

## **Activity: Silent Engagement**

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**Time:** 10 Minutes

**Purpose:** To provide a fun and creative approach for getting a team or group into the mindset of a session dealing with creativity, creative thinking, interpersonal communication, customer service.

**Objectives:** By participating in this activity, attendees will:

- Get to know one another better;
- Become actively involved in the session;
- Learn information about others in the room.

**Process:**

- Prior to the session starting, create slides, transparencies or flip chart pages with the following questions on them. The appropriate media format will be determined by the size of the group. Color and humorous graphic images should be used to enhance the text and to add a bit more levity while attracting attention.

What is your name?

Why are you here?

What one thing do you most want to learn today?

What are you thinking at this point?

- When time to start the session comes, either have someone else introduce you and you enter from behind learners, or enter from behind them using some form of noise or attention getter (e.g. train whistle, coaches whistle, bike horn, hand clappers or whatever to draw attention to yourself). You should also be wearing some outlandish prop (e.g. Groucho Marks nose and glasses, rubber animal nose, Cheese Head top hat and bowtie, trick nail through the head).
- Do not say a word as you proceed to the front of the room, smile and wave and proceed to turn on the projector or turn the flip chart to display the first prepared question. Turn, smile and gesture to someone in the front row and then gesture to the question to indicate that they should answer (e.g. What is your name?).
- Randomly select 4-5 other learners one at a time to have them introduce themselves in the same fashion, all the while smiling and remaining silent.

- Present the second, then third question until 3-5 minutes have passed at which time you should project the final questions (What are you thinking right now?) and with open arms gesture to the entire group to indicate they should respond.
- Typically at this point, someone will say something like, “This is different” or “This is strange.” They might also ask, “Are you ever going to speak?” At this point, you should remove your prop(s) and respond, “I was wondering if you wanted me to talk.” (If no one asks the question, remove the glasses and debrief the activity)
- Introduce yourself and then review the activity outcomes.

### Debrief:

- Spend 5 minutes reviewing the outcomes of the activity
- Ask learners the following questions:
  - What was I just able to accomplish without ever saying a word?
  - How can you likewise use of silence, gestures and other non-verbal communication to effectively interact with... (e.g. customers, co-workers, peers, friends/relatives, etc)?
- If the following points do not come out; point out:
  - You introduced fun, humor and a light-hearted approach to the learning environment
  - You created an atmosphere of expectation and piqued their interest
  - Without saying a word; you gained their attention
  - You intrigued and interested them
  - You got their active involvement
  - You gained information about your learners that could be useful later on in the program
  - You discovered which learners potentially might become actively involved and which ones might be reluctant
  - You tied into key program concepts
- Ask:
  - How might some of these outcomes be applied on the job or in other environments?

### Materials

- Flipchart paper, slides or transparencies (depending on format chosen).

- Needed:**
- Assortment of colored of markers (not needed if using slides);
  - Projector and screen (not needed if using a flip chart);
  - Groucho Marks Nose and Glasses, Animal nose, or other similar prop;
  - Noisemaker (e.g. whistle, bell, or clapper).

**Source:** Lucas, R. W., *Creative Learning: Activities and Games That REALLY Engage People*, John Wiley & Sons, San Francisco, CA. 2007.

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