

The Group as a Laboratory

<i>If You Relate To People By:</i>	<i>You Might Experiment With:</i>
<i>1. Complying, giving in, being self-effacing</i>	<i>1. Saying no.</i>
<i>2. Resisting suggestions; holding back</i>	<i>2. Taking a risk; trying something new.</i>
<i>3. Always talking; filling any silence with words because you feel uncomfortable.</i>	<i>3. Being silent for a minute; getting in touch with uncomfortable feelings; talking about those feelings.</i>
<i>4. Waiting for someone to say something, then reacting</i>	<i>4. Initiating something yourself, for someone else to react to.</i>
<i>5. Always smiling, even when annoyed or angry.</i>	<i>5. Talking without smiling</i>
<i>6. Explaining</i>	<i>6. Simply responding with what you feel (e.g., "I have an impulse to explain")</i>
<i>7. Trying to get people to stop feeling a certain way.</i>	<i>7. Simply accepting the way they feel; at the same time exploring your impulses and feelings</i>
<i>8. Being polite; not showing anger or judgment</i>	<i>8. Being judgmental and angry, frankly and outrageously.</i>
<i>9. Expressing anger easily</i>	<i>9. Checking to see what feelings are underneath the anger.</i>
<i>10. Deflecting praise</i>	<i>10. Accepting praise and agreeing enthusiastically with it.</i>
<i>11. Feeling bored but being too polite to say anything about it.</i>	<i>11. Talking about your feelings of boredom.</i>
<i>12. When attacked, defending yourself.</i>	<i>12. Not saying anything in rebuttal-but exploring the feelings you have.</i>
<i>13. Being afraid-and hiding your fear</i>	<i>13. Being openly afraid; letting everyone know it.</i>
<i>14. Always complimenting others.</i>	<i>14. Telling others exactly how you feel about them.</i>
<i>15. Trying to get everybody to approve of you.</i>	<i>15. Being what you are and not giving a damn what they think.</i>
<i>16. Giving advice</i>	<i>16. Reporting "I feel like giving you advice" – but not doing it.</i>
<i>17. Always helping other people.</i>	<i>17. Asking for help, letting yourself be helped.</i>
<i>18. Always asking for help.</i>	<i>18. Helping someone else.</i>
<i>19. Controlling your feelings and suppressing them.</i>	<i>19. Experiencing your feelings and exploring them.</i>
<i>20. Keeping things secret.</i>	<i>20. Disclosing something about yourself that is hard to say.</i>
<i>21. Playing it safe.</i>	<i>21. Taking a few risks.</i>

In trying these experiments, the important thing is to do something that feels difficult. Old, familiar ways of behaving will probably not result in productive experiments. Moreover, a new behavior may seem difficult at first, but with practice, it gets easier. Then the new behavior may be added to your repertoire-your range options-and it's available whenever you need it.

THE GROUP AGREEMENTS

1. Agree to be present each week, to be on time, and to remain the entire meeting.
2. Agree to work actively on the problems that brought you to the group.
3. Agree to put feelings into words, not actions.
4. Agree to use the relationships made in the group therapeutically, not socially.
5. Agree to leave the group with your initial goals in mind, and to say goodbye.
6. Agree to be responsible for your bill.
7. Agree to protect the names and identities of your fellow group members.

**Adapted from:
J.S. Rutan & W.N. Stone, (2001).
Psychodynamic Group Psychotherapy,
3rd Ed. Guilford Press: New York.**