Four by Four

Games To Train By

Games can serve several purposes in a workshop or training situation. They can be used as session icebreakers to capture and hold a group's attention, to warm up or loosen up a rigid audience, or to create expectations about what is to come. Games that require verbal, physical, or intellectual responses can help involve trainees in learning. Games can help illustrate a point, clarify content, or enliven an otherwise dry or dull presentation. Games can also be good devices for summarizing or wrapping up a session and inspiring action.

For all the benefits of games, they also have some pitfalls. Inexperienced or unprepared trainers may end up wasting trainees' time, diverting attention from the real purpose of the session, turning off trainee interest, or confusing or frustrating the group. In this month's "Four by Four," trainers give their advice and some of their favorites games and icebreakers.

> "Going to a training course is a social event. It's a time to meet other people, to be away from the normal routine, to be stimulated, to be exposed to new ideas."

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Look at how a group develops—the process people go through from being complete strangers to becoming part of something that's more cohesive. Along the way, there are certain interventions—call them games, call them icebreakers—certain group activities that a trainer can use to achieve a specific purpose.

People officially attend seminars to learn a set of skills or to gather information or to do attitude development. They come either because they want to be there or because somebody sent them. But they also come because going to a training course is a social event. It's a time to meet other people, to be away from the normal routine, to be stimulated, to be exposed to new ideas. There's something to this notion of being stimulated socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

One book I've turned to a lot in setting up my courses is *Developing Effective Classroom Groups* by Jean Stanford, which is really aimed at high-school teachers. Stanford says that along the learning path, a group goes

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through certain phases or stages and that certain activities that fit into the course content can help move the group through each stage. I've included four of the eight stages here.

Renner's recommendations

1. The first phase any group encounters is the orientation phase, where people first come into the group. At this stage, they're just strangers. They may have met each other before—they may work together or have taken another course together—but at this stage they're still relative strangers. They all have their own agendas and essentially keep to themselves.

The obvious icebreakers here are activities like name tags and introducing ourselves, finding out who our neighbors are and introducing them, interviewing somebody and then introducing him or her, doing the "I am . . ." exercise—any of various activities in which people declare themselves or find out about each other. Icebreakers have nothing to do with course content, but they're essential if you want people to work together.

2. The second stage, concurrent with dealing with content, deals with the notion of who is in charge. As the trainer I can contribute by doing exercises that will help the group gently shift from trainer-centered learning to group-centered learning.

For instance, one small-group exercise in my book *The Instructor's Survival Kit* is called the Circle of Knowledge. First, I clearly state an issue or problem or question, usually something controversial or something that makes people think. Then I go around the room and ask people what the answer is or what they know about the issue. For instance, in a conflict-resolution workshop for a group of supervisors, I might say, "Why do people get into conflict?" or "Some managers say conflict is good for an organization. Why is that so?" We're not allowed to comment on each other's contributions; we just state in 10 or 15 seconds what we know about the issue.

Several things happen. We quickly get a composite picture of what this group of learners knows about the issue. It also says something on a subtle level about who has the power. All of a sudden the whole group has power. We all know something about the issue, and as long as we pull together, we probably can come up with some good answers, even if we have to refine them a bit. I like to record this information on a flip chart.

Also, when it seems to be a negative issue, if I can turn the question around, people will start thinking, "Hey, there's something good about conflict." The Circle of Knowledge is not only a quick way to get information out, but a teaching tool as well. And people think, "Gee, I have something to con-

Four by Four

tribute, and that guy over there has something to contribute." The good thing is that the trainer never loses control. I'm still there, but I've temporarily shifted the spotlight over to the group. Then I can take it back and say, "OK, let me see what we can do with what you've just said." Then I start to massage the information and edit it and build on it.

One concern of new trainers is that when you do any of these icebreakers, you give up control. That seems to be a big deal because trainers like to be on center stage. Control is important to me because I'm getting paid to be in charge. But I can share that control, and not just for the sake of it. I don't do games just so people can feel like they have control, but they do move us toward the goal—the content—of the course.

3. Before I can shift the attention away from me as the trainer and to the group, I have to be sure people know how to respond to each other.

In every group there are a few people who are experienced; they listen well to each other and take their turns and truly contribute. But others may be unfamiliar with suddenly being given air time in class, and they may not use the time as well. I end up having to shut people off or keep them on track. I think it's my job as a trainer to spell out as quietly as I can some guidelines on how contributions can benefit the whole group.

In this third phase, I help people learn to respond to each other by continuing to shift from a trainer-trainee interaction to a trainee-trainee interaction. That can be kind of tricky, especially for the novice trainer. I don't want to lose the group; I don't want it to become a free-for-all. I'd rather get it all back and do all the talking myself. But if I believe that students or trainees have something to offer, then I need to help them learn to do that.

My own behavior as a trainer can help the process. I can make sure the seating arrangement is conducive to people being able to see and hear each other.

Another thing I can do is encourage participation and keep everyone on their toes. I might say, "Susan, that's a good question. Jim, how would you respond to that?" Then, if Jim says, "Well, I don't know," I would either restate the question for him, or I could say, "Susan, would you restate your question to Jim?" I'm doing two things here: one, I'm getting the question answered, but I'm also getting Jim to pay attention and to value what Susan's question is about. Rather than letting people sit back and think, "This is nice, I don't have to do anything until my turn comes," it shifts responsibility to the whole class. The level of participation goes up and up because people are involved; they take

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responsibility for each others' questions and answers.

I may have to prepare the group with some games or activities or active listening exercises, in which people spend time one-on-one, listening to each other and restating "Here's what I heard you say," using such techniques as paraphrasing and perception checking. You can get some games going where people cannot answer questions unless they first restate them.

In one technique, which I think comes from the Quakers, there has to be silence for 10, 20, or 30 seconds after someone has spoken. This helps you avoid that heated exchange where people barely let someone finish before they shoot off. They're not really listening but are responding to the first three or four words or sentences of the other person's statement; they've already shut down because

they're just waiting to respond. But here you force people to slow down by saying, "Before you answer, count to 10, and then reply."

In another activity, you have people sitting around and you bunch up a piece of paper into a ball and say, "Only the person holding the ball can respond. If you want to respond to what Fred has just said, you signal him to toss you the ball, and then you can be the speaker." That focuses the group's undivided attention on the speaker. You don't have to fend off anybody who's quicker with words or more eloquent; you have the group's attention. You also have the responsibility to use that time. You can't just burble on. You are now telling something to the group, and with it comes both a privilege and a responsibility.

Such activities can become mere games, with people saying, "This is silly. Why should I be doing this?" Therefore, I, as the trainer, have to set the scene: "The reason we're doing this is to review some of the techniques I'd like to use when we're working together later on."

4. If I am being effective, the group will naturally move into the next stage, which is cooperation. People will begin working together and helping each other, rather than looking for me to do everything. People will share information and will collaborate rather than compete.

In one of my night-school courses I invite people to clip and bring in items of interest from the newspaper. Or if they are doing an outside activity that's related to the course, I ask them to bring in information about that. In elementary school we called it Show 'n' Tell. It's still basically the same, but some people call it Unfinished Business, some call it How It All Fits Into Your Real Life. People report—"I talked to my boss, and he said . . ." Or, "I read this in a trade magazine, and I think it would interest everyone."

Initially, a person will bring in an article and give it to me. After a while he or she will bring in 15 copies of it and hand them out to the group. What

23

happens is that people start taking on roles that are traditionally the trainer's.

I like a cooperative activity called Broken Squares, which appeared in the University Associates annual series. The trainer takes a series of square pieces of cardboard and cuts them up into puzzle pieces. People get into small groups and each gets a piece of the puzzle on the table in front of him or her. You have to help each other complete your squares, but you can only do that if other people give you their pieces. There are no losers; you can win only if you help others. It forces people to cooperate so that they can win together.

Another quick activity is called Spend a Penny. It can be run concurrently with any agenda or content. It gives me as the trainer a way to regulate dialogue within the group.

It's only natural that when given the chance, certain people will do most of the talking and certain people will be quiet. It's just the way things are. My goal is to encourage the people who are quiet without shutting down the talkers, because they're my collaborators. So, I give everybody three pennies or three tokens, and I say, "In the next half an hour, you've got three pennies to spend, three opportunities to make a contribution. And when you've made them, when you've spent your three pennies, that's it."

Some people will spend their pennies right away; others will judiciously keep them and say, "I'd better keep these until I want to make a gem contribution later on." And the people who are normally quiet will feel obliged to spend them by asking a question or making some shy contribution.

Suddenly, the people who do a lot of the talking realize how much time they spend talking, and now they have to be quiet. The normally quiet people are saying, "Gee, I'm the only one with pennies left; I'd better do some work here."

This is usually quite playful and people get into it quickly. After a while the exercise becomes symbolic and I don't have to do it anymore. People say, "Oh, I think I've spent all my pennies; I'll shut up for a while." And I can say to the others, "If anybody has some money to spend, please do so now." Spend a Penny takes little preparation and no real skill, but it does show that everyone in the class has equal weight, equal opportunities, and equal responsibilities. It's a good classroom management tool.

> "Adults want to know how much you care before they care how much you know"

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When I speak professionally with people, I basically adhere to four premises that are related to the use of icebreakers: the learning experience should be personal, it should be fun, people should use both the right and left sides of their brain, and when you find something that works, you should stick with it.

So, how do these premises translate to the use of brainteasers?

Rinke's recommendations

1. **Make the learning personal.** Adults want to know how much you care before they care how much you know.

Before my presentation, I try to meet people as they come in the door or as they're sitting down. I say hello, introduce myself, and ask them to talk a little about themselves. It's informal, jovial, and upbeat. It's just to connect with some of the people, just to let them know that I'm a human being and not some god on a pedestal.

An exercise that has worked very well for me with smaller groups is to pair people up and ask them to interview one another on the basic stuff—name, background, etc. In addition to that, I ask them to share with the other party something special or personal that will help the other person remember them, like a story or "What makes me a unique person?"

To help people remember first names more rapidly, because that's one of my handicaps, I tell them to make up a word association or a rhyme for the first name. Associations can be very useful. Then team members introduce one another; you don't introduce yourself. That ensures you get to know at least one other person quite well.

2. **Make learning fun.** The second premise I'm driven by is that learning should be fun. I generally strive for roughly 60 percent of

> To help people remember first names more rapidly, I tell them to make up a word association or a rhyme

whatever I deliver to be educational and 40 percent to be entertainment.

I like to use humor for an opening. Obviously, that's not unique, but humor serves several purposes. One, it serves as an icebreaker, and two, it provides me with another opportunity to let people know I'm not some super human, that I'm just like they are.

One joke I use is about how I once had an opportunity to talk to my daughter's fifth-grade class on one of my favorite topics—"Winning Strategies to Maximize Your Potential." After my presentation, the teacher had all the students line up and shake my hand and thank me. Nicole, my daughter, was standing by my side with a big smile on her face because everyone was saying all these nice things.

After all the little people had come through, I noticed one of them, Janet,

standing on the side, and I said, "Janet, how'd you like my presentation?" And she said, "It was boring." Of course my response was "Oh, darn." Then Nicole started pulling on my sleeve, saying, "Dad, Dad, don't pay any attention to Janet. She just repeats what everyone else says." And then everyone laughs and I have a couple of follow-up lines.

I always follow up my stories with a popular exercise called the Four-Shapes Exercise. This is probably one of my most powerful warm-up strategies, first because it uses humor, but also because it leads to something more purposeful.

On an overhead or a slide, I have a square, a triangle, a Z, and a circle. I ask people to pick the shape that best represents them. I say, "Let me see a show of hands of how many people perceive themselves as squares." Well, there's hardly ever any hands, so the follow-up line is "Oh, that's really a shame because research has shown that squares are very intelligent people." I do the same for the triangle and the Z shapes. Triangles have well-developed leadership skills, Z-ers are sensitive—you can make these up, whatever you want.

Most people pick the circle, and that's when I tell them, "Well did you know that people who are circles are obsessed with sex and booze?" The result is rip-roaring laughter in the audience, and that becomes my lead-in to say, "Now, I *really* would like to get to know you . . ." and more laughter.

3. Require brainwork. The third underlying premise I adhere to is that ideally I'd like to have the learners engage both the left and the right sides of the brain to maximize learning.

After we've all gotten to know each other a bit, I go over the presentation overview. Of course, I have a set of objectives for the training, but before I show mine to the trainees, I ask them, "What do you want to get out of this learning experience?"

To do this I hand out an Ideas Page. Sometimes it's just a blank sheet;

sometimes I have a perception on it—such as the woman who can be perceived as the old lady with the crinkly face or the young lady with the feather boa. The purpose is for them to take notes on the Ideas Page and to write down their ideas. I ask them to each write down at least one major question that they'd like to have answered. I tell them to put a box around their most important concern.

Once they know what we're going to accomplish—the basic objectives and the roadmap—I do a brainteaser. Brainteasers are pretty much my trademark. I've compiled a huge file of teasers, humor breaks, and mental-stretch breaks, many of which I cover in my book.

One mental-stretch break involves a page with three to 16 boxes on it. Each box has some sort of word, phrase, or picture, which trainees have to translate into something that is meaningful and recognizable. For instance, what do the words "thought" and "thought," stacked on top of each other represent? "Second thoughts." The word "head" followed by lines that look sort of like a musical score means "headlines." "Show" written down the side of the page is, of course, "sideshow," and so forth.

While I'm giving the instructions on how to do the brainteasers, I explain the purpose, which is to engage the *right side of the brain. And here I go* through very quickly what I mean by left-brain and right-brain thinking.

Solving the brainteasers is very creative, and I try to bring out people's creative sides—their right-brain sides. I believe that we create our own environments, and I've seen the most stuffy people get so into exercises like this that pretty soon they're literally jumping out of their chairs.

Once they understand how to maximize their creative potential, I give them a time limit and they begin translating the brainteaser words or figures.

Afterward, we go through the brainteasers and the trainees score themselves.

Four by Four

4. Stick with what works. One thing I have found in speaking professionally with large audiences is that you experiment with different things and then when something works really well, that's what you should stick with. For me, humor usually works.

My other recommendation is to give credit where credit is due. I've used two excellent sources here that I probably ought to mention. One is *Games Trainers Play*; the other is *More Games Trainers Play* (see below).

> **"Learning is not a spectator sport"**

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Gaming plays heavily in the whole field of experiential learning in terms of creating an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Games are used for more than just fun. They actually can, do, and will contribute toward trainee learning. Games have a useful and important purpose at the start of a training program as climate setters or as ice-breaking activities. Right away, people can see that this is going to be a fun exercise, a nice day, a nice hour. Games also have an important part to play in the overall training process. But they are only a part of the process. They cannot become the dominant activity, and trainers must be careful not to misuse them.

Games verify some of the classical learning principles we know about how adults learn, which Malcolm Knowles has termed "andragogy," versus how kids learn, which is "pedagogy." During some of our train-the-trainer workshops, however, teachers—even elementary-school teachers—come up and say, "Hey, I think it's great that you want the kids to get more involved, as opposed to sitting and listening to the teacher." So perhaps the differences are less than we thought.

People learn things when they do them or hear them over and over. It gets boring, of course, for a trainer to verbalize the same thing over and over, but you can use games to sneak the repetitions in from different directions and different angles.

The law of association is a classic form of learning, and games are one way to use it. After taking a week-long

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seminar, a participant, only half in fun, summarized the week not from a content perspective but from a game perspective, listing all the punch lines and exercises. At first we were dismayed, thinking that was all she had acquired during the week. Then we realized it was the "hook" or the "cue" that she would retain. From there we hoped she would go back to the concept or the piece of knowledge we were trying to get across.

We have some tips concerning gaming, which we would recommend to trainers.

■ Be prepared. We often say that the three most important parts of any presentation or training program are preparation, preparation, and preparation. Unless trainers have a good handle on the why, where, what, and how of using a game, it's going to fall flat in their faces. They've got to do their homework.

■ Be brief. A lot of trainers spend far too much time on games. Gaming really becomes the tail that wags the dog. Games are excellent vehicles for reinforcing learning concepts or techniques, but they can't be the main thing.

■ Have a purpose. You've heard the saying in training "You can't get lost if you don't know where you're going." Well, if a person's going to use a game just because it's fun to do, people are going to see right through it. You have to have some objective or purpose in mind as to what that game is supposed to do, prove, or reinforce.

■ Involve people. Learning is not a spectator sport, and one thing we know about the basic laws of adult learning is that retention is best with some kind of involvement on the part of participants.

■ Have fun. Training, of course, is serious business, and people should take training seriously. But they don't have to take themselves all that seriously. If you can't have fun doing what you're doing, then you ought to be in a different business.

■ Don't be gimmicky. A lot of trainers get carried away, but "cutesy" in the training field is a real turn-off. Gimmicks can be far more destructive than instructive.

■ Don't steal training games without giving credit to the sources. This is imperative. Some games have been around for so long that many have become like generic property. One time we got a nasty letter from a publisher, claiming that three of the games we used in our book were used by some of its authors. The authors were upset, saying we didn't do our homework. In all three cases, our sources predated the supposed initial resources. So, we wrote them a letter, which they never acknowledged. Now look who's not doing their homework.

■ Don't have hardening of the categories. You've got to be flexible to be creative. Don't get in a rut by doing 27

Four by Four

the same thing all the time. Emerson once said that the ability to create is the ability to adapt. So, don't be afraid to do something different, to try new adaptations or revisions. Don't be so rigid and tight that you can't change. Otherwise, you get too methodical and forget that games can be fun.

Newstrom and Scannell's recommendations

Here are some sample icebreakers we have used to open a training session.

1. Expectations. This is one we have used probably 50 times in half-day or full-day training sessions. As the name implies, after we start the introduction and go through the overview of that day's topic, we say, "OK, now you know what our objectives are. But to make sure your time today is well invested and productive for you, we need to know what you want to get out of today's session. What is it that you really need to know that will make this day more productive and effective for you?"

Then we give them each a sheet of paper titled simply, Expectations. We get them in groups of two or three, because typically people won't say by themselves what they want to learn. But in the security of a small group, they will. We give them four or five minutes and ask each group to jot down two or three things it would like to cover by the end of the day. Then we plan to cover them if we can. Sometimes we have to say we don't have time, that it's not part of the program. Other times we find ourselves switching time allocations and at least giving air time to the things they want to cover.

2. The Stand-Up Person. Another technique we use quite a bit came from Joel Weldon in Scottsdale, Arizona. In this one, at the start of the program, we recognize that while we'll have set breaks, we know that the average person's attention span is not going to last for, say, two hours. So, in kind of a fun way, we have someone in the group identify him- or herself as having the shortest span of attention. That person becomes our "stand-up person." In front of the whole group, we say to that person, "If at anytime during the course of the day you feel so inclined, just stand up." We agree to quit talking and to have everyone take a quick one-minute stand-up break at that time. It works pretty well.

3. Introductions. A get-acquainted exercise we use a lot is Mutual Introductions. We first have the participants stand up and introduce themselves. Then the group pairs off; if there are 20 people in the class or program, they count one through 10, one through 10. Then each person finds his or her counterpart and takes three minutes to interview the other person. When they come back, instead of introducing themselves, they introduce their partners.

Another game is Circle Introductions, in which everyone sits in a circle and has to say his or her own name, as well as the names of everyone who has gone before. "My name is John, and this is Sheritta, and that is Mary, etc." The repetition is a good way to get to know everyone's name.

4. Bingo. This is a fun game we've used with ASTD and other organizations. It involves taking a regular bingo card, but instead of having B-1 or G-15, each blank has information about a person, such as "Has attended every ASTD National Conference since 1978," "Serves on his local Red Cross chapter," "Drives a red sports car," or "Plays the piano." Each person has to go around the room and find someone who matches that particular criteria. Some of the boxes are specific; some, of course, have to be generic. We've used it for executive board meetings, as well as when we've walked in cold knowing essentially nothing about a group. You often can get data sheets in advance or just pull two or three words out of someone's bio for the clues. It's a great mixer.

The nice thing about these exercises is that they don't cost anything and

don't take a lot of time to prepare. You shouldn't be spending more than 10 or 15 minutes on the climate-setting games. Anything more is taking away from the content. All a trainer should do is set the stage, establish a comfort zone, and put people at ease with the program—let them know a bit about what's going to happen. These games are especially fun when they involve people who work together who think they know each other. There are always surprises.

> "Games that are indulgers tend to the emotions, whereas inducers tend to the intellect. Indulgers allow rest for the part of the brain that is vigorously engaged in thinking and making decisions, whereas inducers engage the brain gradually through experience and emotion"

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When we think of activities, icebreakers, or games, we don't necessarily think of them as something you do at the beginning of a certain type of a workshop. We think of them as something that should occur all the time, in every kind of environment a trainer may encounter, even during development stages. We see games and activities as a part of life, not just as a particular part of an agenda.

There are two distinct uses for games in a workshop or training program. The first is to offer participants a chance to stretch, to think of something different, to chuckle, and basically to let go of stress. We call those "indulgers." The second is to invite thought about the objectives of the program. We call those "inducers."

Four by Four

Both of them have merit; both of them stimulate learning. And some activities actually do both—indulge and induce people. Indulgers tend to the emotions, whereas inducers tend to the intellect through kinesthetic activity and emotion. Indulgers allow rest for the part of the brain that is vigorously engaged in thinking and making decisions, whereas inducers engage the brain gradually through experience and emotion.

There are specific times when it makes sense to use the two different kinds of activity. We suggest you use indulgers at the beginning of sessions; after lunch; after a tense or a lengthy time of information, conclusion, or breaking; or when you want to divide the class into groups.

Inducers are most useful when you want participants to have an "Ah-ha!" experience; when you want them to come to their own conclusions, knowing that those may be different for each person; when you want to develop a team; when you want participants to be engaged because the preceding part of the program was unengaging; or when you want to summarize the content.

We can't say enough about the benefits to using both types of activities. On top of those we've mentioned, an added benefit is that it all benefits the trainer as well. Isn't that great? We believe the participants deserve to enjoy learning, but that the trainer deserves to enjoy the experience, too.

Greene and Cross's recommendations

1. We use an "affiliating," or networking, activity called the Psychic Shake. It's not our own; we got it from a book called *New Games*. It can be played with a small or large group.

We give people numbers as they walk in. Then we tell them they're going to spend some time getting to know the other people, but that they have to do it without talking. To find their group, they have to walk up to as many people as they can and shake each person's hand the number of shakes they've been assigned. In other words, if you were given the number three you would shake someone's hand three times up and down. When you're done shaking, the other person may keep shaking because his or her number was seven. When someone else also shakes three times, then the two of you hook up and start shaking with other people and looking for other group members who have the number three.

The result of this game is first that people are smiling, so they're beginning to enjoy themselves and to relax and let go of stress. Second, they're

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beginning to know each other, but it's not in a threatening way. Often if you say to people, "Turn to the person next to you and find out what you can about him or her," there's a power play, or some people start feeling uncomfortable because they're uncomfortable in any social situation. But having things clearly structured and having everyone do the same thing without talking gives people absolute license to just relax and shake. They're smiling with each other, and it's that first connection that puts people at ease. At the end, people are in groups, ready to do your next activity.

We like to use music with our games—particular music that matches whatever activity is going on at the time. Not all trainers do that, but we feel that lively music helps people get into the activity.

2. Next, we start focusing on creating a sense of achievement for the individuals and for the groups. That usually involves a light group activity that has them doing something with little risk of anyone failing. From there, we move into a large-group activity that brings the entire room together.

The Paramecium is one of our favorite communal activities because it also focuses on the team as well as the large group. It can be done with a lot of variations. We begin by giving the people, who are in their groups, a basic refresher in high-school biology. Remember having to identify the four basic parts of the paramecium—the nucleus, the protoplasm, the cell wall, and the cilia? The task here is for each group to create a paramecium, with one person being the nucleus and several people being the protoplasm. Outside of that, with arms interlocked, and facing outward, are the people who make up the cell wall. They all have their hands and fingers out—these are the cilia.

The idea is that the nucleus is the brain, so the person who's the nucleus needs to figure out how the paramecium will move. The mission is to meet every other paramecium in the room. To do that, the group needs to move around the room, and when it bumps against another paramecium, the two shake hands, except that they don't have hands, of course, they have cilia, so they shake cilia. It's very difficult for even the most pessimistic human beings not to smile and laugh and find that they're having a wonderful time.

When we want to make the game a little more complicated, in case anyone wants to be particularly challenged, we introduce something called "regeneration." Several times during the activity, we explain that paramecia regenerate every so often—they break off, they double. All we ask them to do here is to regenerate internally. So they regenerate—the protoplasm becomes 29

Four by Four

the cell wall and the cell wall becomes the protoplasm—and then go on to meet other paramecia.

Once all the paramecia have met each other, they all move back to their original spots. What has happened is that the entire group has had a chance to interact while people are still working within their small groups. This activity effectively bridges the gap between small groups and large groups. A lot of wonderful things can happen from it.

3. One game we recently did for a keynote address dealt with the impact of change. Our focus was on experiencing and validating the difficulty of change and then putting the entire group through some quick activities that created "Ah-ha!" experiences for them.

We hand out pieces of paper with frames around the edges. We invite participants to draw a person seated in a chair. That immediately elicits a lot of reactions. Some people are very excited because they can't wait to draw, but most people say, "Oh no, I can't draw. I never could." But we validate their feelings by recognizing them and saying that we aren't asking them to be artists.

Then they begin drawing. Some people draw on a little corner of the paper, others fill the page, and some people's drawings end up looking like they held the pencil with their feet. When they're finished, we push them first to react to their own pictures and then to have other people react to them. Right in front of us, judging is going on at many different levels. We use people's reactions to the pictures as a springboard to describe how instant judging happens elsewhere. It's a very simple but vivid illustration of how we all carry a lot of different types of judgments.

One of the reason it works is that the whole thing is done with a lot of humor. We make it fun. We do this activity after they've already built up some trust within their groups. And we walk them through, saying things like

"Do you trust this other person's judgment? Do you care what others say?" We tell them they absolutely have to be honest. We tell them to think of words that may be very original that the people have never heard used to describe anything they've done.

Part of what comes out is that judgments must be based on some criteria. For people to prejudge—and here they've already judged not only their own drawing but other people's—they must have based their prejudgments on a previous image of what the drawing should look like. What if we create criteria that have nothing to do with

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the way this thing looks? Maybe we base judgments on the use of the weight of the pencil line, or the ability to create a stick figure that looks like it's part of a chair. Whatever those criteria are, if we had set them up ahead of time, we would not be making the same judgments.

In a change process in business, we all still have the same attitudes and skills (while we're also learning new skills), but the criteria have changed. Yet we still judge the change based on the old criteria and often react negatively to it. We use the game to illustrate that we must first recognize the true criteria and then be open enough to recognize that the criteria may be met using skills we already have—but in a new way.

From there, we break off and focus on who else might be judging the pictures. One of the variations we use is to tell participants in the beginning that they're going to enter their drawings in a poster contest. We say that artists—experts in the field—will be judging the pictures.

We validate their inevitable fears by encouraging them to try this—something they've never done before. There are always so-called experts who know it all and can tell you how to do things. But maybe their judgment is not what you're looking for. We make the point that so often we're intimidated by "experts," even though we have good ideas.

With this activity, we can go in many different directions, depending on what the group wants to do with it. We've been invited back to repeat this exercise, and we've never heard anything but positive things about it.

4. We do a lot of work with trainers, helping them learn that for participants to walk away from a training session with as much as possible, the trainer has to attend to the trainees' affiliation needs, their sense of achievement, and their need for validation. As we've described, in our games we attend to those three things. It may appear that we just come up with a list of games, but they're actually carefully organized so that they meet people's needs.

If people aren't attended to carefully, they will shut down. They will not get the kind of information that the workshop needs to deliver. That can all be orchestrated, and we find that games and icebreaker activities can enhance the learning process. ◘