

# Workbook: Step-by-Step with Drama Theory

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This Workbook contains step-by-step guidance to enable you to work out, using the framework of drama theory, the dilemmas facing those involved in a specific interaction and to think in an organised way about the ways that they might change things as a result.

Each section will ask you to focus on one aspect of the situation, and through a sequence of stages you will reach a rounded understanding of the tensions experienced by the participants.

Some stages involve quite detailed work requiring systematic progress through a number of distinct steps: do complete these carefully, checking your logic; otherwise you may reach wrong conclusions—or, more likely, overlook important features.

You'll realise quite quickly that you have to be thinking about the situation at a specific point in time to be able to do this well. That's all to the good, as the analysis you will be carrying out has to be anchored to a particular point in the development of the situation: the whole point, after all, is to explore how things might change from that state through the choices that those involved might make.

The other thing you'll recognise is that you have to be pretty parsimonious in creating your picture of what is going on: otherwise the complexity will swamp you and you won't ever reach any useful conclusions. Don't worry that you'll therefore be over-simplifying affairs to the point where your findings lose practical relevance. Remember that most of the time, while recognising the complexity of everyday life, we still have to simplify in this way: indeed we usually work with quite basic 'models' of the world for this very reason.

Finally, don't treat this as a strictly linear process. As you work through the various stages you may realise that you've overlooked something important at an earlier point. In this case return and revise your analysis, stepping through it again from that point onwards. These iterations are

inevitable as your understanding of the key aspects of the situation you're looking at gradually clarifies.

This Workbook contains a running example, introduced below, to give you an idea of how you might carry out the successive stages of analysis. This is intended merely as a guide, and you should not expect to reach similar findings to those given in this example.

*The example is set within a Sales Unit of a strongly customer-orientated service company. The Unit is one of four, each headed by a Sales Manager who reports to the company's Sales Director. Within the Unit there are three Team Leaders who between them take responsibility for the work undertaken by the twenty sales staff. The Sales Manager with whom we are concerned here is a recent recruit to the company and has brought with her an approach to her work and expectations of others that do not sit easily with the prevailing culture, which may best be described as 'transactional' (i.e., fair pay for fair work and little interest in career development). She by contrast is ambitious and dedicated, and sees her new role as a stepping stone to greater managerial responsibilities. Our Sales Manager's attitude often conflicts with the staff and the team leaders, who can't see the need to fuss so much about the customers. For her part the Sales Manager acknowledges the lack of motivation of the staff and treats them with a certain indifference, assuming that they have to be firmly directed to deliver properly. This difference of view seems to be creating an uncomfortable working atmosphere, particularly for the team leaders, who used to be self-managed before her arrival. The impact of all this upon service quality is not very clear; each party seems to think that their way will deliver better results.*

## CHARACTERS

Begin by thinking about who is involved in the situation. These 'characters' may be individuals, groups, teams or organisations of any size and complexity.

It's often helpful to start with quite a long list and then to whittle this down, as there is less chance then of overlooking anyone. Remember, a specific individual or team may appear any number of times, nested within other groupings. On the other hand, sometimes a number of parties may be considered together, effectively comprising a single group.

*The Sales Unit which the story is about comprises the Manager, three Team Leaders and twenty staff. Potentially we could identify each individual as a character in the interaction because each will have a different view of the situation. However, not only would this be unmanageable but it is unnecessary.*

*As presently understood—and remember that we can always revise our summary—the key divisions seem to be between the Manager, Team Leaders and Staff. An alternative schema based on the relationship between the Manager and the three Sales Teams (each comprising its manager and staff) isn't justified by the story so far told: the Team Leaders seem to share a collective dislike of the Manager and are not orchestrating different responses by their teams to her managerial style.*

*However it may be best to introduce a further simplification for our first model. The discord appears to be between the Manager and her Team Leaders with the staff taking a detached stance. So our first attempt at capturing this situation will just include these two characters. We'll call them 'Manager' and 'Team Leaders'.*

**Think about your own situation and make a list of characters. Then decide which of these you will include in the initial focus for your work.**

## OPTIONS

We look specifically at what characters could do. If they cannot do anything they aren't part of the interaction. We're interested here in actions that are 'communicated common knowledge' (CCK)—that is things that each knows that the other knows, that the other knows, etc. that they might do. These actions are often referred to as 'options' since there is the possibility that they might or might not be carried out. Sometimes we only realise the options a character has by thinking about the situation from someone else's point of view, so be ready to add in further options later on as your understanding of the situation develops. On the other hand we can also find that characters whom we thought of initially as being active actually don't seem to have any immediate options. Finally, be careful at this point to whom you attribute options: **it is easy to mis-state the 'ownership' of an action!**

*The Manager would like to manage her Unit: and direct it quite forcefully! The Team Leaders would like the 'old days' to return when they self-managed. What can the manager do? Clearly she has a choice of whether to 'direct the Unit' or to take a more laid-back approach. However this also implicitly includes the requirement that the Team Leaders acquiesce in this style of leadership: and they may decline to do so. They clearly don't have the authority to choose self-management but by being awkward and by neglecting or being slow to carry out the Manager's instructions they can certainly limit her effectiveness. This exposes the decisions facing each character:*

- \* The Manager has the option to 'direct the Unit' (or not)
- \* The Team Leaders have the option to 'exercise autonomy' (or not).

*Notice that we still don't feel inclined to add the Staff to the picture we are building up here. They haven't indicated, for example, any intention to refuse to work in new ways. So our earlier decision not to include them is still justifiable.*

**Now set down the Options for the characters in your own situation.**

## POSITIONS

In communications with others, characters will make proposals about the options available in the situation. These take the form of demands (about other's options) or commitments (about their own options) concerning the adoption or rejection of each option. However a character may not make a proposal about every option that is presently live.

A character's POSITION is its 'solution' to the situation and is a set of proposals about each live option (including the possibility of saying nothing about any one or more of them). In communicating its Position a character states what it demands from others and what it proposes to do itself if they meet its demands. A character's Position may not be what it would most like of course (it may need to be less idealistic); nor are we saying that it cannot be deceitful.

*The Manager's Position is that the Team Leaders do what she says (i.e., she directs and they don't exercise autonomy).*

*The Team Leaders in contrast want to be permitted to exercise autonomy (i.e., the Manager leaves them alone and isn't directive). However they may only express the wish that the Manager isn't directive.*

**Set down the Positions for your characters now.**

## OPTIONS BOARD

The Options Board is a tabular summary of an interaction and is especially good at showing the differences between the various possible outcomes of a situation. Its rows name the characters involved and the things that they could do (their options) while its columns show the alternative outcomes. We begin the board by setting down the various characters' Positions.

Options are always about potential actions available to characters, so it is best to express them as statements of action in the table (e.g., 'devolve responsibility' rather than 'devolution'). When the 'opposite' of an action is not ambiguous it is helpful to state its contrast (e.g., 'devolve responsibility

... centralise decision-making' since an alternative contrast might have been 'share responsibility': the ellipsis ('...') reads 'as opposed to').

<i>The Options Board so far is:</i>		
	<i>Manager's Position</i>	<i>Team Leaders' Position</i>
<i>Manager</i>		
<i>Direct the Unit</i>	<i>Direct the Unit</i>	<i>NOT Direct the Unit</i>
<i>Team Leaders</i>		
<i>Exercise autonomy</i>	<i>NOT Exercise autonomy</i>	<i>not set</i>

**Now draw the Options Board for your own chosen situation.**

## COMPATIBILITY

Two Positions are compatible if no option adopted in one is rejected in the other and characters whose Positions are compatible are said to be compatible characters. If all pairs of characters are compatible then an agreement is possible.

It is often easier to compare and contrast Positions if the cell entries in a table are not in text form but instead contain symbols indicating whether or not they correspond to an option being adopted or rejected. We shall use a tick to indicate that an option is adopted and a cross to indicate that it is rejected. If a character makes no proposal about an option then this is denoted by a tilde—in the corresponding cell.

<i>The compact Options Board is below. Clearly the Positions are not compatible.</i>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>
<i>Manager (M)</i>		
<i>Direct the Unit</i>	✓	✗
<i>Team Leaders (L)</i>		
<i>Exercise autonomy</i>	✗	–

**Now complete the Positions in your own compact Options Board.**

## INTENTIONS

A character's STATED INTENTIONS are things they tell others that *they* will do, given everyone's present Positions and Intentions. A character's Intentions may pose a threat to others (if they aren't consistent with other's Position(s)) or they may provide a basis for agreement (if they are). Characters can state intentions on each of their own live options, but they

may decide to say nothing about one or more of these (i.e., leave others uncertain of what they might do).

The Stated Intentions of all characters are brought together in a single column (conventionally the rightmost one) in the Options Board. Taken together they represent the future that would obtain if agreement is not reached.

<i>The enlarged Options Board is below.</i>			
	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>SI</i>
<i>Manager (M)</i>			
<i>Direct the Unit</i>	✓	✕	✓
<i>Team Leaders (L)</i>			
<i>Exercise autonomy</i>	✕	–	✓

Add the Stated Intentions to your Options Board.

DOUBTS

Some actions may be doubted by characters. These DOUBTED ACTIONS may be elements of other's Positions or Intentions:

A character may be sceptical as to whether another's Intention(s) will (or won't) be carried out [such doubts are current]

A character may not believe that if a particular Position were to be agreed that others would play their part in sustaining it [such doubts are clearly conditional]

Doubts are signified by question marks '?' in the Options Board.

*The Manager doubts the Team Leaders' resolve to 'exercise autonomy'. Note that they are unlikely to have directly threatened this option but it is clear from their attitude that this sort of bloody-minded resistance is effectively what they'll do if the Manager tries to push them around. So they know that she knows that they will act this way.*

<i>The Options Board now looks like this:</i>			
	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>SI</i>
<i>Manager (M)</i>			
<i>Direct the Unit</i>	✓	✕	✓
<i>Team Leaders (L)</i>			
<i>Exercise autonomy</i>	✕	–	✓ ?

**Now insert question marks to indicate those actions that are doubted in your Board.**

## CONFLICT POINT?

Having now completed the Options Board—every character's 'stance' has been set down—we are able to determine whether the situation represents a Conflict Point or a Co-operation Point. This is easily done by comparing in turn the SI column with each character's Position. As we look at each pair of columns, we must see if there are any instances where the intended actions contradict (i.e., there is a tick in one column and a cross in the other: ignore those comparisons where a tilde shows that the action is left open). As soon as we come across any such contradiction we know that we are dealing with a case where the SI column represents a disagreement: here we shall have to look for Rejection and Persuasion Dilemmas. If we find none then the SI represents an Agreement: however there may still be Trust Dilemmas.

<i>Here is the Board for our example:</i>			
	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>SI</i>
<i>Manager (M)</i>			
<i>Direct the Unit</i>	✓	✕	✓
<i>Team Leaders (L)</i>			
<i>Exercise autonomy</i>	✕	–	✓?

*Comparing the SI column with the Manager's Position ('M'), we can readily see a contradiction over the team leaders' action to exercise authority, so we know at once that the SI represents a conflict point. Even if this were not the case the second comparison (between SI and L) would have given us a contradiction between the intended action by the manager to 'direct the Unit'. This means we must now look for the dilemmas of confrontation [see following pages]: otherwise we would skip forward to look for the dilemmas of co-operation.*

**Check your own Options Board to see whether you are dealing with a disagreement or an agreement. If the former, go on to the next section: if the latter, skip to the section headed 'Agreement'.**

## DISAGREEMENT

The process of checking for the dilemmas arising from a disagreement is rather drawn-out. Please have the patience to work through it meticulously, or you may overlook important issues.

First we shall look for those dilemmas that arise because of the characters’ Stated Intentions (SIs). These are of two sorts: first a character may have SIs about which other characters are sceptical; second there may be SIs about which a character is clearly determined; both of these circumstances give rise to distinct dilemmas as we shall now see.

We check for dilemmas by looking at each option in turn (i.e., by looking at one row in the table after another). As soon as we find a dilemma for a character we note it in that row and in a special column for that character.

Let’s begin by looking for the dilemmas that arise because characters are sceptical about others’ Stated Intentions. Work down the table row-by-row checking each option. To make it easier to refer to the characters involved call the character having the option at which we are looking its ‘Owner’. We are looking just now for those instances where there is doubt about a SI: we find these by looking for question marks in the SI column. When, going down the rows, we encounter a doubt indicated in the SI column we pause and ask a question: ‘Do any of those who doubt this SI hold a different Position on this option from the Owner?’ We answer our question by checking across the row to see the stance taken on the option by each of the characters whose doubt the question mark signified. If the answer is ‘yes’ then the Owner has a so-called Rejection Dilemma in Threat Mode (denoted ‘R(t)’) with the doubting character. This is because the Owner’s SI is not believed by the doubter and so the Owner finds it impossible convincingly to reject the doubter’s Position. Once we find a dilemma like this we make a note of it in the extended table and continue our search for other dilemmas first by scanning across the other characters in this row, and then working on down the other rows. There may be many R(t) dilemmas in a Board.

Check the Board for our example:					
	M	L	SI	m	l
Manager (M)					
Direct the Unit	✓	✗	✓		
Team Leaders (L)					
Exercise autonomy	✗	–	✓ ?		R(t)m

The first (and only) doubt in the SI column is over the Team Leaders’ option ‘Exercise autonomy’; and the doubt is held by the Manager. Does the Manager have a different proposal on this option? Looking across the row we see that she does. This means that the Team Leaders face a Rejection Dilemma (threat mode) with the Manager over the option. I have added two more columns in which to note any dilemmas discovered, and have noted this one there. This is the only such dilemma in the Board.



### Now check your own Options Board for R(t) dilemmas.

Now we shall look for the dilemmas that arise because characters are sure about others' Stated Intentions. Once again we must check for these by looking at each option in turn, working steadily down the table row-by-row checking each option. As before we call the character having the option at which we are looking its 'Owner'. This time we ask whether the Owner holds the same Position as its SI on this Option. This requires a straightforward comparison of the two cells. If the two are identical (and assuming that the proposals are not left open) then those other characters who don't doubt the Owner's Stated Intention face a Persuasion Dilemma in Threat Mode (denoted 'P(t)') with the Owner. This is because the Owner's SI is wholly credible to them and so they have no hope of persuading the Owner to support their Position. Such dilemmas—and there may be several of them—when identified in the Board should be noted as before.

<i>Check the Board for our example:</i>					
	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>SI</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>l</i>
<i>Manager (M)</i>					
<i>Direct the Unit</i>	✓	✗	✓		<i>P(t)m</i>
<i>Team Leaders (L)</i>					
<i>Exercise autonomy</i>	✗	–	✓ ?		<i>R(t)m</i>

There is no doubt about the Manager's intention to 'Direct the Unit' and this also corresponds to her position on this option. It also differs from the Position of the Team Leaders, so they face a Persuasion Dilemma (threat mode) with the Manager over this option. However, moving on to the next option row, the Team Leaders' undeclared Position on their option to 'Exercise autonomy' means that there can be no dilemma for anyone here. Recall that setting this option open was a considered choice made earlier, since I argued that it would be implausible for the Team Leaders openly to declare such a confrontational view: however, it seems perfectly reasonable that this should be their Stated Intention; an intention that is mutually understood, despite not being explicitly stated. However, in this instance, even if the Team Leaders' proposal on this option had been 'Exercise Autonomy' the doubt recorded in the SI column means that there would still not be a resulting Persuasion Dilemma here.

### Now look for P(t) dilemmas in your own Options Board.

There are further dilemmas which may be present for which we must now check. These arise because of doubts that appear in the Position columns. I'm afraid that we must check each Position column in turn through the process which I am about to describe. This may take some time if there are many characters, but usually Options Boards include only two or

three, or at most four characters so the process isn't totally unmanageable. If it still feels like a huge chore, then be reassured that there are software tools under development to assist in this process. Nevertheless it is probably a good idea to work through at least one small example by hand first so that you can understand what the software is doing.

What we do next is very similar to the sequence of steps we used when testing against the SI column. For ease of presentation we shall call the character whose Position we are currently examining, the 'Holder'. As before we shall need to check each option in turn by working our way steadily down the rows of the Options Board.

We'll begin by looking for the dilemmas that arise because characters are doubtful about other's Positions: that is, doubtful as to whether these actions would be carried out. The procedure is to go down the Holder's Position column, looking for those instances where a doubt has been marked. When we come across a question mark, we stop and ask: 'Do any of the doubters hold a different Position from the Holder on this option?'. As earlier, we answer this query by checking across the row to see the stance taken on the option by each of the characters whose doubt the question mark signified. If the answer is 'yes' then the Holder has a so-called Rejection Dilemma in Position Mode (denoted 'R(p)') with the doubting character. This is because the Holder's Position does not seem credible to the doubter(s) and so the Holder will find it impossible to argue against the Position held by the doubter(s). R(p) dilemmas, once uncovered are noted in the Options Board.

<i>Return to the Board for our example:</i>					
	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>SI</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>l</i>
<i>Manager (M)</i>					
<i>Direct the Unit</i>	✓	✗	✓		<i>P(t)m</i>
<i>Team Leaders (L)</i>					
<i>Exercise autonomy</i>	✗	–	✓ ?		<i>R(t)m</i>

*Beginning with the Manager's Position (i.e., treating the manager as 'Holder') we scan down for doubts—there are none. This means we will not find any R(p) dilemmas generated. Nor are there doubts about proposals in the Team Leader's Position so no R(p) dilemmas can arise there. This step of the analysis leaves the Options Board unaltered for this example.*

**Check your own Options Board for R(p) dilemmas. More than likely you will find some.**

We now move on to consider any dilemmas that might arise because characters are not unsure about other's Positions: that is, they have no doubt that some constituent proposals would be carried out. This time

we work down the Holder's Position column, looking for those instances where no doubt has been marked for those options that it controls (i.e., in those rows where the Holder is the Owner). When this is the case we make a comparison with the Holder's Stated Intention on this option. If there is no difference (i.e., the Holder has the same SI and Position on this option) then those other characters who don't doubt the SI and whose Position differs have a Persuasion Dilemma in Position Mode (denoted 'P(p)') with the Holder. This is because the Holder's SI is believable; the doubter(s) cannot Persuade the Holder to retract.

<i>Return for a further time to the Board for our example:</i>					
	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>SI</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>l</i>
<b>Manager (M)</b>					
Direct the Unit	✓	✗	✓		P(t)m, P(p)m
<b>Team Leaders (L)</b>					
Exercise autonomy	✗	–	✓ ?		R(t)m

*Beginning with the Manager's Position (i.e., treating the manager as 'Holder') we see at once that there are no doubts, so we may be about to disclose some P(p) dilemmas. The first option we encounter is the Manager's 'Direct the Unit' on which her Position and her Stated Intention are identical: this points to a P(p) dilemma for the Team Leaders as their proposal on this option is different. There is no need to look at the remainder of this column as the options are under other's control. Moving now to the Team Leaders' Position, we see an absence of question marks. The option under their control ('Exercise autonomy') is not set so it could coincide with their Stated Intention. However even if it were (i.e., if 'Exercise autonomy' was selected in the Team Leaders' Position) it would certainly be doubted, as it is in the SI column. This means that it would not therefore trigger a P(p) dilemma for the Manager, despite the latter making a contrasting proposal on this option. The one additional dilemma we have exposed appears in the table.*

**Now look at your own Options Board to see if there are any P(p) dilemmas.**

## IMPLICATIONS OF CONFLICT

Having established that a situation is a Conflict Point in the relationship between characters, and having surfaced the dilemmas that they face, the next step is to make use of these findings to explore the way that things might develop. Sometimes this is undertaken from a partisan viewpoint, wherein one character wishes to shape the direction in which matters evolve: this is likely to require addressing (so as to eliminate) its own dilemmas

and either leaving or possibly aggravating those faced by others. At other times the exploration is purely investigative and the analyst is simply trying to get an idea of the various ways in which a situation might develop. In either case the interpretation and management of dilemmas is key.

<i>Here is the completed Options Board for our example:</i>					
	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>SI</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>l</i>
<i>Manager (M)</i>					
<i>Direct the Unit</i>	✓	✕	✓		<i>P(t)m, P(p)m</i>
<i>Team Leaders (L)</i>					
<i>Exercise autonomy</i>	✕	–	✓ ?		<i>R(t)m</i>

*There are no dilemmas for the Manager but there are three facing the Team Leaders. Let's set these down:*

*P(t) Dilemma with the Manager because they are sure that she will try to Direct the Unit.*

*P(p) Dilemma with the Manager because they can see no way of persuading her to consider their proposal to NOT Direct the Unit.*

*R(t) Dilemma with the Manager because she doubts their threat to Exercise autonomy and so their rejection of her preference that they do not do so is hollow.*

*Clearly the effect of these dilemmas will be to make the Team Leaders feel somewhat impotent. By contrast the situation for the Manager may not be entirely satisfactory but it causes her no immediate problems.*

**Review the dilemmas, character-by-character in your Options Board.**

**HANDLING DILEMMAS**

**Persuasion Dilemmas**

Since Persuasion Dilemmas arise when the Owner despairs of getting another character to support its Position (because the other character has either declared in no uncertain terms that it will do something contrary, or it has simply refused to be drawn into making any commitment of support) in broad terms, they may be eliminated by the Owner either ‘giving in’ or ‘contesting’ the circumstances. The former could be done by the Owner abandoning its own Position, a move it would make in a spirit of depressed resignation, or even by shifting to the other party’s view (which would demand a much more positive attitude in order to convince the other of its change of heart). The latter could be done by ratcheting up for the other character the costs of not supporting Owner’s Position (e.g., by introducing

more punitive Stated Intentions) or by attempting to induce the other character to support Owner's Position (e.g., by increasing the benefits of co-operating in implementing Owner's solution). However in this latter case where Owner retains its Position, the success of such measures depends upon the response of the other character to Owner's threats or proposals, and these responses are necessarily a matter of speculation.

## Rejection Dilemmas

Rejection Dilemmas arise when the Owner cannot convince another character that it is in earnest in its resolve to carry out proposals that conflict with the other's Position (i.e., the other character doesn't believe Owner's assertion that it will carry out a contrary action). To eliminate its dilemma Owner may pursue any of three possible routes: it may simply confirm the other character's doubts; it may retreat from its intention; or it may challenge the other character, thereby potentially removing its doubts. Looking at these options in more detail: the first means Owner adopting as its Stated Intention the other character's Position (it would could do this in a mood of despair); the second route means Owner refusing to commit to the other character's Position (this will give the other character a Persuasion Dilemma); while the third option is a confrontational one with Owner either making it easier for itself to implement its Stated Intention or making it dearer for the other party to maintain its Position (the eventual success of this strategy naturally depends on how the other character responds).

You will have noticed that there is one way for a character facing both Persuasion and Rejection Dilemmas to eliminate them and that is by shifting to support the other character's Position. Note that this is not necessarily a universal panacea, since in situations involving more than two characters aligning with one may bring a character into confrontation with another. Furthermore even if such a shift is made, then it must also be made believable: the newly compliant party must convince its new ally that it is sincere in its new Position.

<i>Look again at the Options Board for our example:</i>					
	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>SI</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>l</i>
<i>Manager (M)</i>					
<i>Direct the Unit</i>	✓	✗	✓		<i>P(t)m, P(p)m</i>
<i>Team Leaders (L)</i>					
<i>Exercise autonomy</i>	✗	–	✓ ?		<i>R(t)m</i>

*The Team Leaders have decisions to make about how they handle each of their three dilemmas. There is no ‘right answer’ about what they should do.*

*As noted above they could simply ‘give in’ to the Manager (which they would do with heavy hearts, especially after having expended some energy in arguing their contrary case). However, more probably they would, initially at least, seek an outcome that paid some attention to their own desires.*

*An alternative way forward for the Team Leaders would be to attempt to discourage the Manager from exercising close direction: for instance by convincing her that they are capable and competent to manage their teams effectively (this would help with the Persuasion Dilemmas). At the same time they might wish to give a glimpse of their steely resolve to resist any attempt to remove their historical autonomy (to remove the Rejection Dilemma).*

*The two approaches so far noted (effectively ‘concede’ and ‘affirm’), both involve changes in the existing Options Board. But there are more substantial alternatives. The Team Leaders—so Drama Theory would have us recognise—might, under the pressure of emotion at the ‘moment of truth’ could look ‘outside the box’ and invent some totally new option or engineer a change in the cast list. Let us suppose that this is precisely what they did here. Privately they decide to complain about their predicament to the Sales Director, and a meeting is arranged and held on a day when the Manager is away on a training course.*

**Consider ways of handing the dilemmas exposed by your Options Board. Do this in turn for each of the characters involved.**

*Taking the step of complaining to the Sales Director has no direct effect on the Team Leaders’ interaction with the Manager: it is not Communicated Common Knowledge within the situation we have represented. However, that is not to say that it is ineffective—it may be a very potent action, drawing the Sales Director into the frame and potentially leading to a reprimand for the Manager for her insensitive management of the team. It could result in a new Options Board like that below:*

	<i>L</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SI</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>d</i>
<i>Team Leaders (L)</i>					
<i>Complain</i>	✓	✗	✓		<i>P(p)l</i>
<i>Sales Director (D)</i>					
<i>Question Manager’s style</i>	✓	✗	✗	<i>P(p)d</i>	

*The Board above shows a ‘classic’ standoff with the Team leaders adamant that their complaint should lead to a reprimand for the Manager, while the Sales Director wants to stay out of this low-level dispute. Both characters here have a Persuasion Dilemma because of the other’s Position [check this for yourself]. If though the Team Leaders press their case harder and with such determination that they see the Director begin to waver, then the Board changes perhaps first to:*

	<i>L</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SI</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>d</i>
<b>Team Leaders (L)</b>					
Complain	✓	✗	✓		<i>P(p)l</i>
<b>Sales Director (D)</b>					
Question Manager's style	✓	✗ ?	✗		<i>R(p)l</i>

Now the Director has a *R(p)* dilemma (the Team Leaders doubt that he will flout their Position) and the Team Leaders have none. Let's suppose that he reluctantly accedes to their request (we'll return to the question of trust a little later on). Then this would create a situation—making what I think are some reasonable assumptions—represented by the new Options Board below, including all three characters:

	<i>M</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SI</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>d</i>
<b>Manager</b>							
Direct the Unit	✓ ?	✗	✓ ?	✓ ?	<i>R(t)l, R(p)l</i>		
<b>Team Leaders (L)</b>							
Exercise autonomy	✗	✓	✗	✓	<i>P(p)l</i>		<i>P(p)l</i>
<b>Sales Director (D)</b>							
Question Manager's style	✗	✓	✓	✓	<i>P(p)d</i>		

The situation has been transformed from that before the Team Leaders took their concerns to the Director and gives the Manager some serious dilemmas of her own. Of course the Team Leaders expect the Director to support their Manager's authority but they may now be hopeful that she adopts a less abrasive style. I have assumed that their desire to exercise autonomy is less equivocal than before (buoyed up by the success they have had in involving the Director).

Here the pressure is much more obviously upon the Manager. In turn she will seek to defuse the dilemmas she faces; this she may do in a more or less confrontational way. We cannot guess what direction she might take, but as with the development so far, she is as likely to alter the situation by communicating intentions to the other characters as by actually doing something.

Drama theory enables us to track through a succession of strategic moves that create a pathway into the future. At any point we can explore any number of potential pathways, seeing what each offers and understanding what would be involved in an attempt to force the 'story' down one path rather than another.