



Reviewing with Playing Cards and Playing with Reviewing Cards

The cards can be arranged in sequences to create models to guide learning from experience. Let me first introduce what each of the five cards represent.



The **Joker** is the blank or wild card that can mean anything you want it to. The Joker is here for a serious reason. The Joker reminds us not to mistake the model for reality. Models are not reality. Models simplify reality. Every way of seeing is also a way of not seeing. The Joker allows exceptions and the freedom to experiment.



The **Diamond** represents the experience as it first appears: a mixture of facts and impressions. *It's sparkle catches our attention.* What do we first notice, perceive or assume about it? *It has many sides.* What does it look like from other perspectives? How do others see it? *The diamond is a valuable resource.* How can we use it well?



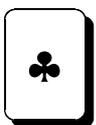
The **Heart** also represents the experience - how it felt and how it seemed. What emotions and intuitions are found within the experience? What was it like? Did it remind you of another experience? How was it similar/different? How intense, new, special, surprising, interesting, frustrating, disturbing, inspiring, comforting was it?



The **red cards** (diamonds and hearts) together represent the story of the experience. This story describes the version of events from which learning and development will be derived through further reflection and analysis. The red cards flesh out the story. This is already a useful process, but you can take it further...



The **Spade** digs deeper. It involves examining the story. Questions typically seek reasons, explanations, judgements and conclusions. *Why did it turn out like that? Why did you not ...? What made you feel that way? What made you think that? How did we manage that? What can we learn from this? What are we finding out?*



The **Club** represents future growth - in many possible directions. These might include action plans, learning plans, predictions, considering possibilities, describing choices, making decisions, practising, testing, rehearsing, imagining and even dreaming. *How can we best take our learning into the future?*

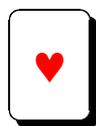


The **black cards** (spades and clubs) together represent the various ways in which people can learn from their experiences and take their learning forwards. The red cards represent the story, the black cards represent learning, change and growth. Black cards are about the story's significance and making a difference.

The basic sequence (in the order described above)



Facts



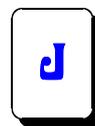
Feelings



Findings



Futures



The joker can be played at any time.



Clearing the air

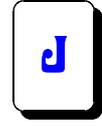
Feelings may be so strong at the start of a review that they need immediate attention. One kind of attention is to 'clear the air' by asking people to express their feelings. Simply taking a break may be the wisest path. Or sensitive facilitation may be the best course of action (see next).



After clearing the air,
the basic sequence



The joker can be
played at any time:



Starting with Feelings

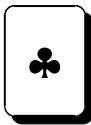
However, expression of these strong feelings may not be a hindrance at all. This may be precisely what you are trying to encourage. You start where the learner is at (emotionally), bring out the story (mixing hearts and diamonds together) and then continue with the basic sequence.



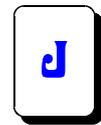
and



then



The joker can be
played at any time:



Starting with Spades

There are some situations where there is not much to be gained by going over the story (the facts and the feelings) before starting a review. These might include:

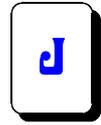
1. If the activity to be reviewed was quite short, has just finished and is easily recalled.
2. When the review topic is impersonal or technical and is about 'things out there' rather than about the human aspects of what happened.
3. When participants have already begun the reviewing process informally by noticing and sharing experiences during the event. Participants may even have been anticipating potential review issues and are ready to start with these issues.
4. When following an agenda of spades questions, the question may start the process and the response to the question draws in responses from the red zone.
5. When participants are most skilled and comfortable in the spades zone, there is an argument for starting and even finishing with spades.
6. When the facilitator has already intervened during the activity with quick reviews that encourage people to notice what is happening or to express their feelings.
7. When observers have been watching an activity, participants may initiate and control feedback from observers by asking questions from the spades zone.



or

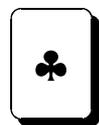


The joker can be
played at any time:

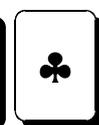


Starting with the Future

This is rarely the best starting point given that the general idea is to learn from experience and not to keep looking at the future. But where there are problems with motivation, engagement or direction, it can be helpful to start by clarifying the expected purpose and destination of the review.



then



The joker can be
played at any time:

