

There are many studies out about how to categorize people in group interactions. The four categories I will describe come from the work of Dr. David Kantor of the Kantor Family Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, author of *Inside the Family*. * These categories work in any group situation. They define how we interrelate with each other not only at meetings but also within the family. As you read them, I'm sure you'll recognize every character type and match it to folks who know. See if you can also find and define *yourself* as I suggest some skills for handling them.

Players in a Group Interaction

Mover

This is the one in the group who usually initiates action. He/she defines where you're heading and suggests and develops ideas for how to get there. Movers are usually called "natural leaders." They're seen as strong, sure-footed, self-confident. They are very creative, but are often intolerant of alternative ideas, seeing their own ideas as the *only* way. They enjoy power and being in charge but also need and want approval and agreement.

Their value at a meeting is obvious. Giving ideas and the energy to back them up is a most useful and constructive trait. Notice their needs, though, for approval and agreement.

Suggestions: The challenge to the group leader is to harness the mover to pull ahead and be creative, affirming his/her contribution, but to also leave room for others in the group to catch up or to vary the plan he/she initiates. The meeting leader must anticipate the mover and what he/she usually does and set a course within which the mover can function but not dominate the meeting. Be aware that meeting leaders can themselves often be movers and must be aware of their own tendency to pre-empt others' participation . . .

Opposer

This person is a reactor and countermover, in response to the mover's action. Not visible in the initiator role, the opposer moves into gear to push *against* whatever has been put on the table. He/she creates a challenge to the mover by blocking the mover's direction or intended destination. Opposers want others to declare themselves on their side.

* *Inside the Family* (Jossey Bass, 1975).