and was to apply to all the project managers across the company. These include people who manage multi-billion dollar projects. Needless to say, we all felt how critical it was to ensure our contribution was top notch. And I saw my contribution as ensuring that the learning was highly impactful to producing maximum business results.

Unfortunately, whenever we talked about how the learning would take place, the only approaches we ever seemed to come up with were presentations and case studies. There is nothing inherently wrong with presentations and case studies, but if that was all we had, how boring. So since then I have found myself on this quest to find really engaging learning approaches, and games became one of the most promising of these approaches.

About this time, I also attended my first NASAGA conference. That conference helped reinforce my conviction that games could be a powerful learning approach.

TGL: How have you used games in your work?

Jay: I have designed three pretty intense games so far. The first was a game to help Pitney Bowes teach records management. The second game helped Shell to introduce a company-wide project management process. I developed the third game, 2020 HINDSIGHT, as part of my own consulting to help stress the need for good learning design.

TGL: What attracted you to game design?

Jay: When I think back on the games I have designed, I noticed that I have had a tendency to design fairly large, complex games rather than smaller games. I like the fact that games can address many learning objectives in an intense way within a very short amount of time. For example, while the participants are applying the company's work process, they can also be solving problems, learning technical information, and using appropriate terminology.

Games give me the opportunity to be really creative because I get to create the world the players play in, which might include storylines, characters, game boards, or playing pieces. I also get to wrestle with taking really complex game schema and working them into a fun experience that does not overwhelm the participants.

Also, I like that games are very memorable. People get really excited about the idea of a

game, and they tend to look back on them with fond (or at least strong) memories. We consultants like it when people remember something we have designed.

TGL: How do your clients and participants respond?

Jay: Once I got the hang of designing games, I have gotten a great response from those who have played the games. The participants all seem very energized after playing, and I have heard that they say great things about the games afterward. But I really like the reputations that the games get in my client organizations. If the game is successful, word seems to get out.

TGL: What was the most surprising moment you had in designing games?

Jay: Let's just say that if you are not careful, your game can get much bigger than you ever intended. When I designed my first game, it was for a one-hour course on records management. It was one of my first projects after I started my consulting business, and I really wanted to impress my new client. I went in with lots of enthusiasm. But as I started to develop the game, I started to realize that it was far more complicated than I anticipated. And when we piloted it, we found it to be too complex for the participants to do within the time we allotted. The month-long project extended to two months and then to three, which was really hard in a fixed-priced contract. When we were done, the game that was originally intended to last one hour, lasted one full day.

I have heard that the client has run that game fairly successfully several times afterward. Recently, I looked back at the game materials, and I think it was a pretty good game. With a little more time and a few less anxious sleepless nights, I am sure it could be a sensation. Nevertheless, I learned the hard way to be very careful to have a well-thought-out design before I start developing.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Invitation

Thiagi's Summer Workshops in Switzerland

I would like to invite you to two public workshops that I am conducting in June 2009.

Last summer, I conducted a 3-day workshop on how to design and conduct training activities, games, and simulations in Switzerland. This is what participant Dimis Michaelides (Managing Director of Performa Consulting) said about the workshop:

During my first day in Thiagi's workshop I gathered ideas and material to substantially and immediately enrich two new business proposals I was preparing—and I remember laughing a lot.

The second day was when I really learnt how to drive my clients with content generated by themselves or outside sources that I did not need to master myself—and again I laughed a lot.

On the third day, I understood how I might let myself be driven by participants in my workshops—and there was yet more laughter.

Three months later, I find myself reflecting to further enrich what was my most engaging learning experience ever and, yes, I am still laughing!

Here are my plans for this year:

Workshop 1. Interactive Training Strategies

This three-day workshop practices what it preaches. It helps you design and conduct 24 different types of effective training games, simulations, and activities. Based on 30 years of field research, these design formats enable you to create training faster, cheaper, and better. You will receive a hefty collection of training games during the workshop and have access to hundreds of web pages with additional games, activities, and facilitation tips.

For more information, see [the brochure](#) (500k PDF)

[Register now](#) (opens in a new window). To get the registration form in English, click the → ENGLISH link in the top right corner of the web page.

Or register by phone by calling Brenda at +1 812 332-1478 .

Workshop 2. Evidence-Based Positive Psychology Activities

In this two-day workshop, Thiagi offers an intriguing alternative to stress-reduction. The workshop explores principles and procedures from positive psychology about how to measure, increase, and sustain your happiness. You will also learn how to help other people be happier, improve their health, and enhance their productivity. This is not an inspirational touchy-feely seminar but a workshop that incorporates scientific evidence-based facts, concepts, and techniques.

For more information, see [the brochure](#) (500k PDF)

[Register now](#) (opens in a new window). To get the registration form in English, click the → ENGLISH link in the top right corner of the web page.

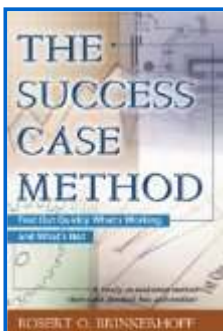
Or register by phone by calling Brenda at +1 812 332-1478 .

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Bookshelf

Three Useful Books

To order a book from Amazon, click its cover art below. We receive a small commission if you do this.

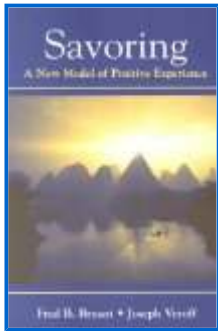


Brinkerhoff, Robert O. (2002). The Success Case Method: Find Out Quickly What's Working and What's Not. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler. (ISBN-10: 1576751856 ISBN-13: 978-1576751855)

If you are a trainer, instructional designer, or performance technologist, the Success Case Method (SCM) will provide you with an evaluation technique that is faster, cheaper, and better. Using powerful concepts from naturalistic inquiry and storytelling, SCM shifts the focus from average performance to the best-of-the-best and the worst-of-the-worst

outliers. This technique enables you to find effective and elegant answers to such questions as “What really is happening?”, “What results did the program produce?”, “What is the value of these results?”, and “How can the program be improved?”.

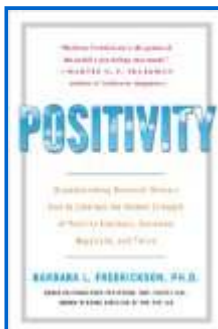
Sample practical idea from the book: Put a compelling success story as a preface to the report or as a prelude to the presentation.



Bryant, Fred B., & Veroff, Joseph. (2008). Savoring: A New Model of Positive Experience. (ISBN-10: 0805851208 ISBN-13: 978-0805851205)

This book is about the capacity to attend to the joys, pleasures, and other positive feelings that we experience in our lives. Savoring provides a new theoretical model for understanding the psychology of enjoyment and the processes through which people manage positive emotions. The authors provide measurement instruments with scoring instructions for assessing and studying savoring. They differentiate the concept of savoring from related concepts such as coping, pleasure, positive affect, emotional intelligence, flow, and meditation. The book provides strategies and hands-on exercises that people can use to enhance savoring in their lives, along with a review of factors that enhance savoring.

Sample practical idea from the book: When you are experiencing a pleasant event, take multiple digital photographs of the environment. Later, you can browse through the pictures (with others) to recall and savor your memories.



Frederickson, Barbara. (2009). Positivity: Groundbreaking

Research Reveals How to Embrace the Hidden Strength of Positive Emotions, Overcome Negativity, and Thrive. *New York, NY: Crown Publishing. (ISBN-10: 0307393739 ISBN-13: 978-0307393739)*

Written by a pioneer in the field of positive psychology and an award-winning scientist, Barbara Frederickson's long-awaited book contains practical suggestions built on scientific results. Here are some intriguing insights from her book: Positivity includes these 10 emotions: amusement, awe, gratitude, hope, inspiration, interest, joy, love, pride, and serenity. Increased positivity broadens your mind, builds your best future, and helps you bounce back from negative events and thoughts. The ratio of positive to negative emotions of 3 to 1 is a tipping point. Ratios greater than this tipping point produce a positive upward spiral that continuously increases your happiness and productivity.

Sample practical idea from the book: Increase your positivity ratio by decreasing the denominator (negativity) or increasing the numerator (positivity). You can decrease your negativity by disputing your thoughts and perceptions and by distracting yourself in a healthy fashion.

See this month's [Check It Out](#) link to Barbara Frederickson's online tool that lets you compute your positivity ratio.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Say It Quick



Reprinted from the [January 2009 issue](#) of **Firefly News Flash** by permission of the author.

Taking a Stand on Meetings by Brian Remer

In this story of just 99 words, read about one of the problems with communication in some organizations. Then click to [Ideas](#) for some simple suggestions of how to use the power of storytelling to make communication more effective.

Taking a Stand on Meetings

In some organizations, no one is allowed to sit during meetings. The idea is that if we have to stand, we'll finish the meeting and get back to business. Problem is, this assumes a limited use for meetings: giving orders or reporting. Both could be accomplished as easily in an e-mail!

If the meeting is to analyze, create, learn, solve, celebrate, then make a place for conversation. Spread the table with linens, flowers, coffee, and snacks and have a meaningful conversation.

Shape the environment to your needs. Don't force people into a well-oiled machine.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Discoveries



Reprinted from the [January 2009 issue](#) of **Firefly News Flash** by permission of the author.

Story Matters by Brian Remer

Imagine sitting next to a cozy fireplace in a hotel lobby. Two people are talking together nearby. You aren't intending to be an eavesdropper but you can hear everything they say.

One fellow tells a story and his companion responds with a story of his own. As each story is shared, you find yourself being drawn into their circle, anxious to share a tale of your own. Though you resist the temptation to break all social taboos and join them, you are surprised at the novel concepts their conversation has brought to mind for you. Inspired,

you pull out your cell and text a message to your best friend to set up a time you can get together for a chat.

That's the concept behind *StoryMatters*, a recorded webinar that demonstrates the power and versatility of stories to create value in the workplace. Conceived by [Terrence Gargiulo](#), an organizational consultant who uses stories to enhance workplace learning, *StoryMatters* is a montage of stories, insights, and ideas that build upon each other to draw valuable learning out of everyday experiences.

Now (full disclosure) I collaborate with Terrence on this project and I share *StoryMatters* as this month's *Discovery* because I am so excited about what I've learned about using stories to promote learning.

Each session of *StoryMatters* begins with three 99 WORD STORIES. Terrence finds a common thread among them and weaves in a few stories from his experiences. I respond with a story and we talk about further insights and conclusions. The whole recording lasts about 15 minutes but during that short time, a dozen insights that have application to the workplace or personal living are sparked.

You can watch *StoryMatters* for your own interest or use it as an example of the type of conversations you might initiate in your home or workplace. However you use the webinar, please accept this invitation to "eavesdrop" on *StoryMatters* then let me know ([email Brian](#)) how you've been inspired.

Click [HERE](#) to view *StoryMatters*. (You'll be asked to log in which provides us with statistical information only.) Enjoy!

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Ideas



Reprinted from the [January 2009 issue](#) of **Firefly News Flash** by permission of the author.

Priceless Stories by Brian Remer

Though they are often told at the water cooler, in the halls, and over the Internet, stories are underappreciated and underutilized in the workplace. Perhaps the oldest type of communication, stories are so pervasive in our lives that we take them for granted. Their value for teaching, communicating culture, and creating and maintaining relationships is often ignored.

However, with the kind of intention demonstrated in [*StoryMatters*](#), the tales we tell each other can be a powerful conversational engine able to drill through the superficial layers of a topic and reveal new and more profound meaning.

Scholars may argue about what is or is not a “story” by analyzing whether it has a plot, character development, conflict, resolution, and so forth. But in everyday life, we tend to relate our experience in narrative form. And as listeners, we expect to hear stories. The first thing we are likely to ask a friend after a few days' absence is, “What's new? What have you been doing?”

Wondering how best to begin telling stories? Here's an idea. DOUBLE EXPOSURE is a game invented to inspire conversations and promote positive relationships in the workplace. Each player draws a random card which gives a prompt for a personal story. You can download the [instructions](#) and the [cards](#). Print and use the cards as is or customize them for your own purposes. Then when you play DOUBLE EXPOSURE, tell us ([email Brian](#)) about your experience!

If we listen with intention to a story, we can make connections to our own experiences. When that happens we are able to expand upon the ideas in the room. That value added becomes a wealth of insight. It's learning that could have remained hidden below the surface but is now dis-covered, revealed and available for anyone to use.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Activities



Reprinted from the January 2009 issue of **Firefly News Flash** by permission of the author.

Be a Story Listener by Brian Remer

Most everyone can tell a story. The subject isn't as important as your willingness to be colorful and play with a sense of drama. But as you can see from StoryMatters, listening is important too. Storytellers need an attentive, inquisitive audience. So as a listener, it's important to ask the right questions.

Asking questions does more than extend the conversation. Good questions can invite the storyteller to share more deeply. Questions that don't have a right or wrong answer create an open space for discovery, invention, and speculation. And that's when learning can occur.

Here are a few question starters you might try the next time someone shares a story with you.

- What do you think about...?
- What connections do you see between...?
- How is what you just said like...?
- What would you have done differently if you had known...?
- What other examples of ... have you seen?
- Can you tell me more about...?
- What was something you learned?

Practice being a good story listener and I'll bet you'll discover that the people around you have suddenly become better storytellers! Turn some of the question starters on yourself and perhaps you too will become a scintillating tale teller!

Then send us an email ([email Brian](#)) and share the story of your success with everyone!

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Check It Out

Positivity Ratio (<http://www.positivityratio.com/index.php>)

World renowned researcher Dr. Barbara Fredrickson gives you the lab-tested tools necessary to create a healthier, more vibrant, and flourishing life. She discovered that experiencing positive emotions in a 3-to-1 ratio with negative ones leads people to a tipping point beyond which they naturally become more resilient to adversity and effortlessly achieve what they once could only imagine. With Positivity, you'll learn to see new possibilities, bounce back from setbacks, connect with others, and become the best version of yourself.

Eighty percent of U.S. Americans fall short of the ideal 3-to-1 positivity ratio. What's your positivity ratio? The fastest and the most objective way to find out is to visit the [positivity ratio website](#) and take the positivity self test. This online tool can be completed in about 2 minutes.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)

Single Item Survey

Topics and Situations for UP AND DOWN by Tracy Tagliati



In this month's *TGL*, Thiagi described a framegame called [UP AND DOWN](#). This is an example of a template that you can use to instantly create your own training games. Simply replace the old content with your own content and you are ready to go.

I took a crack at it and here is an example that I came up with:

Topic: Starting a Diet

Sample Situation Cards:

You join a weight loss center.

You have three parties to attend this weekend.

It's only 2:00PM and you're hungry, and you've already consumed your allotted calories for the day.

Your friend is on a diet too.

Your spouse is naturally slender, and brings home fattening foods.

Your boss brings donuts to work.

You buy a bike.

I am not the only one having fun with this activity. We recently tried this activity in one of Thiagi's game design workshops and the participants came up with some wonderful game ideas too. Click on the "Peer Answers" button to view some of their responses.

Now it's your turn to tell us how you would use this framegame with your own training topics. Send us your topic (along with sample situations) at [this survey page](#) (opens in a new window). You may choose to include your name along with your response, or if you prefer, keep it anonymous.

[\[Table of Contents\]](#)
