

Contents

Preface ix

How to Use This Book 1

Guiding Ideas 7

22 Games

1. Arms Crossed 11

When conditions change, habits must change.

2. Avalanche 17

Understand the implicit rules. They can produce different results than desired or expected.

3. Balancing Tubes 25

You can't achieve long-term goals with short-term perspective.

4. The Bathtub Game 31

A level will decline only if outflows are greater than inflows.

5. Biodiversity Game 39

You can't change only one thing.

6. Circles in the Air 45

Our perspective affects the actions we take in complex systems.

7. Frames 51

To obtain consensus be clear about the mental framework you are using.

8. Group Juggle 61
Adding one more apparently minor problem can sometimes collapse the whole system.
9. Hands Down 69
When trying to understand a complex situation, don't limit your focus to where the action is.
10. Harvest 75
Over the long term, individuals often get more from cooperation than from competition.
11. Hit the Target 85
Delays between perception and response can lead to overshooting the goal.
12. Living Loops 93
It's easier to reach your goals by building a system that achieves them for you.
13. Paper Fold 105
With exponential growth, small growth rates can quickly lead to extremely large numbers.
14. Paper Tear 111
One-way communication is much less effective than interaction.
15. Pens 117
Sustainability depends more on culture than on technology.
16. Space for Living 123
Thinking outside the box can produce win-win solutions.
17. Squaring the Circle 133
Without a shared goal, cooperation is ineffective.

18. Thumb Wrestling	141
<i>Life is not a zero-sum game.</i>	
19. Triangles	147
<i>If you want big changes, look for the high-leverage points.</i>	
20. Warped Juggle	153
<i>Incremental changes produce improvements; structural changes produce transformation.</i>	
21. Web of Life	159
<i>To better understand systems, make the interconnections visible.</i>	
22. 1-2-3-Go!	165
<i>Actions speak louder than words.</i>	
Acknowledgments	171
Notes	173