

# The Soft Shoe Shuffle

## What is the Soft Shoe Shuffle

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- The Soft Shoe Shuffle is a conversation on our feet.
- It allows everyone to be involved.

## Instructions for the Soft Shoe Shuffle

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Start with everyone standing in a circle. Anyone can start by taking a step forward breaking the circle and making a certain statement. People show their agreement with a view by going to stand next to the person and their disagreement by moving away.

As more people step forward to offer their views, group members shuffle to join whoever they agree with. As they do so they can add their own shade or addition to the view. If someone doesn't agree with any of the positions presented, she can move to an unclaimed area of the room and state her own view. Again people can show their support by shuffling over to join her.

One of the many advantages of this method is that you can change your mind. You can say one thing and stand on one side; then you can change your mind and say/make a totally opposite statement and stand in another position.

Each view stands in space; it exists whether you support it or not. So you can move back and forth between positions as often as you like. This gives a tangible way to experience your views as fluid.

The greater the fluidity the more you are able to see all points of view.

ENCOURAGE people to move freely from one group to another.

Discourage participants from using/posing questions.

It's important to explain to people how to cheat or how to hide. That is if people want to remain quiet it's important to hook onto a crowd and shuffle with the crowd; otherwise, if they stand still in space you will ask them what their view is. So if they don't want to be asked they should move around a lot.

## Things to watch out for in the Soft Shoe Shuffle

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- Not Shuffling. People often tend to forget to move. Remind them and encourage them as much as possible to move.
- Don't insist on shuffling; encourage and facilitate it.

## When to stop the Soft Shoe Shuffle

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- When shuffling may not be required: When there is a change in energy and people are very engaged they may also tend to stop shuffling and continue the conversation standing. Use your discretion at this stage. If the conversation is flowing and all seem involved insisting on the shuffling may not be the best thing to do.
- Watch for edges and cycling and change of energy.
- The on-going cycling or edges may suggest that there is a clear polarity which now needs to be resolved through the Argument.
- When the group seems on the point of making a decision and there is a clear majority. Move into a decision and ask the people in the minority what they need to go along. You are now in Step 4 of the Four Steps.

## When to use the Soft Shoe Shuffle

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The Soft Shoe Shuffle is good to use in the following situations:

- With large groups as it enables everyone to be involved and have a "voice" because even if they don't say anything they show through moving what their views are.
- When you want to get rid of rank in the room as it naturally get rid of rank.
- When people are frightened to speak out, as through having other people stand next to you your views /role is spread and it makes it safer to say things.
- With people who have been disadvantaged and find it difficult to speak their view, as the Soft Shoe Shuffle empowers them to be involved in an easier way.
- As an icebreaker because it is fun to do
- With children and young people – they really enjoy it