

HATS WE WEAR!

60 Hats for Coaching, Training and Facilitation

metaFox
coaching tools

ABOUT THIS DECK

Hats We Wear! is a coaching tool about the roles people take on at work and in life: the ones they chose, the ones they were handed and the ones they wish they had.

As a tool for professionals, it lets you easily have conversations with individuals and teams about which hats they wear.

Each person decides what a hat means to them and explains it to the others.

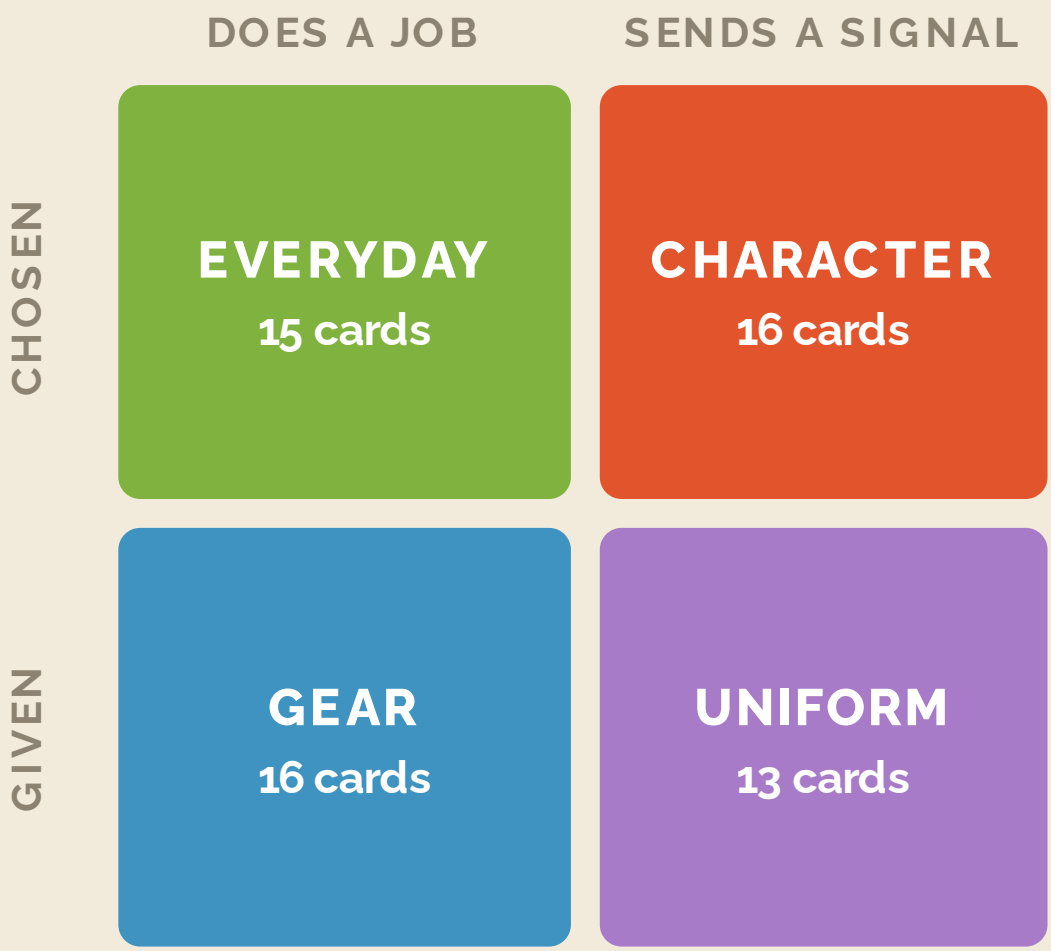
TWO QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY HAT

What is its function? Some hats do a job: a welding mask stops sparks, a cycling helmet protects the head, a miner's lamp lights a tunnel. Some hats send a social signal: a crown shows authority, a nurse's cap shows who to ask for help. Sending a signal is a function too. Coaches will know this split: it is similar to task focus and people focus.

Was it chosen or given? Some hats a person picks up. Others are handed over: awarded, issued, required or inherited. The answer depends on the person: the same hat can be a dream for one person and a duty for another.

FOUR GROUPS

The two questions sort every hat into one of four groups, and the back of each card shows its group as a colour.



Whether a hat really belongs in its group is partly in the eye of the viewer. Treat the groups as a starting point, not as absolute truth.

EVERYDAY

EVERYDAY (15 CARDS)

Chosen, and it does a job.

The hats people pick for themselves because they are useful: a cap against the sun, a helmet for the ride to work, headphones to shut out the noise.

In a conversation they stand for the parts of a role someone took on by choice and keeps because they work.







CHARACTER

CHARACTER (16 CARDS)

Chosen, and it sends a signal.

The hats people put on to show who they are, or who they want to be: a wizard hat, a cowboy hat, a party hat. Many of them work best as a metaphor.

In a conversation they stand for identity, play and the way someone wants to be seen.







GEAR

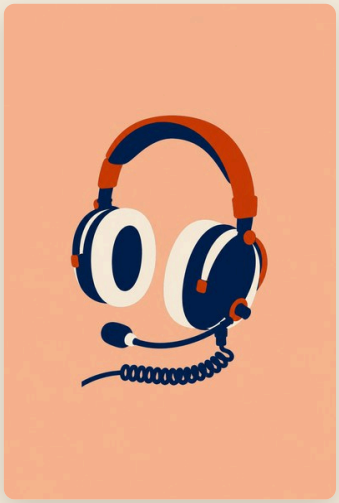
GEAR (16 CARDS)

Given, and it does a job.

The hats that come with the task: a hard hat on the building site, a headset in the cockpit, a hairnet in the kitchen. Nobody wears them for the look.

In a conversation they stand for the duties, tools and rules that come with a role, whether or not someone asked for them.







UNIFORM

UNIFORM (13 CARDS)

Given, and it sends a signal.

The hats that tell everyone else what a person is: a police hat, a mortarboard, a crown.

In a conversation they stand for status and for what other people expect from someone in a role.







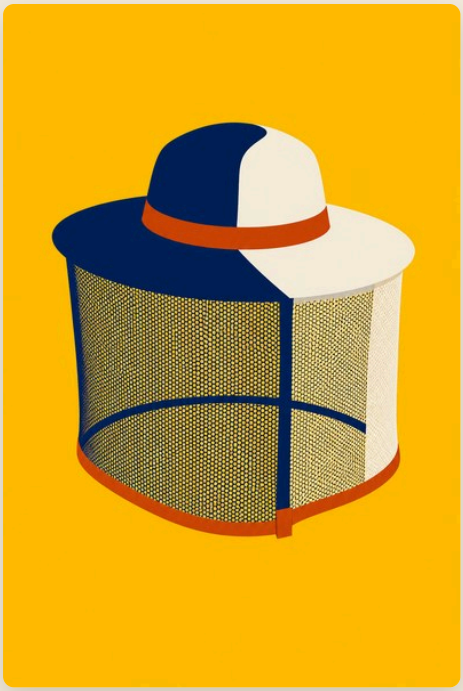
WHY CARDS FOR ROLES?

Roles are hard to talk about. They are abstract, they overlap, and people describe the same role in very different words.

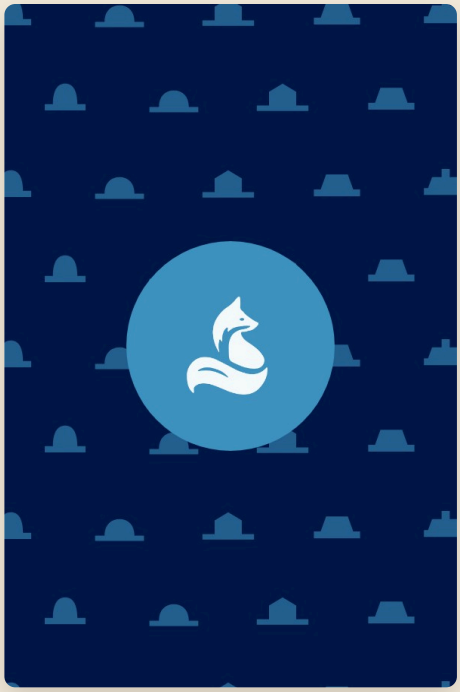
A hat on the table is concrete. A person can point at it and say: “This is what my job feels like at the moment.” The others can see it, ask about it and compare it with their own.

The cards carry no words, so nobody has to find the right term first. A picture works in any language.

CARD ANATOMY



FRONT



BACK (GEAR)

Front: one hat on a coloured ground. The person who picks it decides what the hat means.

Back: the colour of the card's group, so a facilitator can sort or deal the deck easily:

- **EVERYDAY**
- **CHARACTER**
- **GEAR**
- **UNIFORM**

HOW EVERY METHOD WORKS

Every method in this guide has the same two steps.

1. **Hand out the cards.** Decide how people get their hats: from a dealt hand, from the open table, by trading, or one of each colour. The options are on the next page.
2. **Talk it through.** Each person picks one or more hats, as the method says, and explains them. The others listen and ask open questions.

Each method on the next pages changes what people pick or what they talk about. Unless a method says otherwise, use the open table.

STEP 1: HAND OUT THE CARDS

Before the talk starts, decide how people get their hats. There are four ways.

Open table. Spread all cards face up in the middle. Everyone picks from the same pool. Good for large or new groups.

Dealt hands. Shuffle and deal out the whole deck, so each person holds a set of hats (with 6 people, 10 each). Everyone chooses only from their own hand.

Trade. Deal hands as above, then give everyone two minutes to swap cards. What someone gives away already says a lot.

One of each. Give everyone one card of each back colour. Works for up to 13 people.

STEP 2: TALK IT THROUGH

1. Read the prompt or the question of the method.
2. Each person picks a hat, or several if the method asks for it. Take the first hat that fits.
3. One person starts: they name their hat and say why they chose it.
4. The others listen, then ask open questions, for example: What does this hat mean to you? When do you wear it? What would change without it?
5. Nobody judges or argues. Then the next person talks.

GROUPS

THE HAT ROUND

1. Read a prompt, for example “Choose a hat for your role on the team” or “Choose a hat you would like to wear more often”. More on page 21.
2. Everyone picks one hat. Pick fast.
3. A volunteer names their hat and answers. The others ask open questions.
4. Go clockwise until everyone has spoken. Then put the cards back.
5. After the last round, ask: what did you notice across all the hats?

Setting: groups of 3 to 8, 10 to 15 min per round
Good for: any team, any time

GROUPS

COLOUR SORTING

1. Read a prompt. Everyone takes a hat of their choice from the open table.
2. Everyone turns their card over and looks at the back colour.
3. People form groups of 3 or 4: either with others who have the **same** colour, or with others who all have a **different** colour.
4. In the new group, each person shows their hat and says why they picked it.

Tip: take one colour out of the deck to get groups of 2 or 3.

Setting: workshops and large groups, 10 minutes
Good for: forming breakouts, mixing a room

GROUPS

CHECK-IN

“Which hat are you wearing today?”

Spread the deck face up. As people arrive, each picks the hat they are wearing today and keeps it. Once everyone is seated, go round: one sentence each, no discussion.

At the end of the meeting, ask again: has anyone changed hats? People may swap cards.

Setting: any meeting, 1 minute per person
Good for: opening meetings, retreats and retrospectives

GROUPS

A HAT FOR SOMEONE ELSE

1. Everyone picks a hat for themselves and keeps it face down.
2. Each person picks a hat for the colleague on their left, for something they value in that person, and says why.
3. The colleague answers: what fits, what does not, what surprised them. Then they show their own hat. How far apart are the two?

Setting: teams that know each other
Good for: appreciation, feedback, how others see my role

GROUPS

ROLE CRAFTING

1. Everyone picks the three to five hats they wear in their current role and writes each role on a sticky note on the card.
2. They lay them in a row, from the hat they love to the one they would hand over. If a hat is taken, they point to it.
3. Look at the table together: which roles does nobody wear, which do several share? Who would hand a hat over, and who would take it?
4. Agree who hands over or takes on which hat, and by when.

Setting: existing teams of 3 to 10, 60 minutes
Good for: team launches and reorganisations

ONE-TO-ONE

THE HATS IN YOUR LIFE

1. The client picks every hat they wear in life right now: at work, at home, with friends. Usually six to ten.
2. They say a few words about each, then turn the cards over and sort them by colour. Green and orange were chosen, blue and purple given. Green and blue do a job, orange and purple send a signal.
3. Turn them face up again, still in groups. Which group is biggest, which is empty? Which hat would they put down, which pick up?

Setting: one-to-one coaching, about 45 minutes
Good for: life balance, overload, big changes in life

ONE-TO-ONE

WEAR, WANT, EXPECT

1. The client picks three hats: the one they wear now, the one they want to wear, and the one others expect them to wear. They name who the others are.
2. They lay the three out as a triangle, with the distance between the cards showing how far apart they feel.
3. Explore the gaps. Whose expectation is it? What would it take to move one hat closer? What is one small step this week?

Setting: one-to-one coaching, 30 to 45 minutes
Good for: role conflict, career questions, a new job

PROMPTS

WARM-UP

1. Choose a hat you are drawn to. Why?
2. Choose a hat you do not like. Why?

TEAM

1. Choose a hat for your role on the team.
2. Choose a hat for the role you wish you had.
3. Choose a hat for a role the team is missing.

LEADERSHIP

1. Choose a hat for good leadership.
2. Choose a hat for a skill you want to develop.

CONFLICT

1. Choose a hat that means conflict to you.
2. Choose the hat you would most like to wear in a conflict.

AWARENESS

1. Choose a hat that makes you feel stressed. Why?
2. Choose a hat that calms you. Why?

PERSONAL

1. Choose the hat others expect you to wear.
2. Choose a hat for your role in your family.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Brian Tarallo is the managing director of Lizard Brain. He specialises in visual methods and virtual meetings and has worked as a visual facilitator and graphic recorder for more than 20 years.

He is an IAF Master Certified Professional Facilitator and an IFVP Master Visual Practitioner, wrote *Surviving the Horror of Online Meetings*, and received an IAF Facilitation Impact Award in 2023.

ABOUT LIZARD BRAIN



Lizard Brain is a visual facilitation and graphic recording company in the Washington, D.C., metro area.

The team plans and runs workshops that use drawing and visual thinking, draws live graphic records of meetings and events, facilitates online, and trains people in design thinking, visual facilitation and graphic recording.

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MEET METAFOX

metaFox works towards a world with more emotional intelligence. We make tools for personal growth and run events for the people who use them.

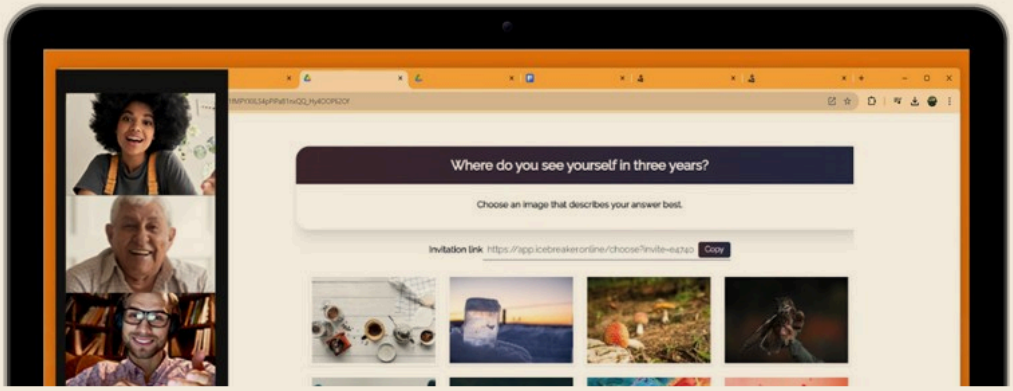
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Emotions Cards “How do you feel?”
60 cards for naming and exploring feelings.



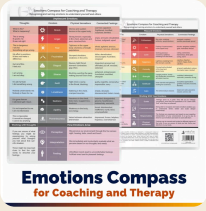
Needs Cards “What do you need?”
60 cards for finding the needs behind feelings.



Values Cards “What Really Matters!”
80 cards for identifying core values.



Strengths Cards “Stronger You”
52 cards for discovering strengths.



Emotions Compass
An overview for naming emotions.

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