

Revolver 1

We can do many things with games - we can learn, compete, connect, escape, and empathize (as only some verbs of many). One oft-forgotten role of games is the resolution of conflict. It is said that games are the whole of existence in utopia¹, but perhaps they are also a way to get there. Let us settle things with a game. Let us determine *what do we do now*.

You and the other person stand facing each other with your hands crossed in front of you. Clasp hands with the other person, and bring your foreheads together. Each person (player) puts into their mind the problem or question that they seek to resolve.

Now, start slowly rotating in one direction. Players alternate repeating **their formulation of the quandry**, back and forth until they are saying the same thing. This gets players onto the same page, and makes sure everyone is talking about the same thing.

Now change direction. Players alternate saying **what they think the other person wants**. When you feel that the other player is properly phrasing your desires, respond with "yes," otherwise continue trying to find what the other person wants. Continue until both players have said "yes." This is can be the most frustrating part of the game, but it's also the most important, so stick with it.

Change directions one last time. Each player proposes a **solution that satisfies both players' desires**. As in the

first round, players continue back and forth until they are saying the same thing. Once both players are on the same page, stop.

Throughout this process, if at any point things get too frustrating, heated, or just plain dizzy, stop rotating. For as long as you are not rotating, you are only allowed to make observations about the other person or repeat the last thing they said. Take deep breaths. When you're both ready to start rotating again, resume.

By the end of this third rotation, you will have come to a solution, but we still have to check if it's the right solution. Take a step back and look up at each other. Each asks the other, "is this okay," in turn. If it's not okay, that's okay! Not all conflicts can be resolved this way, and not all conflicts can be resolved in one sitting. The goal is not so much to resolve the conflict as it is to go through the process of resolution together.

Additionally, this game doesn't have to be used only for two-sided disputes. It can also be great fun for open-ended questions that don't present clear answers. Start with a quandry like "what do we do now," and see where it takes you. ■

A game by Ben Spalding.

New Games-esque black and
white picture of play here

1: Bernard Suits, *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia*, 1978