

# **PART 1**

## **What Jolts Are and How to Use Them**

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# Chapter 1

## What Are Jolts and How Can I Use Them?

**A**s the definition of the word implies, *Jolts* are brief activities that challenge (and maybe push, jar, and sometimes shock) participants to re-examine their comfortable assumptions and habitual practices (see definition below).

### Jolt

- 1 to cause to move with a sudden jerky motion
- 2 to give a knock or blow to; specifically: to jar with a quick or hard blow
- 3 a: to disturb the composure of: shock; b: to interfere with roughly, abruptly, and disconcertingly

While not directly aimed at skill building, the fifty *Jolts* we describe in this book are nonetheless powerful training tools that will help you engage your participants and focus attention on your learning event. In addition, *Jolts* are perfectly suited for use in many types of training interventions, including training in diversity, sexual harassment, change management, customer focus, and creative problem solving. Here are a few other suggestions on how to use these activities. You may use *Jolts* to

- Capture participants' attention at the beginning of a session
- Segue between one training topic and the next
- Keep participants awake and energized after a lunch break
- Make a profound, thought-provoking point at the end of another activity (for example, to demonstrate the difficulty of making changes in behaviors and habits)
- Vary the pace and break up lengthy presentations such as presentations of technical content
- Anchor a lecture by choosing an appropriate *jolt* that will allow you to present your content as part of the *jolt* debriefing
- Illustrate effective learning techniques or emphasize the importance of follow-up activities

## **Conducting Jolts**

Skilled facilitation is essential to the success of jolts since some of these activities require participants to examine differences between people and cultures as well as preconceived notions connected directly to potential emotion “hot buttons” issues. Other activities are simply fast paced and highly competitive so keeping emotions in check requires the finesse of an experienced facilitator. This is particularly true during the debrief portion (see Chapter 6) of the activity when strong emotions or negative reactions often surface. That is why we offer specific detailed instructions and appropriate warnings about the use of these exercises.

In the next chapter you will find a scenario of a jolt exercise that will be useful to your full understanding of jolts. But first you’ll need the grounding provided by the rest of this chapter so that the principles are clearly understood.

## **The Types and Categories of Jolts**

Jolts are broadly classified into two categories, *entrapment* jolts and *enlightenment* jolts. As you might imagine, both types present unique facilitation challenges. Jolts are designed to be used with individual participants or groups and either nudge, push, or perhaps force participants to consider new ways to thinking or behaving, thus our cautions about use and the careful instructions provided in this book. We have designed the jolts to employ a variety of media prompts that increase the effectiveness of the jolts, including the use of printed cards and audio and video clips. Some of the jolts do require simple props for successful execution, but we have deliberately limited the number of jolts requiring props to simplify facilitation. Finally, we vary the required tasks to take advantage of a wide range of individual preferences and learner types. You will find exercises involving listening and thinking, listening and remembering, and listening and talking as well as drawing, negotiating, and performing physical activities.

## **The Art of a Jolt**

Clearly, using jolts is fun, energizing, and highly effective in many training situations. But before using them, you need to carefully consider both your motivation for using them and your ability to handle difficult situations.

Chapter 5 provides some very specific recommendations, but in general we suggest the judicious use of these jolts. When you do use a jolt, we highly recommend setting aside plenty of time for debriefing. In addition, we suggest a nimble, flexible approach to facilitation that includes a rapid pace when conducting jolts and a willingness to abandon a chosen jolt if you anticipate a too severe reaction from participants or if a point has been made sufficiently before the end of a jolt.

## **Debriefing a Jolt**

Without a debriefing discussion, jolts would certainly not be an effective training, learning, or engagement tool; in fact, jolts might even be considered potentially harmful without careful debriefing. Chapter 6 offers you detailed instructions on how

to debrief jolts, but in general there are three reasons to support our insistence on debriefing:

1. More learning results from *reflecting* on an experience than from the experience itself.
2. Debriefing reduces possible negative impact from a jolt by allowing “wind down” time and increasing opportunities for positive insights.
3. Debriefing maximizes impact and connection to your training objectives.

Some activities benefit more than others from extensive debriefing, and you will find more guidance in Chapter 6. However, you can be sure that jolts with potential strong positive or negative emotional reactions or activities that are too brief or abstract to be understood without a debriefing are clear-cut candidates for this follow-up session.

### **Next Steps**

Now that you have an overview of what a jolt is and how to use it, perhaps *showing you* rather than *telling* you how to introduce and facilitate a jolt session might be the best next step. Chapter 2 is intended as your window into how an experienced facilitator might handle a typical jolt session. If reading through the provided scenario is not enough *showing* for you, then go to our website ([www.thiagi.com](http://www.thiagi.com)) and click on the jolt icon on our home page. You will find links to a few jolt session that clearly demonstrate the ropes of successful jolt facilitation. In addition, the website offers you some additional jolt-related content for both novice and advanced facilitators.

