

Friends Council on Education

Force Field Analysis – Simple Instructions

Based on the work of Agazarian, Yvonne and Susan Gantt (2000).

Autobiography of a Theory. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

In the dynamic system of life, there are driving and restraining forces in relation to any particular goal at any particular time.

Solo activity (5 minutes)

1. On a piece of paper or in your journal, fill the paper with a large "T."
2. Write a one-sentence goal statement. Use a goal that you currently have for yourself in your work life or for your personal life. Write the goal above the cross-bar on the "T."
3. Now, brainstorm the driving and restraining forces relative to that particular goal. Below the cross-bar, list the driving forces on the left side of the vertical line and list the restraining forces on the right side. The current tension of driving and restraining forces are keeping you from moving toward the goal.
 - Driving forces: What driving forces are in place that are already moving you (or your group) in the direction of meeting this goal?
 - Restraining forces: What forces are in place that are keeping you from meeting this goal? Note: restraining forces are not negative – often they are driving forces toward other goals.

The "T" chart gives a visual representation for how these driving and restraining forces keep the status quo in place, a kind of gridlock. **The key to force field analysis is to focus on weakening a restraining force** so that the driving forces are freed to move you (or the group) toward the goal. Resist the temptation is to keep adding driving forces. Change and movement happen when we tweak and shift the restraining forces, thereby shifting the overall balance of forces.

4. Analyze the restraining forces:

- Are there themes/patterns that you notice in the restraining forces?
- Are some of the restraining forces immovable and others a bit open to being shifted?
- Which of the restraining forces can be most easily shifted or changed?
- Is there at restraining force that can be shifted just enough to begin a change?

Work in pairs (10 minutes)

- Share your goal and the restraining forces.
- Identify one or more restraining forces that could be most easily modified.
- Next, create an action step for yourself that would allow you to modify one (or more) of the restraining forces. The most do-able action steps are those that are very concrete: who, what, when, where, how. Action steps are brief, clear, concrete, and visible (you and we can see you doing it).

Share surprises and learnings in the whole group (5 minutes, if time)

Force Field Analysis

Title:

Date:

GOAL:

Driving

Restraining