

***The First 100 Hours:  
Phase 1 of a 6-Phase Program of Growing  
Participation in the Life of Another Human  
Group***



*by Greg and Angela Thomson (March 2015)*

***Growing participation is a long growth—much longer than most  
new growing participators envision.***

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## **NOTE for Groups Using This Program: Before you meet to start The First 100 Hours**

We suggest that before you begin to meet as a group for the Phase 1 activities with a nurturer, each participant read the introduction to Phase 1 (and skim the rest of the document). Then meet together, with the nurturer, and a Growing Participation Advisor also present, if possible.

We also recommend an initial social event like a party, potluck supper, or other activities that will help the members of the group better understand one another and develop a team spirit of mutual support, encouragement and ‘plain old fun’. It also provides opportunity to take the photos needed for the game “Here-and-Now Photos of Us” which is first used in the first Phase 1 meeting. This will also be a good time for everyone who does not have one to receive a host name, if a host person (hopefully the nurturer) is there to help with that.

Please keep in mind that even though the Here-and-Now Phase involves less than ten percent of the total set of activities recommended for the six phases of the Six-Phase Program (1500 hours with nurturers), these first 100 hours provide a rapid and powerful kick-start which can create momentum that will help those using it to continue for months to come.

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|---|--|--|
| <i>Phase 1A: Games for Listening and Responding Nonverbally pages ???</i>                       | <i>Time Spent with Nurturers:<br/>15 Sessions, 30 - 40 hours</i> | <i>Word Gain:<br/>first 300+ words</i> |
| <i>Phase 1B: More Listening Games and also Constrained Two-Way Interaction Games pages ????</i> | <i>Time Spent with Nurturers:<br/>25 Sessions, 50 - 60 hours</i> | <i>Word Gain:<br/>add 600+ words</i>   |

### ***Graphics Pack Included***

We include set of drawings of the objects and actions suggested in for each game, and other pictures to be used during some of the games with the nurturer, such as a drawing depicting common places in the local town. Someone in each location where the plan is used needs to make locally appropriate drawings. The first versions of the drawings were done by a non-artist! Have fun localizing the drawings for your location!

## **Phase 1A Listening Games: Understanding the Nurturer and Responding Non-Verbally**

### **People**

Growing participation is first and last about *people*. Are there some people who are visible to you right now? Look at them. See them clearly. Each life is a book waiting to be written. Look in the mirror if you can, but don’t just look at yourself. Look at yourself and a few other people together in that mirror. As you look at groups of people, imagine you were to participate in their lives and they in yours. That’s what we’re about.

We are *not* about you as a *separate, private* individual, with an isolated individual mind—“the learner”. Growing participation is not private and individual! We are about you first as part of a human group that you grew up in—your “home-world” group. Then we are about you as you grow into another group—your “host-world” group. Your home-world group is probably made of

people such as those you just looked at. Wherever you are, you take that home world with you (even when you are alone!). Usually, you are accompanied by other people from your home world as you approach another world. If not—if you don't actually travel to the new place with others of your home world—you are likely to find some and identify with them. You are already a full participant in your home world.

The other world you may have in mind is not your host-world until you join it and start growing and changing in it. Just being physically there doesn't make it your host-world. To be in your host group, some of its people must take you into it—help you to join them in their home world, and to live their life in it with them. In your mind's eye, picture some real people in that world, too, standing with you, looking in that mirror. If you can actually see members of that human group—look well! Growing participation is *about them*. It is about what they will experience of you within their social world.

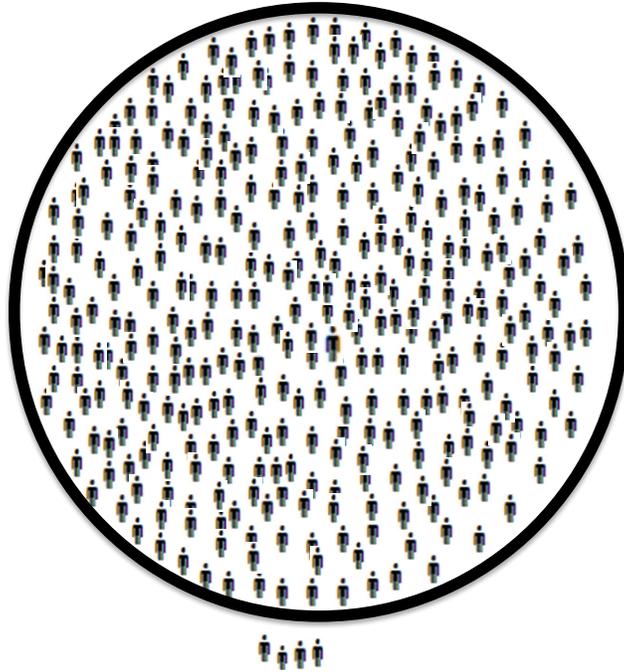
*However, it's a long, long growth—much longer than most new growing participators envision it being.*

This manual is about **Phase 1**, which is **your first, exciting, baby steps into that long growth** in a host world. Your early growth will normally involve growth with others from your home world (or possibly from other home worlds) together becoming part of the host group. You and they will keep changing before host people's eyes from the first moments of Phase 1 onward. That also means that the host world itself—that is, particular host people's experience of their world—becomes something different in virtue of you and your companions being part of it. I could go on and on with this picture, but must leave it!

### **A life hidden behind a wall—meaningless sound and mis-read sights**

Here is a situation you may be able to identify with if you have ever travelled to the location of a human group that strongly differs from the human group that you grew up in.

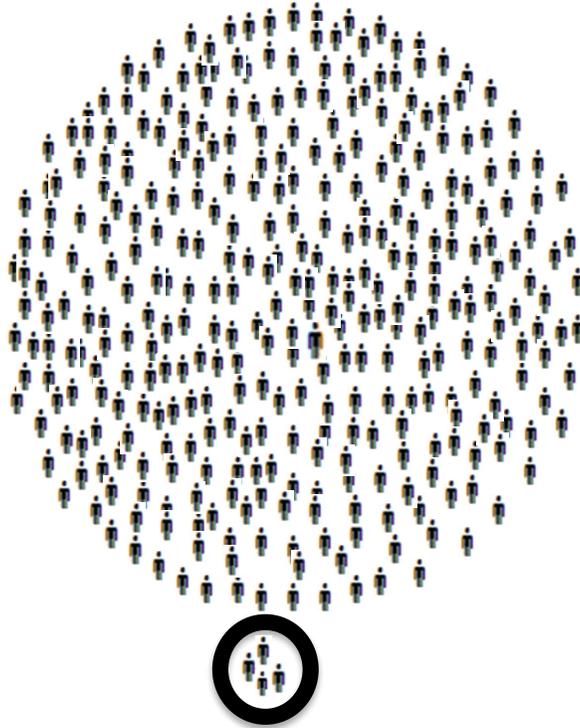
In the situation we are envisioning, the people are *so* different from you that as they talk to each other, you cannot understand anything whatsoever that they say to one another. You are locked out of their world by a “wall of noise”



### Behind the Wall: A World of Action

Looking at the diagram, you could ask, as you and your home-world companions stand looking at people behind the solid wall of meaningless noise, what exactly is going on in there?

What is going on is a huge, tangled mass of human activity. Their life together is so much wrapped up in their talking that we can say you are *deaf* to their group life. But you're also more *blind* to their activities than you realize. First of all, much if not most of their activities are in the talking, and not in anything you can see (think of activities such as re-connecting with a friend, strengthening that friendship, showing interest, telling what is going on in your life, and on, and on). Therefore, being deaf to their talking means being blind to most of their activities, which are happening in their talking. Furthermore, what you think see them doing with your eyes is not what they see themselves doing and see one another doing! The meanings of the actions you see differ from similar visible actions in your own world—sometimes greatly so, but always somewhat so. You see, those people's understanding of what they visibly do was shaped from their early childhood by *people talking to them* and *people talking around them*. The great tangled mass of people's actions and their understandings of their actions are what we call "their languacultural world". Participating in that world means understanding it as host people understand it. Therefore ***understanding*** is one of the most important words in connection with growing participation. You may be surrounded all day by people of the other group, but only as you understand their words and other actions as the people themselves understand one another are you truly *in* their world.



Now for those people and their experience we need a different diagram. The “wall of noise” that they experience is the one that hides you and your companions from their understanding. You talk, to one another, and carry out other actions together, but the people of the other group are utterly shut out of all you say, and misunderstand much of what they see you do.

**People and their “practices,” including (in particular) their words.**

We have met some important words for understanding growing participation: 1) *People*, 2) *home world*, 3) *host world*, 4) *wall of noise*, and 4) *understanding*. Another important word is 5) *practices*. After we explore that a bit, we’ll let you get on with Phase 1 of your growing participation.

Something you do repeatedly is one of your *practices*. It is *shared practices* that makes a group of people a group. By shared practices we mean actions many people do similarly, at different times, and that they understand similarly to others in the group.

*Now for host people to take you into their world means that they help you to participate in their practices, so that with enough experience you come to understand their practices more or less as they do.*

Students at a university I attended carried backpack-style “book bags”, slung over one shoulder only. A nineteen-year-old girl student told me that if holding the bag over one shoulder was inconvenient she would strap hers over both shoulders, and “just not worry about being cool”. So, one student practice was to carry a book bag in a particular way, and part of the meaning of that practice was being “cool”. (Most people who know English as a second language seem to know the word “cool” in that sense.)

Now a human group such as the one you grew up in and the one you now hope to join has one collection of practices that is especially enormous, with an especially powerful effect: **words**. Using a word is a *practice*. Using a particular host word with a particular host meaning is a particular host practice. Human groups with their own words also have practices of combining words in particular ways. This all gets extremely complicated extremely quickly. So let's slow down and consider how we can start to understand the practices of a human group, how we can go behind the wall of noise.

In Phase 1, participating in the practices of using words and combining them are the first steps toward understanding all sorts of host-languacultural practices—entertaining guests, participation in community events, conducting business, carrying book bags at the university, slaughtering sheep, etc., etc. In the end, the most complicated practices and their meanings will still mainly be practices involved in talking—issues like who talks how to whom in what contexts and for what purposes. We start mainly with practices of using words and their combinations, because this will allow nurturers and other host people to explain all the practices we want to ask about. *We can't understand the meaning of more complicated practices until we are able to understand the explanations host people provide!* And so we start with words.

**An unusually special host person takes you into his or her life for a few hours each day.**

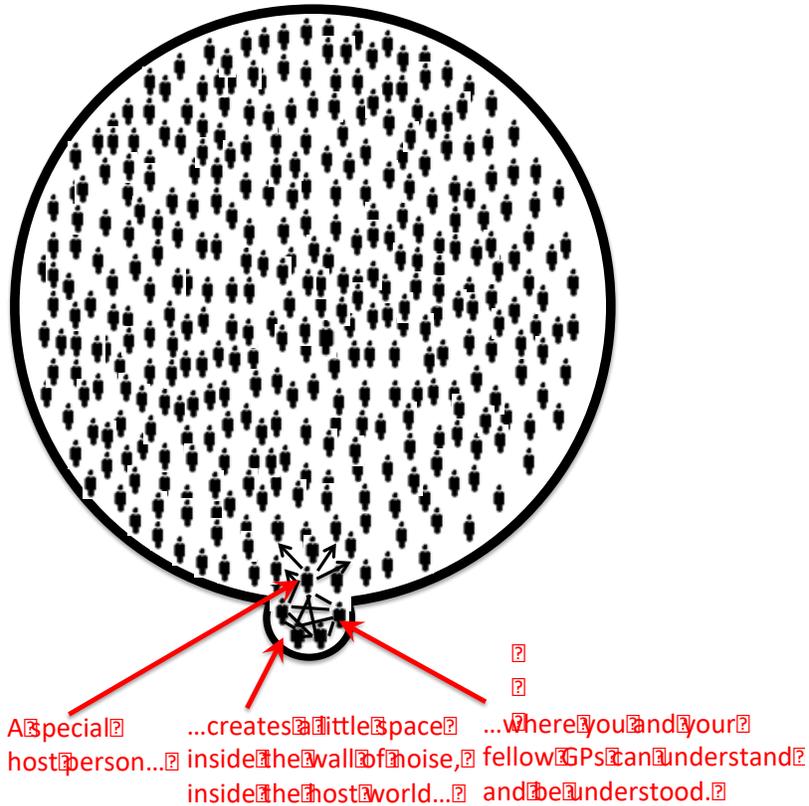
To get behind the wall of noise, we will have one or more special host people who will talk to us, following their own talking practices, but doing it in such a way that we can understand them. We call such people “nurturers”. Those who the nurturer nurtures are weak and need special care in order to grow strong. A nurturer can be male or female. For convenience in what follows, we'll call the nurturer “she”. Normally small children or people who are really sick need nurturing. But as a newcomer to a human group that is so different from the one you grew up in, you desperately need a host person who will take you in your helpless state and nurture you into her world.

Now, how does the nurturer create a space for you behind the wall of noise? How does she let you begin participating in her practices? It is by doing 1) and 2):

- 1) **She talks to you in such a way that you can understand what she is saying**, even though she only uses host words.
- 2) **She helps you express yourself in ways that host people can understand.**

*Remember these two points.* If she is doing these two things in a way that is caring and encouraging, then she is *nurturing you into her practices and those of her people*. She represents the host group. In fact, to you at the beginning, she is a living piece of the host group, she *is* that group. (Your first community in the host group is your nurturer, you, and any others like yourself whom she is nurturing with you.)

When your nurturer talks to you in such a way that you can understand her (point 1 above), you are inside the wall of noise. She has created that space for you inside that wall where you are participating in host life:



**How in the world does she manage that? Answer: She plays with you!**

The big question you might be asking is how does she do 1) and 2). Well, she won't immediately be able to involve you in complicated host activities of normal adult host life in ways that you would be able to understand and make yourself understood! But what she can do is *play* with you. It is the games she plays with you that make 1) and 2) above possible.

You hold in your hands a guide to such games. Play them all! Play them well, and the host people will soon know you as someone very different from the person you started out as! You will be part of their languacultural world! A strange, "baby" part, but a part nevertheless.

**Phase 1A Games in General: The nurturer talking to you in ways that let you understand her and grow in your participation**

There are a variety of games. Here we mainly emphasize a common format: "The Dirty Dozen", as people have a tendency to do it in ways we don't recommend. All of the games use what you can see and so to help you with understanding. New words are usually introduced in a Dirty Dozen or similar activity, and subsequently re-used in a more complicated activity. In Phase 1A they are all listening games and you respond without talking, by doing something.

### ***Rules of the “Dirty Dozen”.<sup>1</sup>***

This way of doing thing will become clear as you do it. We’ll spell it out more in the game-by-game instructions. The nurturer should be well aware of these Do’s and Don’ts. GPs should cooperate and not try to redirect things! Then you should reread this list of do’s and don’ts before the second day.

Do:

- 1) Stay connected to the nurturer as a person
- 2) Have fun—laughing is good!
- 3) Start with **two** items (such as two objects—a dog and a cat—or two actions—walking and running—or two expressions depicted in pictures—“Hello” and “Gooby,” etc.).
- 4) Add one new one at a time when all the GPs are ready to go on.
- 5) Be satisfied with your hearing of a word as long as you can point correctly. (There will be other acts besides pointing, but in any case, if you can do the act, then you know the word well enough to go on.)
- 6) Growing participators (GPs) **listen and point**. Example: nurturer says to a GP “Where is the ball?” and the GP points at the ball.
- 7) Listen intensely to the nurturer’s voice and at the same time, think about the “meaning” that is, the object or action, etc.
- 8) After adding a new item, the nurturer asks the whole group to listen and point together a few times. Then the nurturer has GPs respond one at a time.<sup>2</sup>
- 9) No one but the nurturer talks, and the nurturer only talks in the host way! (see section below on the nurturer’s talking.)
- 10) Keep adding until every item in the plan for that game has been understood.
- 11) At that point, record a one minute sample of that game that includes all the items.
- 12) Then make a recording of the picture dictionary. (see section below.)

Don’t:

- 1) Don’t start with one item or with three or more items!
- 2) After those first two items, don’t add two or more new items at a time.
- 3) Don’t do a lot of “point and listen”. If you understand the first two items, such as “cat” and “dog” then the nurturer adds the next one by saying, “This is a horse,” and then immediately starts asking “Where is the horse? Where is the dog?” GPs should not point at an object to hear it over and over, the nurturer should not point at an item and say it over and over, and the nurturer should not point to and say all of the items each time a new one is added.
- 4) GPs don’t talk. During listening games, you want to be hearing only the nurturer’s voice and no other (not even the coach’s voice). (Of course, you can talk between games.)

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<sup>1</sup> Where does the idea of “dirty” come from? Here it means “far from perfect”. Your goal in a “dirty dozen” is to be able to understand a word when you hear it in the game. You might not understand it in another context. Perhaps you couldn’t possibly recall it and say it. But if the nurturer says, “Where is the elephant?” and you point to the elephant and not the lion, then you have achieved the goal in a “dirty dozen” activity. The number of new words included in a “dirty dozen” activity may be around a dozen, but could be less—such as five—or more—such as twenty.

<sup>2</sup> A good way to do this is to ask the whole group, “Where is the elephant?” and then after everyone has had a second to think about it and try to respond in their own minds, the nurturer says the name of one particular GP who gets to be the one to point. “Rasheed!” and Rasheed points at the elephant. If he doesn’t know, then the nurturer might ask “Who knows?”

- 5) No one writes. You are learning to *hear* at this point. It is not easy to hear well. Don't let anything (such as writing) distract you.
- 6) Don't try to master new words. (This goes with "Do be satisfied with your hearing of a word.") Don't try to learn new words well enough to recall them or to say them yourself. (That will come later.) You'll learn to hear and understand many new words rather than trying to master a much smaller number.

### The Iceberg Principle

*Many GPs put great energy into attempting to master every word fully as possible when they first encounter it. They find that a large portion of the words they tried to master do not stay mastered! We find it works better to simply aim to put the words into the lower part of "the iceberg" and let them rise.*

