



## **TERRITORIAL GAMES: UNDERSTANDING AND ENDING TURF WARS AT WORK**

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Dear Friends,

As always, please feel free to contact me if you need me as a sounding board or want to tell me success stories about using these ideas. I LOVE success stories.

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Here you will find:

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## The Ten Territorial Games

### powerpoint presentation

Take notes so you can present the ten slides yourself when you get back to your workgroup.

This file.ppt is easily downloaded in it's electronic form:

<http://www.groupprocessconsulting.com/flow/books.shtml#teritory>

Slide 1



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Slide 2



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Slide 3

**Filibuster Game**



Using excessive verbiage to prevent action,  
Out-talk or "wear down" objectors,  
Monopolize discussion until time runs out.

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Slide 4

**Camouflage Game**



Creating a distraction,  
Emphasizing the inconsequential,  
Deliberately stimulating anxiety over 'consequences'

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Slide 5

**Manipulating Information Game**



Withholding Information, covering up  
Putting a 'spin' on information, or  
Giving false information

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Slide 6

**Strategic Non-Compliance Game**



Agreeing up-front to take actions that never happen,  
Promising agreement simply to buy time,  
Having a "silent veto"

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Slide 7

**Invisible Walls Game**



"Roadblocking" the details of implementation,  
Creating negative perceptions about a project  
Making it very, very, difficult to proceed

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Slide 8

**Shunning Game**



Subtly or overtly excluding an individual from the group,  
Branding an individual as an "outsider"  
Withholding social acknowledgments

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Slide 9

**Powerful Alliances Game**



Using relationships to activate territorial games elsewhere  
Name-dropping as a display of territory  
Using relationships to threaten others

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Slide 10

**Discredit Game**



Using personal attacks or criticisms to diminish others.  
Creating doubt about another's competence or credibility.  
Using sweeping generalizations to negatively brand a group

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Slide 11

**FIELD MANAGEMENT**



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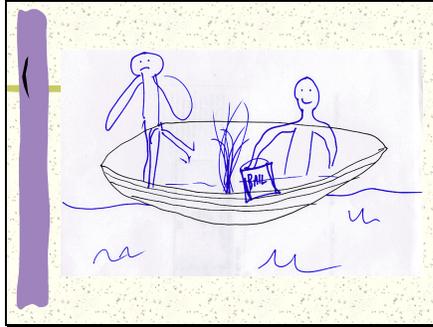
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Slide 12



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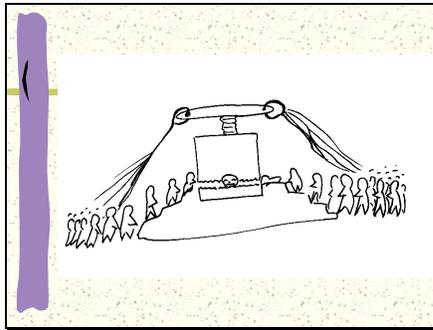
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Slide 13



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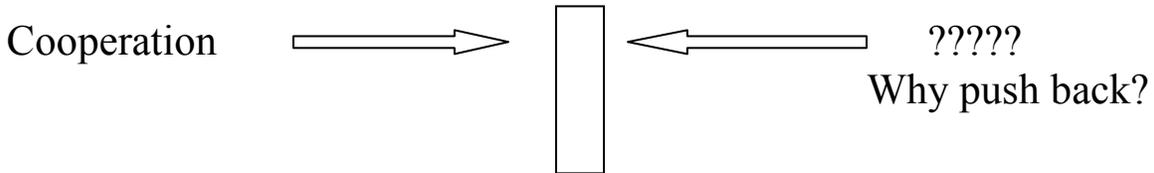
## Territorial Games – Self-Awareness Survey

<b>Territorial Games</b>	Used by your Peers	Used by your Boss	Used by You
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1. Occupation</b></p> <p>Marking territory; maintaining an imposing physical presence; acting as the gatekeeper for vital information; monopolizing relationships, resources, or information</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2. Information Manipulation</b></p> <p>Withholding information, putting a “spin” on information, covering up, or giving false information</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3. Intimidation</b></p> <p>“Growling”, yelling, staring someone down, scaring off, or making threats (veiled or overt)</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4. Powerful Alliances</b></p> <p>Using relationships with powerful people to intimidate, impress, or threaten others; using name dropping; making strategic displays of influence over important decision makers</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5. Invisible Wall</b></p> <p>Actively instigating circumstances or creating counterproductive perceptions so that an agreed-upon concept is, if not impossible to implement, very, very difficult to implement</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6. Strategic Noncompliance</b></p> <p>Agreeing up front to take action and having no intention of taking that action, or agreeing just to buy time to find a way to avoid taking that action</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7. Discredit</b></p> <p>Using personal attacks or unrelated criticisms as a way of creating doubt about another person’s competence or credibility</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>8. Shunning</b></p> <p>Subtly (or not so subtly) excluding an individual in a way that punishes him; orchestrating a group’s behavior so that another is treated like an outsider</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>9. Camouflage</b></p> <p>Creating a distraction, emphasizing the inconsequential, or deliberately triggering someone’s anxiety buttons just to distract him or her</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10. Filibuster</b></p> <p>Using excessive verbiage to prevent action, outtalking any objectors at a meeting, talking until time for discussion is exhausted, or simply wearing others down by outtalking them</p>			

## Territorial Games: Understanding and Ending Turf Wars at Work Presentation Notes

If your efforts to create cooperation are not working...it might be worthwhile to learn about the hidden human dynamics that cause people to push back – to *resist* cooperation.

What is it that makes us wary? When someone asks, “Can I see your report?” what tightens our grip on it, and makes us say, “Why... what do you need it for?”



A THEORY: People have a natural instinct to hold on to things of value. Whether through years of social conditioning or genetic pre-programming, humans are naturally territorial. And in today’s world of too much information and too little security our territorial instincts are constantly over-reacting.

Instinct: The word we use to describe behavior that happens *without* thinking...i.e. MINDLESS BEHAVIOR

Territorial behaviors have been covert and hidden for so long that we only have metaphors to describe the behavior. (turf war, silos, old boys club, etc.)  
There are ten specific behaviors people use to keep other “out.”

<u>Physically</u>	<u>In Meetings</u>	<u>During Implementation</u>	<u>Social Behaviors</u>
Occupation	Intimidation	Invisible Walls	Shunning
	Filibuster	Strategic-Non-Compliance	Powerful Alliances
	Camouflage	Information Manipulation	Discredit

Create the opportunity to discuss the games. Help people laugh – if it gets too serious people get defensive. Present the games with examples from your own experience:

- Information Manipulation – “Didn’t anyone tell you?”
- Strategic Non-Compliance – “Oh dear, did I forget to do that?”
- Shunning – “I’m sorry, what was your name again?”
- Discredit – “...she’s probably got PMS.”
- Intimidation – “you did WHAT!?!?”

## Metaphor Map Process

Drawing can invoke an altered state --a state that invites reflection. People see things they missed before. Suddenly they see another's point of view, the bigger picture, and/or the fact that other people want the same things they want. They can see because it is safe. And because a picture is worth a thousand words.

1. **Create trust.** A group needs to trust you, before they will try this. They will intuitively know this is a self-disclosure process that can be abused. Let them see you are interested in a mutually beneficial discovery process *not* a manipulation process.
1. **Stimulate hope.** Talk about what they could accomplish if they really worked together. Reveal a few "truths" of your own.
3. **Pre-empt blame and feelings of defensiveness.** Describe territorial and negative feelings as natural reactions to stress and uncertainty. Talk about the predictable games that people play when there are too few resources and too many priorities. Make it o.k. to admit to "negative" feelings.
2. **Instill confidence with clear directions.** Ask them to draw a picture that is a metaphor for their organization – to go at least one level bigger than their day-to-day interactions. Explain that their drawing is going to be a piece of the puzzle that only they can see. Give them lots of ideas for metaphors: bridges, bridges that are 'out,' walls, unkempt vs. kept garden, cityscapes with slums, ships, islands, a golf course, whatever. Then let them draw whatever they want without judgment.
3. **Make it safe.** Make agreements that make this exercise safe for everyone. Agreements on confidentiality, respecting *everyone's* point of view. I recommend two rules.
  1. Stay within the metaphor.
  2. Comment on someone else's map only with sentences that begin "IF that were my map, what that *might* mean is..."
4. **Give everyone a chance to tell his/her story.** Assure them that no one has to share if they don't want to (if you set it up right, most will want to). Ask the most willing to show their pictures to the group and describe their metaphors without making judgments or naming names. Humor is your ally. There are always funny pictures and lots of giggles. Encourage a sense of fun. Invite questions of clarity only.
7. **Let the increased understanding do it's work.** Don't try to solve dangerous truths and undiscussables in one session. If you rush to solutions they won't get the benefit of increased understanding. This is the sort of thing that needs time to seep in. Few will admit they "got it."

## Story, Poetry, and Metaphor: Subjective Solutions for Subjective Problems

Annette Simmons (Printed in Reflections Journal, 2003)

Despite a few weak smiles, the senior managers' faces displayed mostly anxiety or aggression. Their jaws tensed and released. The CEO shook my hand a little too hard. I stood before 33 post-merger survivors surrounding a U-shaped table. When the CEO introduced me as "a young lady from North Carolina," I winced. This "merger of equals" was not going well. The CEO clearly saw the dilemma as "us versus them" and considered me (hired by the chairman of the board) one of "them." His sabotage of the process had begun in earnest. Military metaphors like "necessary losses" and "taking a bullet" had placed lines of demarcation and created an impasse. I needed a story to create some gray in their black-and-white world.

"I want to tell you about my dog, Larry. Larry is a greyhound. I adopted him from the racetrack. You know, they kill the dogs that don't win, if no one adopts them. Larry didn't know how to be a pet when he came to live with me. He had never seen a bone before and chased it all over the backyard until he made the intellectual leap that if he'd hold it down with his paws, it would stay still. He has never learned—and shows no sign of learning—that when he is on the leash and he walks on one side of a telephone pole and I walk on the other, we aren't going anywhere. Larry just looks up at me with his puzzled dog face. You know, I could tell him all day to back up, but he's not going to back up until I back up. Once I back up, he follows. Only then, can we disentangle ourselves and move on."

There are a few smiles, nods, and some cut their eyes to meet others' across the room. One guy uncrossed his arms. They know I am *not* talking about my dog, Larry. Only a story could simultaneously address all positions. The Larry story connects to a universal human experience. It offers an opportunity for introspection about personal responsibility without pointing fingers. It gets their attention. And it might have earned me a few points for being a nice enough person to adopt a greyhound. I would even suggest that it offered a healing touch to hidden fear over the fate of those who don't win. Story and metaphor are powerful for anyone hoping to shift a group's perceptions quickly. I've told the Larry story dozens of times. Others have borrowed the story. It is a gem. Told well, a story can shoot past defenses and get to the heart of a matter. Better still, it can prompt introspection within the privacy of a listener's mind without risking public admission of error.

What is a story? It is a narration of a sequence of events that simulates a visual, sensory, and emotional *experience* that feels significant for both the listener and the teller.

If experience is the best teacher, then a story is second best. Bullet points on a PowerPoint screen are dead, inanimate representations of someone else's conclusions. A

story has the power to breathe real-life experience into charts, tables, numerical analysis, and statistics so listeners can see, hear, and feel enough of an alternative perspective for it to become real. Once an idea or initiative feels real in their imagination, people are much more likely to do what it takes to make it real in the physical world. No matter how smart your conclusions seem to you, they are still yours, not theirs.

Reporting *your* conclusions sets up a either/or situation that creates too much competitive tension. A story makes people think backward and then forward again through the experience of your story in a way that prompts their own new conclusions, which they will value much more highly than your conclusions. In addition, a really good story has the power to connect humans to their emotions and access deep, shared wisdom that lies beneath language. Many people are making bad decisions because they simply don't have the time to think deeply. A story is a way to create or reawaken "common" sense (that is, shared meaning that works).

## Poetry

Perfectionists and idealists often turn to cynicism as a defense. Because these are usually the best and the brightest, releasing them from the tyranny of self-criticism also decreases cynicism. However, an objective description of the detrimental effects of self-limiting beliefs is, in equal parts, accurate and ineffective when compared to reading Mary Oliver's poem, "Wild Geese."

*You do not have to walk on your knees  
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting...*

Poetry and story have the power to shine a light into dark places and shift the emotional receptivity of a group in a way that redirects the flow of their thoughts—in this case, away from old self-defeating loops toward new thinking that can lead to new solutions. Reading a poem is like listening to music that changes how we feel long enough to find a fresh perspective on a day that has been downhill since breakfast. Our perspective pops from seeing the old lady to seeing the young woman, the vase instead of two faces, or any of the other perspective-popping drawings you might remember. This flickering of perceptual perspective gives people new choices when they are stuck; it gives them access to their own creative intelligence and wisdom. It opens doors. Poetry is a tool that induces perceptual agility so people can begin to learn how to do it for themselves.

## But How Do You Sell It?

None of this sounds like the sure thing that a client wants you to promise before he or she shells out  $x$  amount of money and two days of her top performers' executive time. I can see a senior manager's brow furrow at "perceptual agility" or "shifting the emotional state" and imagine the theme music from "The Twilight Zone" playing in the background of his mind.

Reconnecting people to their wisdom or common sense is difficult to explain in objective terms. Articulating an agenda or defining outcomes for a highly subjective process is difficult when the client (or the client's boss) has not yet experienced (or still doesn't trust) the unpredictable nature of subjective solutions. The tyranny of agendas, objective measures, and outcomes has distorted our ability to do good work.

Objective criteria distract us from tending to the subjective aspects of organizational life. Recently, some federal judges, the clerk of court, and staff people held a dialogue to discuss the spotty implementation of their new IT system. Focus on implementation plans, "accountability" systems, and follow-up had failed to increase compliance. After getting permission to talk about subjective issues, they discussed, for almost *two hours*, who says hello in the morning. One particularly formal looking judge (no one dared address her by her first name) burst out, "Well, no one says hello to *me!*" The shocked looks were testament to the fact that no one had dreamed that she cared. Was this dialogue relevant? Only when you interpret that saying hello in the morning was operating as a metaphor for "respect" in this group; the IT system had been held up by people who had decided they had no intention of cooperating with anyone who did not show them enough respect to say "hello." After this dialogue, people started saying hello in the court hallways, and the implementation of the IT system proceeded much more smoothly.

Many groups suffer from untended subjective issues invisible to objective criteria and quantitative analysis. Objective, analytical methods make subjective truths disappear before they can be tended. This accounts for meetings at which a group talks for hours and never talk about the real problem.

It's not only problems that disappear with objective, quantifiable criteria, but many of the solutions too. Most of us think kittens are cute, right? But trying to produce *cute* as a measurable outcome is like cutting a kitten in half to examine the quantifiable inputs that create *cute*. In many cases, our analysis destroys the very thing we seek to understand. Subjective methodologies like story, poetry, and metaphor cannot survive intact when subjugated to objective criteria or agendas. I sigh when corporate storytellers try to provide linear recipes by crafting outcome-based stories. The result is a bizarre, mechanical kitten that looks like a kitten, sounds like a kitten, costs a hell of a lot more than a real kitten, and falls way short of being either cute or engaging (although it never poops, you don't have to feed it, and you are guaranteed to get the same result every time). Stories that result from this 1, 2, 3 linear recipe approach are almost always boring and patronizing.

### **Objective versus Subjective Reality**

Objective thinking routines introduce a terrible alchemy to subjective truths that transform gold into lead. I try to preempt these thinking routines with a model that protects subjective truths long enough for a group to tend to issues that need tending (see table 1). This model has accelerated both (1) permission to introduce story, metaphor, and dialogue and (2) the transfer of story, metaphor, and dialogue skills. The model reduces

defensiveness, builds credibility, and preempts the “tried that, didn’t work” responses that high achievers sometimes place on this soft stuff. It takes about 10 minutes to deliver.

Table 1 Objective versus subjective reality

Objective reality	Subjective reality
Quality of decision—a decision or plan derived from objective facts, cost/benefit, documented need (real work).	Quality of acceptance—decision or plan people like and want to implement (soft stuff).
Things are either 100% true or they are false (test the hypothesis; if it fails, discard the hypothesis).	Nothing is 100% true or works 100% of the time; if a process works 50% to 70% of the time, that’s as good as it gets.
Scientific method and root cause analysis	Kittens
Facts	Feelings
Leadership competencies—flexibility, consistency, decisiveness, inclusiveness.	Real-leader stories (that is, flawed human beings who change their minds and at times make decisions without input).
Bullet points or charts	Metaphors, poetry, stories
Accuracy (derived from rational analysis).	Faith (often beyond rational evidence).
External proof (you can prove it is true).	Internal experience (you can’t prove it; you just know it is true).

We already know that no matter how right a plan is by objective measures, if people don’t accept it—if they simply don’t *like* it at a subjective, emotional level—it’s not going to succeed. We spend hours on cost/benefit analysis, information flow, and system architecture (doing real work) and come up with the perfect new compensation structure, but if people don’t like it, it won’t happen. The quality of the decision is dependent on the quality of the acceptance of that decision. We intuitively know subjective truths have a profound impact on our success. What we don’t seem to know is what to do about it. Objective truths have been elevated over subjective truths for so long that we tend to label the time spent making the right decision as real work and the time spent on subjective issues as something less.

Neglecting the soft stuff is bad enough, but tending to the soft stuff with objective tools built for real work is like carving coffee cups with a jackhammer. Or building a value-based organization by passing out laminated cards.

Lightening-fast mental routines embedded in us by a well-meaning educational system overrely on objective criteria to tell us what is true and what is false, to the extent that we inadvertently discard our natural-born understanding of vital subjective truths like trust and loyalty. Because objective truth is either 100% true or it is false, after one failure, the entire principle is discarded. One jerk and some people never again trust senior management. One betrayal and they never leave a subordinate’s work unchecked.

But subjective truths are subjective. Even when a subjective truth is true only 70% of the time (that is, “employees left alone will do the best work they can”), it doesn’t make it a half-truth. Consider the subjective strategies you use to create inspiration, courage, or integrity in your own life, for instance. There will be times when the theme to “Rocky” flares your nostrils and gives you energy, and there will be times when it makes you smirk. Trusting subjective truths that may let you down 30% to 50% of the time is better than discarding these truths and reverting to systems designed for worst-case scenarios.

Many a manager who has suffered the nightmare of facilitating a decision from a group that can’t even agree on what to order for lunch has rejected the subjective truth that group input creates better decisions. She stops trusting that principle because, by objective standards, she ran an experiment and the principle failed. She decides that making the decision herself and *pretending* to get group input is a much better strategy. (If your mind is saying, “Well, that just means she didn’t have good consensus-building skills,” let me say first, “Duh!” and second, “This is exactly how inquiry and learning about subjective issues stop before they get started.”)

Subjective issues are also resistant to our habit of looking for a root cause to the problem. Many groups reveal that lack of trust is a problem. Unfortunately, looking for the root cause of this particular issue invariably turns into a “Whose fault is it?” blame game that accelerates defensive reasoning. Counterintuitive as it may feel, examining root cause on trust issues will usually make things worse. Subjective problems respond much better to subjective tools and solutions.

## Metaphor

Change what people see and feel, and their behavior will change accordingly. When lack of communication is the problem, it is safe to assume each individual is operating with an untold story about who or what contributes to this lack of communication. As long as these stories—founded on negative assumptions about people who don’t care, are incompetent, or are overly self-interested—remain hidden, they are untouched by a more balanced, collective story.

Few senior managers will admit to their staff that they “feel alone and afraid,” but a metaphor drawing of a ladder that’s too short to get to the table and getting shorter due to the efforts of a group of stick figures with chainsaws can express those feelings. The branch managers who assumed this senior manager was sucking up to the CEO instead of representing their interests can now see more than they saw before; the metaphor gives a glimpse into his inner experience. When you increase a group’s ability to see their boss’s internal struggle and positive intent, you will change the way they treat him, the effort they make to communicate with him, and the support they offer.

Metaphor has the potential to disable negative judgment and jumping to solutions long enough for individual perceptions to intermingle, cross-pollinate, and stretch to include a bigger picture. The branch managers show their metaphor maps—a train with

square wheels, a boot that threatens to crush their good intentions, and a road map that leads to a dead end. These negative, subjective feelings have had no other place for expression, so they festered. Once expressed, they lose their sting. They even become laughable. The sharing of metaphor maps usually gets a group laughing, a subjective source of healing and creativity that beats the hell out of any other intervention technique I've ever seen. Laughter is a solvent for negative emotions.

Getting a bunch of objective thinkers to draw metaphor pictures requires stealth. I hide the markers and the paper until we need them. Before resistance can build, I present sample metaphor maps, explain the task, and give people five minutes to draw a metaphor of the current dynamics of their group or organization. As hidden beliefs about the futility of communication or cooperation are revealed, they are simultaneously reframed by seeing other's hidden beliefs. Sure, only 50% to 70% of the maps provide insight, but in a group of 10 or 40, that is a *lot* of insight.

Insight pops at several points. Sometimes, it happens when a person looks at his or her own map (a long line of new hires being sucked up into the whirling organizational tornado, bodies flung every which way, some even flung out the top). Sometimes, it happens by seeing others' maps (bailing out a sinking boat). And sometimes, it occurs in the conversation that follows ("I just got back from the Gulf War, and if I'm not drinking powdered milk and I can kiss my kids goodnight, this ain't that bad"). Ultimately, each individual's metaphor enters the collective memory of the group *unabridged* and begins to create an opportunity for a new group metaphor to emerge. Conflicting truths that cannot be reconciled in a true-false framework reconcile more easily within the "two sides of a coin" framework of metaphor.

Objective criteria force us to choose sides on issues like whether last year's performance was good or bad. Metaphors allow the complexity of "it depends on how you look at it" to be expressed. It may have been a good year financially, but all the dead bodies tell another story. You can feel the pop of recognition that occurs when people begin to understand that they each have a different piece of the same damn picture. They don't actually disagree; they were just using different definitions of good.

Businesspeople trained to deliver a problem description via objective language lose the subjective content. If a manager describes the last reorganization as demonstrating a lack of communication, when she really means, "I feel like I'm being treated like a rat in a cage," we lose the ability to tend to the real problem. We need tools to reveal the subjective issues behind rational descriptions. Argyris's "Left-Hand Column" exercise promises access to the unspoken, but, in practice, this wonderful tool doesn't work as fast or as effectively as metaphor. Smart executives mangle the intent and manufacture lightning-fast resistance to the awareness the Left-Hand Column offers. We need tools that reveal the subconscious before the conscious has a chance to disable it with logic. We need tools that help us laugh at ourselves and give us permission to stop pretending that we are something we are not.

## Conclusion

Recently, a group of PhD physicists and engineers took the objective-subjective truth model further than I expected: “You realize that quantum physics moves even objective reality over to the subjective side, don’t you?” I said, “Yeah, but that is a little too scary, don’t you think?” We just both smiled and moved on. It’s all in how you look at it.

Annette Simmons, M.Ed. (AnnetteGPC@aol.com) is president of Group Process Consulting (www.groupprocessconsulting.com), a firm that helps organizations in the public and private sectors build more collaborative behaviors for bottom-line results. Her books have been translated into nine languages and include: *Territorial Games: Understanding and Ending Turf Wars at Work* (AMACOM, 1997) *A Safe Place for Dangerous Truths* (AMACOM, 1998) and *The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence and Persuasion Through the Art of Storytelling* (Perseus, 2001).  
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## References:

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Oliver, Mary; *New and Selected Poems*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1992.

## “HOW TO”

### have a one-on-one conversation with a person who is “playing games”

1. **TIME:** Set aside two hours for the conversation. **DO NOT** have the conversation until you have enough time. The first half hour will be groundwork, and while the conversation may end sooner – you *don't* want to leave it half finished. Laying your “truth” in someone’s lap and then running off to a meeting is irresponsible (and wildly ineffective). If they want to know what this is about before they give you two hours send them the ten games survey and ask if they’d be willing to talk about these issues (if you play it straight, you will be pleasantly surprised in most cases). If you have tried everything and genuinely believe you are dealing with a hard case sociopath – go to Machiavelli’s Rules and CYA.
2. **WANTS/DON’T WANTS:** You probably don’t have trouble discussing territorial games with people whose good intentions you respect and trust. I’m betting the person you have in mind is not your favorite person and that you harbor negative assumptions about his/her intentions (like she/he must wake up early to think up new ways to make you crazy), based on her/his actions and impact on you, rather than a conversation *in person* letting her/him explain her/his intentions.

Articulate the kind of conversation you “want” and the things you “don’t want.” (“I want to talk about these issues openly and honestly so both of us have an opportunity to change what needs changing. I don’t want either of us to feel blamed or defensive.”) Articulate the kind of working relationship you want/don’t want to have with this person. (“I want to feel a sense of mutual respect and trust...etc.”)

Ask him/her to tell you his/her “wants” and “don’t wants”. Really listen. Resist eyebrow lifting, eye rolling and sneezing “Bullshi\*” into your fist. As you listen this person will be judging you – “Is she serious about getting to know me and understanding my point of view?” If he concludes you are not genuine your chances of change are slim.
3. **LISTEN FIRST.** Use the survey as a guide. Ask the person to read the list and tell you which of the games he thinks *you* play – explain the philosophy that everyone needs to check perceptions on a regular basis and you’d like to know if he experiences you playing any of these games. Really listen – validating his perceptions is not admitting guilt.
4. **THEN TALK.** **Now** it is your turn. First, ask permission to talk to him/her about some of the games you’ve experienced. Describe the behaviors without judgment. Speak in a provisional way (“might have” “could have”) and from a place of equality (“it happens to all of us”). Do not expect acknowledgement or an apology. Defensiveness is natural. They may “get it” without ever admitting it.
5. **LET IT GO.** Agree to pay more attention to these issues and end the conversation. Demonstrate over the next two weeks that you heard and valued what this person said. Say a little prayer that they will do the same.

## **Protect or Connect?**

### **Machiavelli's Rules: When you have no choice but to protect**

If you allow yourself to be exploited, no one wins. Here are a few ways you can “protect,” with the aim to later “connect”. When lines are drawn and your essential territory is legitimately being threatened, you have an obligation to protect yourself until you can successfully change the game. The secret here is to resist the urge (protective emotional responses) to escalate the battle. Your goal is to unplug the energy that feeds territorial games at the same time you stand your ground. De-escalate protective emotions every chance you get. Continue to cast lines that might connect. But don't be a patsy. If these games are eroding your ability to do a good job, then:

#### **OCCUPATION**

Get there first. If a decision, relationship or source of information is essential to your success, be proactive in protecting your ability to make/influence a decision. When a decision needs to be made, circulate a communication that clearly states the decision making process (who should be involved and the timeline). Clearly mark and monitor access to resources (a security system against theft). Be more visible (face time, reports, attending meetings).

#### **POWERFUL ALLIANCES**

Ensure powerful people know and respect who you are and your organizational goals. Understand the agendas of those in power and take the time to ensure they see how your success will help them achieve their goals.

#### **INVISIBLE WALLS**

Think ahead. Consider the perspective of those in the areas your project might “invade.” Bring them in early to discover hidden objections. Pre-empt by discussing a thoughtfully developed list of “what could go wrong” beforehand. Let them know you know what they are up to (use rich description without judgment).

#### **INTIMIDATION**

Don't get hooked. Intimidation is a ‘show of force’ rather than real force. Your non-response (no flinching *or* flashing) renders the tactic ineffective, and creates a useful tension – the ball is back in their court. If they don't understand any other language, and you share equal power – bark back (don't escalate – merely use an equal force to nullify) and move on quickly.

## **SHUNNING**

- Maintain your equilibrium and register no public response – this game only works if you display an emotional response.
- If (and only if) you can keep a peaceful tone, describe the behavior and ask if there is any meaning behind the behavior.
- Offline, find one or two people on the “other side” sympathetic with your goals and build one-on-one relationships with them.

## **INFORMATION MANIPULATION**

- Take responsibility to get good information. Ensure you have multiple sources.
- Take the time to understand the source and treatment of all information. (Let go of “I shouldn’t have to do this” feelings .)
- Ask lots of questions “Is there any information that could disprove what we have here?”

## **CAMOUFLAGE**

- Stay the course. Re-state group goals and label side-tracking as such.
- Understand your emotional susceptibility – learn how to ride out irrational insecurities.

## **DISCREDIT**

- Immunize yourself against attacks with a good reputation.
- Bring gossip into an open forum and strip it of its titillating attraction.

## **FILIBUSTER**

- Pre-empt with clear structure, agenda and time agreements.
- Don’t get in a head-to-head battle for floor time. It gives them energy.
- Take your message to individuals outside the meeting in one-on-one discussions.

## **STRATEGIC NON-COMPLIANCE**

- Take responsibility to check on their compliance before the window of opportunity is past. Help facilitate their compliance.
- Make non-compliance as public as possible without embarrassing anyone.

### **Calling people on their games:**

1. It is more effective for a non-victim to highlight a game.
2. Use descriptive language without judgment. (Avoid self-righteousness)
3. Use provisional language rather than language of certainty.
4. Beware of a superior tone, use language of equality.
5. Private is usually better than public.