

THIAGI GAMELETTER: May 2009

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

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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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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!

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Board And Card Game

90 DAYS: THE SEQUEL

In the March issue of *TGL*, we presented a game called [90 DAYS](#) that explored the impact of different situations on the progress of a new manager during her first 90 days on the job.

Structure of the game

Here's the basic plot of the game:

Participants create situation cards that specify events that impact the new manager's reputation. Later, they play a game with a game board that helps them keep track of their progress. In the beginning, player's pieces are placed in the central space on the game board. The first player picks a situation card. The other players decide whether the situation on the card is likely to produce positive or negative results and specify whether

the player should move 1, 2, or 3 spaces up or down on the game board. The player who picked the card tries to influence the other players by emphasizing the positive potential of the situation or by de-emphasizing its negative potential. Game continues with different players taking a turn to pick a card. Game ends when the players run out of cards or time.

The sequel

Players are enthusiastic about the game and gain useful experience in seeing both the positive and the negative potential in different situations. However, they feel slightly depressed by the implication that their progress is determined largely by chance factors. They would prefer to play an active role in leveraging the positive situations and containing the negative ones. To accommodate this need, we created a companion game called 90 DAYS: THE SEQUEL. In this game, the context is similar: You are a newly promoted manager. You play the game on the same game board, but begin with your pieces at the bottom of the board.

Purpose

- To come up with plans for leveraging positive situations and containing negative situations
- To explain a plan in a few well-chosen and persuasive words

Materials

- Game Board
- Players' Pieces
- Game Cards
- Pieces of paper for writing your plans
- Smaller pieces of paper for distributing evaluation points
- Pencils or pens

Participants

Four or five players (or four or five teams)

The game is described below as if the players play individually. The same procedures apply

to team play. Each team will have a single piece, make joint decisions, and handle all tasks jointly.

Game Flow

Game cards. The game cards are the same as the ones used in the previous game: Each card identifies a positive or negative situation that influences what happens during the first 90 days in the life of a manager. Shuffle this packet of cards and place them near the game board, with the statement side down.

Begin playing. Identify one player to start the game. This player is called the Prime Player for this round. She will pick up the top card from the packet and read aloud the situation on the card. The player will then place the card on the middle of the table so everyone can see the situation.

Come up with a plan for handling the situation. Each player develops a plan for leveraging or containing the situation. The goal is to reduce the negative outcomes and to increase the positive outcomes that may arise from the situation. Players write a brief summary of their plans on pieces of paper. There is a time limit of 2 minutes for this activity.

Present the plans. At the end of the time limit, the player seated to the left of the prime player reads her plan. Then all other players take turns to read their plans.

Evaluating the plans. At the end of the plan presentations, each player compares the plans of the *other* players and distributes 13 points among them to reflect their *immediate* effectiveness. During this activity all 13 points must be distributed, and there should be no ties among the point distribution. (*Example: If there are five players, I may distribute my 13 points among the four other players this way: 5, 4, 3, and 1.*) After making the decision, players write the number of points on separate pieces of paper, fold the paper, and place each folded piece in front of the appropriate player.

Moving the player's piece. All players now open the pieces of paper in front of them and add the points. The person with the highest total moves her piece one space on the game board. (In case of a tie, all players with the highest score move their pieces by one space.)

Re-evaluating the plans. Each player reads the plan statement again. Each player

compares the plans of the *other* players and distributes 13 points among them to reflect their *long-term* effectiveness. Players may decide that both the short- and the long-term effects are the same or they may change the point distribution drastically. After making the decision, players write the number of points on pieces of paper, fold the paper, and place each folded piece in front of the appropriate player.

Moving the player's piece. As before, all players now open the pieces of paper in front of them and add the points. The player (or players) with the highest total moves the piece one space on the game board.

Continue playing the game. The player seated to the left of the Prime Player becomes the new Prime Player for the next round. Players use the same procedure to continue the game. Play continues in this fashion until you run out of the cards or the facilitator calls time.

Find the winner. The player whose piece has moved the farthest on the game board wins the game.

Debrief the activity. Discuss the similarities and differences among the strategies used for leveraging positive situations and containing negative ones.

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Happiness Activity

STRENGTH ENVELOPES

Recently, I completed a REFLECTED BEST SELF (RBS) activity that involved a dozen people sending me emails with their perceptions of my strengths. This is an effective activity that helps participants to identify—and leverage—their strengths.

You can learn more about this activity by reading “How to Play to Your Strengths” by Laura Morgan Roberts, Gretchen Spreitzer, Jane Dutton, Robert Quinn, Emily Heaphy, and Brianna Barker (*Harvard Business Review*, January 2005).

Here's a faster face-to-face activity that I created by combining RBS, the ENVELOPES

framegame, and the PSYCHIC MASSAGE closer. I recently conducted this activity with several intact work teams to help them discover and share individual strengths and to increase their engagement by structuring their jobs around these strengths.

Purpose

To create a verbal self-portrait that incorporates your strengths (as perceived by your colleagues).

Participants

Any number of people who work together (for example, members of an intact work team) organized into playgroups of 5 to 9 members.

Time

Allow 5 minutes per each member of the playgroup for the group activity and 15 minutes for the individual activity.

Example: If the playgroup has 7 members, the group activity will require 35 minutes. The individual activity will require 15 minutes.

Handout

- *Player's Instructions* (including the list of strengths)

Supplies and Equipment

- Envelopes
- Writing paper
- Countdown timer
- Whistle

Flow

Brief the players. Organize participants into playgroups and ask each group to sit around a table. Explain that the object of this activity is to identify the strengths of each individual member of the group as perceived by his or her colleagues. Also explain that the activity has two phases: The first one takes place in groups and the second one is completed by individuals.

Distribute supplies. Give a copy of *Player's Instructions* to each participant. Also distribute a blank envelope and several sheets of blank paper to each participant.

Clarify the steps of the activity. Explain that all instructions for the participating in the activity are included in the handout. Ask participants to skim through the handout to understand the flow of the activity. After a suitable pause, invite participants to ask questions about the activity and provide brief answers. Reassure the participants by announcing that you will be circulating around to help with any problems during the activity.

Begin the group activity. Tell participants to begin by writing their names on the envelope and passing it to the person on the left. Set the timer for 3 minutes and ask participants to write the strength statements. Assist any participant who requires additional clarification. At the end of 3 minutes, blow the whistle and ask participants to fold the statement and place it in the envelope (without sealing the envelope).

Conclude the group activity. Ask participants to repeat the procedure outlined in the handout. Continue timing each round. When the envelopes make their way to the participants whose names are on the envelopes, announce the end of the activity.

Assign individual activity. Ask participants to pick up their envelope, retire to a convenient location, read the strength statements, and process the information by following the instructions given under "Individual Activity" in their handouts. Ask them to spend at least 15 minutes on this activity. Thank the participants and send them on their way.

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Handout1

Player's Instructions for STRENGTH ENVELOPES

Group Activity

Prepare your envelope. Write your name on the face of the envelope (where you would usually write the address). Write the name in big block letters. You don't need to write

your address.

Exchange envelopes. Pass the envelope to the person on your left. Receive the envelope from the person on your right.

List strengths. You have 3 minutes to complete the next task. Think of the person whose name is on the envelope you received. Think of three or more strengths of this person. (See below for a list of strengths from which you may choose appropriate ones.) For each strength, come up with a couple of specific examples of how you have seen the person use the strength in action. Briefly write the strengths and examples on a piece of paper.

Here's an example:

Strength: Reliability

This strength in action:

1. You promised to deliver the regional sales report on May 17th. Most of us expected you to ask for an extension because the deadline date was very tight. However, you delivered a high-quality report on the promised date.
2. When people ask questions during staff meetings, you give detailed answers. The information you provide is always accurate and up to date.

Exchange the envelopes again. At the end of 3 minutes, fold the paper and put it inside the envelope. Do not seal the envelope. As you did at the beginning of the game, pass this envelope to the person on your left and pick up an envelope from the person on your right.

List strengths again. Do not open the envelope. You have another 3 minutes to repeat the process writing down at least three strengths (along with appropriate examples) of the person whose name is on the face of the new envelope.

Stop the activity. Repeat the process of exchanging envelopes and recording three or more strengths of the person. Continue doing this until you receive the envelope with your own name. This concludes the group activity.

Individual Activity

Work alone. Collect your envelopes with the strength statements inside. Retire to a

convenient location and process the information. (Later, if you want to share the information you may do so with one or more of your friends. But right now, process the information all by yourself.)

Do it yourself. Before you open the envelope and read the statement, prepare a list of strengths that you feel you have.

Bask in the positive feedback. Open the envelope and read the strength statements from your colleague. Savor what the others think to be your strengths.

Remember the Johari window (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johari_window)?

Reflect on the following questions:

- Which of your strengths are recognized by most other people—and by yourself?
- Which strengths surprised you (because you never realized that you had them)?
- Which strengths did most people list?
- Which strengths are listed by only one person? What is about your relationship that makes this person perceive this unique strength?

Create a self-portrait. Make a list of your strengths. Use this information to create a verbal portrait of your reflected best self.

Create your ideal job. Figure out how to restructure your daily routine and your job activities so that you are able to apply your strengths more frequently and more effectively.

List of Strengths

Accountability	Adaptability	Assertiveness	Boldness
Bravery	Calmness	Caring nature	Caution
Cheerfulness	Cleverness	Commitment	Confidence
Continuous learning	Courage	Creativity	Critical thinking
Curiosity	Dependability	Detachment	Dignity

Diligence	Discretion	Efficiency	Emotional intelligence
Energy	Enthusiasm	Equity	Extroversion
Fairness	Flexibility	Friendliness	Future-mindedness
Generosity	Gratitude	Helpfulness	Honesty
Hope	Humility	Humor	Idealism
Impartiality	Improvisation	Inclusiveness	Independence
Industry	Ingenuity	Integrity	Intelligence
Interpersonal intelligence	Introversion	Intuition	Kindness
Knowledge	Leadership	Listening skills	Logical thinking
Long-term focus	Loyalty	Maturity	Modesty
Neutrality	Objectivity	Open mindedness	Optimism
Organization	Originality	Patience	Perseverance
Perspective	Playfulness	Proactivity	Prudence
Quantitative skills	Realism	Reflective nature	Relaxed nature
Resiliency	Respect	Responsiveness	Self-assertiveness
Self-awareness	Self-control	Self-esteem	Sense of humor
Sense of priorities	Sense of purpose	Sensible nature	Service mentality
Simplicity	Sincerity	Social intelligence	Spirit of adventure
Spirituality	Spontaneity	Street smarts	Sympathy
Teamwork	Technical expertise	Tolerance for ambiguity	Trust

Truthfulness

Versatility

Warmth

Wisdom

Wit

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Training

Ask and Answer

Learning involves asking questions and giving answers. So does training.

Traditionally, instructional designers, teachers, trainers, facilitators, and subject-matter experts are the ones that ask the questions. Learners and participants answer questions in order to reinforce their learning. After they answer the questions, they usually get feedback and remedial instruction.

Asking Questions

When you think about it, the ability to ask deep, penetrating, and provocative questions is an essential component of all problem-solving and communication skills. So we need to train our participants to ask questions as much as we train them to answer questions.

In our approach to training, we blend questioning and answering. We require and reward participants to ask questions. We train them to ask different types of questions. We show our admiration for participants' questions by immediately incorporating them in a variety of learning activities.

To help participants in their question asking task, we supply them with templates for different types of questions. For example, we give them a checklist for constructing valid multiple-choice questions. We give them examples of multiple-choice items that emphasize the use of plausible alternatives. We also give them examples of questions that are based on authentic scenarios. At the end of a training session, we ask teams of participants to come up with a couple of scenario-based multiple-choice questions. These teams exchange the questions they created and critique them by using the checklist. We find that this activity strengthens the participants' mastery of the training topic. It also provides us with

a pool of valid test items for the assessment of future students.

Here's another technique that we frequently use: At the beginning of a training session, we ask participants to come up with a set of questions based on their limited knowledge and unlimited curiosity. We use these questions as a rapid needs analysis for structuring presentations by subject-matter experts.

One more technique for using participant-generated questions: At the end of a training session, we ask participants to come up with left-over questions for subject-matter experts. We use these questions (and answers from experts) to create online FAQs and to incorporate them in various follow-up activities.

During a training session, we frequently ask participants to generate different types of review and application questions. We incorporate them in a variety of quiz games and activities.

Giving Answers

Of course, all our training involves preparing participants to answer a variety of questions related to the recall and application of the principle and procedures related to the training topic.

In addition, we help participants improve their answers in several different ways:

We encourage participants to improve the quality of their responses. We give them a checklist of quality standards that require the answers to be accurate, complete, unique, up-to-date, succinct, credible, clear, and memorable. We encourage participants to review their own responses (and the responses of each other) and revise them.

We ask participants to give answers in a variety of formats: orally, in writing, and in a graphic mode. We force participants to give their answers in a variety of lengths, from a single word to a lengthy essay. We also challenge participants to slant their answers to appeal to different audiences (Examples: *How would you explain the Grand Unified Theory to a six year old? How would you explain human performance technology to your grandparents?*)

Whenever appropriate, we encourage participants to provide more than one acceptable answer rather than the single correct answer.

Here's a question for you to answer: How else could we blend and use participants' questions and answers to make our training more interesting and effective?

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Guest Gamer



Michele L. Deck is a presenter, author, and educator. She is the co-founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer of G.A.M.E.S., a company that specializes in adult learning and interactive teaching methods. She is CEO of Tool Thyme for Trainers, a company that supplies innovative presentation tools to educators worldwide. Michele's extensive travels have resulted in thousands of people who gained valuable expertise of adult education and training, from

*Australia to Scotland, Canada to Taiwan. A prolific writer, Michele's publications include **Instant Teaching Tools for the New Millennium** and **Presenter's Survival Kit: It's A Jungle Out There.***

Interview with Michele Deck

TGL: *Michele, what's your specialty area?*

Michele: My specialty is teaching healthcare and other technical content in fun and engaging ways that increase retention of material.

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

Michele: I started 26 years ago by using game shows to teach Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation. Back in those days, no one in healthcare was using games to teach such serious topics as CPR. My approach was so successful that it encouraged several other trainers to use interactive teaching methods in health education.

TGL: *How long have you been designing and using games?*

Michele: I have been using training games for 30 years. I can't sit back and watch people zone out in training sessions, missing critical content. I have to involve them. I seldom call

my activities games, but people recognize them to be just that. They always have a learning point, and that is what I focus on.

TGL: Where do you use games?

Michele: I use them in all my training sessions, whether I am teaching two people or 2000.

TGL: How do people respond to your use of training games?

Michele: My clients respond with energy and invest their time and money. My participants get involved quickly. Many of them are not used to interactive methods, but they come along with their peers. By the end of my session, they are surprised by how quickly the time has passed and how much they have learned. I have had many participants over the years tell me that they are not game people, but they enjoyed their experience in my sessions.

TGL: What is the most horrible or embarrassing moment you had in conducting games?

Michele: I have had to think on my feet when I have not had enough props, or completely redesign in seconds, but I have never had a horrible moment when using games. I once taught an entire 2-hour class with my pants on backward, but that had nothing to do with a game! The group had been with me every week for 5 weeks, and they kept waiting for me to make some point about my pants, but when I didn't, they told me I had them on backward. They knew I was full of surprises, but that wasn't one of them.

TGL: What advice do you have to newcomers about interactive training?

Michele: Practice with your friends or family first so you have some degree of comfort before using a game with a training group. Also, if you are teaching technical people, quote some research on why games work before you ask them to engage in one. That way they will see it as a valuable learning vehicle, rather than a waste of time.

TGL: What types of games do you use most frequently?

Michele: I use games where everyone in the audience is involved and that take less than ten minutes from start to finish.

TGL: What is your most favorite game?

Michele: My most favorite game is called, THE WEAKEST THINK. I designed it to teach new employees how to think critically in healthcare facilities when taking care of patients. They can make their mistakes of judgment on paper, not on people. You can teach them to think.

TGL: Do you have any book recommendations?

Michele: I'd be silly if I didn't recommend my own. *Instant Teaching Tools for the New Millennium* has 85 ready-to-use activities for trainers in healthcare. It is published by Mosby/Elsevier.

TGL: What is your prediction about the future of games?

Michele: I think games will be a teaching method for as far as I can see, whether in person, online, on PDA's, or in the virtual world.

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*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.

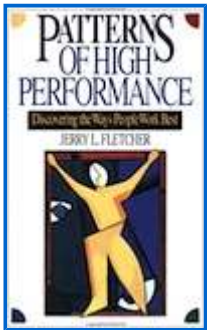
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Bookshelf

Same Topic, Similar Approaches

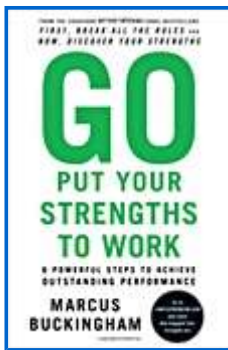
To order a book from Amazon, click its cover art below. We receive a small commission if you do this.



Fletcher, Jerry L. (1993). Patterns of High Performance: Discovering the ways people work best. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler. (ISBN-10: 1881052702 ISBN-13: 978-1881052708)

Re-reading this book after a gap of 15 years, I am convinced that it was ahead of its time when first published. Jerry Fletcher defines a high performance as producing results much better than expected. In contrast to the grind-it-out mode, the high-performance mode seems to have a life of its own. Each individual has a unique high performance pattern. To discover your pattern, begin by selecting three representative high-performance experiences. Analyze these experiences to identify key elements in these four stages: getting drawn, getting it rolling, keeping it rolling, and ending it well. Reflect and probe your responses for deeper insights and connections. Write down the pattern. The book explains how to apply your pattern for achieving a variety of goals such as finding the best job or making the most of the only available job.

Sample practical idea from the book: When working with a partner, share the patterns with each other. After identifying points of conflict, collaborate on appropriate divisions of work to take advantage of different strengths.



Buckingham, Marcus (2007). *Go Put Your Strengths to Work*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc. (ISBN-10: 0743261674 ISBN-13: 978-0743261678)

Best-selling author Marcus Buckingham presents a six-step process for applying your strength for maximum success at work. He begins by challenging such myths as “You will grow the most in your areas of greatest weakness,” (actually, you will grow the most in your areas of greatest strength). He provides step-by-step directions for identifying your strengths and weaknesses by keeping track of activities you love and loath, making the most of your strengths, cutting out your weaknesses, speaking out to your managers and teammates, and sustaining your strength-based approach.

Sample practical idea from the book: If an activity that is related to your weakness is a critical one, figure out how to reduce the amount of time you spend on it.

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Say It Quick



Reprinted from the February/March 2009 issue of **Firefly News Flash** by permission of the author.

**Perspective
by Brian Remer**

It's not just foods with different spices that makes learning about other cultures so fascinating. It's also the opportunity to learn about ourselves by empathizing with others. The following 99 Words will jump start your thinking about cross-cultural learning. Then click to [Discoveries](#) for an immigrant experience and [Activities](#) to fine tune your empathic intelligence.

Perspective

I love travel. Every day is an adventure with multiple small reminders that you are a foreigner. And the bonus: re-entry is an adventure too. With enough time away, everything looks different upon your return. You ask, "Why do we do things this particular way, and do we have to?" Imagine! The highway signs are green here instead of blue like in Europe!

How can I keep that foreigner's inquisitiveness alive? So quickly the novel becomes the norm. By the time I arrive home from the airport, those green signs don't look so odd.

Sadly, I'm feeling acculturated.

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Discoveries



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

***The Arrival* by Shaun Tan by Brian Remer**

Once, as a boy, I was exploring the recesses of my grandmother's attic. Lifting the lid of an old trunk I discovered a thick envelope full of yellowed papers. The handwriting was ornate and fading; the language indecipherable—a mystery begging to be solved.

That's how I felt reading Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*. This engrossing book has the feel of old

documents or a family album that has been lost for years. Pick it up and you hold in your hand the account of an immigrant who travels across cultures to a new land and a strange life. Yet this story is its own mystery to be solved because it is told entirely without words!

Pictures on each page reveal new clues to the story. Tan renders his drawings in pencil with a sepia tone and "water stains" that suggest the age and authenticity of a historical document once hidden between the rafters. Seen through the eyes of the protagonist who leaves his homeland, the culture of the new world is familiar and confounding at the same time. Buildings, street vendors, animals, foods, even kitchen utensils are foreign and confusing presenting complicated challenges for the main character. As readers, we find ourselves observing, analyzing, and interpreting this strange culture too.

And that's the fun of this book. We also must decipher and ascribe meaning to the images that create this story. Sometimes we even have to decide the order in which to "read" the sequential pictures! Tan's book gives a heart-felt voice to the immigrant experience and opens a window for anyone going abroad or welcoming new comers to their own land.

Learn more about Shaun Tan and *The Arrival* at www.shauntan.net .

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Ideas



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

Do You Belong? by Brian Remer

Belonging is one of the most powerful motivators in our lives. It's the foundation of our family commitments. It fuels friendships. It is the power behind peer pressure. And it has a profound influence in the workplace. Whether or not people "fit" into your organizational culture has an impact on teamwork, performance, and productivity.

The Arrival invites readers to consider both their own belonging and the belonging of people new to an adopted “culture.” On his website, Shaun Tan writes:

“I think that the ‘problem’ of belonging is perhaps more of a basic existential question that everybody deals with from time to time, if not on a regular basis.... We often find ourselves in new realities—a new school, job, relationship, or country, any of which demand some reinvention of ‘belonging.’

“One of the great powers of storytelling is that it invites us to walk in other people's shoes for a while, but perhaps even more importantly, it invites us to contemplate our own shoes also. We might do well to think of ourselves as possible strangers in our own strange land. What conclusions we draw from this are unlikely to be easily summarized, all the more reason to think further on the connections between people and places, and what we might mean when we talk about ‘belonging.’”

Empathy, then is an important element in incorporating the ideas and experiences of newcomers into one's organizational culture. Read ahead to learn about an activity designed to increase one's “empathic intelligence” no matter what group to which you belong.

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Activities

Reprinted from the [February/March 2009 issue](#) of **Firefly News Flash** by permission of Brian Remer.

Brian writes, “Kate Koski is a member of The Firefly Group and president of CultureWorks (<http://cultureworks.biz/>), a consulting firm whose mission is to improve workplace effectiveness through cross-cultural awareness. Here is a description of her activity, **GIVE IT UP**, which can create a profound sense of empathy toward people who have made a move across a cultural divide.”

Give It Up by Kate Koski

This is a simulation in which participants must emigrate from their homeland to a new one because of an ecological disaster—everything is turning to ice and becoming unlivable. They must adjust to their new country by choosing to give up parts of their identity, or not.

At the start, participants are asked to write down on separate pieces of paper two values, two names, two skills and two activities that are important to them. They are then asked to listen to a “story” of their emigration and at certain places along the way they have a choice of giving up an “identity paper” and receiving an economic benefit or keeping their identity and continuing to live in Tent City.

This activity can be used with participants who work with immigrants and refugees or with a group made up of diverse cultures to create an understanding of what people “give up” as they acculturate to another country's values. It is also excellent for working with people going through any transition: e.g. new to poverty, newly divorced, adjusting to college, and so on.

The simulation has been played with employers, teachers of Adult Basic Education, refugee workers, supervisors in multicultural organizations, and social workers.

I don't know how helpful it is for use with people who are actually transitioning. I haven't had that opportunity, although I have had participants who are immigrants, some long-term, others short-term, who have enjoyed having their experience made explicit.

Insights include understanding what their constituents (students, clients, employees, colleagues) have or are going through, awareness of the developmental nature of acculturation, understanding how values are manifested differently in different cultures (which is a very powerful discussion, when it goes in that direction), and self-awareness.

Brian writes, "Kate has generously made the notes for GIVE IT UP available to readers of The Firefly News Flash [and TGL]. You can download a copy by clicking [HERE](#) [28K PDF]. If you use the activity, please be so kind as to send her a note (at kmkoski@cox.net) and share your experience. Thanks!"

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Check It Out

Playing with Twitter (<http://www.copyblogger.com/twitter-writing/>)

My friend Chris Saeger recently alerted me to a nice blog piece explaining how the use of twitter can be useful to improve your writing skills. By forcing you to limit your message to 140 characters, Twitter trains you to write tight prose. Read this [interesting article](#) on the copyblogger site.

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Single Item Survey

Questions and Answers **by Tracy Tagliati**



Did you read Thiagi's article, "[Ask and Answer](#)"?

An essential component of all learning is to give answers. Another equally essential component is to ask questions. As Marty Grothe suggests, the real value of learning lies in answering questions and questioning answers.

All of this leads us to this month's single-item survey:

What questions do you have about using participants' questions in your training?

Send us your question at [this survey page](#) (opens in a new window). You may choose to include your name along with your question, or if you prefer, keep it anonymous.

Make sure that your questions about questions are provocative, penetrating, and practical. Here are some examples from a recent group of workshop participants:

- How can we use questions generated by participants in online learning?

- What if I invite participants to ask me questions and everyone keeps quiet?
- What if all the questions from participants are shallow and trivial?

Check back to the survey page often to see how your questions compare with those of others.

Now, what is stopping you from responding to my invitation? Why are you not going to the survey page?

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