

Groundhog's Dream

A game for 2 - 20 players.

By Andrew Sirkin

You're all dreaming variations on the same dream. But it keeps changing location, and it keeps changing perspective. You can change how it ends. But you won't escape until everyone gets everything right.

Every round, each player plays a different character, with different goals. They will be trying to complete their own goals each round, and simultaneously using the Metagame knowledge they gained from playing other characters in previous rounds to help other players complete their goals.

Requirements/Equipment:

- A timer or alarm clock
- One Hat (or similar hidden sorting bag)
- If playing with 5 or more players, one Tarot Deck
- For each player:
 - A writing utensil
 - 3 Index Cards
 - A Unique Mask
 - One Nametag for their Number
 - One Nametag for their Name
 - Note Paper or a notebook
 - Blank Character sheet (See Page 3 - only given to players AFTER they fill out their index cards)
 - Examples page (See Page 4)

Setup:

- Have players write on an index card the number and a part of speech below, as if they were preparing for a Mad Lib:
 - 1) [Emotion]
 - 2) [Adjective]
 - 3) [Emotion]
 - 4) [Descriptive Noun] (generally an Adjective with -ness or -ce at the end!)
 - 5) [Emotion]
 - 6) [Descriptive Noun]
 - 7) [Emotion]
 - 8) [Descriptive Noun]
- On the second index card, have players write a setting, which can be a location, genre, or style. These index cards should be folded in half once and then placed in the Hat.
- Number all the Number tags, starting at 1, and give them out to each player. This is for identifying people OOC. These Number tags are not removed or transferred between players.
- Have each player fill in their Character Sheet with the words they wrote on the index card, matching the numbers.
- On the Character Sheet, fill in the Name section on the top left, and add that player's Number to the character sheet on the top right.
- Each player should write the name of their character and that character's pronoun on their Name tag.

How To Play:

- At the start of each round:
 - Set the timer - for 5 or more players, set it to 15 minutes, and for 2-4, set it to 20 minutes.
 - Draw one Setting from the Hat. This is the setting or location for the Dream. If the two locations seem incompatible, draw a third, and let players vote on a combination that they like. Discard both afterwards (do not put them back in the Hats).
 - For 5 or more players, shuffle the Tarot deck and distribute the cards evenly. Put any leftover or uneven cards to the side. Tarot cards represent goods, services, and/or money that characters might offer each other.

- During the Round:
 - Each player attempts to complete the goals on their character sheet.
 - To keep the action moving, any time a character completes a goal, or feels like they can't fulfil their goal in that situation, they should try to move on and talk to someone else – even if the person they were just talking to is in the middle of a story. This is a dream, and weird transitions happen all the time.
 - Write a new word, phrase, song lyric, or picture on your new character card. This is now Canon for that character – for example, if you write that they're a Doctor, all future players of that character now play the character as a doctor!
 - Taking notes about yourself and other players is encouraged. Players should metagame and use your OOC knowledge IC to attempt to resolve the goals of other characters. (The physical notebooks are OOC and can't be spied on or stolen.)
- At the end of the Round:
 - All players who have completed ALL the goals on their character sheet will raise their hand. If all players have completed all goals, go to Endgame. (With 4 or less players, play each character twice instead).
 - Pass each Name Tag and Character Sheet to the next number higher (highest passes back to 1). Each time a player gets a new character, they should write their number in the upper right corner, to identify to other players who has seen what character sheets. If players get their original character sheet or four hours has passed, go to Endgame.
 - Start the next round.

Endgame:

The game continues until one of the following conditions is met:

- All players have completed all of their goals.
- All players have had a chance to play all characters (With 4 or less players, play each character twice instead)
- Four hours has passed (only possible with 16-20 players)

Wrapup:

Is waking up a relief, or a harsh reality? Everyone shared similar dreams, from different perspectives – but was it real? What really happened?

As a group, tell the story of each character in turn. How many people were able to complete that character's goals? How did that character make other characters feel? How different was that character played by each person? Whose portrayal of that character stood out for you?

Safety Rules:

At the start of the game, players should announce any topics that they're uncomfortable dealing with, or may be triggering in some way. For example, assault, animal death, and prison could all be listed as forbidden topics. When Settings/Genres are announced each round, any player may Veto a word for safety reasons, similar to the X card, even if it was not mentioned at the beginning of the game. No reason needs to be given for this, and a new card will be drawn.

When filling out your Mad Libs, be careful. Emotions, Descriptive Nouns, and Adjectives can be tricky things. Because of the nature of Mad Libs, you may accidentally write down an adjective or emotion that isn't appropriate in context – you might realize it as you fill out your character card, or you might see it on a card you get handed midway through the game. If you don't feel comfortable performing a certain action, for ANY REASON, you may cross it out and write in one of your choice. If a word has been changed, it becomes changed permanently for all future players of that character (unless someone is uncomfortable with the new word), even if that interferes with someone's metagame knowledge from having played a character previously.

Try to avoid adjectives that may insult someone's appearance, or emotions that may require someone to flirt. Avoid adjectives that encourage you to violate others' consent.

Please use the OK Check-in [<https://participationsafety.wordpress.com/2016/09/09/toolkit-the-ok-check-in/>] if you're not sure about someone else's level of comfort. If you need a scene to be less intense and no one is checking in with you, give an obvious thumbs-down sign. If you need to leave at any time, you can always do so (the Door is Always Open) - remember, this is a dream, and weird transitions are part of that.

Name

Numbers

General Emotion (1)

General Adjective (2)

Goals

- 3) Express _____ to a friend. [Emotion]
- 4) Demonstrate your _____. [Descriptive Noun]
- 5) Stop someone else who is feeling _____ before it overwhelms. [Emotion]
- 6) Inspire someone with a memory about _____. [Descriptive Noun]
- 7) Encourage someone to express _____. [Emotion]
- 8) Don't _____. [Descriptive Noun]
- 9) Find someone who agrees with you and team up with them.

Notes (add one note per round):

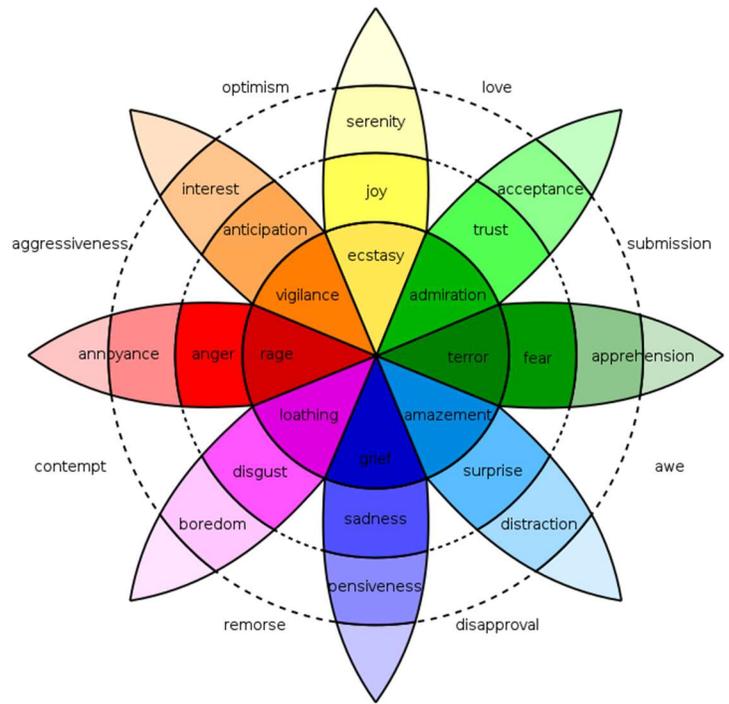
Some suggestions to help you fill out your index cards.

Emotions:

Fear, Anger, Sadness, Joy, Disgust, Surprise, Trust, Anticipation, Anger, Friendship, Fear, Shame, Kindness, Pity, Indignation, Envy, Love, Suffering, Depression, Grief, Devotion, Reflection, Sulky, Hatred, Disdain, Disgust, Guilt, Helplessness, Patience, Surprise

Descriptive Noun:

- **Appearance:** Cleanliness, Drabness, Elegance, Fanciness, Gorgeousness, Magnificence, Quaintness, Scruffiness
- **Condition:** Carefulness, Cleverness, Dullness, Famousness, Helpfulness, Importance, Oddness, Shyness, Tenderness, Unimportance, Wrong-headedness
- **Personality (Positive):** Agreeableness, Ambitiousness, Braveness, Calmness, Delightfulness, Eagerness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Happiness, Jolliness, Kindness, Liveliness, Obedience, Politeness, Pride, Silliness, Thankfulness, Wittiness, Zealousness
- **Personality (Negative):** Anger, Bewildered, Clumsy, Defeated, Embarrassed, Fierce, Grumpy, Helpless, Itchy, Jealous, Lazy, Mysterious, Nervous, Obnoxious, Panicky, Pitiful, Scary, Thoughtless, Uptight, Worried
- **Sound:** Crashing, Deafening, Echoing, Harsh, Hissing, Howling, Loud, Melodic, Noisy, Purring, Quiet, Rapping, Raspy, Rhythmic, Screeching, Shrilling, Squeaking, Thundering, Tinkling, Wailing, Whining, Whispering
- **Time:** Ancient, Brief, Early, Fast, Future, Late, Long, Modern, Old, Old-Fashioned, Prehistoric, Quick, Rapid, Short, Slow, Swift, Young



Robert Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions
By Machine Elf 1735 - Own work, Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=13285286>

Locations:

- **Buildings:** Farm, Shop, Skyscraper, Church, Stadium, Prison, Famous Landmark, Doctor's Office, Hardware Store, Office, Factory, Hairdresser/Barber Shop, Harbor, School, College, Market, Gym, Laundromat, DMV, Drunk Tank
- **Nature:** Glacier, Forest, Beach, Meadow, Desert, Park, Rainforest, Oasis, Savannah, Waterfall, Famous Landmark
- **Private Space:** Bedroom, Living room, Kitchen, Garage, Music room, Library, Guest room, Basement, Balcony
- **Unreal:** Moon, planets, Heaven, Hell, Paradise, Spaceship, Space station, Time machine, Castle, Comic Book, Ghost Town
- **Transportation:** Aircraft, Caravan, Motorcycle, Train, Zeppelin, Tram, Bus
- **Other:** Under the bridge, On the bridge, Cemetery, Zoo, Circus, Street Corner, Bootcamp

Genre:

Absurdist, Action, Adventure, Biography, Comedy, Crime, Drama, Essay, Fantasy, Historical, Historical fiction, Horror, Journalism, Magical realism, Memoir, Mystery, Narrative nonfiction/personal narrative, Philosophical, Political, Public Speech, Reference book, Romance, Saga, Satire, Science fiction, Self-help book, Social, Speculative, Surreal, Textbook, Thriller, Urban, Western, Whimsical