

## Focus Ring

**From:** <http://www.teachmeteamwork.com>

- **Group Size:** 4-10
- **Age Range:** Elementary – adult
- **Intensity:** Mental=3, Physical=2
- **Time:** 15-45 minutes
- **Space:** Minimal – Medium - Lots
- **Set Up Time:** 90 seconds
- **Props:** Focus Ring, pedestal and one ball to place on the pedestal

### Objective

Using the Focus Ring, carry a ball from one point to another point and then place the ball onto the pedestal.

### Set Up / Preparation

Each person in the group holds on to at least one string (depending on the size of the group, some will have more than one string). The participants spread out like spokes of a wheel, holding on to the end of their string. A tennis ball is then placed on top of the steel ring.

### Rules

1. Each participant gets to operate at least one string.
2. Participants must hold onto the end of the string and no other place.
3. Participants must stay at a distance of at least the length of a stretched out string (very important).
4. If the ball falls off the steel ring the group must start again.
5. If the pedestal falls over the group must start again.
6. The group is successful when the ball is balanced on the pedestal and the ring is resting on the ground with no one holding onto a string.

### Safety Warning

1. Do not allow the participants to tie the string around their fingers or hands.
2. Do not carry balls that can damage the floor if they fall.
3. If you ask the group to carry the ball through and around obstacles you must make sure the path they take is clear and safe.

### Comments

1. The Focus Ring activity gets its name from the fact that it requires a group to completely focus on the activity to achieve success.

2. I like this activity because it's so portable and you I can lead it with small and large groups.

### **Debriefing**

1. When a group works together to complete a task, the impact each person has can be profound. In this activity, the ball can be caused to drop if even one person doesn't do their job well. This fact may prove useful to the group during the debrief (processing of the activity).
2. I often ask a group to identify their most important goal and then ask them to identify the biggest obstacles to reaching this goal. I then write the goal on the tennis ball using a marker and then place physical objects (tables, chairs, doors, etc.) in the path of the group – I even identify each obstacle with an index card (example: table = lack of adequate time). Then I'll make the group travel under the table, over the chairs, through the door, etc. To debrief I'll ask the group to describe how they handled each of the physical obstacles and how they may be able to use similar skills to handle the obstacles which are real to them in achieving their goal.

### **Variations**

1. Have the group transport the ball over, under or around chairs, trees, desks, doors, etc.
2. Use a bigger ball such as softball to make this activity harder.
3. Attach a marker to the center of the Focus Ring to allow the group to draw on a piece of paper as a team or take a multiple-choice test as a team (or draw a picture, etc.). I call this variation "Robot Writer".
4. Have two separate groups work together by placing their respective tennis balls on to a "dual pedestal" or candelabra. For a really hard version, you can have four groups work together to place four balls on a four position candelabra. Refer to the How To Make document for details on constructing these candelabras.
5. Rotate who can communicate verbally by announcing that only the people holding a certain color string can talk (orange for example). Allow them to talk for 1 minute and then change the color/people. This variation allows everyone to talk and take a leadership role.

### **History**

I learned this activity from Jim Cain who coauthored the book *Teamwork & Teamplay*.

### **How To Make It Directions**

Click on the link below to download a set of "how to make it" directions.

[Download FocusRingHTM.pdf](#)

### **Variations**

The images below show more complex versions of the Focus Ring activity. The first photo shows a pedestal which requires two teams of 10 people each to work cooperatively. The second photo shows a pedestal which requires four teams of 10 people each to work cooperatively.



## Comments

Focus Ring is the BEST ACTIVITY!

I use this with all ages of groups from Corporate to School groups.

The photos that come from this activity are amazing.

The concentration, communication, and emotional intelligence that activity needs - make this a must do and must have for trainers.

One concept that I implement into corporate development is the idea of "The goal is not reached until the work is done".

Groups tend to drop the ball and knock over the Pipe just before it touches the ground. Team members feel "close enough just let go" once that happens the pipe falls over. THE team needs "closers" these closer are the ones that complete the projects that the "initiators" start, Team thrive off of diversity.

Thanks  
Tom

[http://www.teachmeteamwork.com/teachmeteamworkonline/2006/07/focus\\_ring.html](http://www.teachmeteamwork.com/teachmeteamworkonline/2006/07/focus_ring.html)