

Then the opposer can become the mover. Like movers, opposers are powerful, too. They can redefine the action established by the mover; to halt or redirect what the mover begins.

Opposers get their attention and consequent sense of importance by the very act of taking a contra stance. They say they don't care about overt approval; they care about the "facts" and the "truth." In this process they can also hurt feelings and make enemies, not only of the people they thwart but of the group itself. Because they are perceived as interrupters not only of one person but of forward progress, groups can often resent opposers.

Suggestions: Although this type sounds like a negative contributor, and the tendency can develop to want to ignore them or put their objections down, opposers actually serve some very useful functions. As those who test ideas and scrutinize data to find flaws, meeting leaders and others can and should use them as a stimulus for further thought and analysis of a mover's idea. By taking the *useful* critique from their seemingly negative message, opposers can also, if well directed by the leader of the group, redirect and even stimulate more ideas or improvements on the original mover's suggestion.

Ideally, opposers should be motivated to dissent and critique constructively, thus entering into a dialogue with the mover to develop better strategies jointly, rather than simply to oppose.

Meeting leaders should also check up on their own tendency to be opposers. Playing the devil's advocate, finding fault, and critiquing the suggestions of others too often, the leader can lose his/her role as a facilitator who moves the action along.

Follower

This person is a familiar in any group: he/she is the one who "goes along." The follower's role is to support someone; in a group meeting, it's the mover or the opposer. Followers "sign on" to someone else's idea, and as long as they stay in this position, they seldom initiate any ideas of their own. Followers are not necessarily uncreative people. They may simply have greater needs to play it safe, to keep a lower profile, or to wait until they see the general tenor of the group as a whole before they take an overt stand.

They do have interesting kinds of power, though. They can empower others by granting them support and creating a constituency. Everyone wants the follower on his side because we all need supporters and troops to back us when we go out on a limb. Followers can retain their power