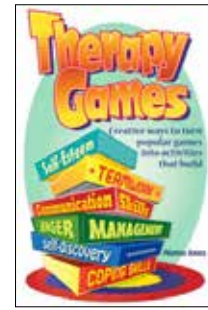


*A sample introduction chapter from the book:  
Therapy Games  
Creative Ways to Turn Popular Games Into Activities That Build  
Self-Esteem, Teamwork, Communication Skills, Anger Manage-  
ment, Self-Discovery, and Coping Skills*



# APPLES TO APPLES

APPLES TO APPLES is one of the best group games out there. One of the biggest advantages of this game is that people can join in during the middle of the game. This makes it a great option to have ongoing during a free time for any group. It's very easy to show newcomers how to play, and the game will quickly become a favorite for those who try it.

## **Game Summary**

APPLES TO APPLES comes with 756 Red Apple Cards and 252 Green Apple Cards. The Red Apple Cards are mostly filled with people, places, things, and events. The Green Apple Cards contain descriptive words.

Everyone begins with seven red cards, and one person is chosen to be the “judge” for the first round. The judge selects a green card from the top of the draw pile, and he or she lays it out on the table face up so everyone can see the word. Each person (except for the judge) looks at their seven cards. The players then select the one card in their hand that they think best fits the descriptive word and lays it face down in a pile in the middle. Once everyone has laid down a card, the judge collects the pile and reads them. The judge determines which one he or she thinks best fits the descriptive word and announces this card to the group. The person who played that card is the winner of the round and collects the green card.

For the next round, select a new judge (usually you will go around the circle). Everyone takes a red card from the draw pile to start each round with seven cards. The judge lays down another green card and play continues in the same manner as above. The winner is the first one to collect a predetermined number of green cards or the person who has the most green cards when it is time to end the game.

## **Therapeutic Applications of APPLES TO APPLES**

APPLES TO APPLES is such an interactive game that many different object lessons can be pulled from playing the game itself. Oftentimes people will feel that the judge didn't make the choice that made the most sense; they'll frequently think that their card should have been chosen when it wasn't. This can lead to a discussion about feeling like life is fair or not. Because the judge is the one in control, there's a good opportunity to discuss feelings we have about being in control or feeling like others are in control. Also, everyone should feel the pressure of being the judge, and this can open the discussion about making decisions when in a group. Being judged by others or our own judgment of others is another easy lesson that can be derived from this game.

Many of the games in this chapter focus on self-discovery. Individuals are asked to select cards in the course of the game that are descriptive of how they see themselves, how they think others view them, or how group members view each other. Some of the games focus more on communication skills or self-esteem. As you'll see, there is such a wide variety of ways that APPLES TO APPLES can be used as a therapeutic tool to open up communication in a group.

### **Discussion Prompts: Feeling like life isn't fair**

1. Did you ever feel it wasn't fair when your card was not chosen and it clearly seemed to be the best fit? Why?
2. How do you react when you feel that your life isn't fair?
3. Do you feel that other people have an advantage over you in life? If so, why do you feel you're at a disadvantage?
4. If you feel that your life is unfair, who do you blame?
5. Do you feel that you can rise above the circumstances that seem to be putting you at an unfair advantage?
6. What can you do to overcome circumstances you feel put you in an unfair situation?

### **Discussion Prompts: Feeling like others control your life**

1. How did you feel when someone else was deciding if you had a good card or not?
2. Do you ever feel like others judge the decisions you make? How does this make you feel?
3. Do you question your own judgment when someone else doesn't think you made the right choice about something?
4. How can you become more confident with yourself when your decision isn't what others agree with?

### **Discussion Prompts: Making decisions**

1. Do you prefer to be the one leading and making decisions, or following? Why?
2. Do you ever feel that the options in front of you are all negative? How can you turn your negatives into positives?
3. Did you ever argue to convince the judge that your card was best? Why or why not? Are you willing to stand up and fight for what you believe?
4. Did you ever feel the judge made a decision that you felt wasn't fair? Why or why not? How do you feel inside when you think things are unfair?

### **Discussion Prompts: Judging others or feeling judged**

1. Do you ever feel that people judge you? Is this a good or bad thing, and why?
2. What information do you use to judge others? Why do we judge others?
3. Did you ever select a card from the draw pile that would have been perfect for a previous round?
4. Did you wish you could go back and get a "do over" on the previous round with a new card?
5. Do you ever wish you could get a "do over" in life?
6. What would you go back and change in your life?
7. What can you do about situations you wish you could do over but can't?
8. Would you want the job of permanent judge for this game? Why or why not?
9. Would you want to play with one person having all the power? Why or why not?