

OBLIQUE STRATEGIES

Over one hundred worthwhile dilemmas

by Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt

These cards can be used as a pack (a set of possibilities being continuously reviewed in the mind) or by drawing a single card from the shuffled pack when a dilemma occurs in a working situation. In this case, the card is trusted even if its appropriateness is quite unclear. They are not final, as new ideas will present themselves, and others will become self-evident.

Accept advice

Is there something missing?

Accretion

Instead of changing it, change what's
around it

A line has two sides

Just carry on

Allow an easement

What would make this really
successful?

Pretend		Listen in total darkness, or in a very large room, very quietly
Consider transitions		Listen to the quiet voice
Ask people to work against their better judgement		Look at a very small object, look at its centre
Ask your body		Look at the order in which you do things
Assemble some of the instruments in a group and treat the group		Look closely at the most embarrassing details and amplify them

Balance the consistency principle with the inconsistency principle		Lowest common denominator
Be dirty		Make a blank valuable by putting it in an exquisite frame
Breathe more deeply		Make an exhaustive list of everything you might do and do the last thing on the list
Bridges -build -burn		Make a sudden, destructive unpredictable action; incorporate
Save a few steps. What else can you do?		Mechanicalize something idiosyncratic

What are you doing? What do you do best

Mute and continue

Change nothing and continue with immaculate consistency

Only one element of each kind

Work alone, then work in unusual pairs

(Organic) machinery

Cluster analysis

Overtly resist change

Consider different fading systems

Remove as much mystery as possible.
What's left?

Consult other sources -promising
-unpromising

Remember those quiet evenings

Convert a melodic element into a
rhythmic element

Remove ambiguities and convert to
specifics

Courage!

Remove specifics and convert to
ambiguities

Cut a vital connection

Repetition is a form of change

Decorate, decorate

Reverse

Define an area as `safe' and use it as an anchor		Short circuit (example: a man eating peas with the idea that they will improve his virility shovels them straight into his lap)
Destroy -nothing -the most important thing		Shut the door and listen from outside
Discard an axiom		Simple subtraction
Disconnect from desire		Remove the middle, extend the edges
Discover the recipes you are using and abandon them		Take a break

Distorting time		Take away the elements in order of apparent non-importance
Do nothing for as long as possible		Tape your mouth (given by Ritva Saarikko)
Don't be afraid of things because they're easy to do		The inconsistency principle
Don't be frightened of cliches		Pay attention to distractions
Don't be frightened to display your talents		Think of the radio

Don't break the silence

Tidy up

Don't stress one thing more than
another

Trust in the you of now

Do something boring

Turn it upside down

Do the washing up

Twist the spine

Do the words need changing?

Use an old idea

Do we need holes?

Use an unacceptable color

Emphasize differences

Use fewer notes

Emphasize repetitions

Use filters

Emphasize the flaws

Use « unqualified » people

Faced with a choice, do both

Water

List the qualities he has. Which ones do you like?		What are you really thinking about just now?
Fill every beat with something		Incorporate
Get your neck massaged		What is the reality of the situation?
Ghost echoes		What mistakes did you make last time?
Give the game away		What would your closest friend do?

Give way to your worst impulse

What wouldn't you do?

Go slowly all the way round the outside

Work at a different speed

Honor thy error as a hidden intention

You are an engineer

How would you have done it?

You can only make one dot at a time

Humanize something free of error

You don't have to be ashamed of using
your own ideas

Imagine the music as a moving chain or caterpillar		Intentions -credibility of -nobility of -humility of
Imagine the music as a set of disconnected events		Into the impossible
In finitesimal gradations		Abandon normal instruments
Is it finished?		

