

The Group as a Laboratory

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

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 of options – and it's available whenever you need it.