# How to prepare and facilitate (creative) workshops

# Workshops, group work, idea processes, strategy meetings…

*"Yes! Now we get to talk and work together!"* some say. *"Oh no… now we have to talk and work together,"* others reply.

Facilitating a workshop is an art. Anyone who believes it is enough to gather people in a room and hope that something good will happen has seriously underestimated the work required to succeed. When done well, however, a workshop becomes an opportunity for insight, shared understanding, and concrete action plans.

**Your job: moving the group toward the goal**

Your goal is the destination you want the group to reach, compared to where they are today. I call the current situation the **Now**. I call the goal the **New**. That is where you are heading. Your task is to lead the group from the Now to the New by using your tools: methods, instructions, structure, and timing. The group itself creates the content and the results — with your support and guidance

# What is the difference between a seminar and a workshop?

- In a seminar or a presentation, both the goal and the content are defined in advance.
- In a workshop, the goal is defined in advance, but the content and results are created during the session.

Another word for workshop leader is **facilitator**.

A facilitator is responsible for the **process**, not for the content that is created. The content is the participants' responsibility.

The more participants are involved and feel a sense of ownership, the more they will enjoy the workshop — and the more they will remember afterward.

Note: The word *workshop* triggers very different reactions in people. Some people have experienced workshops that were not workshops at all. At conferences, it is common for a few keynote speakers to address a large audience in one room. Participants are then sent to smaller rooms where the "workshop" is supposed to take place. But all too often, it turns out to be nothing more than another presentation, followed by a slightly confused question-and-answer session.

# The ingredients of an impactful workshop

**The right question
+ the right instructions
+ the right atmosphere
= an impactful workshop**

Finding and working with the right question is the first of three keys to a successful workshop. It doesn't matter if the workshop feels great if you are trying to answer the wrong question. The question should align with your purpose and, hopefully, create the impact you seek.

The second key is preparing to give the proper instructions — meaning clear communication, clear leadership, and clear time frames.

The third key is creating a positive atmosphere in the room, one that makes participants feel safe and willing to engage with the questions at hand.

**Tip:** Send the relevant question already in the invitation. If you are leading a creative workshop, participants will begin to "marinate" the question in their subconscious mind. As a result, many will arrive with ideas already forming.

# Goals, methods, and resources

Think of goals, methods, and resources as the sides of an equilateral triangle. If you increase the ambition of the goals, you must also increase the resources. If you reduce the resources, the other sides shrink as well.

Your resources may include:

- yourselves
- time
- money
- mandate
- participants
- the venue
- tools such as flip charts, paper, post-its, pens, whiteboards, projectors, or digital solutions
- anything else relevant to your situation
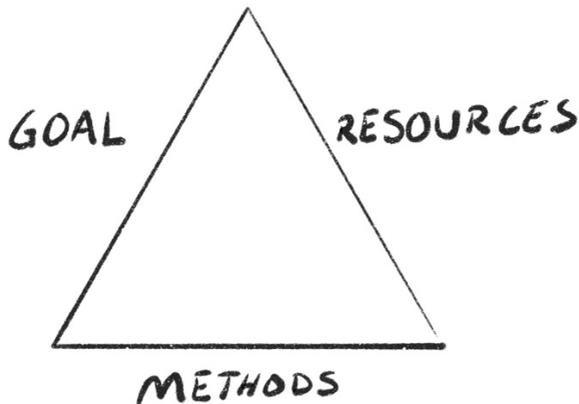
# Four questions for your preparation

Answer these four questions before you begin designing a workshop. They will help you greatly.

1. What is the **purpose** of the workshop?
   - What is the effect and impact you are trying to achieve?
   - Why have a workshop at all?
2. What **goals** do you have?
   - What should be different when the workshop is over?
   - How do you know that you have succeeded? What are the metrics?
3. What **resources** do you have?
   - Time, personnel, money, room, props…
4. Which **methods** do you want to use in your workshop?
   - Involving methods, ice breakers, energizers, presentations…

# Five tips for a better workshop

Here are five practical keys, each with concrete advice, to help you succeed with your workshop.

## 1. Invest time in planning your workshop

- Have a clear **goal** for the workshop and a sound reason for holding it (its purpose).
- Invite the right **people** and **communicate** the goal and purpose well in advance. This allows participants' subconscious minds to begin working on the topic, which increases the quality of contributions during the workshop.
- Create an **agenda** and assign time slots to all parts. Plan for about **80%** of the available time, leaving a margin in case discussions take unexpected turns.
- Create clear **instructions** for each step. Remember: in a workshop, the goal is set, but the group creates the result. Your role is to support that process.
- Book appropriate **spaces** and as many rooms as you need. Decide on seating arrangements. **Tip:** Theatre-style seating is poor for workshops. Table islands work much better. Book a slightly larger room than you think you need. Too much space is always better than too little.

## 2. Be ready before participants arrive

Be fully prepared at least **five minutes** before the workshop starts.

- Make sure all **equipment** works: pens, post-its, flip charts, projectors, whiteboards, and so on.
- **Flip charts** are almost unbeatable in workshops. Bring plenty.
- Use the final minutes to personally **welcome** participants. Music can also help set the mood.
- Organize participants into groups of no more than **six people per table**.

## 3. Create a positive atmosphere

- Start with an icebreaker. For example, ask participants at each table to share **two truths and one lie** about themselves. The others guess which is which.
- **Icebreakers** are great. Before an idea workshop, you can ask each group to come up with as many uses as possible for an everyday object, such as a brick (a bookend, a weapon, a pedestal…). There are many variations. Choose something that gets people started.
- Another option is to ask participants to share something from the past week that put them in a **good mood**. This creates a positive buzz in the room.

## 4. Run the workshop

- In some moments, you may want participants to **write down** their ideas individually first. This ensures that more introverted participants are heard and not overshadowed by highly social ones.
- **Pay attention** to everyone. Encourage and acknowledge contributions. Check in if you notice that some people struggle to get a word in.
- Vary your **methods** to avoid monotony.
- Signal that you are in **control** of the process. Participants should not worry that the workshop is drifting without direction.
- Let groups **report back** at different milestones you have defined. This can be done in various ways, but the most common is one group at a time. Keep an eye on the clock.

## 5. Close with a summary and reflections

- In the summary, you or the participants **review** what the group has produced.
- If concrete **actions** have emerged, highlight them clearly. Who does what, and when?
- Reflect together: what worked **well** in the workshop, and what could be improved?
- Thank everyone for investing their time, their minds, and their hearts.

**Agenda: When – What - How**

A clear, well-thought-out agenda helps you keep track of time and intention and shows how each part of the workshop should be carried out.

One key factor is setting realistic timeframes for each activity. If you are unsure, create space between segments. Time-plan about **80%** of the total duration and let the remaining time flex as discussions unfold. If you are experienced and confident, you can tighten this to **90–95%**.

Use the example on the next page as inspiration, then create your own version.

# Example of an agenda

| When/Time | What | How |
|---|---|---|
| 5 min | Introduction – presentation of me and the topic | Flip chart. Verbal introduction |
| 15 min | What makes a good workshop? | Discussion question:<br>• 2&2 with Post-its – 5 min<br>• Collect on board – 2 min<br>• Group ideas – 5 min<br>• Reflection – 3 min |
| 20 min | Which methods can we use in a workshop? | Presentation – 10 min Open discussion – 5 min<br>Write down your favorite – 5 min |
| 4 min | Summary and closing | What do you take with you from these 45 minutes?<br>Mingle with at least two others |
| 1 min | Thank you | Music to close |

# Examples of methods

There are many methods you can use that will involve participants. The key is exactly that: **involvement**, not information. You cannot call it a workshop unless people are involved and co-create.

Which methods work best depends on the group's energy, willingness, and your own preferences. With a positive atmosphere, all the following methods can work well. Some are well-tested classics. Which ones do you use most often? Which ones have you not tried yet?

**Write individually, then talk**

- Give a task or ask a question.
- Let everyone write down their own answers.
- Participants then share in small groups or with the whole group.

**Write on Post-its, then cluster**

- Follow the two steps above.
- Ask participants to place their Post-its on a whiteboard for everyone to see, or on flip charts in smaller groups.
- Let the group cluster similar answers into meaningful groups.
- Discuss both the answers and the clusters.

**Buzz groups (small-group discussion, then plenary)**

- Present the question.
- Ask participants to discuss in small groups (2&2, 3&3, etc.).
- Then bring the discussion back to the whole group.

---

**Pair interviews (2&2)**

- Give the group one or more questions.
- Ask participants to pair up with someone nearby and interview each other.
- Reflect together in plenary if needed.

---

**Open discussion**

- Ask the question.
- Invite open discussion.
- Make sure you have follow-up questions ready.
- **Advice for large groups:** ask a few participants in advance to prepare a response so the discussion gets off to a smoother start.

---

**Half for, half against**

- Divide the group into two halves.
- Ask one half to argue for a solution and the other half to argue against it (or for an alternative).
- Listen to both sides.

---

**Expand, then prioritize**

- Ask the group to generate as many ideas as possible within a set time.
- Group ideas if relevant.
- Let participants vote on which ideas are strongest.

---

**Work from a model**

- Draw a simple model, for example a **four-quadrant model** such as SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats).
- Divide the group so each subgroup works with one quadrant.
- Present the results.

---

# Creative processes

Creative processes are about **expanding ideas first**
and **then prioritizing**. This is usually done in several
steps until the group has identified the strongest ideas
and developed them to a level where they can be used.

By using different methods — such as walking outside,
card decks with images, words, or quotes, whiteboards,
or almost anything else — participants are encouraged
to generate a large number of ideas (**expansion**). These
ideas are then grouped, after which the group may
choose, for example, one cluster (**prioritization**). The
group then continues to develop those ideas (**expansion**
again), before selecting (**prioritizing**) and making them
concrete.
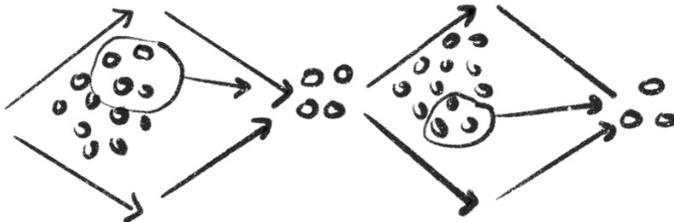
What matters most is that there is a **clear question or goal**. For example:

- How can we reach more customers?
- What ideas do we have for reaching our desired position?
- What new ways can we use to communicate with our target audience?
- How can more people become aware of our offering?

As mentioned earlier, it is an advantage to share this question with participants in advance.

# Warm-up exercises

To get started, it is often helpful to begin with some form of warm-up exercise. Below are three variations.

**The most unusual common denominator**

This exercise works well at the beginning when participants do not know each other very well. Instead of the classic "smallest common denominator," you can make it more interesting.

- Divide participants into groups of approximately **3–4 people**.
- Turn it into a competition. The group that finds the **most unusual thing they all have in common** within five minutes wins.
- Listen and decide who won — or let the participants decide.
- The prize? An envious round of applause.

---

**The brick**

Before a creative meeting, you can activate the group in this simple way:

- Divide participants into smaller groups.
- Give them pens and paper (flip charts work well).
- Give them **two minutes** to come up with as many uses as possible for an object such as a brick.

(Or ten popsicle sticks. Or a credit card. Or anything else.)

- The winner can be the group with the most ideas, or the group with the most unusual ideas. You decide.

---

## Means of transport

Another simple way to activate the group before a creative session:

- Divide participants into smaller groups.
- Give them pens and paper (flip charts work well).
- Give them **two minutes** to list as many means of transport as possible.
- After two minutes, ask everyone to count how many they came up with. You now have a first winner.
- Then ask how many of their ideas transport people (most lists will focus on this).
  Why not books, which transport words, ink, and emotions?
  Why not power lines, which transport electrons?
- Give them another **90 seconds**.
- Repeat the count and ask participants to share their new ideas.

---

# The idea-generating workshop, step by step

1. Define a question or topic
2. Generate associations using Post-it notes
3. Group ideas
4. Work in pairs (2&2). Take one Post-it from a group. Generate ideas. Repeat.
5. Draw a card from an idea card deck. Generate ideas.
6. Take a walk. Generate ideas.
7. Collect all ideas on a wall.
8. Make ideas concrete
9. Introduce criteria
10. Remove ideas that do not meet the requirements — or rewrite them
11. Vote among the remaining ideas

Finally, present the result.

On the next pages, you will find **suggested instructions** for this process. See them as suggestions. Use your own wording. Depending on the number of participants, the time available, and the physical space, you will need to adapt these instructions.

## 1. Define a question or topic

"Today, we will run a creative workshop with the theme:
___

During the day, we will go through several steps. First, we will generate a large number of ideas. Many of these ideas will be really bad — and that is exactly how it should be. All ideas are equally welcome.

If someone criticizes ideas while we are generating them, they receive a yellow card the first time, from the group or from me. If they continue, they receive a red card and are sent off for two minutes. If they persist after that, they receive a match penalty.

In the following steps, we will group, prioritize, make ideas concrete, and finally select the strongest ones. We would never have reached these ideas if we had not gone through the entire process, where the bad ideas acted as fertilizer for the good ones.

In some phases, some of you will feel that things are moving far too slowly, while others will think that they are moving far too fast. Accept that we are different, and trust that we will reach the goal by the end of the day."

## 2. Generate associations using Post-it notes

**Materials:** Large whiteboard (or wall), Post-it notes, pens
**Time:** 2 minutes for instructions, 10 minutes for individual writing, 5 minutes to place notes on the wall

"Look at the question. What words come to mind when you read it? Write down **one word per post-it**. Write as many as you can in ten minutes. Keep the notes to yourself for now. When time is up, I will give you the next instruction."

*Facilitator note:* After a while, associations will slow down. Even if ten minutes have not passed — hold the space. After a dip, new associations often appear. This is when participants start thinking differently.

"Five minutes have passed. Your task now is to take **one** of your notes, say the word out loud, and place it on the whiteboard. Then the next person does the same.

As you listen, you may come up with new associations. Write those down as well. Continue until all notes are on the wall. You have five minutes."

---

### 3. Group ideas

**Time:** 10 minutes plus instructions

"Thank you. Now group these notes in ways that make sense to you. When you are done, draw a circle around each group and give it a heading.

If several notes say the same thing, keep them for now. That simply shows that many people are thinking along the same lines.

Self-organize and help each other. You have ten minutes."

---

### 4. Work in pairs (2&2). Develop ideas. Repeat.

**Time:** 30 minutes plus instructions

"Now work in pairs (groups of three are fine if the numbers are uneven). Take **one note** from any group you choose. Start developing concrete ideas on new Post-it notes.

Be as specific as possible and write **one idea per note**. When you run out of ideas, return the note and pick a new one. Keep your notes for now.

You have thirty minutes."

*Facilitators' note:* At this stage, you will need an empty wall where notes can be posted later. Have tape or adhesive putty available if the Post-it glue is not enough.

---

### 5. Draw a card from an idea card deck

Idea card decks can be purchased easily. A simple online search will give you many options.

**Time:** 30 minutes plus instructions

"Take one or two cards from the deck. The cards contain things that have nothing to do with our business or challenge. That is exactly the point — it disrupts habitual thinking.

Use whatever is on the card to generate new ideas. You have thirty minutes."

*Facilitators note:* If you do not have cards, postcards, or similar tools, skip this step and choose another method instead.

---

## 6.  Take a walk. Generate ideas

**Time:** 30 minutes plus instructions

"Now leave this room — and the building if possible. Pair up again and go for a walk. Return in thirty minutes with new ideas."

*Facilitators' note:* If the weather is poor, you can skip this step. Alternatively, if the building has artwork or interesting surroundings, ask participants to use those as inspiration while generating ideas.

## 7.  Collect all ideas on a wall and group them

**Time:** 20 minutes plus instructions

"Now, place **all idea notes** on the wall and help each other group them again.

Ideas that are identical or very similar should be placed together. You will also notice that some ideas belong to the same 'family'. Place those close to each other.

You have twenty minutes."

*Facilitators' note:* Twenty minutes is a rough estimate. You may need to step in and support the process.

## 8. Make ideas concrete and remove duplicates

**Time:** 30 minutes plus instructions

"Now it is time to start removing ideas that do not hold up.

Go through the notes one by one and decide whether each idea is concrete enough to be evaluated. If not, either discard it or rewrite it to make it concrete.

This is an important step. We are moving from vague ideas to concrete proposals. We are not judging feasibility yet — only clarity.

At this stage, you can also remove duplicates. You have thirty minutes."

*Facilitators' note:* You need to actively test the notes here. Are they understandable, or are they just empty buzzwords?

---

## 9 & 10. Introduce criteria/requirements. Remove ideas or rewrite them

**Time:** 30 minutes plus instructions

"Now we will examine the ideas using a set of criteria.

The ideas must be possible to implement:

- within one year
- within a budget of less than 50,000
- within our existing organization

Take one idea at a time. If it does not meet **all** criteria, either remove it or rewrite it so that it does.

You have thirty minutes."

*Facilitators' note:*
These criteria are examples used for this course documentation. You need to identify which criteria apply in your own context. There are almost always constraints related to time, money, mandate, or resources.

When this step is complete, the number of ideas should be significantly reduced. All remaining ideas should now be **concrete and feasible**.

Place the remaining notes on a whiteboard in a structured way, with space between them so it is easy to mark votes next to each idea.

---

### 11. Vote among the remaining ideas

**Time:** 20 minutes plus instructions

"Now it is time to vote on the remaining ideas. The goal is to create a **top ten list** of the strongest ideas.

Each of you has **three votes**, linked to three different criteria:

- Place a **black mark** next to the idea you think is easiest to implement.
- Place a **blue mark** next to the idea you believe will deliver the best results.
- Place a **red mark** next to the idea you simply like the most.

You have twenty minutes."

*Facilitators' note:*
When voting is complete, count the marks and identify the winning ideas.

If the results are to be presented to people outside the workshop group, assign **one or two ideas per group** to be presented. This can be done using flip charts prepared in advance or another creative format.

A useful tip is **not to use PowerPoint**, as it is rarely a creative tool.

These instructions do not include breaks. Plan for them. Make sure fruit, snacks, water, and similar refreshments are available throughout the session.

Also plan moments where you gather the group and invite reflection:

- How does this feel?
- How has it gone so far?
- What thoughts are emerging?

Remember to acknowledge and praise participants throughout the process.

# The Disney method
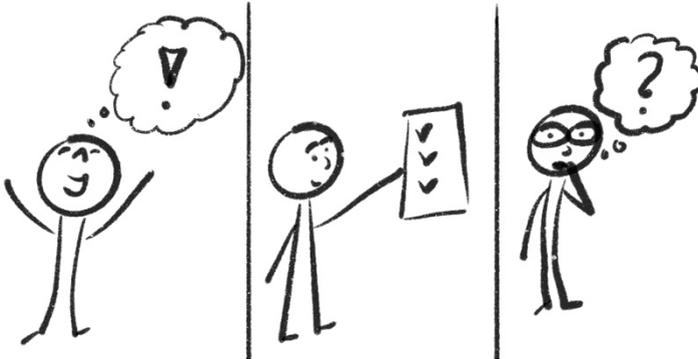
It is said that Walt Disney used to enter meetings about new projects and adopt different roles depending on where the group was in the process.

- **The Dreamer** – where all ideas are welcome and everything is possible
- **The Implementer** – where one idea is selected and a plan for execution is developed
- **The Critic** – an analytical role that identifies risks and pitfalls

This approach has become a popular workshop method in which participants shift perspective by changing roles.

After cycling through these roles several times, groups often arrive at a plan that is both creative and workable.

Ideally, participants move between different rooms to make the experience even more tangible.

**Instructions for the Disney method (step by step)**

In this example, the workshop lasts **90 minutes**, including an introduction, and the group consists of 8 participants, divided into two teams of 4.

*Facilitators' note:*
After warming up the group and explaining Disney's three roles, it is time to begin. If you have access to three rooms, physical movement between them strengthens the experience. If possible, furnish and decorate the rooms differently — for example:

- red or yellow in the Dreamer room
- green in the Implementer room
- blue in the Observer room

If you do not have three rooms, use a large room and let participants move within it. If that is not possible either, do the best you can with what you have.

**The Dreamer**

**Time:** 15 minutes plus instructions

"We will now create new concepts and ideas related to the challenge: ___

We are now in the Dreamer room, where everything is possible. For the next twelve minutes, you will dream up ideas related to this challenge. Remove all limitations — other roles will handle those later.

Please begin."

*Facilitators' note:*
Use paper and pens, flip charts, Post-its — whatever works best.
You can also ask participants what a Dreamer looks like in body language. They will often say the Dreamer looks upward, uses large gestures, points toward the sky, and so on. You can mirror this behavior — and later do the same for the other roles.

"Fifteen minutes have passed. Select **one idea** and bring it with you to the Implementer room.

You have three minutes to decide which idea you want to develop further."

---

**The Implementer**

**Time:** 15 minutes plus instructions

"You are now Implementers — project leaders. Your task is to create a **concrete plan** for how the idea can be carried out.

Focus on activities, responsibilities, and timelines.

Do not criticize the idea at this stage. Assume it *can* be implemented and explore what would be required to make that happen.

You have thirteen minutes."

"Time is up. Bring your material with you as we move to the Observer room."

---

**The Observer**

**Time:** 15 minutes

"Now — finally — you are allowed to analyze and criticize, and this is helpful.

Your task in this room is to identify **risks, weaknesses, and potential obstacles** in both the idea and the execution plan.

You have thirteen minutes."

"Thirteen minutes have passed. Collect your material and return to the Implementer room."

*Facilitators' note:*
If there are specific criteria the idea must meet, introduce them here. Doing so makes them a natural part of the analysis, focusing on what could go wrong or what does not hold up under scrutiny.

---

## Back to the Implementer

*Facilitators' note:*
In the instructions above, you now return to the Implementer room. One variation is to return to the Dreamer room instead and cycle through all three roles again until all are satisfied. In this example, we return to the Implementer role to address the Observer's critique.

---

## The Implementer (second round)

**Time:** 15 minutes plus instructions

"Your task now is to review the Observer's analysis and use it to improve and refine your idea.

Make the adjustments and improvements necessary for the idea to become viable.

You have fifteen minutes for this."

"After that, you have another fifteen minutes to prepare a **short presentation**, two to three minutes long, to present your idea to the other group."

*Facilitators' note:*
The presentation may be delivered to a different audience than the workshop group. Adapt your instructions accordingly.

It may also be that you want to move directly into implementation. In that case, include additional steps related to timelines, roles, and responsibilities.

---

This concludes the two different creative workshop instructions.

On the following pages, you'll get extra material that can be useful in your role as a facilitator.

# Extra material

## 4 × 5 presentation tips

As a workshop leader, you will often present and give instructions. Below are concise, practical tips to support you.

---

### 1. Five steps to prepare your presentation

1. Understand the **purpose** of the meeting.
2. Define your **target audience**.
3. Clarify your **goals** — what should they *know*, *feel*, and *do* after your presentation?
4. Decide how you want to **come across**.
5. Define **content** and **structure**.

---

### 2. Five tips for dynamic body language

1. Maintain **eye contact** with the audience.
2. If your nose points upward, you appear arrogant. Lower your chin slightly.
3. **Smile** — when appropriate — all the way to the eyes.
4. Use your whole arm, not just your forearms. "Unzip" up to the armpit to free your arms.
5. **Move** deliberately. Movement is good — aimless wandering is not.

---

### 3. Five tips for vocal variation

1. Breathe deeply. This makes your voice more sustainable and less nervous.
2. Change your **tone** when making an important point — up or down.
3. Vary **volume**. Speak loudly at times. Whisper at times.
4. Vary **tempo**, especially by using pauses.
5. Palms down create a *sending* voice. Palms up create a *seeking* voice.

---

### 4. Five tips to help your audience remember

1. Be **clear**. The risk of misunderstanding is high anyway.
2. Use the power of **Three**. We remember in triads (for example: Blood, Sweat, and Tears).
3. Tell a **story**. Stories stick better than facts and abstract words.
4. Use concrete, **simple** language that allows the audience to see, hear, and feel what you describe. Abstract language is dull.
5. **Repeat** your message. Repetition strengthens memory. Repeat — preferably three times.

   Get in touch with me, and I'll send you a chapter I wrote called "Nine memory hacks – so that your audience remembers."

---

# Five challenging personalities

In many workshops, there will be participants who, in one way or another, make the situation slightly more challenging for both the group and you, the facilitator. This is rarely intentional, and they are often unaware of the effect they have. Still, their behavior can negatively affect both you and the group.

Below are five different personality types that can create challenges, along with suggestions on how to handle them.

*Note: I just invented the names for fun alliterations. They are not about gender specific traits.*

---

### 1. Ben the Besserwisser (the Know-It-All)

With Ben in the group, you have another rooster in the henhouse. He challenges you and may feel that he could just as well take over. In Ben's eyes, you do not add much value.

In the worst case, the group is treated to a long lecture revealing "the truth," which takes considerable time. In the best case, Ben questions where you got your facts. Sometimes Ben is clever and asks questions he already knows the answers to, to test you.

Constant questioning that leads nowhere can undermine you and shift the focus toward a power struggle, eye-rolling, and heavy sighs. Other participants may admire

Ben's knowledge — or feel frustrated because the discussion does not help them move forward.

**What you can do:**
If the group knows Ben well, they may handle it themselves. Going on the attack rarely helps. Thank Ben for his input and redirect the question to the rest of the group. Acknowledge his expertise and involve him constructively by asking him to shed light on a specific issue. This allows Ben to feel important without taking over. If nothing works, speak to Ben privately and ask whether this session is useful for him at all.

---

### 2.  Curious Cate

No one is more curious than Cate. No question is too simple or too complex for her to ask. She genuinely wants to learn and often learns best by asking questions.

Cate is a *learner*, which in many ways is the opposite of Ben the Know-It-All, who is a *knower*. Other participants may appreciate that someone else is asking the "stupid" questions — or they may lose patience when one question follows another.

**What you can do:**
Cate truly wants to learn. One way to handle this is to explain in advance what will be covered and when questions will be addressed, so Cate can mentally check them off. You can also announce that additional questions will be handled at the end.

---

### 3. Victor the Victim

Everything is unfair to Victor. No matter what you do or say, he suffers. Victor is a master at draining energy from the group by creating insecurity and guilt.

If you try to engage him, he resists. Why should *he* have to answer? If you leave him alone, equally wrong — why doesn't he get any questions? If he fails, it proves he never succeeds. If he succeeds, it was probably just luck, and things will soon get worse again. Whatever you do, it feels wrong.

**What you can do:**
Do not fall into the trap of taking responsibility for Victor's situation. Ask coaching questions instead, if time allows:
What do you want?
How should we handle this?
How could you use this in your situation?

You can show empathy for a difficult situation, but do not take over responsibility. You can also ask: How does this affect your ability to focus on the workshop right now?

### 4. Talkative Tina

Congratulations — you have Tina in your group. Silence will not be a problem.

Tina enjoys talking and hearing her own voice. She associates freely and often drifts away from the topic. It does not really matter who has the floor — Tina jumps in and dominates. Before long, others grow quieter, unless someone becomes irritated and tells Tina to be quiet.

Tina may be brilliant and say useful things, but no one else gets a chance to speak. In the worst case, Tina embodies the saying: "The lights are on, but nobody's home — though the radio keeps playing..."

**What you can do:**
Make sure your agenda includes space for discussion so you are not rushed. Be friendly but firm. Listen for other voices and invite them in. Ask Tina — kindly — how what she is saying relates to the topic. Challenge her by asking: If you had to give your answer in one sentence, what would it be? These forces focus. Use exercises that allow participants to reflect individually, so they cannot dominate continuously.

## 5. Silent Sam

The Sams are easy to overlook. They take up no space at all. They would never raise their hands to ask a question, let alone answer one. In group work, they sit quietly and draw little attention to themselves.

The Sams are the opposite of talkative Tina. If they could wish for a superpower, it would be invisibility.

Why is Sam so quiet? Are they shy? Highly focused? Do they learn best by observing and reflecting? Or do they lack confidence and feel that others know more than they do?

Other participants may ignore Sam or feel irritated that they do not contribute verbally. Their silence can unintentionally affect group balance.

**What you can do:**
The best approach is to understand why Sam is quiet. If you have time, ask them during a break. One effective method is to let everyone write down ideas on paper or Post-its. That way, Sam's ideas surface without putting them on the spot.

# Thank you for reading this mini guide

**Congratulations — you have reached the goal**

Best of luck with your future creative workshops. With practice, you will soon be able to facilitate them without external support — unless there is value in having an external person who is perceived as neutral and objective. Remember:

<div align="center">

**Competence is applied knowledge**.

</div>

Practice. Reflect. Practice again.

The more methods you have, the better. Variety creates engagement. Participants appreciate meetings more when they are involved than when they are informed.

<div align="center">

**The right question
+ the right instructions
+ the right atmosphere
= a good workshop**

</div>

Warm regards,
**Antoni Lacinai**

antonilacinai.com
antoni@lacinai.com