

## " THE CONSCIOUS MEETING"

Which role are you playing in your meeting?

Which role could you play?



Painting commissioned from Johan Duplessis, a South African Artist

Several years ago, I had the privilege of coaching in a dynamic research division within an organization. During this time, the director approached me with a fascinating challenge. "Alain," he said, "we have an exceptional external consultant who consistently improves the quality of our meetings. However, I can't quite put my finger on what makes him so effective. Could you coach him and uncover his secret? While I value his contributions, I don't want to rely on him indefinitely."

Motivated by the director's request, I eagerly embarked on coaching sessions with this remarkable consultant. It soon became apparent that he possessed an intimate understanding of the research team, recognizing their individual strengths and weaknesses. Astutely assessing the meeting's agenda and the unique dynamics of its participants, he consciously adopted various roles that would optimize the collective outcome. Like a skilled chameleon, he effortlessly transitioned from being a leader to a provocateur, an entertainer to a creative thinker, and even a timekeeper when needed.

Inspired by this consultant's extraordinary talent, I invite you to embrace a similar level of consciousness in your own role within the meeting. As we gather, I encourage you to select the role that aligns best with the objectives at hand and the collective value we seek to achieve. Just as our consultant brought forth maximum value through deliberate role selection, let us infuse our meetings with passion, empathy, and a genuine desire to drive positive outcomes.

Together, let us model this exceptional ability to adapt and contribute meaningfully, ensuring that our meetings become vibrant spaces where collaboration flourishes, ideas flow freely, and our shared goals are passionately pursued.

### Here are the typical roles/attitude that people play in meetings:

**Hippopotamus:** Initially uninterested and inactive, often sleeping during the meeting. Assist in awakening their engagement by encouraging them to express their experiences through precise examples.

**Giraffe:** Exudes dignity and prefers to look at others from a higher vantage point. Avoid diminishing their stature in front of the group and embrace their objections. Respond by acknowledging their valid points, saying, "Yes, that is a good point, however..."

**Zebra:** Exhibits confidence, a balanced demeanour, and possesses extensive knowledge. Encourage their participation by utilizing their expertise through open-ended questions.

**Monkey:** Appears nervous and seeks validation by showcasing their knowledge. May sometimes come across as overconfident. To counter unreasonable ideas, leverage the collective input of the group using the mirror technique, reflecting their ideas back to the group or the zebra.

**Fox:** Constantly poses questions, often cunning and quick-witted. Counter their questioning style by utilizing the mirror technique, redirecting their inquiries back to the group.

**Frog:** Has a tendency to talk at length without conveying much substance. To maintain focus, tactfully limit their speaking time and interject when necessary.

**Impala:** Exhibits shyness and lacks confidence within the group. Boost their self-assurance by asking them easy questions and highlighting their ideas to generate interest from the rest of the participants.

**Porcupine:** Presents challenges with their difficult temperament, frequently complaining, and disregarding the group's needs. Encourage their involvement by tapping into their experience or knowledge. Leverage their arrogance or ambition to motivate their participation.

**Wild dog:** Exhibits aggression, constantly looking for confrontations. Stay composed and avoid being drawn into their territory. Engage them through questioning and rephrasing their statements to encourage more constructive dialogue.



I help successful people to become even more successful...effortlessly!  
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