


Effective Debriefing Tools and Techniques

by


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Intro to Processing and Debriefing

In processing, asking the group to state "What happened" in the experience can generate a "video" replay of the action with little or no evaluation or commentary. Members are then encouraged to share, discuss, or verbalize feelings about their experiences in the most personal way possible (So what?). The facilitators clarify and validate member's thoughts and feelings, and help with perceiving connections that the experience may have to other parts of the person's lifespace. The facilitator mentally stores this data for future individual and group references. Allow all the participants an opportunity to speak. In your mind carefully tie the threads of conversation together; reviewing the individual statements made at different points. This will allow you to summarize the experience for the group at closure (until such point that the group takes on this responsibility). Be sure to validate each member's experiences...then gently guide the group toward their next session....Now what?

Clearly, the facilitator's role evolves as a group takes on more responsibility and becomes more self-directed. Highly self-directed groups can require little more from the facilitators than knowing when their time on the course begins and ends. Even structuring the processing or debriefing of every experience with as much attention as was given to the experience itself will no longer be the facilitator's role once the group begins to appreciate the inherent value of reflective processing. Be prepared to give them the "What, So what?, Now what?" model.



In fact, be prepared for a highly empowered group to uncover an issue that merits the group's attention during the check-in process. Suppose the bulk of a group's challenge course time is spent problem-solving around that issue. Would this be "wasting" the group's time? In such cases the facilitators need to monitor to assure that the group is considering every member's needs. Is there a true consensus in the group to support working on this problem as the group's *de facto* initiative task?

Secondly, keep them grounded. Monitor to make sure the problem solving stays moving forward on the tracks of "what's possible". Help them re-focus on what this group of members who are present can actually do/decide that will impact or modify the problem situation with the resources they have or can realistically obtain. Facilitators don't have to be the only ones who provide these "reality checks" however.

Finally, see if the group will support a debrief or "process check" on their problem solving and teamwork in this session. If convenient, you can move the circle to a different spot on the field and process what just happened over there. Don't forget to recognize achievement, even if in the end it was simply emotional support for a distressed member.

What, So What, Now What information adapted from the book, *Islands of Healing*.



Debriefing Technique ~ Sit and Get

Debriefing is a term used in experiential education to describe a question and answer session with participants. These talking sessions are generally thought to be a 'sit down' circle where the facilitator asks questions and the participants answer. This is often referred to as a Sit and Get circle or the Traditional Sharing Circle.

This technique requires skillful questioning from the facilitator. It's a more advanced method and yet it is the most common - and expected - technique for processing. It involves asking Open Ended Questions in the What, So What, Now What sequence. Open Ended Questions are those which require more thought and explanation than a simple one-word answer. Closed Ended Questions are those which can be answered by a simple "yes" or "no."

Examples of Closed Ended Questions:

- * Did the group work together well to accomplish the task?
- * Do you feel good about the way the team performed?

Examples of Open Ended Questions:

- * Give an example of how the group worked well together.
- * What were some feelings that came up for you about how the team performed?

Open-ended questions require an answer with more depth and a lengthier response. They are helpful in finding out more about what someone is thinking or feeling, as well as how a situation played out. It's important to listen closely to the responses that are given as they can trigger your next question to the group.

This technique can be very effective as long as it is not the only technique used. If no other technique is used, participants can become bored with the process and can become easily distracted.

Also in this method, the facilitator is directing the participants rather than participants interpreting the experience for themselves. There is more responsibility for the facilitator to ask the right questions in the right order and draw the experience out of the participants.



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1. Sit & Get
2. Pair & Share 
3. Metaphoric Methods
4. Frontloading 
5. Intervention 
6. Anchor Pieces
7. Artistic Methods 
8. Self Reflection
9. Action & Reflection
10. Object Lesson



Sit & Get ~ Processing Gears

Props Needed

- * [Processing Gears Tool](#)

Activity Directions

- * Invite your participants to sit in a circle.
- * Explain the What, So What, Now What process
- * Begin with questions from the 'What' phase. Place the 'What' piece in front of the group.
- * Ask 4-5 questions that correspond with 'What' happened in the activity.
- * Move onto the 'So What' phase. Place the 'So What' piece in front of the group.
- * Ask 4-5 questions that correspond with 'So What' or 'Why is this important?'
- * Finish with the 'Now What' phase. Place the 'Now What' piece in front of the group.
- * Ask 4-5 questions that correspond with 'Now What' or 'How does this relate to the real world?'



Facilitator Script

"Let's quickly debrief what just happened. After we complete each one of the experiential activities throughout the program, we will debrief what happened and apply it back to the real world. Each time, we will take a few minutes to discuss what happened, why it was important, and then what are we going to do with this information, or more simply, What, So What and Now What."

"What Happened?" Debrief Questions

- * What were some of the thoughts that went through your head as soon as I said "Ready Go!"?
- * Who gave suggestions for completing the task?
- * How did you come up with this idea?
- * How did you communicate that idea to the rest of the group?
- * How did the group respond to this idea?
- * What happened to make a shift in the activity from competition to cooperation?

"So What" or "Why is this important?" Debrief Questions

- * What do you think was the purpose of this activity?
- * Why was it important that there was a paradigm shift in the middle of the activity? How does this apply to leadership?



Sit & Get ~ Processing Gears

“Now What?” or “How does this relate to real life?” Debrief Questions

- * Let’s look at this activity from a metaphorical point of view. How does this relate back to the real world?
- * Give an example of how something like this shows up in your day to day.
- * What did you learn about your communication style that might be helpful in the future?
- * What will you do with the information you just learned?

Teachable Moments

- * Use three different colored note cards that have What, So What, Now What printed or written on them.
- * Purchase Commercial products available from Training Wheels:
[Processing Gears](https://www.training-wheels.com/products/processing-gears)



Debriefing Technique ~ Pairing & Sharing

Have you ever stood in front of a group, asked a question and got blank stares as the response? Pairing and Sharing is a wonderful technique to use that helps 'warm' your participants up to talking. Some people are not likely to raise their hand and share their thoughts in a group setting unless they are called upon, especially early on in the program. Other participants are 'over sharers' and they speak up too often. The art of pairing and sharing allows everyone to have an equal opportunity to share their thoughts or ideas.

This technique also gives participants a chance to practice their answer before sharing with the large group. Many people do not like being put on the spot when asked question in front of their peers. Pairing and Sharing also allows for each participant to answer the question, not just one person talking while the rest of the group listens. Everyone gets a chance to answer each question that is asked.

With this technique, the facilitator first asks participants to find a partner. Once everyone has a partner the facilitator instructs the group to discuss a question together. This could be an icebreaker question, a general discussion topic, or a debriefing question. It could be a question on subject review matter or a leadership question. Regardless of the type of question you ask, the act of pairing up with another person and having them share a response is a great way to get them talking.

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Pairing & Sharing

Critical Point:

If you are going to use the Pairing and Sharing technique for processing and debriefing, it is critical that you ask for a few volunteers to share a modified response of what they shared with their partner. As the facilitator, you need to be able to link the learning from the current activity to the group goals, and to be able to carry the learning through to future activities as well. Also, if you selected the current activity to surface a specific behavior, you can address it in the large group discussion. You can also call on specific people in this session, because in theory, everyone just practiced their answer with their partner. Asking for 2-3 volunteers creates a large group experience, and allows the group to practice sharing in front of their peers. This also takes care of those 'rebel pairs' that might have been talking about something other than what you wanted them to be discussing.



Pairing & Sharing Activity ~ Icebreaker Wheelies

Props Needed

- * Question cards, one card per participant.

Activity Directions

- * Have the participants stand in a circle. Include yourself in the circle.
- * Hand each participant one card.
- * Ask participants to find a partner and stand next to them.
- * Participants will ask their partner to answer the question written on their card. After the two have each shared their response to their partner's question, have them exchange cards and find a new partner. This way they will have a new question to ask their next partner.
- * Encourage 3-4 partner exchanges.



Facilitator Script

"Gather around everyone. I need everyone to find a partner and stand next to them in the circle. (Pause until this has happened. If there is an odd number of participants, you will need to participate in the game or have one group of three participants.) In a moment, I'm going to hand everyone one of these question cards. When you receive your card, you will ask your partner to answer the question that is written on your card. After they are finished answering, they will ask you to answer the question that is written on their card. (Demonstrate this.) For example, if Samantha and I were partners I would read her my question, 'If you could choose a super power, what would it be?' Then Samantha would answer my question. After she has finished, she would ask me her question, 'Describe how you would spend a rainy Sunday afternoon.' I would answer this question. After both of us have answered a question, we will trade cards and find a new partner. We trade cards so we will have a new question to ask our next partner. Please try to have three or four different question partners. Are there any questions on what we are doing?" (Pause for questions.) Let's begin!"

Teachable Moments

- * Get to know the names of a few people in their group
- * Pairing and Sharing, Warm Participants Up to Talking
- * Don't make things too awkward at first. Conversations come to a natural end.
- * Appropriate tool to use if participants arrive late.
- * Easy to make your own with Notecards and a writing utensil
- * Purchase Commercial products available from Training Wheels:
[Icebreaker Wheelies](http://www.training-wheels.com)



Pairing & Sharing Activity ~ Debriefing Wheelies

The Debriefing Wheelies were designed to help facilitators ask debriefing questions in a proper sequence that makes sense to participants. It can also shift some of the responsibility for successful processing from the facilitator to the participants. The sequence of **1) What? (What happened)**, **2) So What? (Why is this important?)**, and **3) Now What? (How can I use this information in the future?)**, not only takes participants through a progression for processing a specific event, but also presents a fun and unique way for participants to debrief themselves.



Props Needed

- * Debriefing Question Cards

Activity Directions

- * Place the cards in 3 piles according to color.
- * Instruct participants to choose one card from the **Orange Pile** first.
- * Ask them to find a partner and share their response to the question on their card with their partner.
- * After the two have each shared their response, have them exchange cards and find a new partner.
- * Encourage 3-4 partner exchanges.
- * After 3-4 exchanges with Orange cards, have them trade out their card for a **Green card**.
- * Encourage 3-4 partner exchanges with the green cards.
- * When this is complete, instruct the group to trade out their green card for a **Blue card**.
- * After 3-4 partner exchanges with the blue card the participants can return the card to the pile and form a circle. This process lets the group walk themselves through the What, So What, Now What debriefing sequence.

Facilitator Script

“Gather around everyone. I need everyone to find a partner and stand next to them in the circle. (Pause until this has happened. If there is an odd number of participants, you will need to participate in the game or have one group of three participants.) In a moment, I’m going to hand everyone one of these question cards. When you receive your card, you will ask your partner to answer the question that is written on your card. After they are finished answering, they will ask you to answer the question that is written on their card. (Demonstrate this.) For example, if Sam and I were partners I would read him my question, ‘How did the group solve the problem??’ Then Sam would answer my question. After he has finished, he would ask me his question, ‘Who do you think the leader in that activity was? Why?’ I would answer this question. After both of us have answered



Debriefing Wheelies

a question, we will trade cards and find a new partner. We trade cards so we will have a new question to ask our next partner. Please try to have three or four different question partners. We will start with the questions on these orange cards, then wait for my instructions on what to do next. Are there any questions on what we are doing?" (Pause for questions.) Let's begin!"

After several minutes, interrupt the group and instruct them to trade in their Orange cards for a Green card.

"OK everyone. Please listen here for a moment." (Pause until everyone is listening.) "Now what I'd like you to do, is turn in your Orange card and pick up a Green card. The questions on these cards will now focus on 'So What' or 'What do you think was the purpose of this activity?' Please try to interact with different people than before, and repeat the same process of asking each other questions, trading cards, and finding new partners. Are there any questions on what we are doing?" (Pause for questions.) "You may begin."

After several minutes, interrupt the group and instruct them to trade in their Green cards for a Blue card.

"OK everyone. Please listen here for a moment again." (Pause until everyone is listening.) "Now what I'd like you to do, is turn in your Green card and pick up a Blue card. The questions on these cards will now focus on 'Now What' or 'How does this relate back to real life?' Please try to interact with different people than before, and repeat the same process of asking each other questions, trading cards, and finding new partners. Are there any questions on what we are doing?" (Pause for questions.) "You may begin."



Critical Point:

Afterwards, select 2-3 questions from each color group and ask for volunteers to give their answers to the questions. This helps you, the facilitator, hear some of their answers, and gives you the opportunity to ask any additional questions or steer the conversation in a specific direction.

Teachable Moments

- * This process allows each participant to answer multiple debriefing questions.
- * This takes the focus off of the facilitator asking ALL of the questions ALL of the time.
- * Participants are more apt to share more in depth in a small group rather than a large group.
- * This technique is more 'Participant Focused' rather than 'Facilitator Focused.'
- * Create your own set by using three different colored note cards and writing your own questions onto the cards.
- * Commercial products available from Training Wheels:

[Debriefing Wheelies](#)



Pairing & Sharing Activity ~ Non-Prop Activity ~ Back to Back

Props Needed

- * None

Activity Directions

- * Invite participants to find a partner
- * Have them stand with their backs touching one another, or 'back to back'.
- * Instruct them that when you say 'Front to Front' they will turn and discuss a question with their partner.
- * When they hear you say 'Back to Back' they are to finish their discussion and stand 'back to back' with their partner again.
- * For the next question, when you say 'Front to Front' they will find a new partner to answer the question with.
- * Continue for 4-5 rounds.



Facilitator Script

"Gather around everyone. I need everyone to find a partner and stand next to them. (Pause until this has happened. If there is an odd number of participants, you will need to participate in the game or have one group of three participants.) In a moment, I'm going to say 'Front to Front'. At that time, you will turn and face your partner and answer a question that I will announce. Continue discussing this question until you hear me say the words, 'Back to Back'. When you hear this, please get back into the position you are now, being back to back with your partner. Are there any questions?" (Pause for questions.) "Great! The question I'd like you to discuss with your partner is..... (insert awesome question here), Ready, Front to Front!"

After a few moments of discussion (determine length by the depth of the question you asked them), call out, "Back to Back!" The whole group will follow your direction and the room will get surprisingly quiet. People naturally stop talking as soon as they are not facing one another. Then ask your next question.

"Great! Now when you hear me say Front to Front, I want you to find a new partner and discuss... (insert your next question of awesomeness here). Ready? Front to Front!"

Continue for 4-5 rounds.



Debriefing Technique ~ Metaphoric Methods

Webster's Dictionary defines a metaphor as, "1. a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance, as in 'A mighty fortress is our God.'" or 2. something used, or regarded as being used, to represent something else; emblem; symbol."

Metaphors are common in literature and more expansive speech. We hear them everyday in stories and even popular catch phrases. The human brain starts to understand the concept of metaphors around the age of ten unless exposed and groomed in earlier years.

Metaphoric Methods is an amazing technique that let the props do the talking for you. They also give more ownership of the debriefing process to the participants themselves. Debriefing activities can be just as dynamic and engaging as challenge course initiatives or group activities- especially with a new frame of mind from facilitators towards recognizing that reflection is not that 'boring thing' that comes at the end of the activity. It is not. It is that thing that creates the value and wonder in learning; it is the way ideas come together as a lasting lesson.

Using objects, as symbolic representations of an experience, or personal attribute can be a very effective approach to processing. These activities engage participants in creating or choosing symbols representing a group success or individual strength or accomplishment. The strength of these types of activities is that they are not threatening to participants and facilitators, and leave the opportunities for creative and meaningful interpretation of an experience wide open.

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Metaphoric Methods Activity ~ Metaphor Cards

Metaphor Cards are reflective tools that use metaphors or symbols to represent participant's reactions to an experience. These cards are useful as introductory activities, for processing a specific experience, for closure, or even as tools to help participants resolve conflict.

This engaging tool uses pictorial images, metaphors or symbols to represent a participant's or group's reactions to an experience. Providing a tangible image upon which participants can attach their thoughts helps give these ideas substance and shape in quite profound depth. Metaphor Card Activities are appealing to participants, can be used in many different ways, and are appropriate for most age groups.

Props Needed

- * Picture Cards

Activity Directions

- * Place the cards in the center of the room on the floor or on a table.
- * Direct the group towards a specific topic, and ask them to choose a card that would metaphorically match your directive.
- * Invite participants to Pair and Share their choice with a partner.
- * Ask for 3-4 volunteers to share their choice with the larger group.



Activity Directions

"You'll notice I have spread several picture cards on the floor here in the middle of the room. I'd like you to think about an experience you've had in today's program that really resonated with you, and choose a card that would metaphorically match that experience. For example, earlier today when Karen shared her ideas around how we could better serve our clients, it really got me thinking about my contributions and what I can do differently that would really make a big impact. I might choose this card that has a bag full of light bulbs on it, as those ideas or 'light bulbs' really resonated with me and I'm excited to implement some of those ideas. So that's an example of how to choose an experience that resonated and metaphorically match it to a picture card. Once you have made your choice for your metaphor and matching experience, please find a partner and Pair and Share with them your selection. Are there any questions about what we are doing?" (Pause for questions.) "You may begin."



Metaphor Cards

Teachable Moments



- * As an introductory activity participants can choose the card that best represents a strength they bring to the group, or a goal they have for the day, course or program.
- * As a pre brief in the early parts of a program, spread the cards out before the group and invite participants to pick a card that best represents where they are mentally coming into the day. Ask each participant to describe their choice. If you start the day with this activity, it is good to end the day with this same activity.
- * Spread the cards out before the group and have them pick a card that best represents an experience or a feeling that they had during an activity or overall summarizing their experience. Depending on the size of your group, either Pair and Share or invite each participant to share their choice with the large group.
- * Participants can each pick their own card, then draw about it or write about in their journal.
- * As a group process, invite the group to come to consensus on three different cards:
 - One that would metaphorically represent the beginning stages of the group.
 - A second metaphor for the current stage.
 - And lastly, a third metaphor that would represent where the group would like to be at the close of the program.
- * Create your own set by cutting photos out of magazines or printing photos from your computer.
- * Commercial products available from Training Wheels:

[Metaphor Cards](#)

[Chiji Cards](#)

[Climer Cards](#)

[Postcard Processing Kit](#)



Debriefing Technique ~ Frontloading

In its simplest form, **Frontloading** refers to giving an example *before the experience* rather than afterwards. It is a form of role modeling without putting words in anyone's mouth. By giving the participants an example of the type of answer you are expecting, it makes the debriefing process much easier. People learn by example, so if they hear a good example they will most likely follow your lead. Frontloading gives participants a sense of the task purpose, expectations for behavior and motivation for coming up with their answer.

Behavioral research from the Association for Psychological Science suggests that the power of suggestion can influence how well people remember things, how they respond to events and even how well they will perform and behave. The reason is attributable to something called **response expectancies**. This means that the way we *anticipate* our response to a situation influences how we will actually respond. In other words, once you *expect* something to happen, your behavior, thoughts and reactions will actually contribute to *making* that expectation occur. (Researchers Garry, Michael and Kirsch. 2012.)

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Frontloading Activity ~ Body Part Debrief™

The Body Part Debrief™ activity is a great activity for both new and seasoned facilitators. It is simple enough in nature that groups of any age will use it with ease. The body parts have a ‘coolness’ factor to them that fosters a safe environment for people to talk. If you are having a hard time getting your participants to share or reflect, this activity will help solve that problem.

Props Needed

- * Items that resemble Body Parts



Activity Directions

- * The basic concept for this activity is that you have different balls or objects that are shaped like body parts. Each part can represent a metaphor related to that part.
- * Place the Body Parts in the center of the room on the floor or on a table.
- * Describe each object and give a sample metaphoric response.
- * Ask participants to match and experience in the program to one of the metaphoric parts.
- * Invite participants to Pair and Share their choice with a partner.
- * Ask for 3-4 volunteers to share their choice with the larger group.

Facilitator Script

“You’ll notice there are a variety of body parts in the center of the room. I’d like you to think about the experiences you’ve encountered today, and choose a body part that would metaphorically match one of those experiences. For example, if you were to choose the **Brain**, it could represent something new that you learned about yourself, or something you thought of today that really resonated with you. Or if you choose the **Heart**, it could represent a feeling that you experienced, or something you’d like to share from the heart. If you select the **Stomach**, it could represent something that took guts for you to do, or describe something that pushed you outside your comfort zone. The **Eye** could represent something new that you saw in yourself or someone else, or maybe a vision for what changes you may make after participating in today’s program. The **Hand** could represent a way the group supported you or lent you a hand. Or maybe you would like to give a hand to someone for a job well done. And finally, the **Ear** could represent something you listened to or a good idea you heard. Or maybe it could represent something that was hard to hear when you received constructive feedback or not-so-



Body Part Debrief™

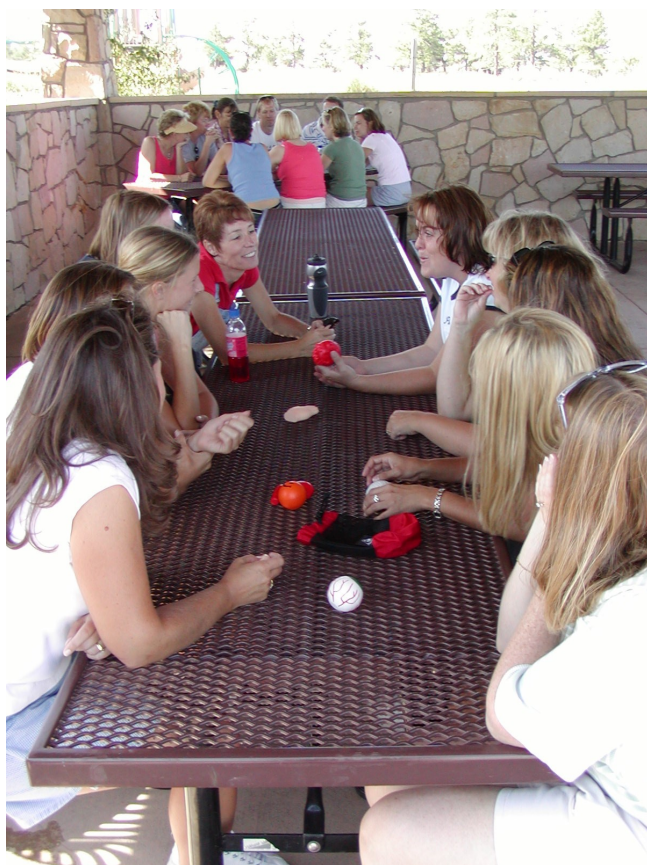
constructive feedback. Start thinking about which part you'd like to share now. Then we'll go around the circle and each person may come forward, select the part they'd like to share, give us your thoughts, and then put your selection back into the center so that other participants may use that same part. Are there any questions on what we are doing?" (Pause for questions.) "We do not have to go in any specific order, so whomever would like to start may come forward."

Teachable Moments

- * The body part metaphor is easy for people to relate to seeing how most people possess the same parts on their body. They understand the function of each part, so it is easier for them to attach an experience to the metaphoric action associated with each part.
- * Children as young as three years old have been successful with this activity.
- * For younger audiences, focus on one or two parts at a time, starting with external body parts. The more exposure and experience they have with this style of processing, you may advance to more difficult parts.
- * Create your own set by printing photos of anatomical body parts from your computer, or finding props such as Mr Potato Head or science related toys.
- * Commercial products available from Training Wheels:

[Body Part Debrief \(7 parts\)](#)

[Body Part Deluxe \(14 parts\)](#)



Confronting Behaviors ~ Intervention Tools ~ Debriefing Technique

Sometimes we have to stop the fun and games and have hard conversations with participants. This could result from a negative behavior from an individual or a group behavior that needs to be addressed. This section will give a few strategies and tools to use when you have to have a hard conversation.

Blocking

Leaders have the responsibility to promote a positive atmosphere, that is, to block certain activities of group members, such as cross-talking, probing, gossiping, invading another's privacy, breaking confidences, talking about someone who isn't present and so forth. It is important to be able to block these counter-productive behaviors without attacking the person. By being sensitive and direct, the group leader can encourage positive ways of relating.

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Negative Nancy's

A "Negative Nancy" is someone who overgeneralizes in labeling situations and people, focuses on the bad in each situation, jumps to conclusions and constantly redirects the blame. In a business setting, these behaviors can result in harmful effects, such as reduced productivity, decreased group morale, increased stress, wasted time, hindered creativity and innovation, and higher employee turnover. In a team building program, this person generally shows up with arms crossed, reluctant to participate in any activities and rolls their eyes at everything you say or ask them to do.

Ability to Cope With Attacks

Depending on the type of participants you will be facilitating, the ability to cope with attacks is an important topic to surface. There may be times when participants become angry, and then direct their anger towards you, the facilitator. This can happen when someone is 'volun-told' to participate in the program, or when they feel they do not have a choice in the level in which they participate. Do your best to empathize with them, be honest in what your options are and de-escalate the situation. Remember to try and not take verbal attacks personally.



Intervention Tool Activity ~ Stoplight Debrief

Props Needed

- * A Stoplight. Could use tennis balls (take a permanent marker to two of them!), Lego Pieces, our [Traffic Debrief](#) set, or three different colored pony beads.

Activity Directions

- * Invite your participants to get into small groups of ten and stand in a circle.
- * The three colors on the stoplight can be used as metaphors for behaviors: What are you doing well? (green light) What do you need to be careful of? (yellow light) What do you need to stop doing? (red light).
- * Present a stoplight to the group to set the stage for targeted metaphoric processing. When a group has started to show negative behavior patterns, or if a conflict arises, use the metaphor of the stoplight to debrief the situation. **Frontload** your discussion with examples for each color. You could also have the group give suggestions for each color. Following are examples of processing questions and information that relate to the Stoplight.
- * **RED:** What are things happening in the group that need to STOP in order for us to be more successful? The usual answers are to stop teasing, horseplay, put-downs, blaming, etc.
- * **YELLOW:** What are things we need to be CAREFUL of as we continue? Suggestions have included keeping everyone safe, listening to all ideas, being aware of personal choices and boundaries, etc.
- * **GREEN:** What are things we want to GO for? This could be group goals, as well as behavior suggestions. Ideas have included being respectful, encouraging more, setting time limits, etc.
- * If it wouldn't be a distraction, the stoplight can be handed out to a specific individual who will monitor those ideas for the group. This person can be asked to report on what they observed at the end of the activity or session. For example; the person designated to carry the stoplight is asked to let the group know any time he sees an infraction of behavior norms. He could call a group discussion, point to the yellow light and say, —We had stated we wanted to be careful of listening to everyone's ideas before we started. Are we listening to everyone?



Intervention Tool Activity ~ Trash Can Conflict

Props Needed

- * Sheets of paper, writing utensils

Activity Directions

- * Ask participants to take a sheet of paper and take three minutes to write down a brief description of a thought, concern, worry, interfering behavior, or other event that may keep them from fully participating in the workshop. Inform the group that no one else will read what they write. What they write is confidential.
- * When they've finished writing, ask them to fold the paper in as many folds as possible and then make a unique mark on the outside of both sides so that they can identify their particular piece of paper.
- * Then place a garbage can (or bin or cardboard box) in the center of the circle and ask the participants to act like basketball players and shoot their piece of paper into the receptacle. If they miss, they can try again.
- * Once all the pieces of paper are in the can, make a big deal of lifting the can up while saying, "I'm now going to place your worry, concern, or interfering behavior just outside the door of the training room. This should help you release this issue while you are here in the training. Anytime you find yourself thinking about it, please feel free to go out the door, search through the pieces to find your mark, open it and read it. Then return to the group prepared to participate 100% again."
- * This usually gets a laugh but apparently provides a great deal of relief and reduction of conflict between being in the room and what was going on before they came into the room. Participants often seem more ready to learn and engage in the day's activities. During the day, it's not unusual for some of the topics that went into the can to come up as examples that participants want to work on or deal with more effectively within conflict resolution



Teachable Moments

This activity is typically not debriefed right as it is completed, but here are some questions you could ask near the end of the workshop:

- * Was it helpful to write down an inner conflict/worry/concern you were having? Why?
- * Was it comforting knowing you had permission to revisit the concern throughout the session? Why?
- * How could you use this type of activity back in the workplace?
- * Is acknowledging the inner conflict we bring into the room helpful?
- * What behaviors would be counterproductive today?
- * Be sure to reiterate that everyone has permission to utilize their 'conflict' at any time.



Intervention Tool Activity ~ Conflict Resolution Thumball

Have you ever been sitting at your desk, sipping away at your morning coffee, reading through your email that came in the night before when WHAM! You get an email that completely ticks you off. You angrily hit REPLY and start typing a response IN ALL CAPS as you feel your blood start to boil...

Stop...Take a Deep Breath... and go into the ball...

Wait, what? Go into the ball? That's right, go into the ball.

A few years ago I was working on an activity that uses the [Conflict Resolution Thumball](#). I had one sitting on my desk and happened to get an email from someone that really made me mad. Like seething mad. I found myself hitting reply and rapidly typing out an emotionally charged response back. Before I hit send I happened to look over at the Conflict Resolution Thumball sitting cozily next to my coffee cup, and the question that was facing me was "How do you think they view the problem?" It caused me to pause, think about their perspective, and then review my response. I then started looking at the other questions on the ball... "Are you in the appropriate frame of mind to deal with this?" "What are some options to solve this problem?" "Who and when do each of us need to get information from?" "Did your behavior prevent or encourage the conflict?"... The questions on the ball really helped me think through my response to a challenging situation. In the end, I deleted my original email and started over with a more emotionally resilient response that most definitely diffused the situation rather than adding fuel to the fire.

I will admit, when I get emotionally hijacked by something, there are times I respond in ways that I'm not proud of. I love the irony that I created a tool that to help others think about and process through conflict--and little did I know I simultaneously created my own little mini-therapist.

I now keep one of my Conflict Resolution Thumballs near my desk at all times. What are some ways that you help keep yourself in check?



Debriefing Technique ~ Anchor Tools

Anchor pieces are small trinkets or mementos of your program that participants take home with them. These objects will anchor the learning and experiences they had back to your program. Groups seem to go more in depth about their ideas and feelings when they attach their thoughts to a symbol or picture. Because participants share about a card or object rather than directly about themselves they are often more willing to share. Often more reserved members are drawn to expressing themselves through the use of these symbols.

Postcard Processing

As a pre brief - in the early parts of a program spread Postcards or trinkets out before the group and have them pick a one that best represents where they are at that moment. Ask them how they are feeling and to pick a card that matches where they are mentally coming into the day. Go around the group and ask each participant to share why they picked the card they did and why that card represents them or where they are. If you start the day with this activity, it is good to end the day with this same activity.

Debrief - Spread the objects/postcards out before the group and have them pick one that best represents an experience or a feeling that they had during the activity or at the end of the day. You can do this at the end of the day or after an activity. Ask participants to share why they picked the object or picture and why it represents them or an experience they have had.

Take away- Ask each participant to pick a card that best represents their experience. On the cards write a note to yourself or another person. Take this card with you and “deliver” it to yourself/others at a later date.



[Postcard Processing](#) Kit



[Mini Metaphor Charms](#)

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6. Anchor Pieces
7. Artistic Methods
8. Self Reflection
9. Action & Reflection
10. Object Lesson



Anchor Tool Activity ~ Later Letters

Concept

To allow participants to receive a letter from themselves at a later date to remind them of their experience during the program.

Props needed

- * Paper, envelopes, stamps, and writing utensils.

Activity Directions

- * Give each participant a piece of paper, pen/pencil and envelope.
- * Ask each person to write a letter to themselves describing their experience from this program.
- * After they have finished writing have them seal the letter inside the envelope, and write their mailing address on the front of the envelope.
- * Seal letters and mail them back to their authors at some other strategic time. If you have the ability to keep up with a calendar, ask the participants to place a date on the back of the envelope as to when they would like to receive the letter. Then you can mail the letter to them a few days before the wished to receive it. A file cabinet system and good organization are key to making this work.
- * As an alternative, before sealing each envelope, other members of the group can include greetings, mailing addresses, birthday wishes, email addresses, sketches or photographs. And don't forget a greeting from the group's facilitator.



Anchor Tools ~ Other Ideas

Forget me Knots

- * Provide 12-inch long pieces of webbing. Allow participants to write sentiments on the webbing. Tie in an overhand knot and call it a 'Forget Me Knot'

Forget me Nots

- * Adhere your contact information to a packet of 'Forget Me Not' seeds.

Impression Feet

- * Invite participants to observe how other group members make an impression on them. Invite them to present a foot to another participant telling them how they made a positive impression.

Body Part Keychains

- * Select a specific body part metaphor and give each participant one to take home with them. Connect a metaphor with each part.

Brainstorm Your Own Anchor Tools:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Debriefing Technique ~ Artistic Methods

Artistic expression opens the heart to new learning for many participants, allowing them to gain control over strong feelings, and letting them transform emotions into new and creative energies. Artistic methods can portray symbolic expressions of a feeling that was evoked during an activity or program.

Artistic Methods allow participants to have creative freedom to express their learning through different mediums. There are many different kinds of art: Paintings, Music, Theatrical performances, Digital Arts, Drawings, Videography, Molding Clay, Elements from the Natural World. The list could go on and on.

According to Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, many kinds of psychological states can be expressed in or by works of art. But it is the artistic expression of emotion that has figured most prominently in philosophical discussions of art. Emotion is expressed in pictorial, literary and other representational works of art by the characters who are depicted or in other ways presented in the works. We often identify the emotions of such characters in much the same way as we ordinarily identify the emotions of others, but we might also have special knowledge of a character's emotional state, through direct access to their thoughts, for instance.

Allowing your participants the freedom of expression can open up the reflection process to a completely different level. Expressiveness is valuable because it helps us to understand emotions in general while contributing to the formation of an aesthetically satisfying whole.

It's important not to judge or evaluate your participant's creative products. Nothing squelches the artistic spirit more than comparison and criticism.

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Artistic Methods Activity ~ The Community Puzzle

Puzzles can be incorporated into reflective learning in a variety of ways. Puzzles create a unique atmosphere in which each participant can contribute an equal piece. Puzzle pieces can work as a metaphor for the role participants take in activities. They can act as a space to create artistic representations of a participant's strengths, or contributions to the group. They can create a "picture" of the group and its experiences and goals piece by piece.

There are many ways to use The Community Puzzle. The only limit is your imagination. We recommend having each person decorate a puzzle piece in his/her own style, usually, but not always using a common theme. You can have them color on their puzzle piece to represent a 'piece' of learning that they are going to take away from the program, or how they are an essential 'piece' of the team.

Props Needed

- * [A Community Puzzle](#) - one center piece for each participant
- * Colored writing utensils

Activity Directions

- * Have the participants stand or sit in a circle. Include yourself in the circle.
- * Give each participant one puzzle piece and access to colored writing utensils
- * Once participants complete their puzzle piece, have them share their unique drawings with a partner.
- * Invite the group to put all puzzle pieces together



Facilitator Script

"Everyone will need one puzzle piece and some colorful markers for this next activity. I want you to think about what some 'pieces of learning' were that you got out of today's program. Think of ways you could metaphorically sum up a few of these learnings into a picture or word that you could draw onto your puzzle piece. Spend 5-8 minutes completing your piece, then partner up with someone and share what you designed on your puzzle piece. Then we will put the large puzzle together and examine all of the pieces of learning that we had today."

Teachable Moments

- * Invite the group to put all puzzle pieces together.
- * How are you an essential piece of this team?
- * What pieces of learning will you take away from today?
- * What is a 'piece of advice' you would give another group?
- * Commercial product available from Training Wheels



Debriefing Technique ~ Self-Reflection

Not everyone processes information the same way. Some people like to 'think out loud' and would prefer to discuss their thoughts with another person. Others are more introspective and would prefer to have time to process what they are learning. Providing opportunities for both styles of processing is important to incorporate into your facilitation process.

Self reflection is defined as: *careful thought about your own behavior and beliefs*. Self awareness gives you the ability to understand your emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and goals, and recognize their impact on others. We can also give careful thought to an experience, a change we have undergone or a learning event.

There are 3 main benefits of self-reflection:

1. **Strengthening Emotional Intelligence:** When taking time to self-reflect you are looking inwards. This helps to build two components to emotional intelligence: self-awareness and self-regulation. Self awareness gives you the ability to understand your emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drives, values and goals, and recognize their impact on others. Self-regulation involves the ability to control or redirect your disruptive emotions and impulses and adapt to changing circumstances. Building these skills will improve both your personal life and professional role as a leader.
2. **Acting With Integrity:** Becoming clear on your core values will help to strengthen your integrity and lead you to better decisions. Our integrity is often put to the test during stressful times. Taking time to review your key decisions and actions in the recent past and evaluating them against your core values is critical to acting with integrity. Doing this consistently can solidify your values and make the decision making process easier in the future.
3. **Being More Confident:** Confidence is crucial for managing a busy, complex life that includes meeting career, family, community and self needs. It helps in effective communications, decision-making, and influence building. The more you reflect on your strengths and how you can build upon them the more confident you will be in the future. We become more confident in where our strengths lie and how to close the gaps in our areas of weakness.



Self-Reflection Activity ~ Labyrinth

Props Needed

- * [Labyrinth](#)

Activity Directions

- * Explain the concept and purpose of a Labyrinth
- * Have each participant walk the Labyrinth either one at a time or as a group
- * Upon completing an activity, or even after journaling, the facilitator encourages participants to reflect on their experience, while traversing the labyrinth.
- * The typical goal is to reach the center of the labyrinth, and return to the outside, without crossing any lines, and without talking.
- * Movement with meditation and introspection are the key.



Facilitator Script

“Let’s gather around to hear the directions for our next activity. Today we are walking the labyrinth. The labyrinth has been around for many centuries and is used by many of the world’s religions and spiritual paths as a way of personal reflection, meditation, and connection. The typical goal is to reach the center of the labyrinth, and return to the outside, without crossing any lines, and without talking. Movement with meditation and introspection are the key. The labyrinth becomes a metaphor for our own journey. As we wind through the labyrinth consider your own journey inward and as you return from the core of the labyrinth consider how you will move out from here. Consider all that it took to arrive to this moment and all the amazing tools you take with you as you prepare to go forward.”

Teachable Moments

- * What did you notice as you were about to walk into the labyrinth?
- * What was the journey like for you?
- * What are you taking with you as a result of the journey?
- * Commercial [Labyrinth Walk](#) tarp available from Training Wheels
- * [Table Top Labyrinth](#) also available.



Debriefing Technique ~ Action & Reflection

Traditionally processing has involved sitting a group of participants down in a circle after an activity and having the facilitator ask participants questions regarding their reactions to experience. Though this process can be effective, it can be tiresome for everyone involved if it is the only processing method used. Action and Reflection is a technique that gets participants up out of their seats and physically engaged in reflection. It can also create muscle memory, and that movement connected to a reflective practice can aid in long-term retention of the memory. A person who reflects throughout his or her practice is not just looking back on past actions and events, but is taking a conscious look at emotions, experiences, actions, and responses, and using that information to add to his or her existing knowledge base and reach a higher level of understanding.

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Action and Reflection also helps with managing the energy and emotional bandwidth a person has after participating in a lengthy day of learning. When people use their bodies and their brains simultaneously for a long period of time, they will start to fatigue. Providing opportunities to be active during reflection sessions can aid in added energy and retention after a long, full day.



Action & Reflection Activity ~ Debriefing Thumbball

The Debriefing Thumbball™ was designed to help facilitators ask debriefing questions in a proper sequence that makes sense to participants. It can also shift some of the responsibility for successful processing from the facilitator to the participants.

The Debriefing Thumbball uses a specific reflective sequence that not only takes participants through a progression for processing a specific event, but also presents an overall lesson on proper processing.



- 1) **What? (What happened)**
- 2) **So What? (Why is this important?)**
- 3) **Now What? (How can I use this information in the future?)**

Props Needed

- * [Debriefing Thumbball](#)

Activity Directions

- * Invite your group to get into a circle.
- * Toss the ball to a participant.
- * Instruct them to look under their thumb and answer the question written in the panel under their thumb.
- * Toss the ball to another participant.
- * Complete 4-5 questions from the Orange panels first. Then 4-5 questions from the Green panels. Ending with 4-5 questions from the Blue panels.

Facilitator Script

"Let's get into a big circle. I have a special ball here called the Debriefing Thumbball. It's called a Thumbball because when you catch it, you look under your thumb and you answer the question that is written under your thumb. For this ball, there is a specific order of questions that correlate to the colors on the ball. We'll start with the Orange panels, so when you catch it, if your thumb lands on an Orange panel, look under your thumb and answer the question that is written there. If you do not land on an Orange question, slide your thumb over to the closest Orange panel. We'll do 4-5 questions on the Orange panels first, then we'll move on to the Green panels. We'll do 4-5 questions on Green, and finally we'll end with the questions on the Blue panels. Are there any questions on what we are doing?" (Pause for questions.) "Let's begin!"



Debriefing Thumball

Teachable Moments

- * Create your own with a Beach Ball and a Sharpie
- * Commercial products available from Training Wheels:

[Debriefing Thumball](#)

[End of Day Review Thumball](#)

[Body Part Debrief Thumball](#)



Action & Reflection Activity ~ Knot Pass

Props Needed

- * One rope. Size depends on the size of your group. One 50' rope tied with an overhand knot, creating a large circle.

Activity Directions

- * This activity serves to identify key takeaways from the day and allow for personal reflection.
- * Tie an overhand knot into the ends of one 50' rope. Invite the group to stand in a circle and hold onto the rope with their hands.
- * With the entire group holding onto the rope, the knot is passed around the circle as a pointer identifying whose turn it is to speak.
- * Instruct the group to think of the greatest insight or key takeaway they had from the day.
- * Begin with the person standing closest to the knot. The knot stops in front of each participant giving them the opportunity to disclose a key takeaway from the day.
- * Pass the knot to the right around the circle until everyone has had an opportunity to share.

Facilitator Script

"Please come and hold onto the rope. Take a moment to think about your greatest insight from the day. We are going to pass this knot in the rope around the circle, stopping it in front of each participant. When it stops in front of you, please share with the group a key takeaway from the day. When you are finished, please pass the knot to the person on your right. This will continue until everyone has had a chance to share."



Debriefing Technique ~ Object Lesson

According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, Object lessons are defined as, 'something that serves as a practical example of a principle or abstract idea.' Object lessons are most often applied to difficult abstract concepts which simplify the learning into a concept that is more tangible.

The main thing that an object lesson does is create an emotional connection to the abstract concept, driving it home to the participants under your influence. Instead of jumping right into a lesson plan, you pique the interest of the participants, unveiling an "aha" moment that gets brain cells engaged in the total learning process.

Object lessons do more than tell about what they are teaching. Instead, they show, in an easy to understand way, what it is that you are trying to portray. They are in fact suitable for all ages, and are quite powerful with participants that can discern and draw more powerful insights and connections from the metaphor.

Furthermore, because older audiences have more biased viewpoints, object lessons are ideal for breaking through those barriers, which is a distinct advantage in any teaching situation. In order for participants to grasp a concept, they must be open to it in the first place.

Why Use Object Lessons?

As a facilitator, preparation is always a part of the process. Facilitators that are well prepared are able to reach their participants in a much more profound way. Participants realize that they are being made a priority and the learning is enriched. There are many other reasons to use object lessons are part of your facilitation strategy.

- * **Learning Retention:** There is a teaching cliché that brings this concept into focus. When a participant hears something, they may forget it; when they see something, they may retain it; when they experience something, it becomes a part of them, and learning becomes easy. Object lessons assist in the retention of learning, because more parts of the brain are engaged and the participant experiences the lesson as a more wholly involved process.
- * **Simplifying Concepts:** Especially when you are dealing with children and participants, there are a lot of times when you want to bring complex lessons down to a more understandable level. In order to do this, you have to create a connection between what is being presented and something that your participant is already familiar with. Object lessons make this possible.
- * **Increased Involvement:** Participants can become easily bored with the learning process. When you are able to get them up, moving, and involved, the synapses are activated and a more energetic class time is the result.



Object Lesson Activity ~ Advice From a Pencil

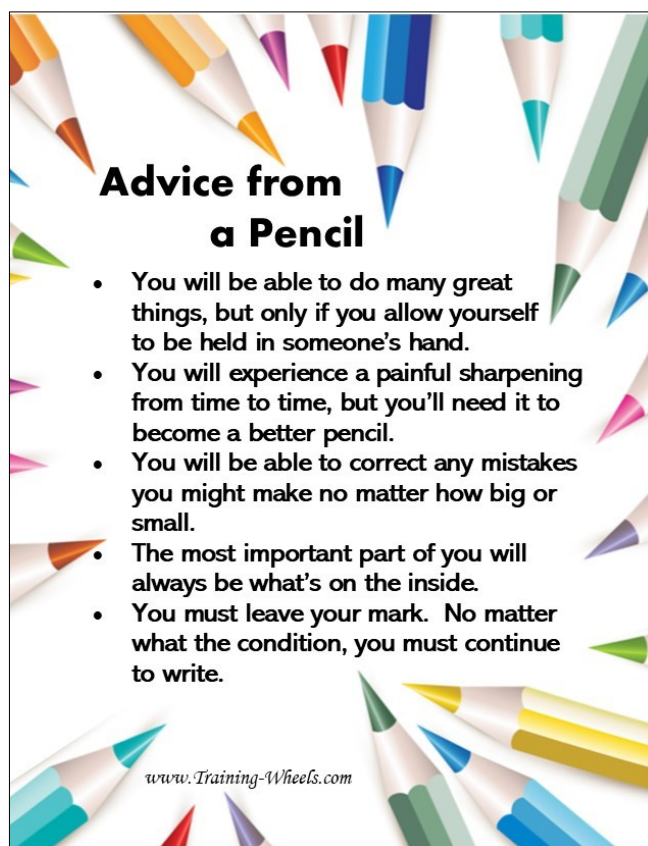
The Pencil Maker took the pencil aside, just before putting him into the box "There are five things you need to know before I send you out into the world." he told the pencil. "Always remember them and never forget, and you will become the best pencil you can be.

1. You will be able to do many great things, but only if you allow yourself to be held in someone's hand.

Michelle's additions/debriefing points with groups:

- * Connection with others is important.
 - * Allow others to have access to your gifts.
2. You will experience a painful sharpening from time to time, but you'll need it to become a better pencil
 - * Going through various problems in life, you'll need it to become a stronger person.
 3. You will be able to correct any mistakes you might make.
 - * The Really Big Eraser is a luxury. Sometimes we only get the small eraser at the end of the pencil. What might the big eraser mean to you?
 4. The most important part of you will always be what's inside.
 - * A pencil can be used for many things, but the lead inside is what is most important. What gifts do you have that would be helpful to others?
 5. On every surface you are used on, you must leave your mark. No matter what the condition, you must continue to write.
 - * Our actions affect others. Our interactions have an impact on everyone around us.

Advice from a pencil is a tool to use to let each person know that they are unique and that only they can fulfill the purpose to which they were born to accomplish. Don't allow yourself to get discouraged and think that your life is insignificant and cannot make a change. We might become more useful and even write our own story of success.



Advice From a...

Advice from a Snowflake

- * *Keep Your Cool*
- * *Celebrate Your Uniqueness*
- * *Let Your Plans Crystallize*
- * *Take Time to Chill*
- * *Appreciate Small Wonders*
- * *Look at What We Can Accomplish When We Stick Together!*

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Advice from a TROUT

- Show your true colors
- Be a good catch
- Don't be lured by shiny objects
- Scale back
- Cherish clean water
- Know when to keep your mouth shut
- Don't give up without a fight!

 Your True Nature® 

Advice from a TREE

- Stand tall and proud
- Sink your roots into the earth
- Be content with your natural beauty
- Go out on a limb
- Drink plenty of water
- Remember your roots
- Enjoy the view!



Object Lesson Activity ~ Sci-Fi Tube ~ UFO Ball

Props Needed

- * One [UFO Ball](#) or [Sci-Fi Tube](#)
- * This fun tool is similar to the UFO Ball, but is an easier visual for larger groups. The Sci Fi Tube or "Energy Stick," looks like a simple tube with lights inside, but when both ends wrapped in silver are touched simultaneously, the stick lights up and makes noise. The tool itself is pretty fun, but once you add a significant debriefing point to the experience, it drives home the metaphor of the power of experience.



Directions

- * Invite your group to stand or sit in a circle.
- * Conduct a brief discussion on the value of connection. Why is it important? What are the benefits of being connection to a group or an individual?
- * As the facilitator, hold the Sci-Fi Tube in your left hand, making sure you are grasping the metal plate. Ask 'Bob', the person on your left, if he will demonstrate the activity with you. Invite him to grab the other end of the Sci-Fi Tube with his right hand without physically touching you (meaning, no skin to skin contact between the two of you).
- * Now describe to the group that you may not know very much about 'Bob', your partner, but you both work at the same organization (which is represented by the Sci-Fi Tube). Explain that when you make a connection with 'Bob' exciting things can happen. At this moment reach up with your right hand and touch Bob's left hand. The moment you make physical contact with Bob's left hand the Sci-Fi Tube will light up and make noise.
- * Notice the Ooooh's and Ahhhh's that erupt from the group.
- * This is a wonderful tool used to teach the value of connection in your team.
- * Next, disconnect hands with Bob and invite the entire group to hold hands with the person standing next to them in the circle.
- * Once everyone is connected hand to hand, reconnect to the Sci-Fi Tube with Bob. The tube will immediately light up and start making noise again. If one person disconnects from the team the tube will stop making noise. That's a powerful metaphor to debrief the effects on a team when someone is not giving 100%! Emphasize that when someone disconnects from the team, it has an effect on everyone else in the circle. Pretty powerful metaphor!
- * The largest group we have experimented with was 225 people.



UFO Ball ~ Sci-Fi Tube

Teachable Moments

- * If everyone is connected to the mission, vision or values of the group, surprising things can happen. If someone disconnects from these it has an effect on everyone else in the group
- * The importance of maintaining a connection.



The Art of Reflection – Facilitator Tips and Style Notes

An Excerpt from [A Teachable Moment](#), by Cain, Cummings and Stanchfield

- * Allowing group members to “pass” during processing discussions empowers participants to have control over their learning and practice reflective feedback at their own pace. Participants can be experiencing valuable reflection even if they don’t share it with the group. When participants are given the power to pass, they learn to trust the facilitator and the group and often end up offering a great deal to the group at their own pace.
- * Creating a safe and positive learning environment is key. It is risky for people to share their ideas, reactions, and opinions in any environment where they feel exposed or unsafe. Helping the group create behavioral norms regarding comments and judgments during group activities and discussions increases the amount of sharing and interaction and enhances the depth of reflection.
- * Sequence processing activities by beginning with simple conversational prompts. This leads to more in-depth discussions. Reflection is an art that needs to be practiced both by the learner and facilitator.
- * Allow for some superficial answers and comments during reflection activities. Remember that this is a practice. When people start to reflect they might begin with very surface-level comments and observations. Persevere! Groups will increase their level of sharing and reflection as they develop through continued participation.
- * Silences are okay, even necessary. Allow time for group members to think and formulate their ideas.
- * Structured reflection doesn’t have to happen with every activity. It can be a very effective practice to reflect at different times in a program depending on the group and situation. Look for teachable moments!
- * Mix up your methods. Variety is not only the spice of life, but according to new scientific brain research, novelty and the use of different learning tools and methods facilitates learning.
- * Processing can happen at any time -- not just after an activity is over. Sometimes a group will experience a pivotal teachable moment in the middle of a problem solving initiative. Brain-based learning indicates that immediate feedback and reflection can be valuable.
- * Treat debriefing activities as a fun and engaging event, not just something you do after the fun engaging activity is over! Treat reflective activities as an initiative in itself not just something that is done after the event.
- * Empower participants, and be careful not to force your own agenda on them. Go with the flow - be flexible. Let them take responsibility for their learning.
- * Try processing activities that do not involve the facilitator by dividing the group into smaller reflection groups, or allow the group to “self-process”.
- * Take risks. Experiment. Allow for the chance that an activity might flop. There is always something to be learned. A number of incredibly effective tools have been created purely by accident.

Improving Your Debriefing Skills

It is no surprise that we become better at those things we practice in our lives. For the adventure-based facilitator, this means that we can improve our facilitation skills, our reviewing skills, and our overall value as an educator and trainer, by practicing and growing in our craft. If you are new to this field, or just want to improve your facilitation skills, here are a few suggestions on how you can reach the next level.

1. Read everything you can find on facilitation skills, reviewing activities, and the fine art of processing groups. Visit your local library or perform an internet search on such topics as: reviewing, facilitation, problem solving, coaching, mentoring, debriefing, groupwork and teamwork. Read something new every week. Visit Roger Greenaway's reviewing website, and download tons of worthwhile reviewing information, at: www.reviewing.co.uk
2. Shadow another facilitator or co-facilitate a session with another presenter. Each of these techniques allow you to act and observe another facilitator. When you are finished, ask for feedback on your efforts.
3. Volunteer - In every community you'll find opportunities for sharing your knowledge of adventure-based learning and debriefing skills with groups. Your local library, after school programs, summer and day camps, church groups, social clubs and professional organizations are all possible audiences for practicing your skills, and trying out some of those newer facilitation activities.
4. Share what you know. Join an internet listserve (such the Ropes Listserve, www.ropesonline.org) so that you can discuss your adventure-based experiences with other professionals in the field.
5. Join professional societies that promote quality programming. Find out what AEE, ACCT, ACA, NSEE, IAL, ICORE, AORE stand for, join them, and attend their conferences. Better yet, present a workshop at these conferences, and share your knowledge with others.
6. Find a mentor that you can trust. Form a partnership in learning with someone whose opinions you value. Perhaps a local challenge course professional, an author, a corporate trainer, a teacher, or some other talented member of the adventure-based learning community.
7. Have Lunch. Once a month get together with other professionals and discuss your three favorite activities. Bring your best and share them. In half a year, your group will have dozens of best ideas from each other.
8. Attend trainings, workshops and conferences. Locate opportunities for expanding your learning by attending and presenting workshops at new venues.
9. Create your own training manual. Organize and compile your favorite training techniques, complete with photographs, sketches and illustration. You can use this as an informational document to share with your clients, and as a ready reference at your fingertips. Don't be surprised someday if this simple manual turns into your first book, internet e-book, or workshop reference manual.
10. Create a resume of experiences that will make audiences want to enlist your services. Consider what talents, skills and experiences your future clients will want. Identify each of these possibilities, and then make them happen, so that your resume will reflect the best of what you are.



Recommended Reading for Debriefing Tools & Techniques

Recommended Reading and Publications

A Teachable Moment, a Facilitator's Guide to Activities for Processing, Debriefing, Reviewing, and Reflecting. Jim Cain, Michelle Cummings, Jennifer Stanchfield, 2004. Kendall Hunt Publishing, Dubuque Iowa 2004.

Islands of Healing, A Guide to Adventure Based Counseling by Jim Schoel, Dick Prouty and Paul Radcliffe, 1989, 301 pp. Project Adventure, www.pa.org

Lasting Lessons, Clifford Knapp, 1992, ISBN 1-880785-06-4, ERIC Publishing, PO Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325

Reflective Learning: Theory and Practice. Sugarman, D. Doherty, K., Garvey, D., Gass, M. Kendall Hunt Publisher, 2000.

Open to Outcome, Micah Jacobsen and Mari Ruddy, 2005, Wood N Barnes Publishing.

Playing With a Full Deck, 52 Team Activities Using a Deck of Playing Cards. Michelle Cummings, 2007. Kendall Hunt Publishing. ISBN: 07575-4094-5

Processing Pinnacle, An Educator's Guide to Better Processing by Steve Simpson, PhD, Dan Miller & Buzz Bocher, 2006, Wood N Barnes Publishing.

Processing The Experience, Second Edition; John L. Luckner, Reldan S. Nadler, Kendall Hunt Publishing, Dubuque Iowa 1997.

Setting the Conflict Compass, Activities for Conflict Resolution and Prevention. Michelle Cummings, Mike Anderson, 2010. Kendall Hunt Publishing. ISBN-978-0-7575-8457-2

Tips and Tools: The Art of Experiential Group Facilitation, Jennifer Stanchfield, 2008. Wood N Barnes Publishing.

Sit and Get Won't Grow Dendrites: 20 Professional Learning Strategies That Engage the Adult Brain, Dr Marcia Tate. 2004. ISBN-13: 978-0761931546

Most of these titles are available for purchase in our Book Section of the Training Wheels Online Store at www.trainingwheelsgear.com.

About Michelle Cummings

Michelle Cummings M.S. Bio

Michelle Cummings M.S. is the Big Wheel and founder of Training Wheels, a known leader in the Team Development industry. She is an accomplished author and sought-after speaker and consultant on leadership, teambuilding, and experiential learning. Michelle has created a wide variety of facilitation, debriefing and teambuilding activities that have collectively changed the way trainers and educators work. Michelle is also the co-founder and Chief Creative Officer for Personify Leadership, a leadership development company.



Michelle has delivered innovative leadership programs for hundreds of camps and non-profit organizations. Michelle works with professional associations, corporations, universities, and non-profit organizations throughout the world. Her online teambuilding gear site has over 350 different books, activities and kits dedicated to the teambuilding field.

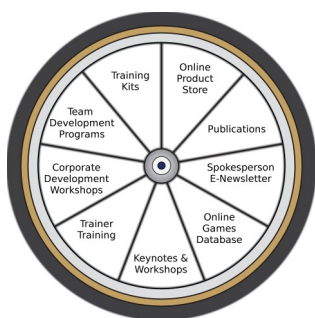
Michelle speaks at more than 15 local, national, and international conferences each year and authors a monthly teambuilding newsletter called [*The Spokesperson*](#) that has over 18,000 subscribers in 65 countries. Michelle Cummings has authored six books, 1. [*A Teachable Moment*](#) 2. [*Bouldering Games for Kids*](#) 3. [*Playing With a Full Deck*](#) 4. [*Setting the Conflict Compass*](#) 5. [*Facilitated Growth*](#) and 6. [*Tag, You're It*](#). She has three new books coming out this year, 1. [*Team Building From the Toy Aisle*](#) 2. [*Table Top Team Building*](#) and 3. [*Storytelling as Experiential Education: Building Resilience, Leadership and Community*](#). She also designed a unique course for teaching new facilitators called [*Experiential Facilitation 101*](#).

Michelle also wrote a novel called [*The Reel Sisters*](#), a story about a group of women fly fishers that was released November 4, 2017.

Michelle received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Kansas State University and her Masters degree in Experiential Education from Minnesota State University at Mankato. Michelle currently lives in Littleton, CO with her husband, Paul, and two sons.

Sign up for Michelle's free games newsletter to receive updates on these titles and for free activities online at www.training-wheels.com.

[The Spokesperson E-Newsletter](#)



The Spokesperson e-newsletter, Tips for Trainers and Wheel of a Deal Wednesday emails are free services that subscribers can anticipate receiving once a week. The content varies from an Activity of the Month, a Book of the Month, a Non-Prop Activity of the Month, and great facilitator tips and tools. You will receive fresh ideas and innovative activities each week to enhance your facilitation skills and practice.

Each person who signs up is entitled to a copy of the free e-book, *Playing With a Full Deck*. It has 9 sample activities from Michelle Cummings book, *Playing With a Full Deck*, 52 Team Activities Using a Deck of Cards. The link for this book will be emailed to you when you subscribe to the newsletter.



Sign Up Online at www.training-wheels.com

Training Wheels Information

RIDE WITH TRAINING WHEELS!

Training Wheels is your creative resource for building high-performance teams. We transform the way people communicate, solve problems, make decisions, and achieve their goals. Like learning how to ride a bike with training wheels, our clients learn ways to grow and balance for the long ride. We are here to support you on the many paths you will encounter by providing hands-on learning and the tools you need to be successful.

Clients who engage in multi-phased relationships with Training Wheels can expect to see significant improvements in communication, trust, teamwork, and innovation.

Building Teams, One Spoke (Gear) at a Time

We know that you know that people are your organization's most valuable resource. Since you probably don't hire intact high-performance teams, you need to build them from the talented individuals already on your staff.

Our programs are not off-the-shelf products, but rather unique offerings that are tailored to each client's specific requirements and desired outcomes. We will work closely with you to determine how best to meet your goals, needs, and budgetary considerations. Together, we will develop a tailored solution that will help you cycle beyond what you imagined was possible.

Multi-Stage (Multi-Spoke) Relationships

Over time, many of our clients choose to engage Training Wheels for additional services, utilizing our staff for coaching, consulting, on-going skill building, and continual leadership and team development programs.

We consult with our clients' leadership teams to strategize the type of growth and direction preferred for each organization, together creating long-term plans that will accomplish the development and progress they seek for their teams.

Have Bag, Will Travel

"Portable" is our middle name. We will come to your site or to a location of your choice, whatever is most convenient for your team.

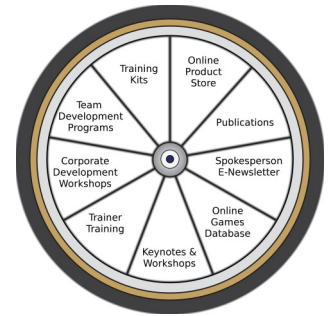


Host a Training Wheels Workshop or Training Event

How to Host a Training Wheels Event

1. Select the Training Wheels Professional development Event of your choice.
2. Call our office, 888.553.0147.

Enjoy your organization's best-ever professional development event!



Processing & Debriefing Workshops

Need more to processing than sitting in a circle, asking questions, and talking about what happened? This workshop is designed to introduce you to a multitude of different processing tools that are simple and easy to use. You will learn how to make/do the activities yourself or find out where to get them. You can increase the quality and value of your programs through powerful reflective learning.

Staff Development & Train the Trainer Programs

We custom design this program to meet your unique needs. You choose the content that will best suit your group and we arrive onsite to deliver your best-ever professional development workshop.

Games Workshops

Need new tools for your trainer toolbox? Why not learn from one of the masters. Bring Michelle out to the location of your choice and spend a day filling your brain and your bag of tricks with new and innovative activities.

Experiential Toolbox Workshop

This workshop will be full of fun and learning, focusing on Icebreakers, Problem Solving activities, Facilitation Tips and Effective Debriefing.

Corporate Challenge

We custom design all of our corporate development programs. All programs delivered with an experiential philosophy. Please call with questions and pricing information.

Experiential Facilitation 101

Join Michelle in a 3-day class that teaches 45 essential skills in experiential facilitation. This workshop is an introductory class for the team building facilitator. This training provides an important first step in building the foundational skills necessary to lead experiential programs.

Keynotes & Conferences

Bring Michelle to your conference! We offer a lively, interactive approach to kick off or energize your meetings that will engage and invigorate your members! Not only will they enjoy themselves, but they will also learn a number of new tools and activities that they can immediately use in the workplace. All of our material is highly interactive and engaging. Attendees will be involved physically, intellectually, and mentally, with lots of opportunity for laughter and learning.