

Governance Tools referenced in
Governance Handbook for Friends Schools, 2nd edition

The Hidden Hinge

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When to use it: When members are finding it hard to move forward or make a decision on an issue.

How it helps: Groups can usually get moving toward a goal by slightly weakening one or two of their least troublesome obstacles (see description of the Force Field Exercise on page 34, *Governance Handbook for Friends Schools*, for more information). Like a hidden hinge, a small movement in the right place can open the gates and get things moving.

Directions:

- Describe the group's goal (the topic under discussion) in a way that everyone can align with. (Examples might be: *Agree on what to do with this donation* or *Strengthen our ability to resolve conflicts* or *Decide whether to buy the adjacent property*.)
- Ask the group to brainstorm a two-column list:
 - 1) What's helping us toward this goal and
 - 2) What's getting in the way of our achieving this goal?(Be specific. Use examples. Know that the same item may fit in both columns.)
- Ask the group which one or two of the obstacles listed would be easiest to weaken or eliminate. These are the "hidden hinges," carrying potential to open currently hidden doors for you.
- Brainstorm ideas for weakening or eliminating the one or two obstacles you've chosen. These are all potential action steps.
- Agree on a list of action steps that you'll take on – your new action plan. Agree who will do what, by when, so that your plan is workable.