

The Third Alternative - Synergise

*“Ancient Mayan greeting: In Lak'ech Ala K'in”
interpretation - I am you, and you are me – we are a synergy.*

Purpose of the process:

This process is dedicated to the work of Stephen R Covey and his book “The 3rd Alternative” <http://www.franklincovey.com/tc/>. At the risk of doing an injustice to the superb work by Stephen R Covey in bringing Third Alternative thinking forward, put simply 3rd Alternative thinking offers a way to resolve conflict and disagreement without any party feeling as if they have compromised or given up ground.

To reach a 3rd Alternative outcome is a natural and creative process. It does require a shift in paradigm, it does require an open heart and mind to the possibilities and it does require people to connect – to truly synergise. To gain more insights to 3rd Alternative thinking we recommend Stephen R Covey’s book “The 3rd Alternative – Solving Life’s Most Difficult Problems” published by Simon & Schuster UK Ltd.

This process is designed for 2 or more people who wish to resolve a disagreement but may be reluctant to do so for fear of compromise. Instead of coming to a mutually agreeable outcome we may perceive that we will be forced to give up something and so the problem remains, unresolved!

The objective of this game is to find a 3rd Alternative to an issue between people. This is not my way or your way or a watered down version of either; the 3rd Alternative is a solution that none of the parties have so far considered.

You will select as many cards as you like or it takes to create your 3rd Alternative. We recommend selecting the cards by beginning with them face down. This is a very creative process, requiring fresh, creative and intuitive thinking and so having the cards face down is the best way to begin.

Resources you will need to play Synergise:

1. One copy of the game (if there are 6 or more people playing this game, you may need 2 copies)
2. Writing pads and pens
3. A table on which to place all the cards face down
4. Space on the table to place your selected cards – the ones that represent synergy for you.
5. Allow as much time as you think you will need to “arrive” at your 3rd Alternative

Instructions

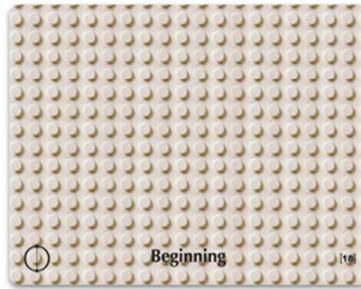
Before commencing, we recommend that everyone takes a pause, at least 7 – 10 minutes. Put on some gentle music, sit back, close your eyes and just *pause!*

There are 4 steps to synergy:

ASK | **DEFINE** | **CREATE** | **ARRIVE**

1. **Ask** the question: Are you willing to find a solution that is better than any solution that either or any of us have come up with yet? If yes, go to step 2.
2. **Define** - make a list of the characteristics of a solution that would delight everyone. What does success look like? What is the real job to be done? What would be a win-win for all concerned? Keep this visible as you commence drawing cards.
3. **Create** - It’s time to engage the cards! To draw inspiration and creativity to arrive at a 3rd alternative – point of you. Take turns to select a card. Keeping in mind your list of characteristics, discuss each card in turn in relation to those characteristics.

Refer to the book and read out loud a story or quote that creates a connection for you.



Suspend all judgement throughout as you select more cards and draw inspiration for your 3rd alternative.

Listen to one another intently, synergise with each other – we each have a different point of you! To synergise is to accept, listen, respect and honour each other.

Cards that have special meaning may go in a place on the table to form a group or collection. Write down all special meaning that emerges within the synergy that you are creating.

Continue to draw cards, searching for ideas and inspiration while keeping in mind the characteristics of synergy. Go wild and turn your thinking upside down as you explore your 3rd Alternative! No idea is a bad one – explore all options.

When you have finished the “create” step.....you have.....arrived!

4. **Arrive** – Now describe your 3rd Alternative and how you intend to put it into practice.

A few tips for this process...

- Take a pause before you commence this process; at least 7 minutes – find a quiet place, put on some gentle music, sit back, close your eyes and just *pause!*
- Synergise is a creative process, enjoy greater success by approaching the Coaching Game feeling refreshed and less stressed.
- Two alternative thinking separates us – My Way Vs Your Way – if I give in and accept your way, you have won and I have lost. 3rd alternative thinking puts aside both ways to find a new and 3rd alternative; a win-win for all.
- To achieve synergy requires the letting go of all preconceived judgements about an individual including differences of colour, race, religion, beliefs, status and any other judgmental concepts.
- 2nd alternative thinking attitudes: You are wrong, I must defend my position; I am only willing to see my point of view. If I must, I will attack you in order to defend myself.
- 3rd alternative thinking attitudes: I see myself as separate from my point of view; I see you separate from your point of view; I see and respect your individuality, separate from the side you are taking; together we synergize and create an amazing solution that no one could have foreseen.

