

SYSTEM DYNAMICS

Exercise 01 · The Opening Bet

DURATION ~12 minutes	SPACE NEEDED Full room, clear floor	MATERIALS Post-its, pens	WALL OUTPUT 1 Post-it per participant
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PART 1 — WHAT THIS EXERCISE IS AND WHY IT OPENS THE GAME

System Dynamics is the first exercise in the I AGREE game and the only one that is entirely physical. Participants do not write, sort, rank or choose. They **move**. The exercise demonstrates, through direct bodily experience, the core insight that makes the rest of the game possible: **changing one thing about how you move changes the entire system around you.**

This insight cannot be taught. It can only be experienced. Every subsequent exercise in the I AGREE game asks participants to identify the one thing they are willing to change about how they act in a real system. System Dynamics gives them the felt sense of why that question is worth asking.

Position in the I AGREE sequence

Ex.1 System Dynamics is the opening bet. The Post-it produced here is the rawest, least defended piece of data on the entire Wall — written before participants have been asked anything about their values, motivators, or ethics. It is what they say when they have not yet been shaped by the questions. The Commitment Card written in Ex.5 is the answer to whether that opening bet was honest.

PART 2 — THE MECHANIC

How the physical game works

Every participant is C. Without telling anyone who they have chosen, each person privately selects two other people in the room as their A and their B.

THE ALIGNMENT RULE

C must keep A- B- C, in a straight line at all times.

C moves to maintain this alignment whenever A or B moves.

C move in the middle of the line connecting A and B.

Because A and B are themselves C to their own secretly chosen pairs, nobody stands still. The room fills with continuous movement. Nobody is chasing anyone. Nobody is following orders. The system self-organises into expansion through the logic of alignment alone — everyone trying to get in line with two people who are themselves constantly moving to get in line with two others.

PHASE 1 — EXPANSION

Rule: C keeps A - B - C aligned in a line.

Result: The room expands. Everyone moves outward, seeking alignment with two people who are themselves moving.

Duration: ~60 seconds.

PHASE 2 — CONTRACTION

Rule change: C must now position themselves physically between A and B — close, sandwiched.

Result: The room contracts. The same people, the same relationships, one rule changed.

Duration: ~60 seconds.

The systemic lesson, stated plainly:

Nobody left the room. Nobody was replaced. No new resources were added. One change in the rule governing how C moves — from alignment to proximity — produced an opposite systemic behaviour. The same actors. The same relationships. A completely different system.

PART 3 — FACILITATION SEQUENCE

PHASE	WHAT YOU SAY AND DO	FACILITATOR NOTES
SET UP 2 min	Clear the room of chairs. Ask everyone to stand. Say: "We are going to play a short game. No explanation yet. Just follow the instructions exactly."	Facilitator: <i>Do not explain the purpose. Curiosity before comprehension. Participants who know what they are looking for will perform rather than experience.</i>
SECRET CHOICE 1 min	Say: "Without pointing, without telling anyone, choose two people in this room. In your head, call one of them A and the other B. Remember your A and your B. Do not reveal them." Pause. "Ready? When I say go, you have one rule: keep yourself on the line between A and B. You are always C in aligned, ABC is the system. Go."	Facilitator: <i>Watch for confusion. If someone asks "what does aligned mean?" say only: "Imagine A, you, and B form a straight line. Keep it straight." Nothing more.</i>
PHASE 1 Expansion 60 sec	Let the room move. Say nothing. After about 45 seconds, call out: "Notice what is happening to the space in this room." After 60 seconds, call: "Stop. Freeze."	Facilitator: <i>Watch for the expansion. It is almost always visible within 20 seconds. Note which participants are moving most — they have chosen very mobile A and B pairs. Note who barely</i>

		moves — their A and B may be near each other or near them already.
PHASE 2 Contraction 30 sec	Say: "One rule change. C — that is still all of you — must now place yourself physically between A and B. Not on the line. Between them. Close. Go." After 30 seconds: "Stop. Freeze. Look at the room."	Facilitator: <i>The contraction is dramatic and immediate. Let participants register it physically before you say anything. The silence after "look at the room" is part of the exercise. Do not fill it.</i>
DEBRIEF 3 min	Ask the room: "What happened?" Accept two or three responses. Then say: "Nobody left. Nobody was replaced. One rule changed. The system changed completely. The question now is — what is the equivalent of that one rule in a system you actually work in? "	Facilitator: <i>Do not lecture the systems theory. The question does the work. If participants try to discuss the game mechanics, redirect: "We will come back to how it works. First — what does it remind you of?"</i>
POST-IT Prompt 3 min	Hand out Post-its and pens. Say: "Think of a real system you are part of right now at work, in your organisation, in how you use or relate to technology. You are C. Who or what are your A and B? Write one thing about how YOU move in that system that, if you changed it, would change the system around you. Not what others should do. What you will do differently. You have two minutes. Write in silence."	Facilitator: <i>Move away from the centre of the room. Do not circulate or observe what participants write. After two minutes, say: "Post your note on the Wall. No names needed. No explanation needed."</i>

PART 4 — THE POST-IT AND THE WALL

The Post-it produced in Ex.1 is the first item placed on the I AGREE Wall. It has specific properties that make it unlike any other Wall item.

What makes the Ex.1 Post-it unique:

It is written before participants know what the Wall is for. This makes it the least performative item on the Wall.

It is written in a state of physical activation, not reflective stillness. The body has just experienced the lesson.

It is written without reference to values, motivators, or ethics, those layers have not been introduced yet.

It makes a systemic claim, not a personal one. "I will change how I move" is a relational statement, not a private commitment.

What the facilitator reads in the Post-it

The Ex.1 Post-it is most useful as a baseline reading, what the participant claims to be willing to change before they have been asked anything probing. Three patterns are worth noting:

Systemic language ("I will change how I communicate with my team / how I position myself in meetings / how I respond when the system pressures me")

Reading: High systems awareness. This participant already sees themselves as a node in a network rather than an isolated actor. Their Ex.4 and Ex.5 data will reveal whether that awareness is matched by motivational energy and value alignment.

Individual language ("I will be more patient / more honest / more decisive")

Reading: The participant translated a systemic experience into a personal virtue. This is not wrong, but it misses the relational dimension. The facilitator should hold this Post-it against their Ex.5 Value Cards: is the virtue they named here already in Pile A, or in Pile C?

Technology language ("I will change how I use AI / how I let AI shape my decisions")

Reading: The participant made the AI ethics connection without being prompted. This is the most diagnostically significant pattern for the REBOOT programme. Their subsequent exercises will reveal whether this is genuine ethical concern or surface-level compliance.

PART 5 — HOW EX.1 CONNECTS FORWARD ACROSS THE GAME

The Post-it written in Ex.1 is not a standalone item. It is the opening hypothesis that the remaining 9 exercises either confirm, complicate, or contradict. The facilitator carries this data forward across the Wall.

EXERCISE	CONNECTION TO EX.1	FACILITATOR QUESTION TO HOLD
Ex.2 River Crossing	The character they prioritise saving reveals the relational logic behind their Ex.1 system claim. Who they will not leave behind tells you whose A and B they really are.	<i>Does the moral logic of their River Crossing choice match the system change they said they were willing to make?</i>
Ex.3 LEGO Duck	Their tolerance for ambiguity in defining a duck predicts their tolerance for ambiguity in defining what counts as change in a real system.	<i>Is their Ex.1 Post-it specific or vague? Does their Duck exercise tolerance match?</i>
Ex.4 Motivators	The push-down motivator (WHAT YOU MISS) is often the precise energy that would make the Ex.1 system change possible. If they said "I will speak up more in decisions" and their push-down motivator is Courage, the connection is direct.	<i>What motivator would make the change they wrote in Ex.1 actually possible?</i>

Ex.5 Value Cards	The intersection of push-down motivator and Pile C values is the growth edge that produces the Commitment Card. The Ex.1 Post-it is the pre-conscious version of that same edge.	<i>Is the value they are not yet living (Pile C) the one that would make their Ex.1 change real?</i>
Ex.8 DANA	The 3 words chosen under emotional pressure reveal whether the change claimed in Ex.1 holds when cognition is depleted. A participant who wrote "I will slow down before I act" in Ex.1 and chose "fast, now, decide" in DANA has revealed the gap.	<i>Do the DANA words confirm or contradict the Ex.1 Post-it?</i>
Ex.9 War Today	Ethical positioning under conflict framing tests whether the systemic change claimed in Ex.1 holds under social pressure. This is the highest-stakes test of the opening bet.	<i>Does their War Today position require the same thing of them that their Ex.1 Post-it promised?</i>
Ex.5 Commitment Card	The Commitment Card is the precise, anchored, lensed version of the Ex.1 Post-it. It should be more specific, more honest, and harder to abandon. In Beat 6 of the Reveal, the facilitator holds both together.	<i>Is the Commitment Card a deeper version of what they wrote in Ex.1, or has the game changed what they think needs changing?</i>

PART 6 — HOW EX.1 READS IN THE REVEAL

In the I AGREE Reveal, the Ex.1 Post-it is not read first. It is held in reserve until Beat 5 or Beat 6, when the facilitator has the complete Wall in view. At that point it functions as the control baseline: the thing this participant said they were willing to change before the game had asked them anything.

The closing question of the Reveal:

"Look at your Post-it from Exercise 1. Look at your Commitment Card from Exercise 5. Is the change you committed to the same change you sensed at the beginning? Is it deeper? Or is it something else entirely?"

This question is addressed to the participant alone. It is not shared. It is not discussed. It is the final act of comparison between the opening bet and the game that followed.

TIMING SUMMARY

PHASE	TIME
Set up + secret choice	~2 min
Phase 1 — Expansion	~1 min
Phase 2 — Contraction	~30 sec
Debrief	~3 min
Post-it writing + Wall	~3 min
TOTAL	~10 min