

# Becoming...everything else

a performance installation for three or more performers of any type

Michael Boyd

2004

## ***Becoming...everything else*** **Performance Instructions**

### **General**

This piece can be performed by musicians, dancers, actors and non-professional artists in any combination. The total number of performers should be at least three, without maximum limit. The performance space should be no larger than the interior of one large building (performers should not venture outside), but can be further limited to a contiguous portion of one building if desired. The macro timeframe can be chosen freely. Suggested durations vary from one day through several months. Before a performance of this piece commences, all performers should meet to determine the performance space limits and the macro timeframe in which the piece will occur. After this meeting, each performer independently will identify times within the larger timeframe when he/she will actually perform.

### **Cards**

Each player will receive a pack of seven cards. Each card contains four pieces of information. The top of a card provides beginning and ending cues for that card. One begins performing that card when the criterion listed in the “begin when” box is met, and likewise, one finishes when the “end when” details occur. Occasionally the starting and ending cues will be simultaneously present in a space. For example, if given “Start when you hear many voices speaking” and “End when you are in a long hallway,” one might encounter many voices speaking while occupying a long hallway. When this type of situation occurs, the performer should not begin interpreting nor skip the card. Instead, that performer should seek out a location where the beginning cue exists *without* the ending cue, and then begin the card. Performers may but are not required to remain within sight/earshot/etc. of each starting cue; movement within the designated performance space is free.

Once a card is initiated, each performer interprets the graphic found in the middle of the card and the verbs at the bottom of the card concurrently. For example, a triangle graphic and the verb “move” might suggest walking in a triangular path (this example is perhaps the most obvious interpretation and therefore perhaps less desirable). The simultaneous integration of all three verbs should be the goal of all interpretations. To accomplish this, performers may wish to begin interpreting a single verb and gradually incorporate the two additional verbs. These verbs may or may not be applied to the card’s initiating stimulus. The graphics are not specific with regard to performance output. Performers should attempt to express each graphic’s essence through varied interpretations of each card. The spatial aspects of graphics (the X-Y-Z axes), likewise, should not simply be interpreted as motions within a given space. Pauses should not be intentionally inserted, though they may occur naturally. Performers may choose to blend with or stand out from their environment (or both, consecutively or simultaneously, or some variant in between); decisions in this matter are important and should be based on the performer’s total interpretation of a given card. Traditional performance gestures within one’s medium (such as a musician playing a scale or an actor reciting a well

known monologue) should be avoided unless the given performance situation recontextualizes such gestures in interesting and new ways. *Players are encouraged to be creative and explore!*

### **Performance**

Prior to the start of the performance, each player should shuffle his/her pack of cards and then begin the piece with the first card. They should then proceed through all seven cards in that order (pacing is inherently addressed in the content of each card). This constitutes a cycle within his/her performance. When all seven cards have been performed, the pack must be reshuffled and a new cycle should commence with the newly ordered set of cards. If a performer needs to stop performing for any reason before finishing a card (for example if his/her personal micro timeframe is over), he/she can stop and simply resume performing the same card at their next performance opportunity. If a performer must stop after completing a card, but before beginning another, he/she should perform the next card when resuming the performance. When performers become aware of another who is performing the piece (by either seeing or hearing that person), they should join the other and coordinate their performances. This should continue until performers are dispersed from the space for either external reasons (e.g. need to leave) or because of card instructions.

The performance can begin at any time after the initial parameters of the performance have been determined; each performer should start whenever he/she wishes. The performance ends either at a predetermined time or may occur naturally as individual participants perform less and less frequently.

### **Shaping the Performance**

In addition to shuffling their pack of cards, performers have two other methods for shaping their performance. They may trade any cards with other performers, but only when both players are between cycles. Alternately, between cycles, performers may trade one of their cards with another drawn from a card bank (large envelope) that is placed within the space so that it is accessible by all. When using this method, performers may discard any of their cards back into the bank, but may only replace them with a card that shares three characteristics with cards already in their pack. As discussed above, each card has four pieces of information on it: start cue, end cue, graphic, and a verb list (two of three verbs in common can be considered “identical” for this purpose). For example, if a card in the bank has the same graphic as one card, an identical end cue with another, and two verbs in common with another card in one’s deck, it is permissible to trade a card for that one. Only one of these two options (trading with another performer or with the card bank) may be carried out each cycle, and only one card may be traded per cycle. Through these processes, performers can statistically weight their card packs toward different ends, enabling them to focus on a few types of cards (those sharing certain characteristics) or a great variety.

New performers may be added continually throughout the performance. Rather than receiving a new pack of cards, these players must acquire cards from current

performers. If approached by a new performer, each player must surrender one card to that person unless the new performer's card set is already equal to or larger than the current player's. Thus a natural upper limit on the total number of participants is created for any specific performance by the initial number of performers.

### **Rehearsals**

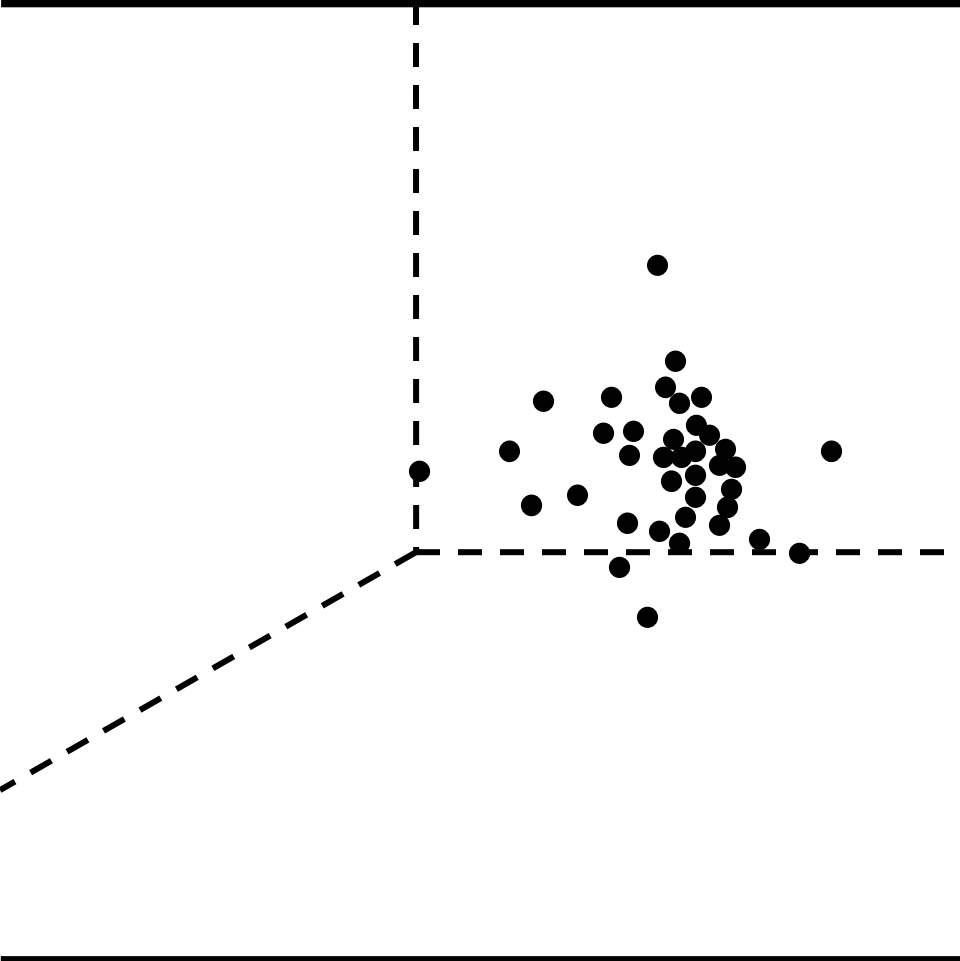
Rehearsals should encourage performers with less improvisatory experience to fully explore the possibilities of each card and avoid banal interpretations. For rehearsals, some or all performers should gather in one room and concurrently interpret a limited number of cards (one to three), ignoring their start and end cues. By the time the actual performance begins, each performer should have become familiar with the entire set of cards so that they are aware of all potential card combinations.

### **Extended Performance Options**

Two or more performers, if they choose, may record audio and/or visual (video without sound) material, separately or jointly, as their part of the performance (in an extreme example, all performers could be involved with this). This material may include any sounds or visuals encountered throughout the performance space including, but not limited to, those produced by other participants. These performers' actions are guided by the cards, as described above. The editing, manipulating, and merging of their materials should also be part of their performance. Accordingly, all actions involving audio or video equipment should result from card interpretations. These actions can be carried out at any time during or after the scheduled performance of the piece. During the editing process, performers can use people, spaces, and sounds from the tape or video to satisfy start and end cues and/or can interact with both recorded performers and those participating in the editing process (obviously, actions are still resulting from concurrently interpreting graphics and verbs). New performers may also be added as discussed previously. The length of the finished product should be determined (similar to the length of the entire performance) by the involved performers. Thus the resulting film and/or tape piece constitutes an outgrowth of some or all performers' interpretations and should be considered one facet of the entire performance (rather than a distillation or summary of it). This film or tape piece can be performed on a concert or as an installation. If the product is a film with audio accompaniment the audio and visual components need not be coordinated. Like all other performers, those involved with recording and editing should continually strive to be creative and original. It is critical to keep in mind that the act of recording, editing, etc. is part of a performance and not simply an effort to document events.

**Start when you  
are in a space with seven or  
more people**

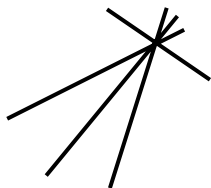
**End when you  
are alone**



**Extract  
Integrate  
Balance**

**Start when you  
are in a space with seven or  
more people**

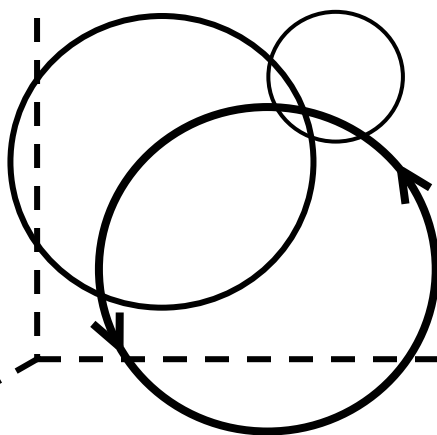
**End when you  
are alone**



**Imitate  
Oppose  
Engulf**

**Start when you  
are in a space with seven or  
more people**

**End when you  
are alone**



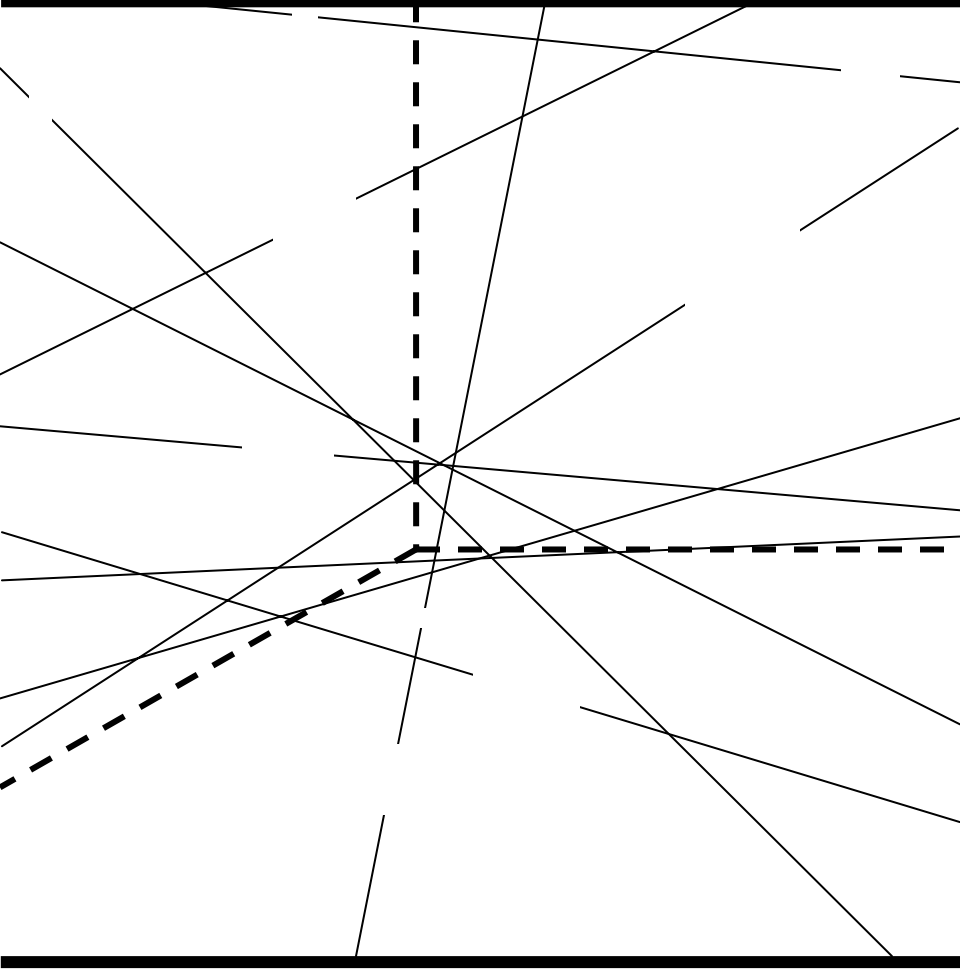
**Influence  
Punctuate  
Radiate**





**Start when you  
are alone**

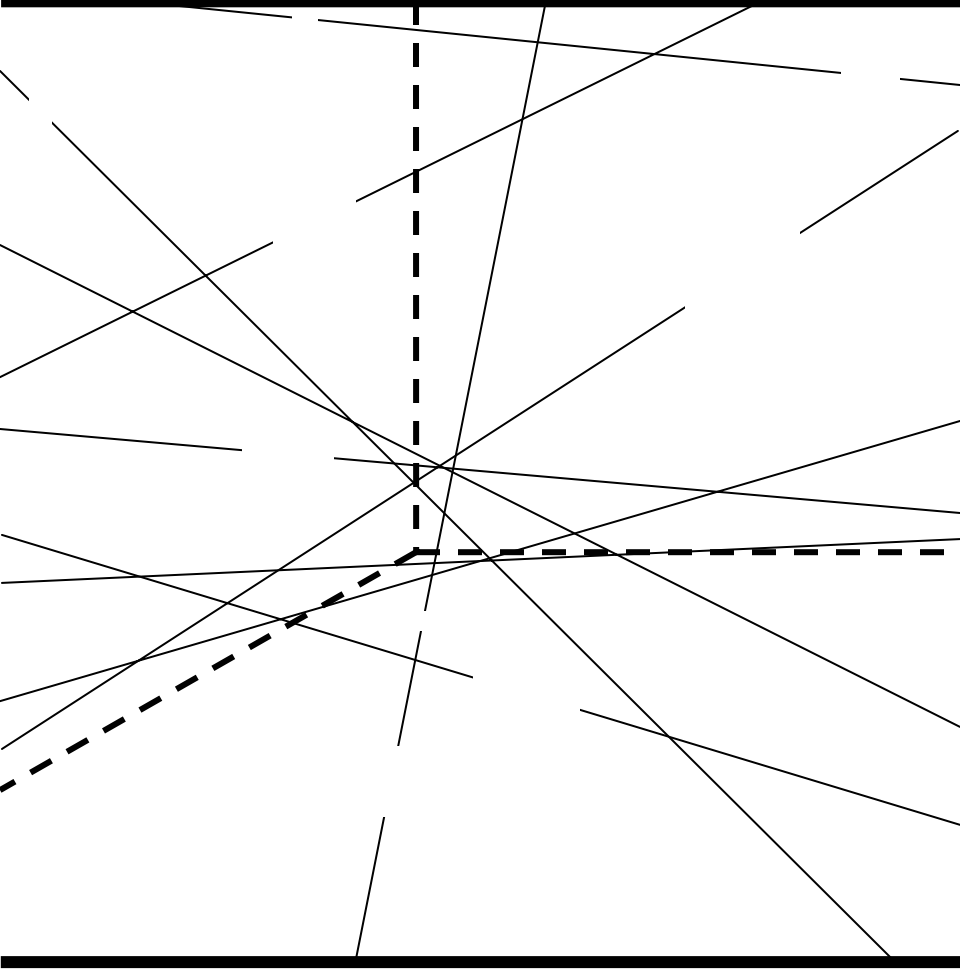
**End when you  
hear machine sounds**



**Disturb  
Punctuate  
Integrate**

**Start when you  
are alone**

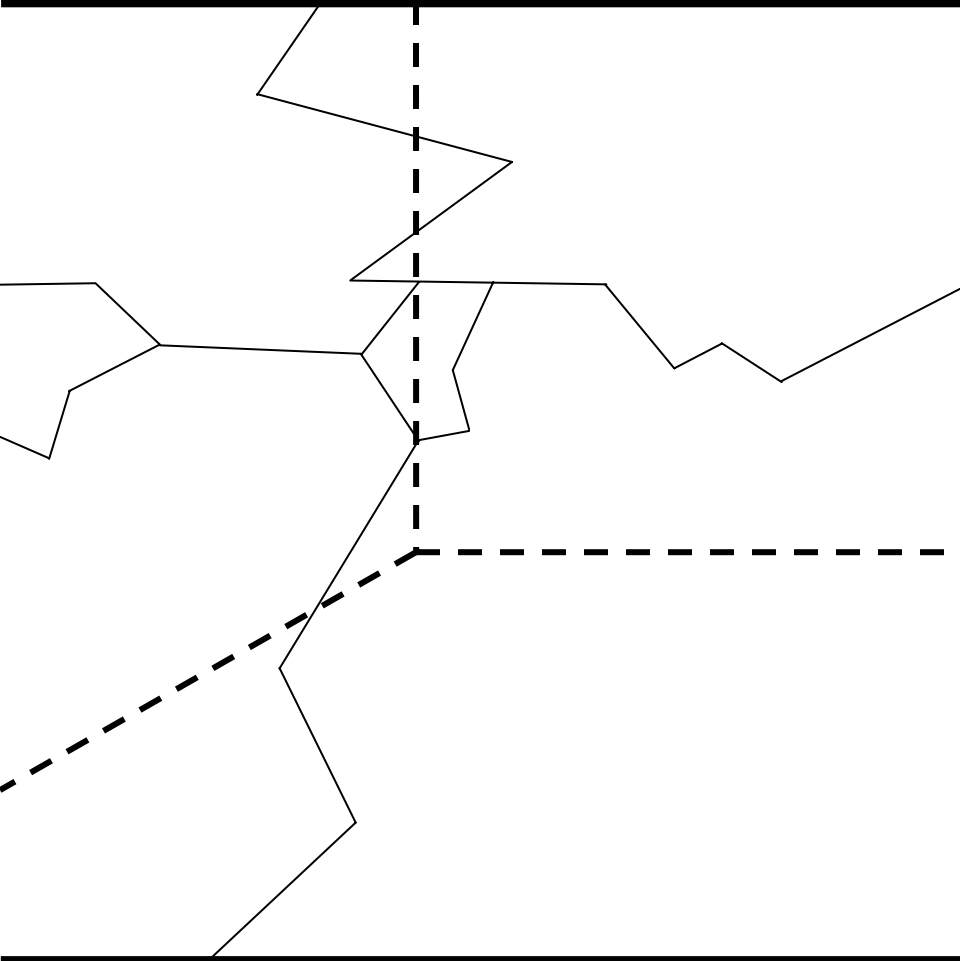
**End when you  
hear many voices speaking**



**Disturb  
Punctuate  
Engulf**

**Start when you  
are alone**

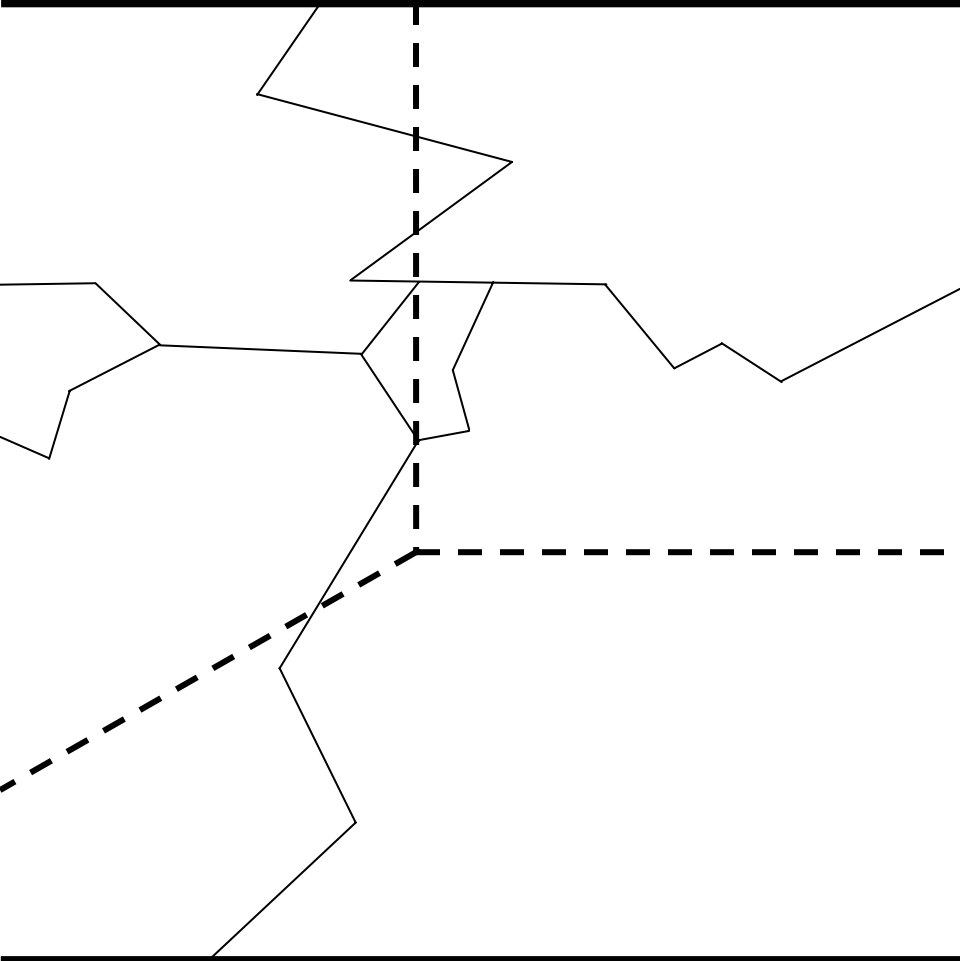
**End when you  
hear singing**



**Disturb  
Punctuate  
Radiate**

**Start when you  
are alone**

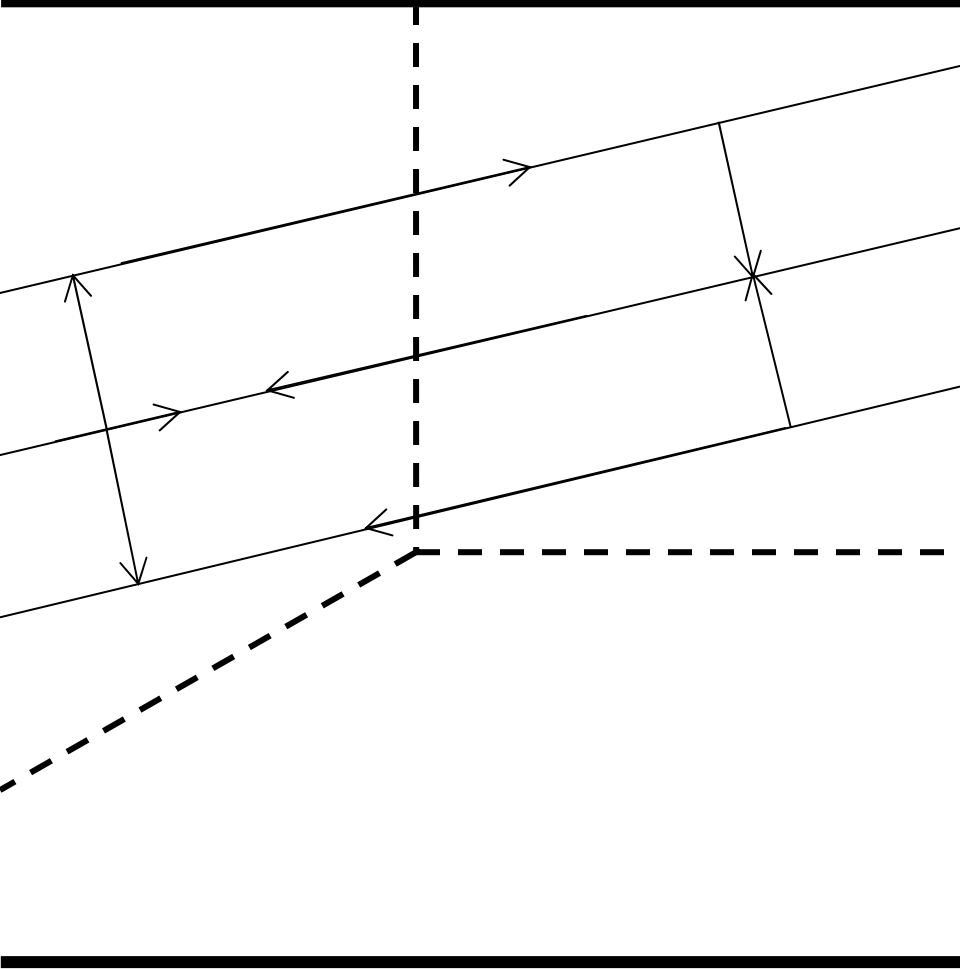
**End when you  
hear a single voice speaking**



**Disturb  
Punctuate  
Penetrate**

**Start when you  
are alone**

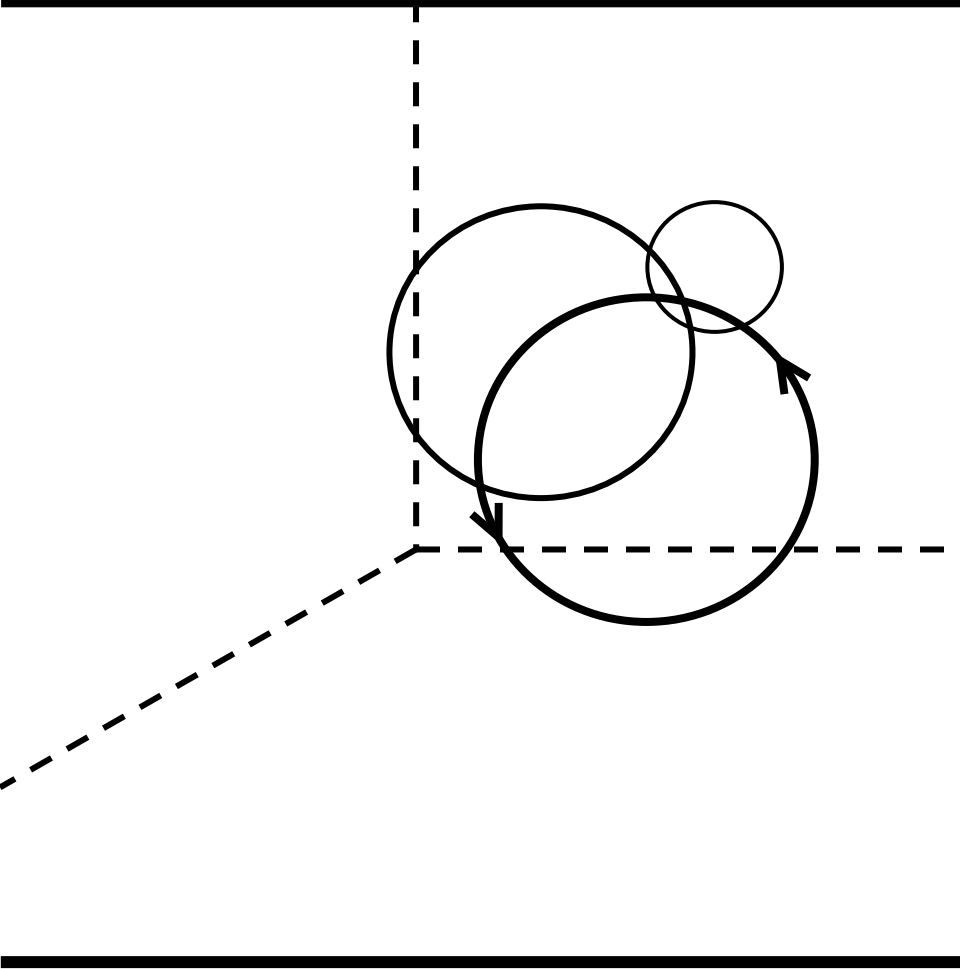
**End when you  
hear sounds from a space  
that you do not occupy**



**Disturb  
Punctuate  
Isolate**

**Start when you  
are in a hallway that dead-  
ends**

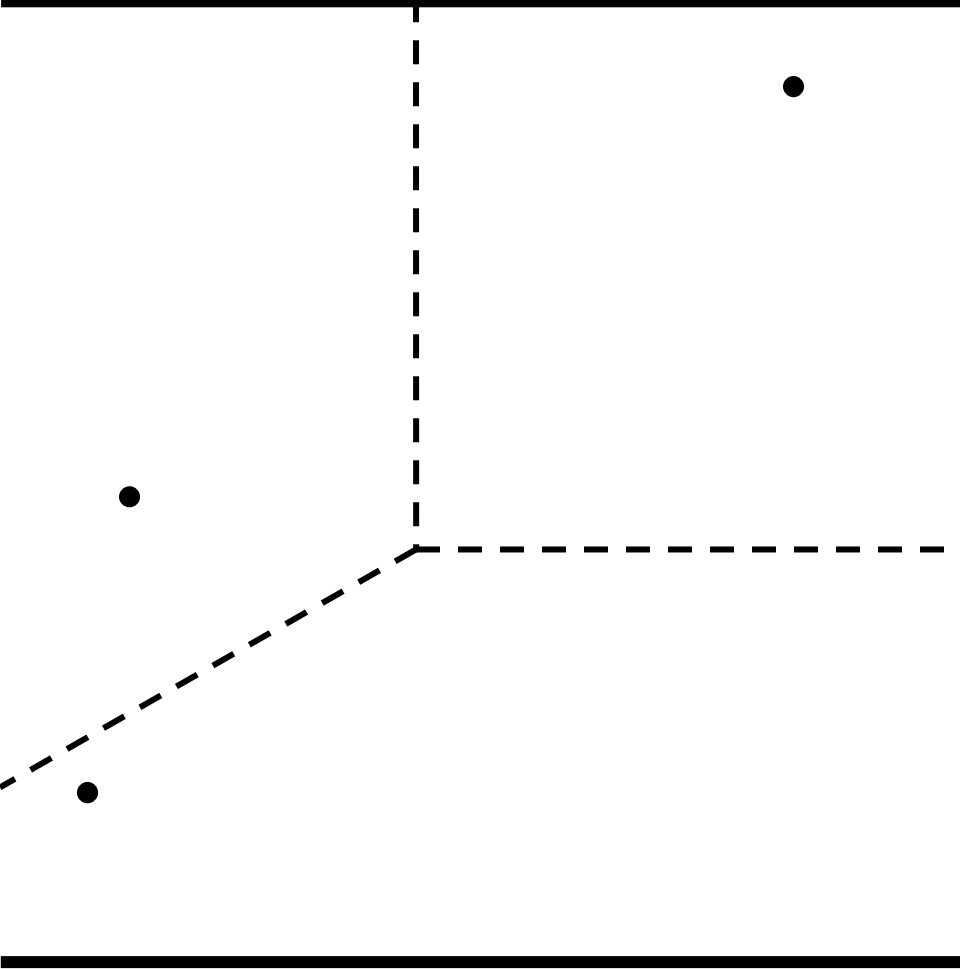
**End when you  
are spoken to**



**Integrate  
Isolate  
Engulf**

**Start when you  
are in a hallway that dead-  
ends**

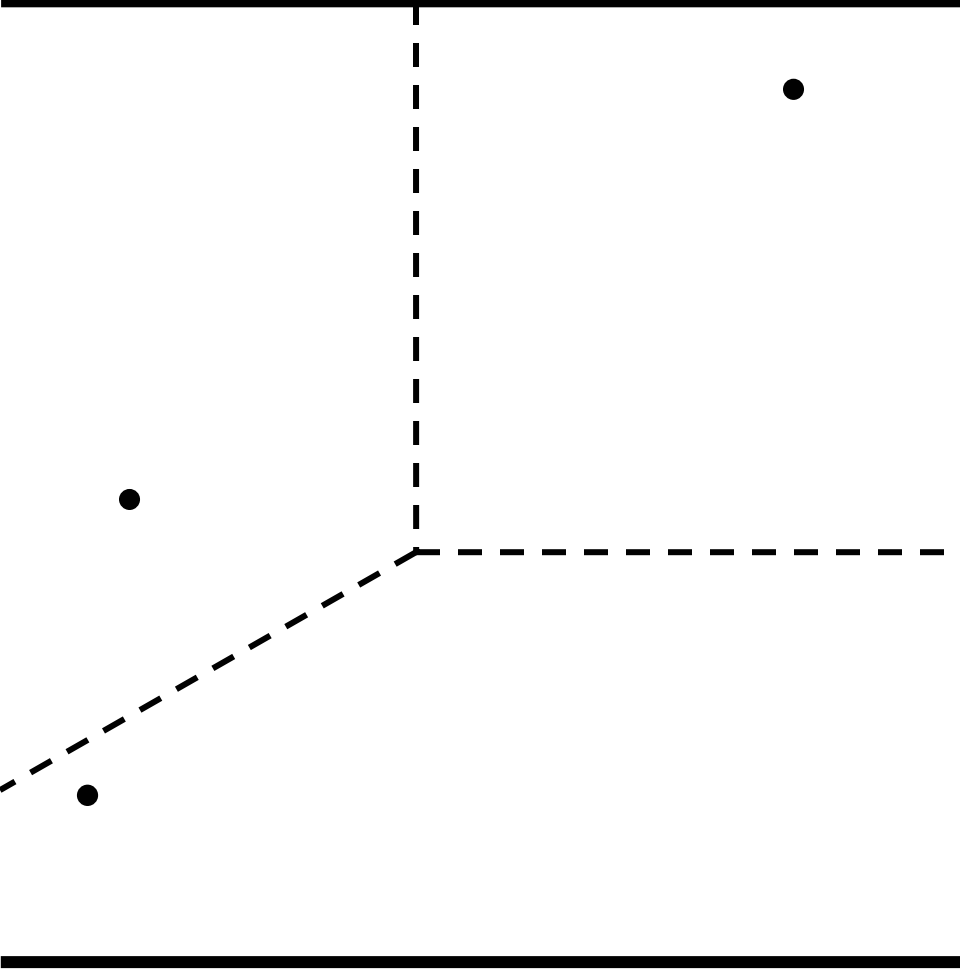
**End when you  
are in a space with seven or  
more people**



**Integrate  
Isolate  
Balance**

**Start when you  
are in a hallway that dead-  
ends**

**End when you  
see someone sitting alone**

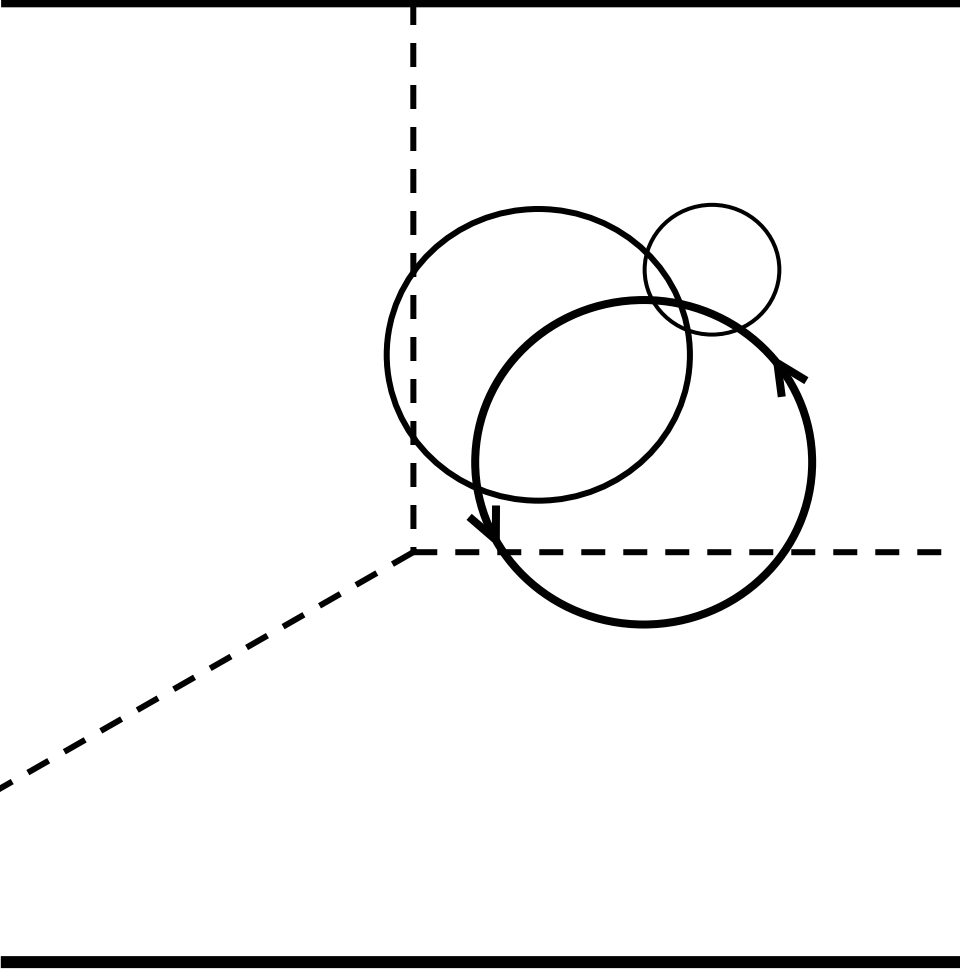


**Integrate  
Isolate  
Radiate**



**Start when you  
are in a hallway that dead-  
ends**

**End when you  
see someone walking  
towards or away from you**

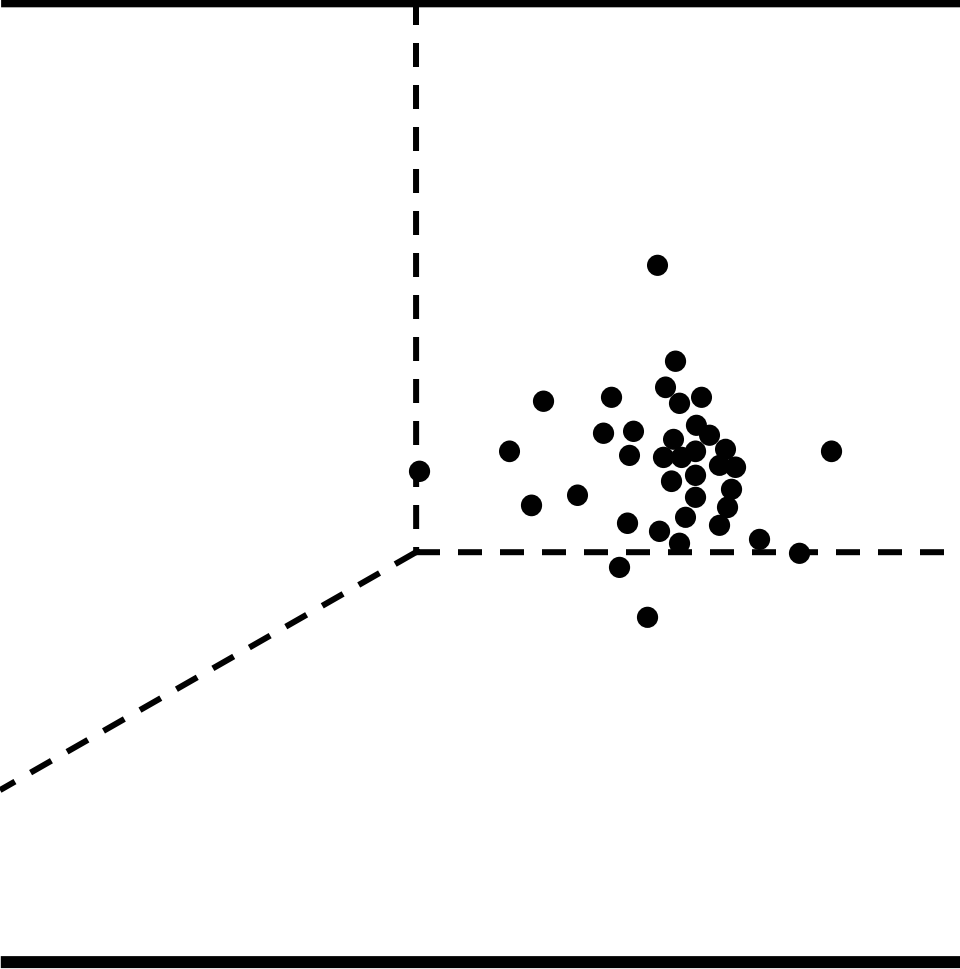


**Integrate  
Isolate  
Penetrate**



**Start when you  
find a fellow performer  
performing this piece**

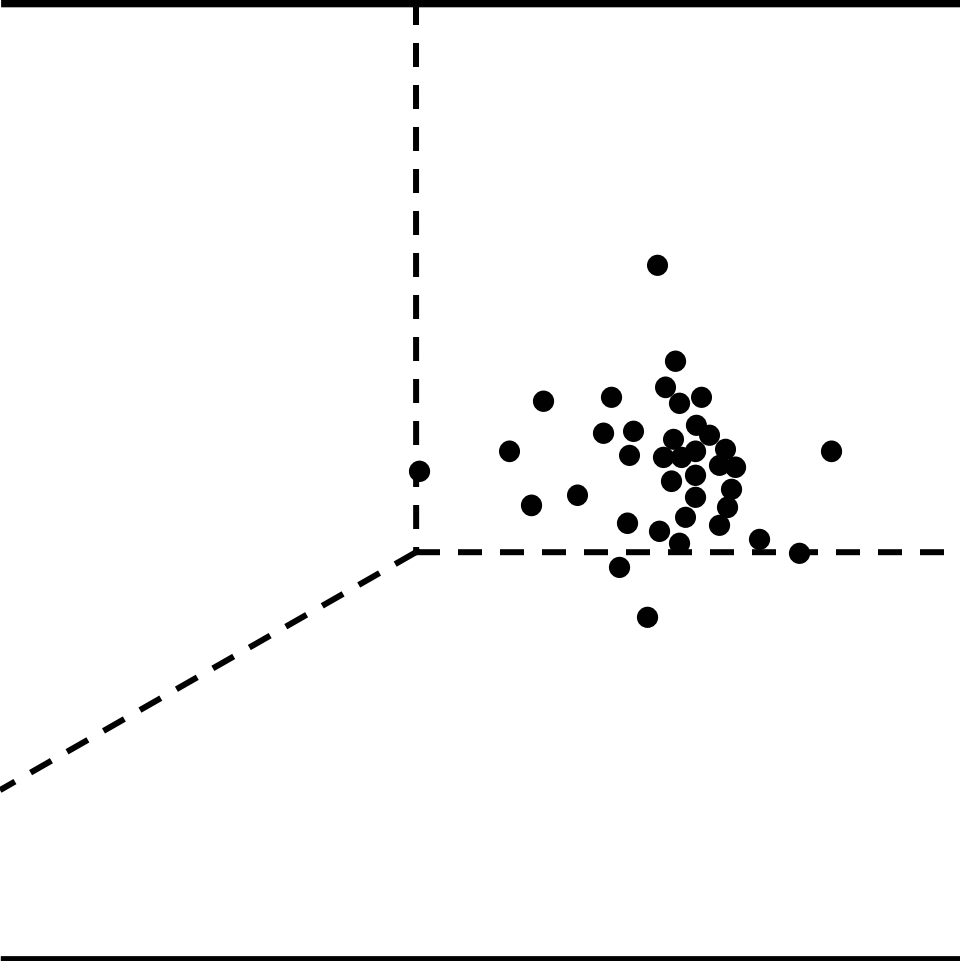
**End when you  
hear machine sounds**



**Imitate  
Oppose  
Isolate**

**Start when you  
find a fellow performer  
performing this piece**

**End when you  
see someone sitting alone**



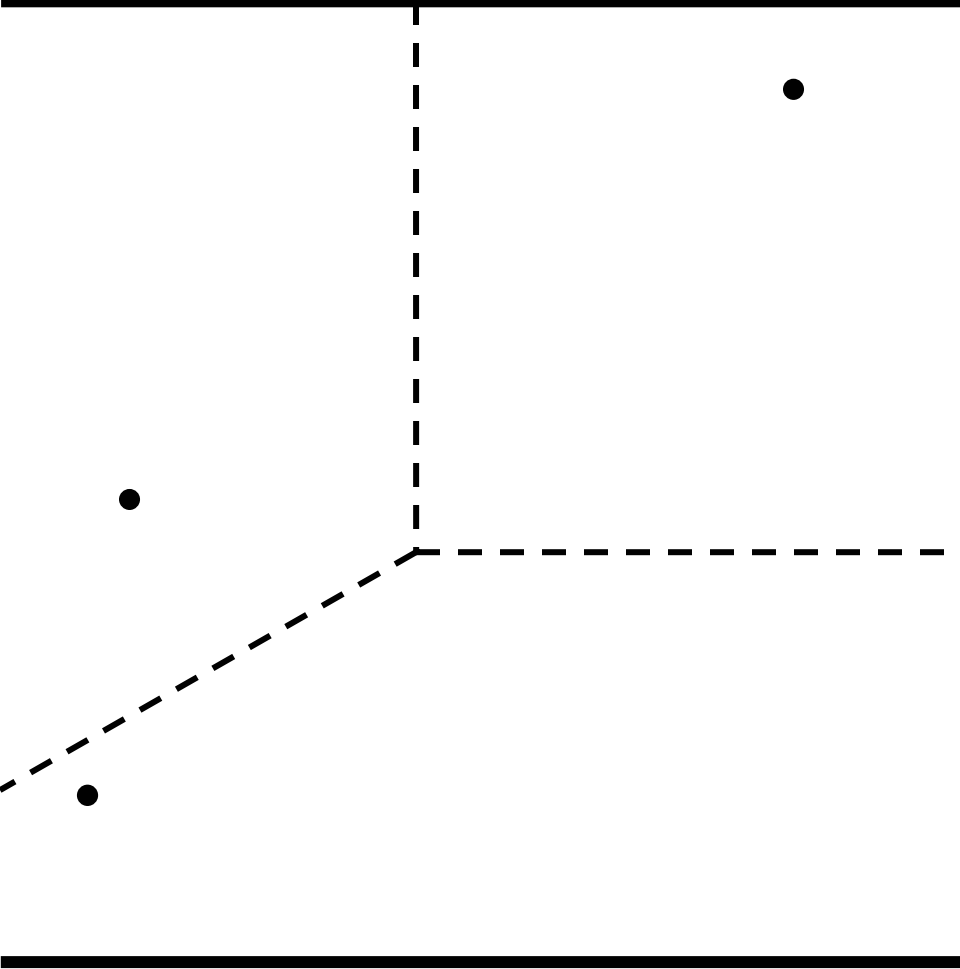
**Imitate  
Oppose  
Influence**





**Start when you  
are near an elevator**

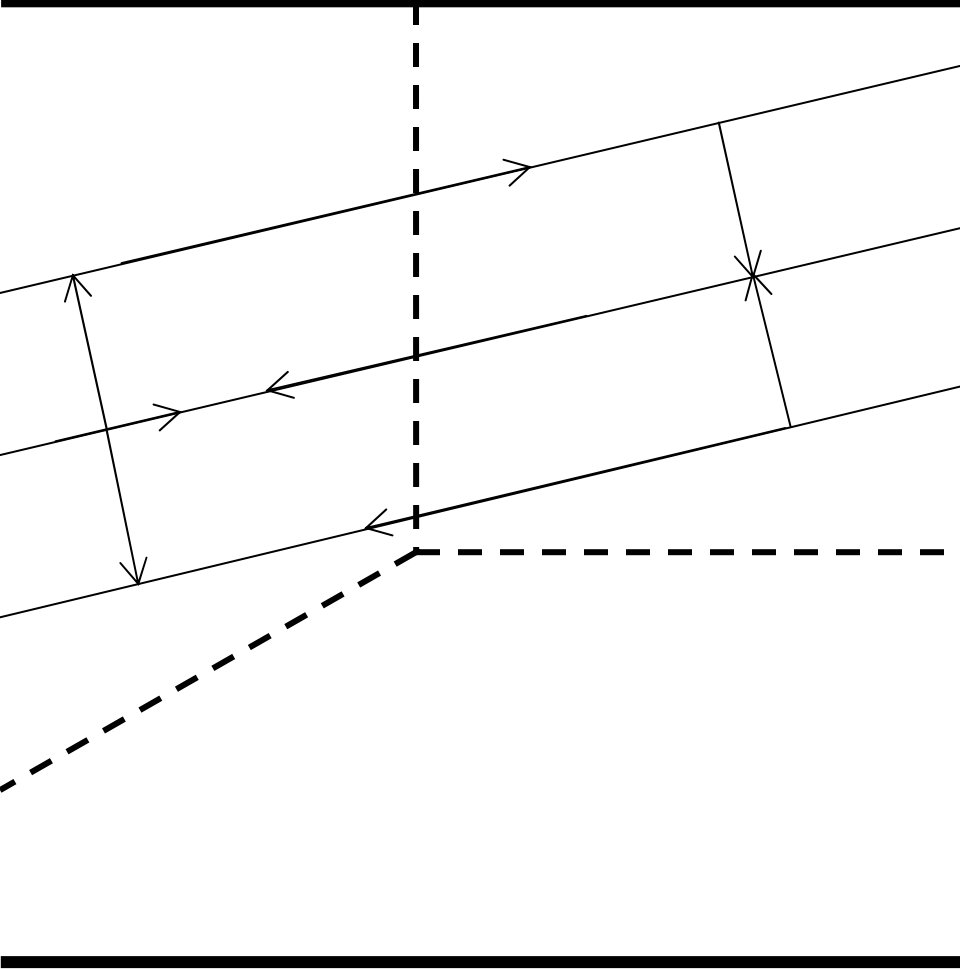
**End when you  
are in a lobby**



**Integrate  
Punctuate  
Isolate**

**Start when you  
are near an elevator**

**End when you  
are in a hallway that dead-  
ends**

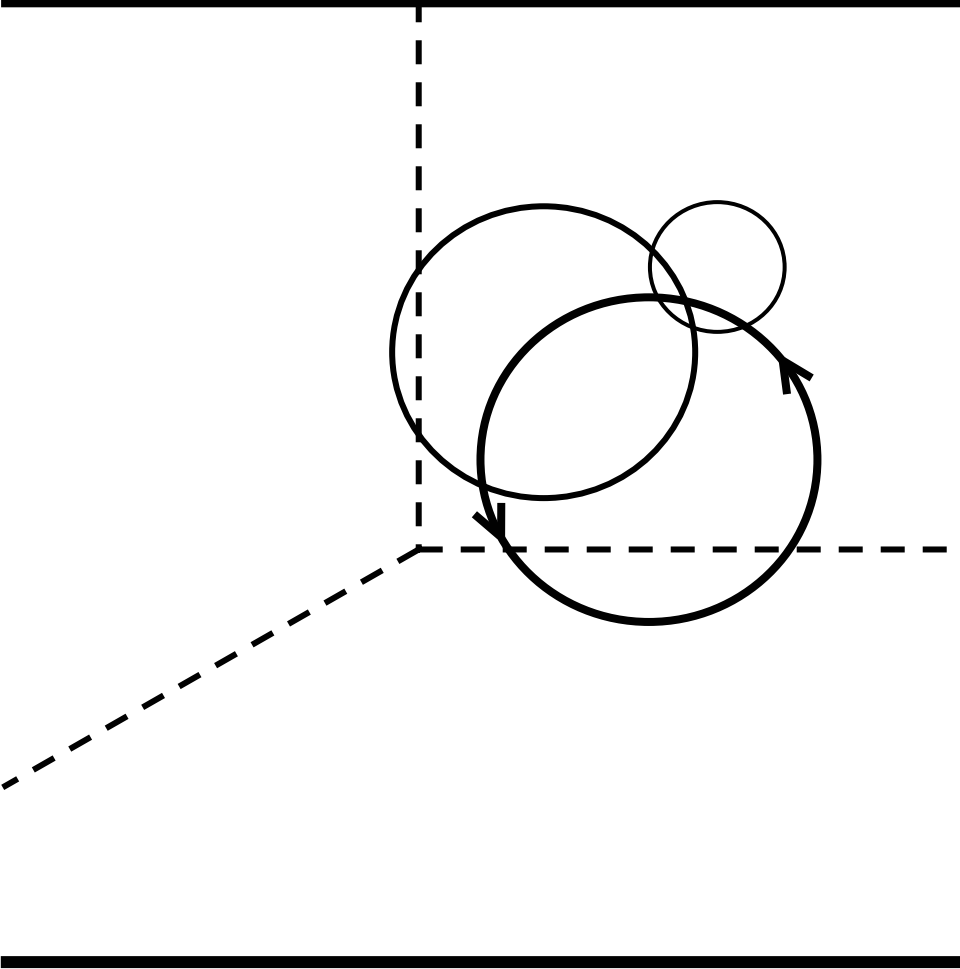


**Integrate  
Punctuate  
Radiate**



**Start when you  
are near an elevator**

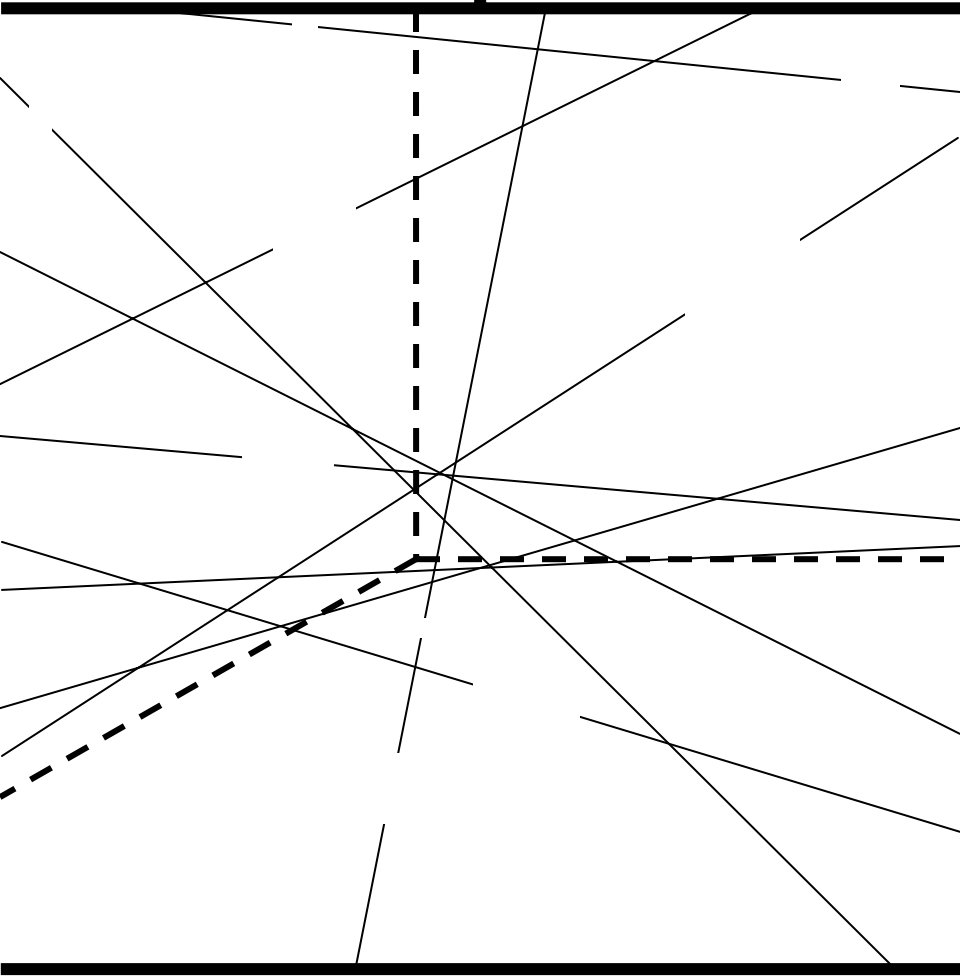
**End when you  
are in a stairwell**



**Integrate  
Punctuate  
Engulf**

**Start when you  
are near an elevator**

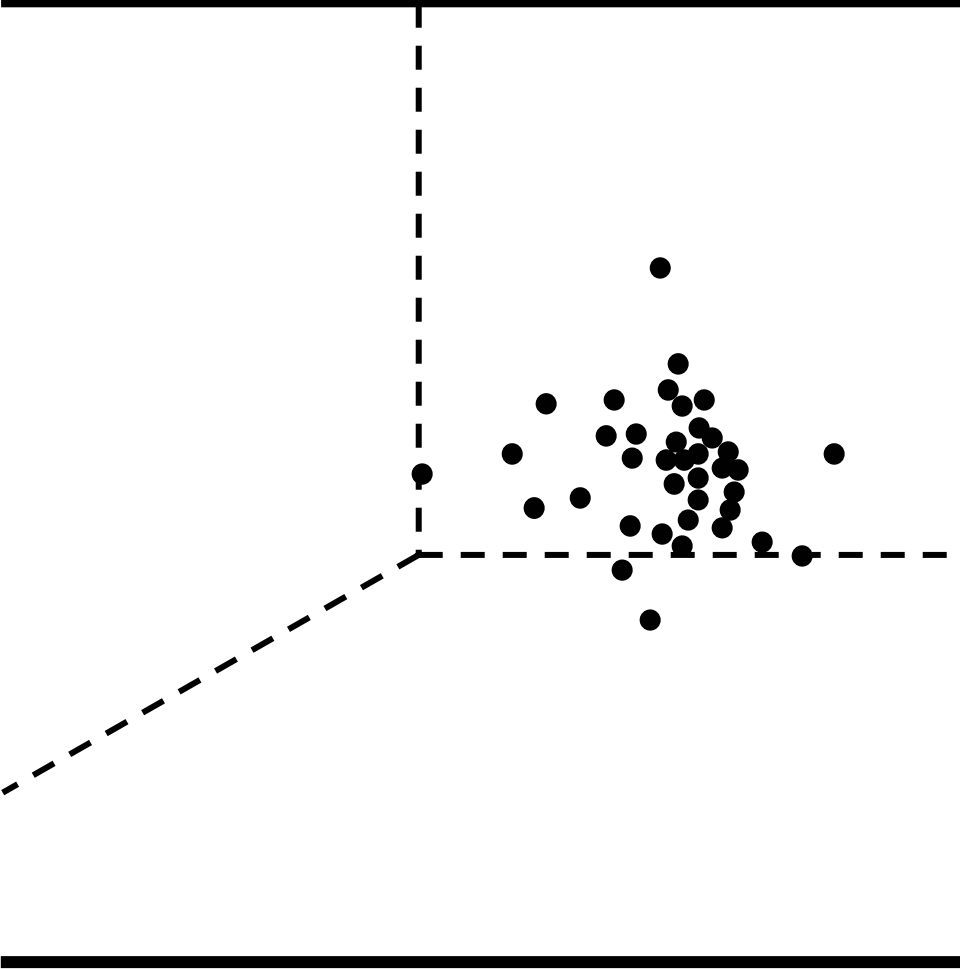
**End when you  
are in a long hallway**



**Integrate  
Punctuate  
Penetrate**

**Start when you  
are in a lobby**

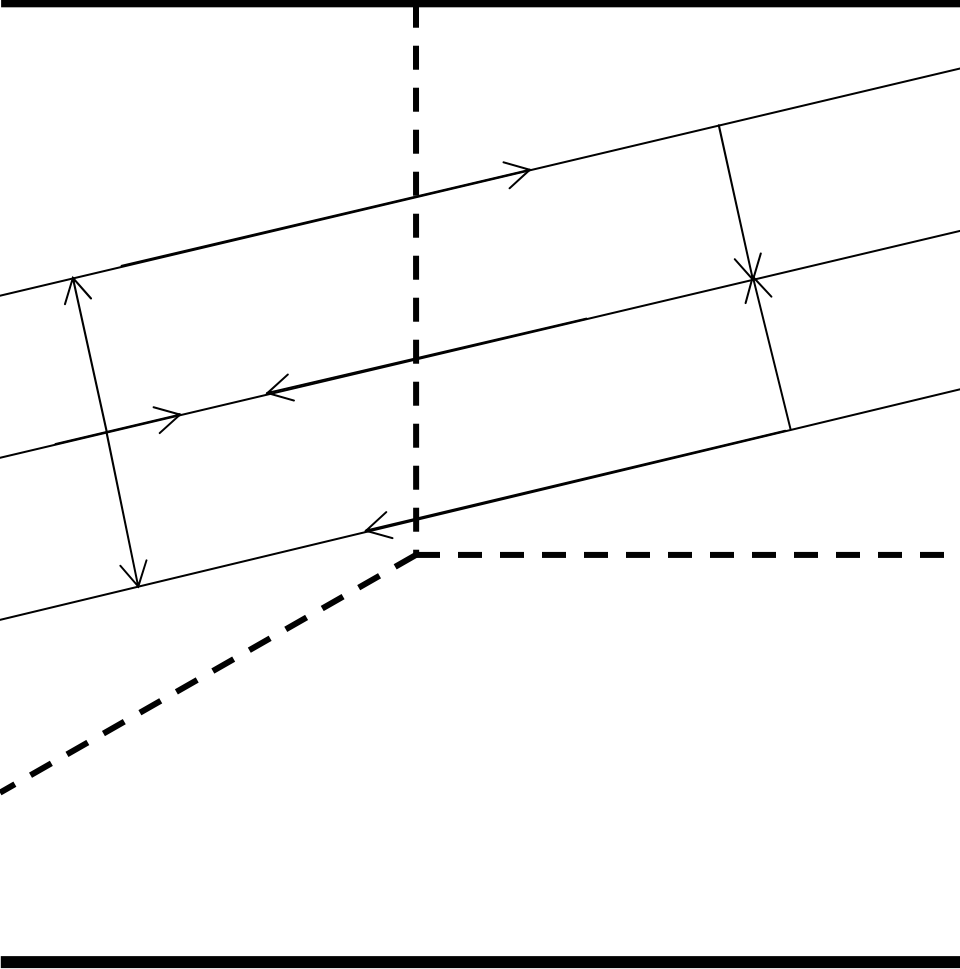
**End when you  
are in a stairwell**



**Influence  
Punctuate  
Oppose**

**Start when you  
are in a lobby**

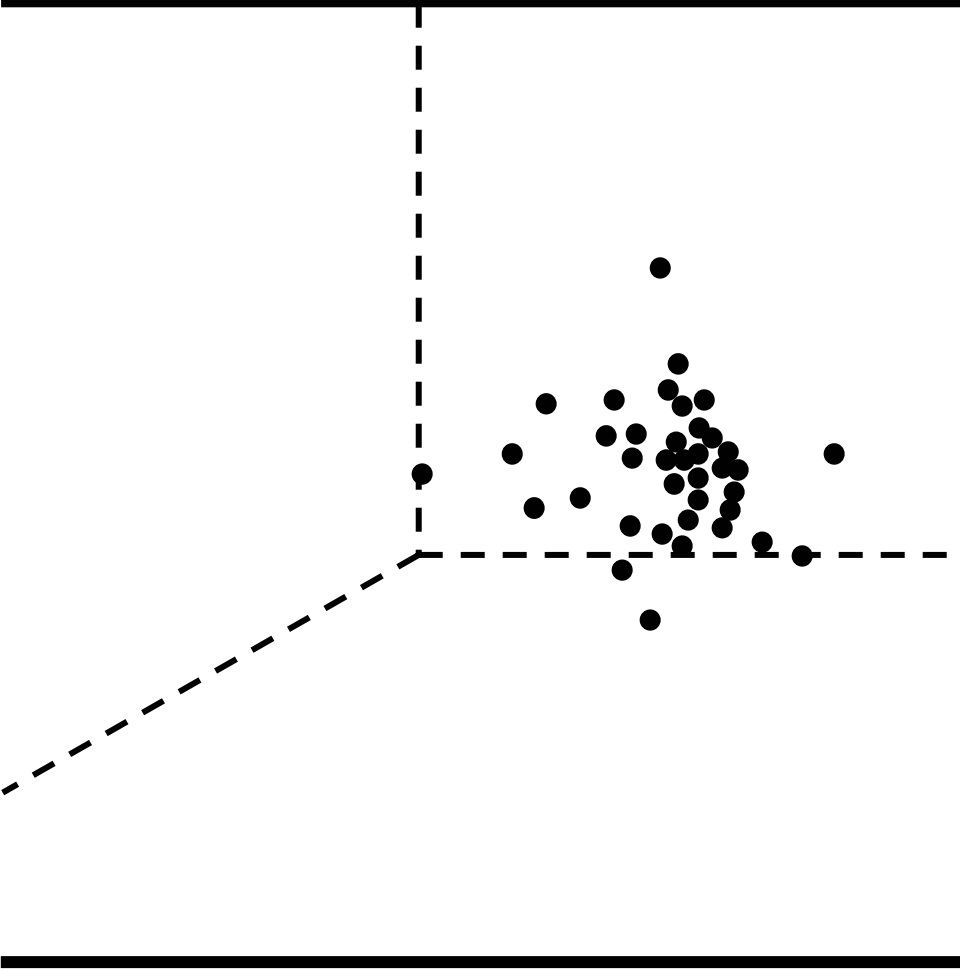
**End when you  
are near an elevator**



**Influence  
Punctuate  
Disturb**

**Start when you  
are in a lobby**

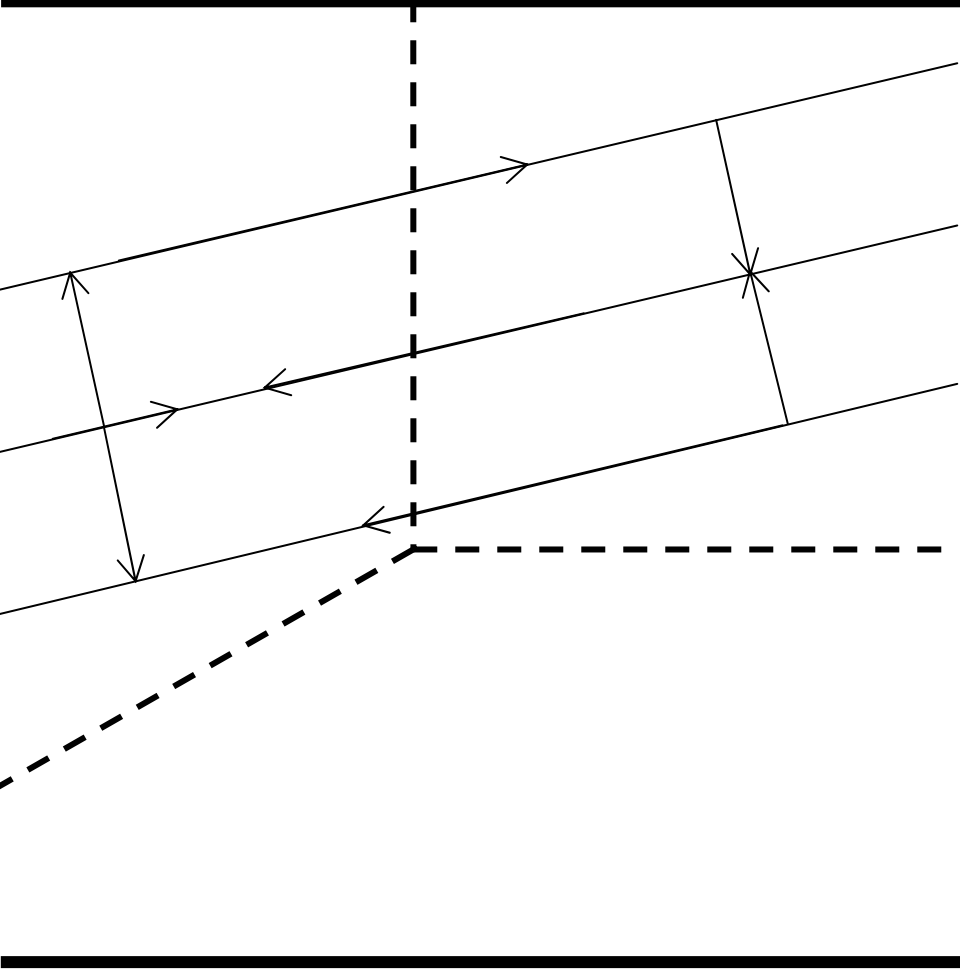
**End when you  
hear sounds from a space  
that you do not occupy**



**Influence  
Punctuate  
Balance**

**Start when you  
are in a lobby**

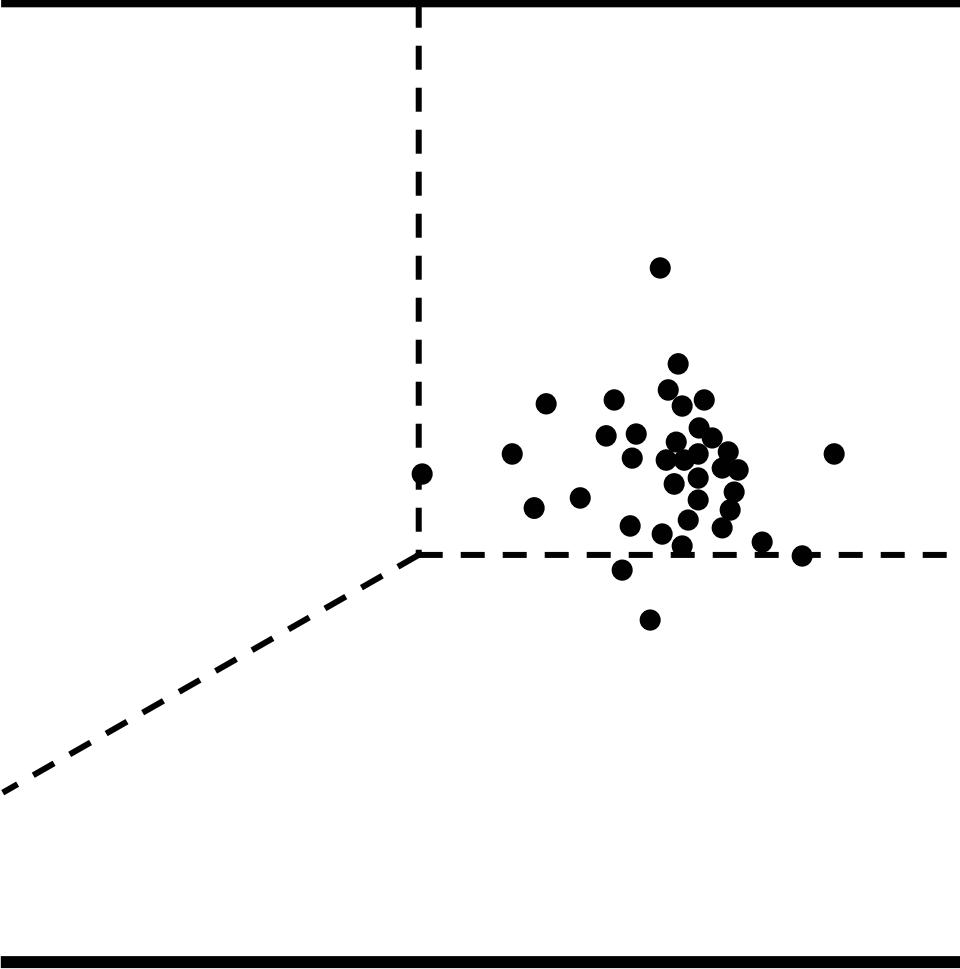
**End when you  
are in a long hallway**



**Influence  
Punctuate  
Imitate**

**Start when you  
are in a lobby**

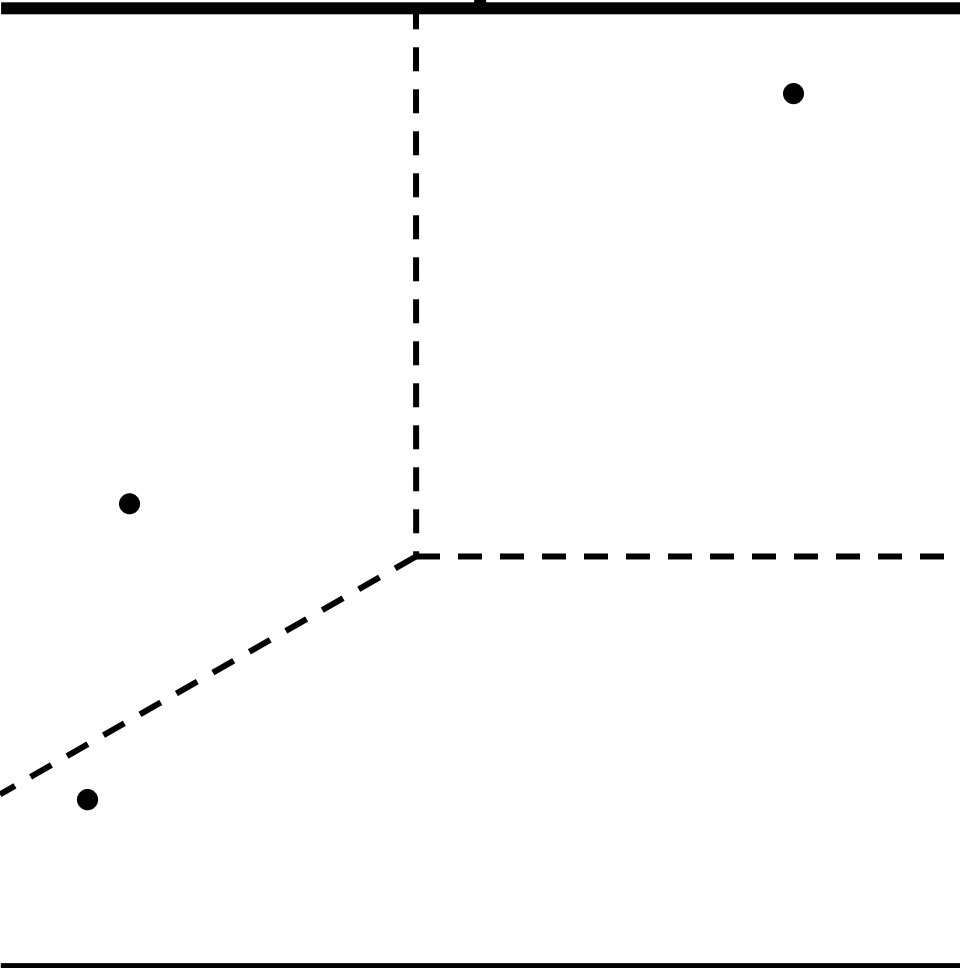
**End when you  
see someone walking  
towards or away from you**



**Influence  
Punctuate  
Isolate**

**Start when you  
are in a long hallway**

**End when you  
hear a single voice speaking**

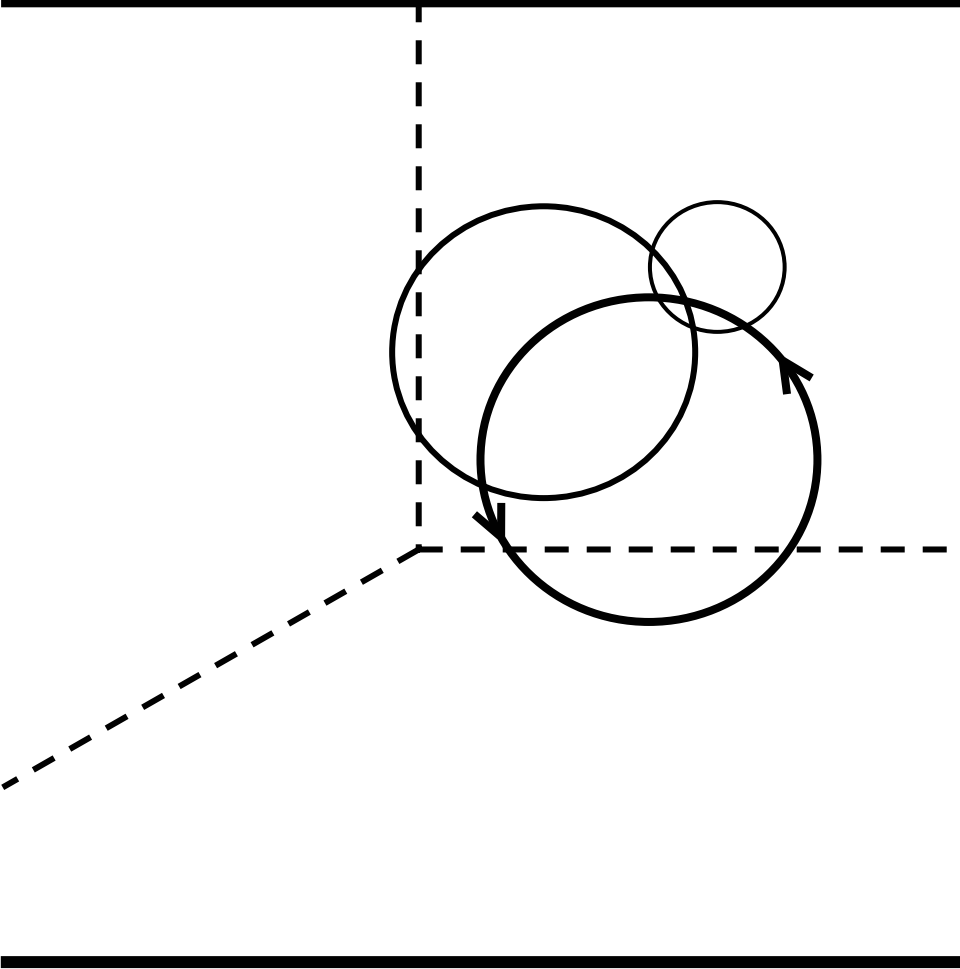


**Penetrate  
Disturb  
Integrate**



**Start when you  
are in a long hallway**

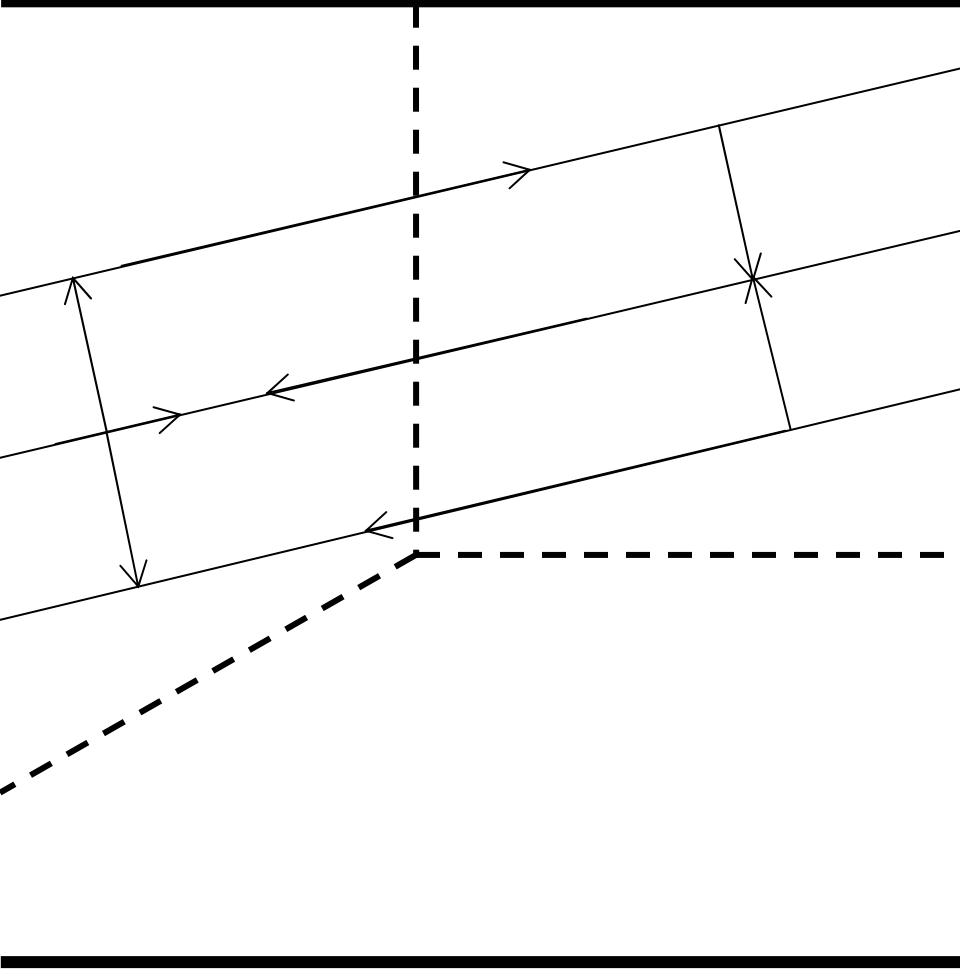
**End when you  
are alone**



**Penetrate  
Disturb  
Balance**

**Start when you  
are in a long hallway**

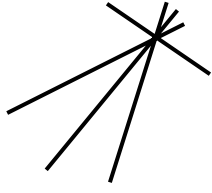
**End when you  
see someone sitting alone**



**Penetrate  
Disturb  
Extract**

**Start when you  
hear machine sounds**

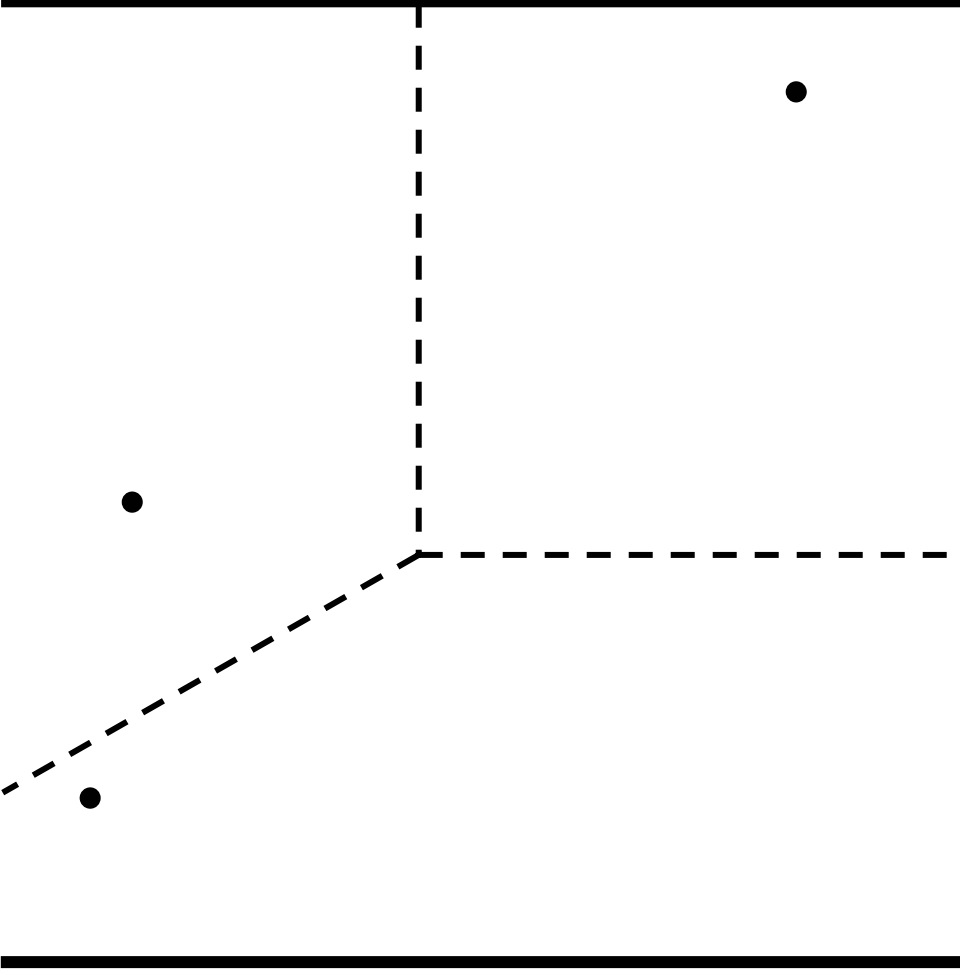
**End when you  
are spoken to**



**Integrate  
Radiate  
Imitate**

**Start when you  
hear machine sounds**

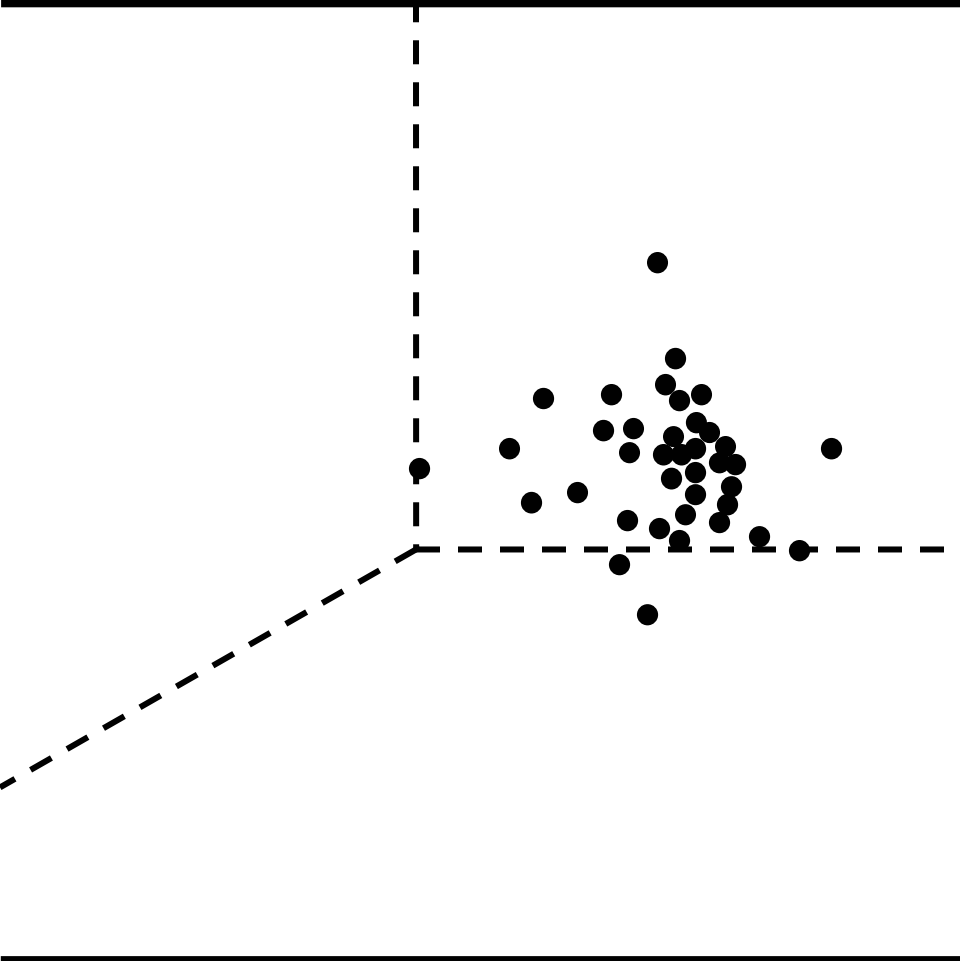
**End when you  
hear many voices speaking**



**Integrate  
Radiate  
Punctuate**

**Start when you  
hear machine sounds**

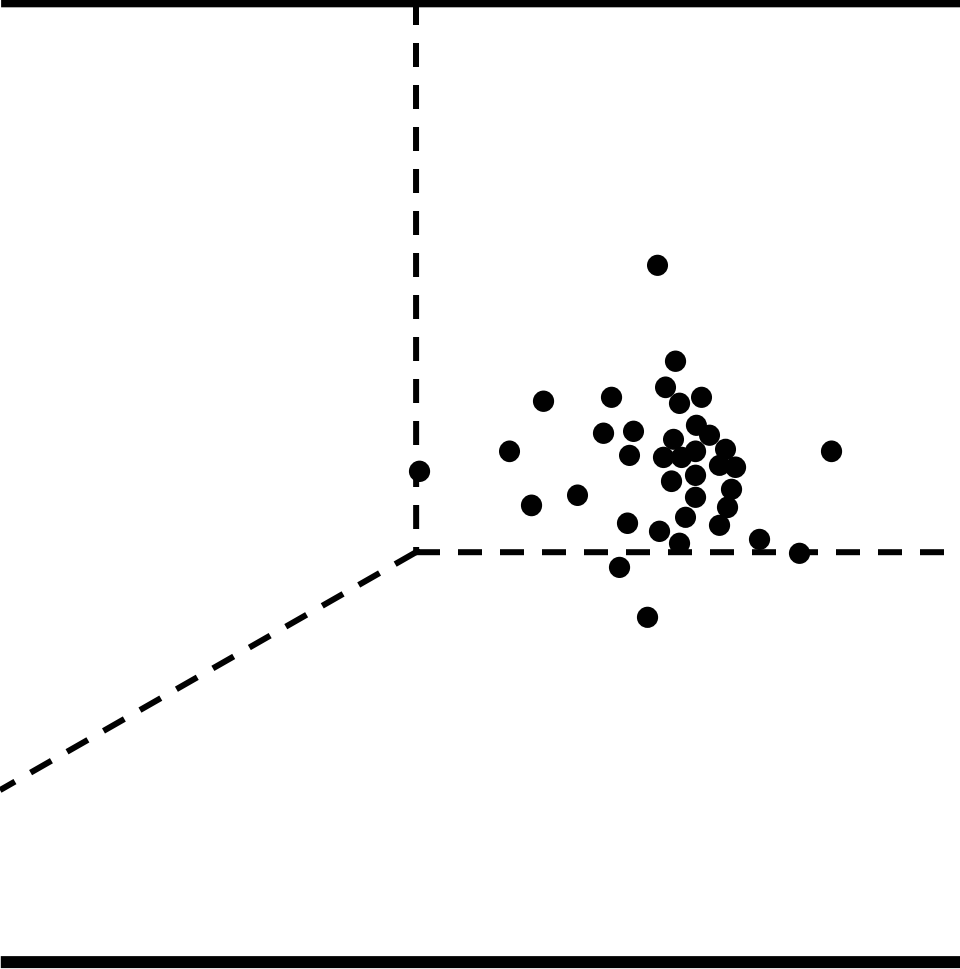
**End when you  
hear a single voice speaking**



**Integrate  
Radiate  
Disturb**

**Start when you  
hear many voices speaking**

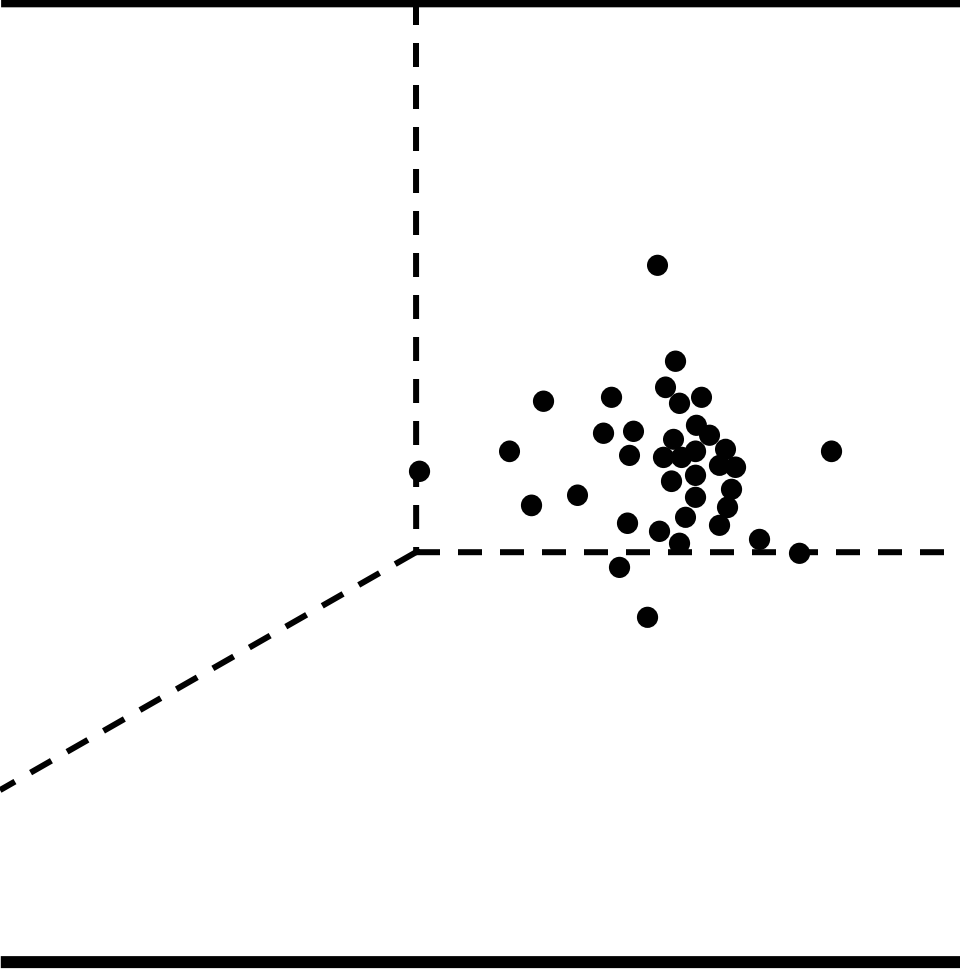
**End when you  
are spoken to**



**Extract  
Balance  
Imitate**

**Start when you  
hear many voices speaking**

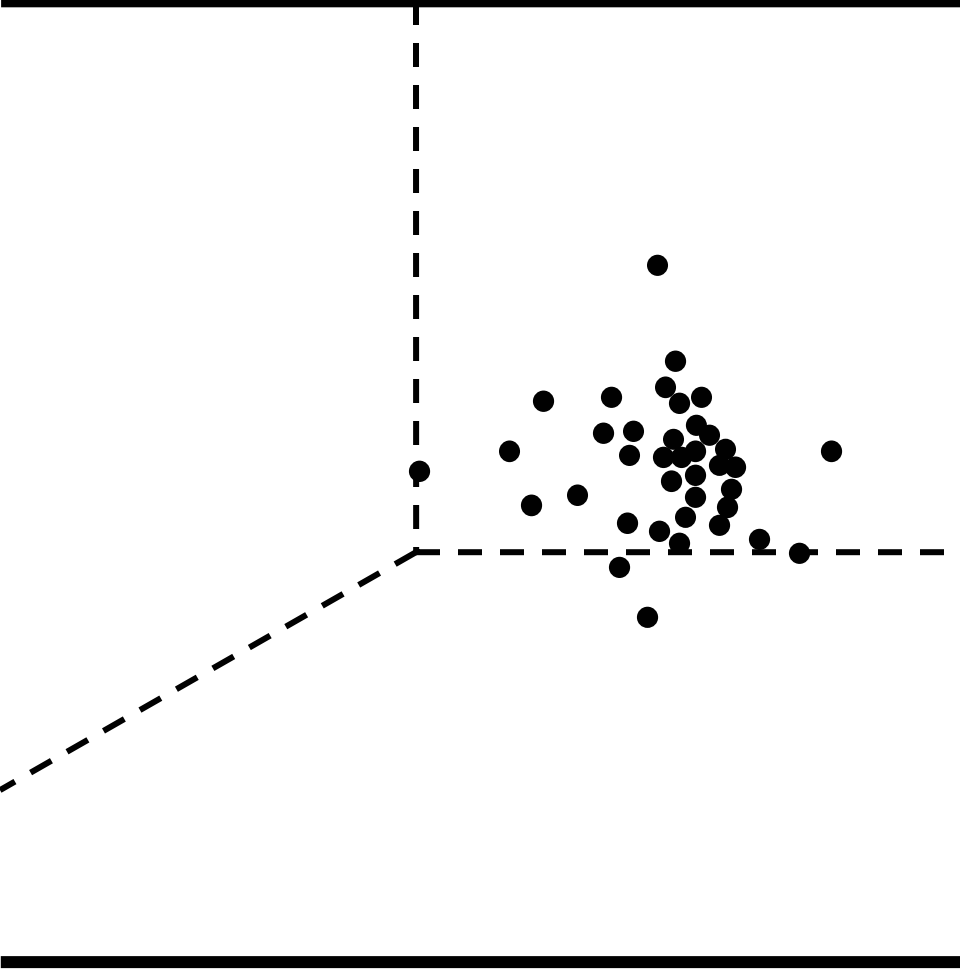
**End when you  
find a fellow performer  
performing this piece**



**Extract  
Balance  
Oppose**

**Start when you  
hear many voices speaking**

**End when you  
are in a lobby**

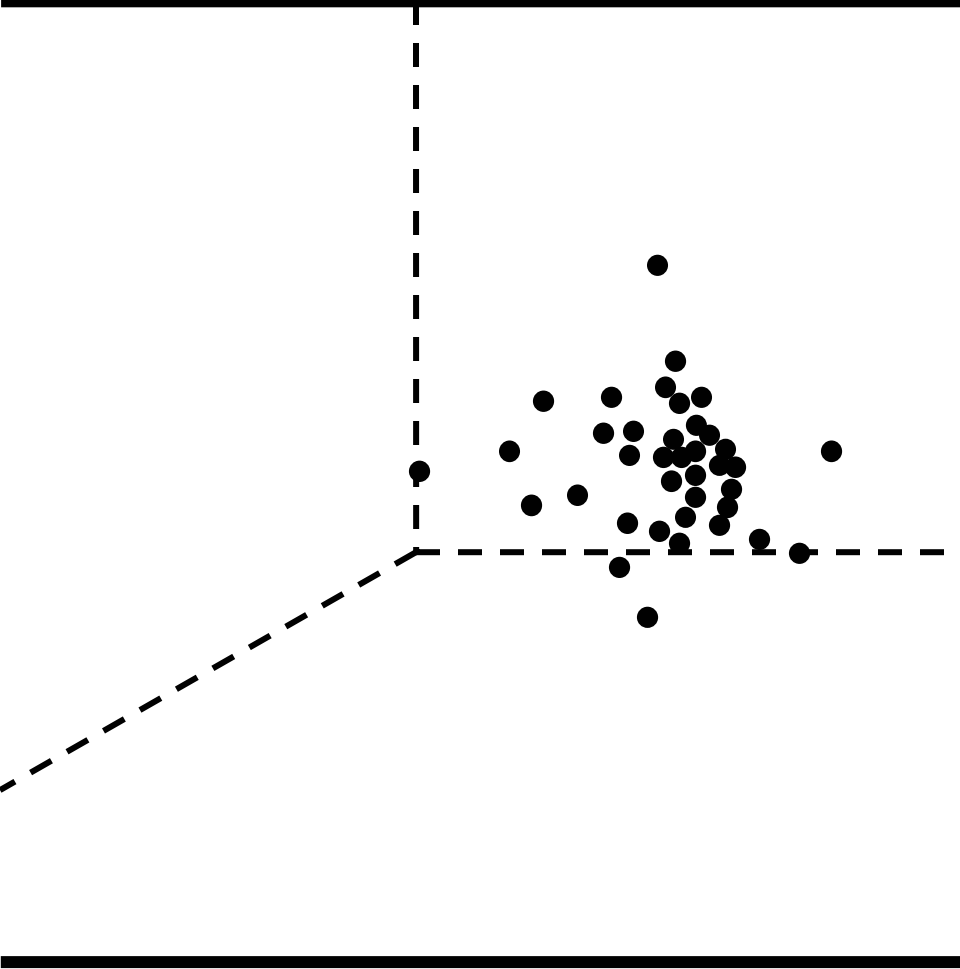


**Extract  
Balance  
Influence**



**Start when you  
hear many voices speaking**

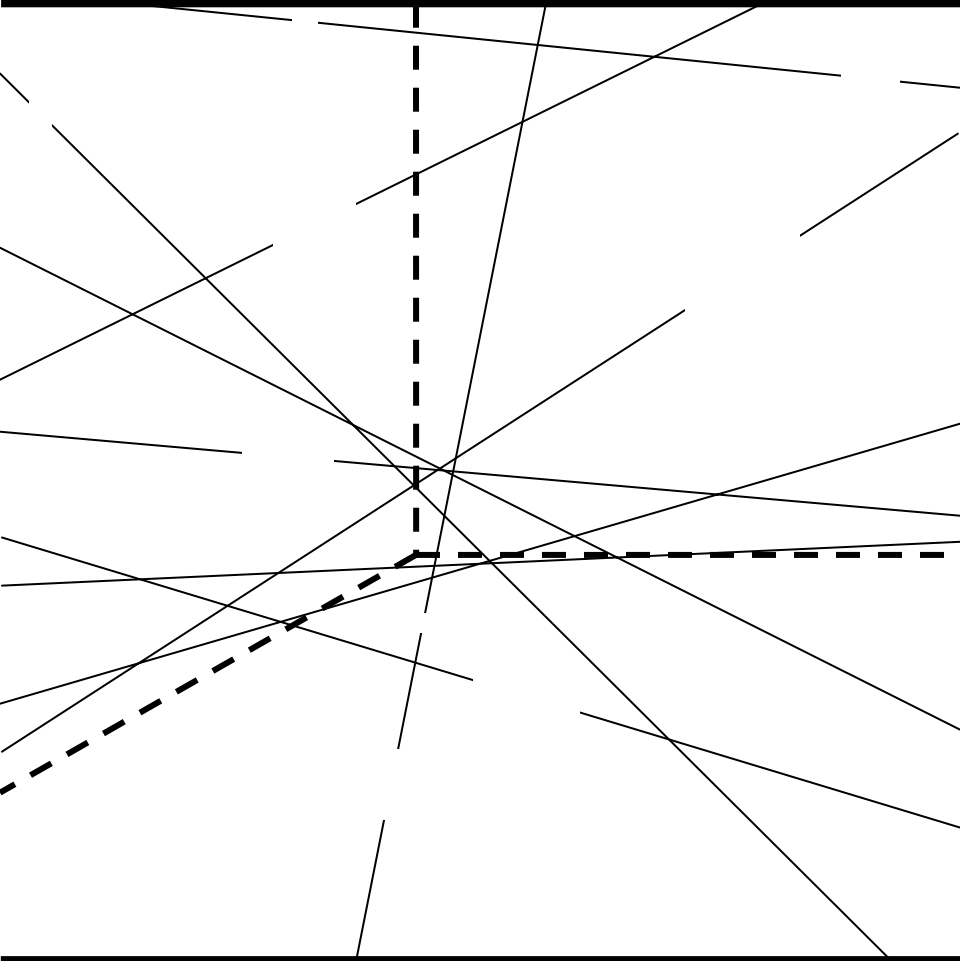
**End when you  
hear machine sounds**



**Extract  
Balance  
Punctuate**

**Start when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**

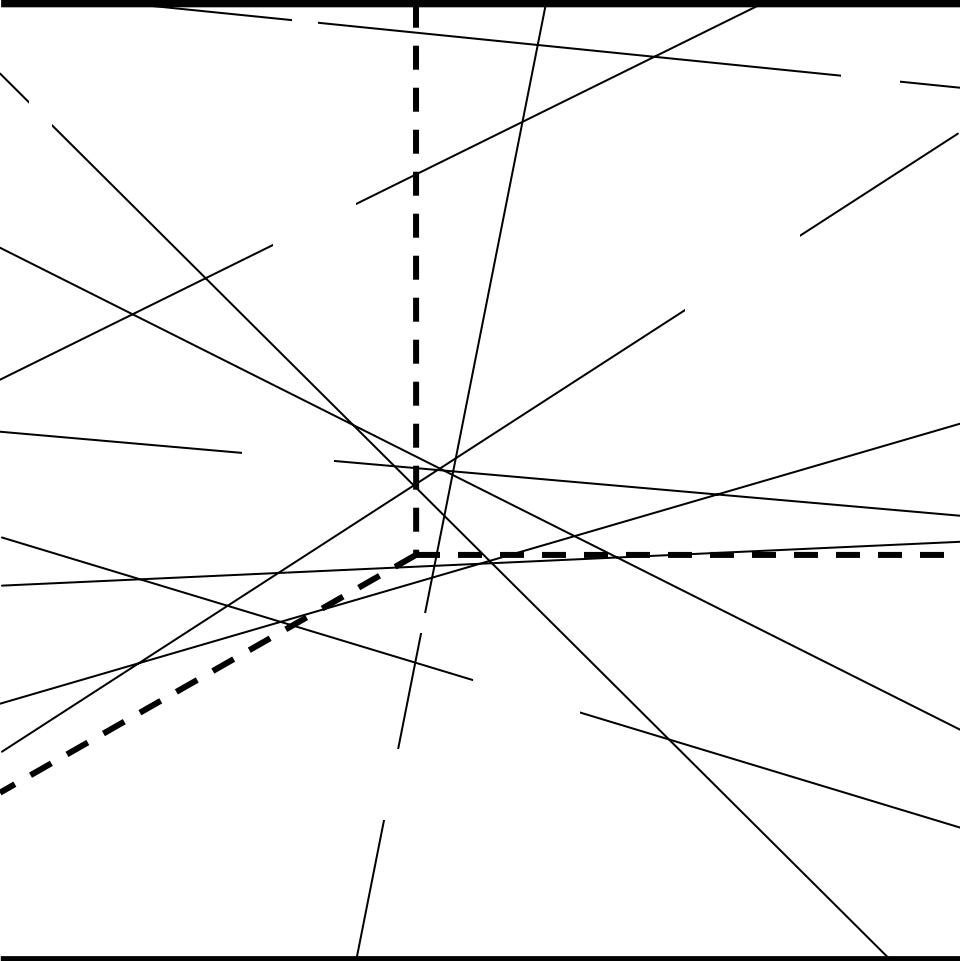
**End when you  
are in a space with seven or  
more people**



**Radiate  
Influence  
Oppose**

**Start when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**

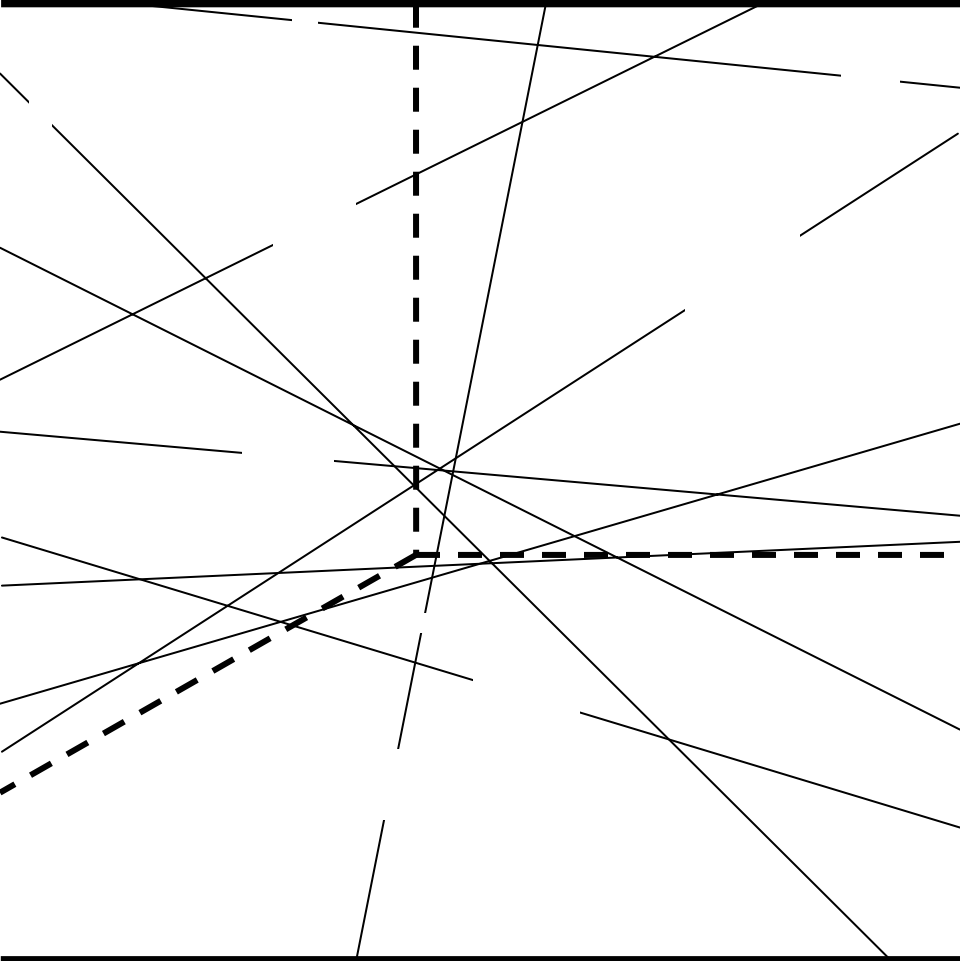
**End when you  
hear sounds from a space  
that you do not occupy**



**Radiate  
Influence  
Balance**

**Start when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**

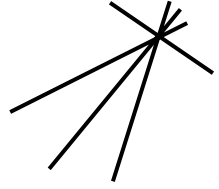
**End when you  
are in a lobby**



**Radiate  
Influence  
Extract**

**Start when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**

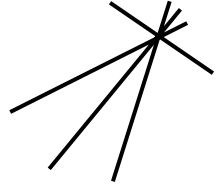
**End when you  
hear many voices speaking**



**Radiate  
Influence  
Isolate**

**Start when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**

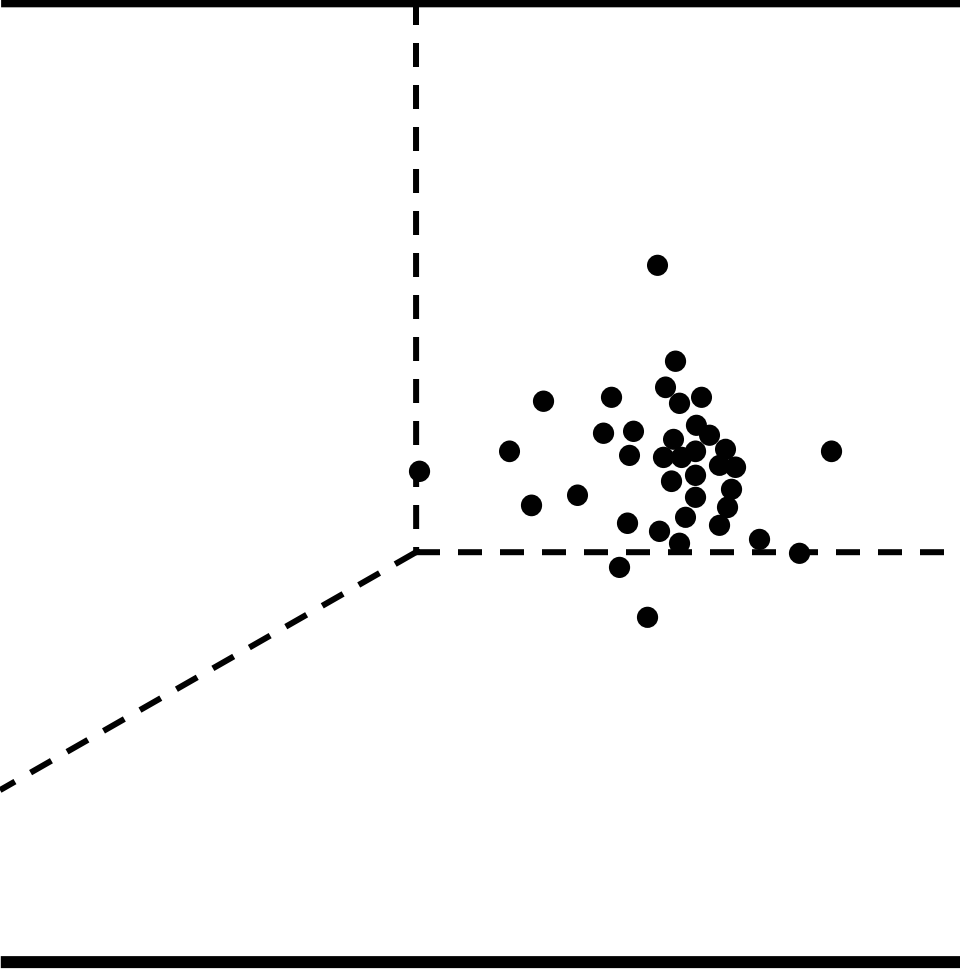
**End when you  
are spoken to**



**Radiate  
Influence  
Disturb**

**Start when you  
hear sounds from a space  
that you do not occupy**

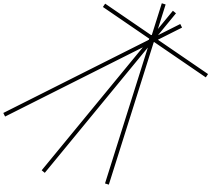
**End when you  
find a fellow performer  
performing this piece**



**Extract  
Radiate  
Imitate**

**Start when you  
hear sounds from a space  
that you do not occupy**

**End when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**

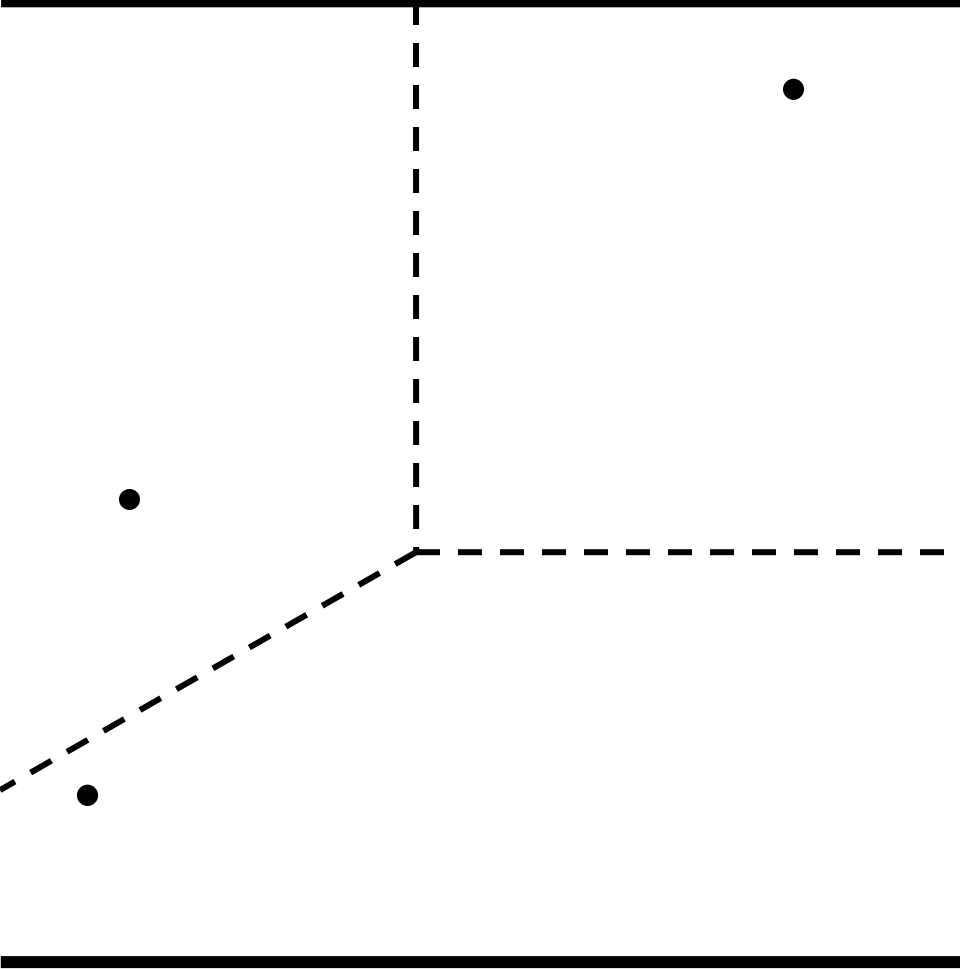


**Extract  
Radiate  
Punctuate**



**Start when you  
hear sounds from a space  
that you do not occupy**

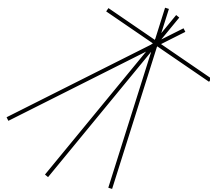
**End when you  
see someone walking  
towards or away from you**



**Extract  
Radiate  
Disturb**

**Start when you  
hear singing**

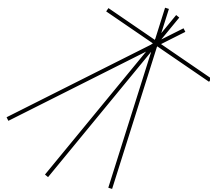
**End when you  
find a fellow performer  
performing this piece**



**Oppose  
Disturb  
Penetrate**

**Start when you  
hear singing**

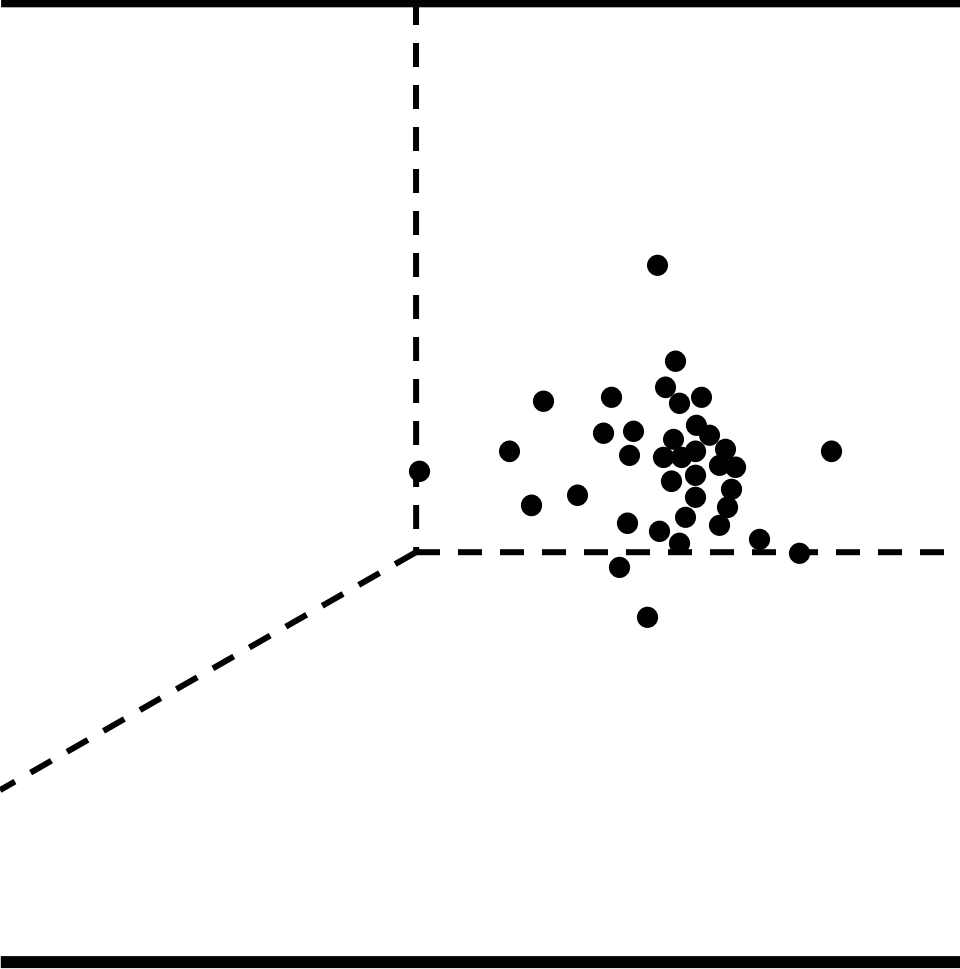
**End when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**



**Oppose  
Disturb  
Engulf**

**Start when you  
hear singing**

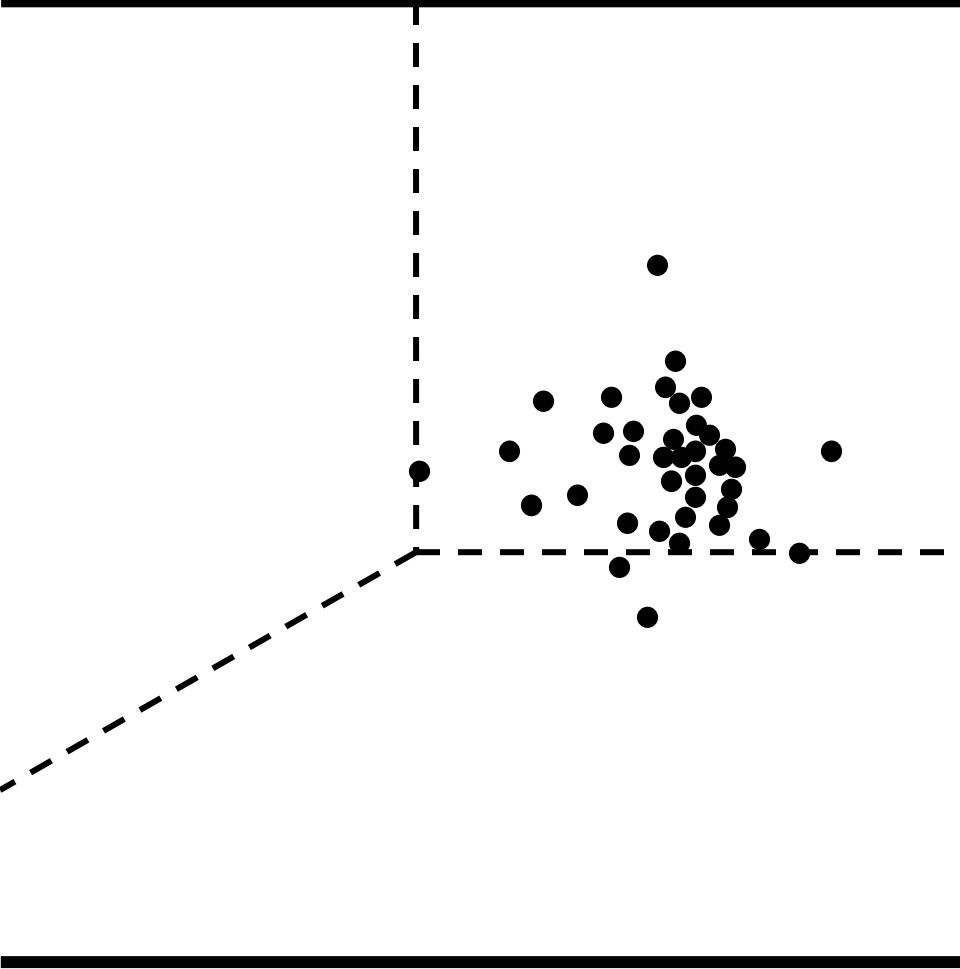
**End when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**



**Oppose  
Disturb  
Radiate**

**Start when you  
hear singing**

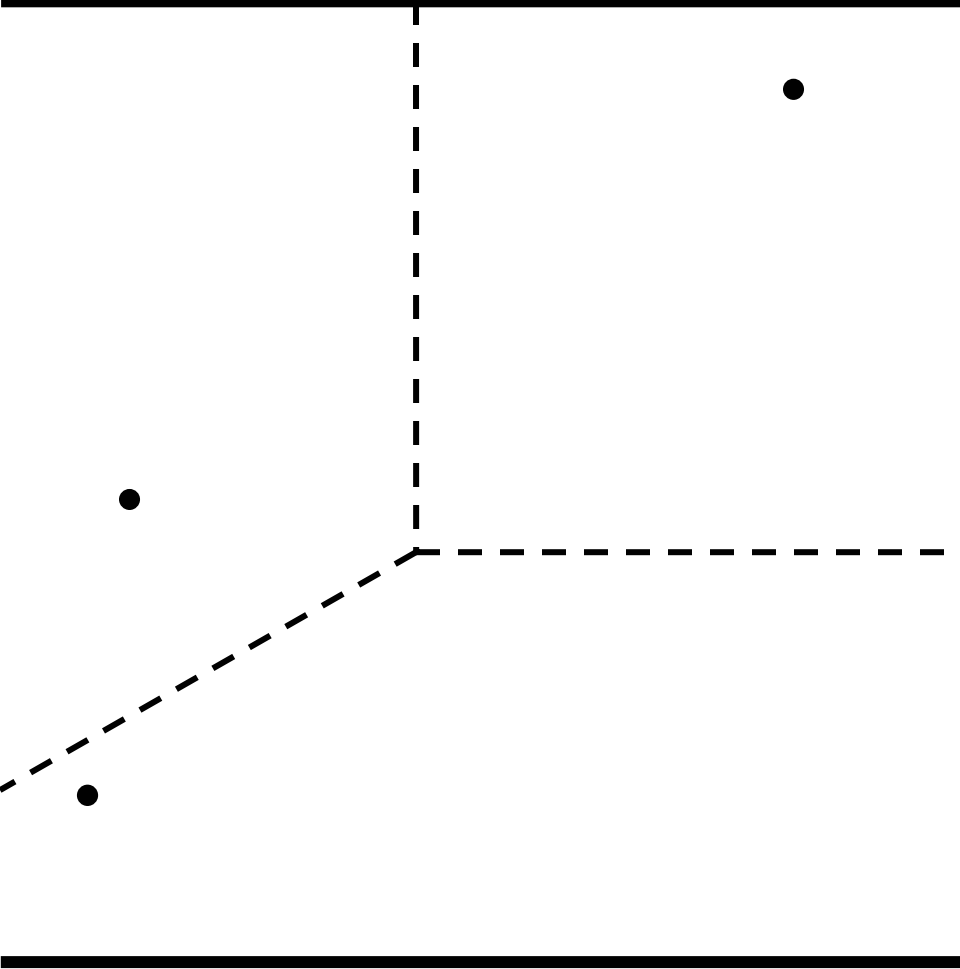
**End when you  
find a fellow performer  
performing this piece**



**Oppose  
Disturb  
Isolate**

**Start when you  
hear a single voice speaking**

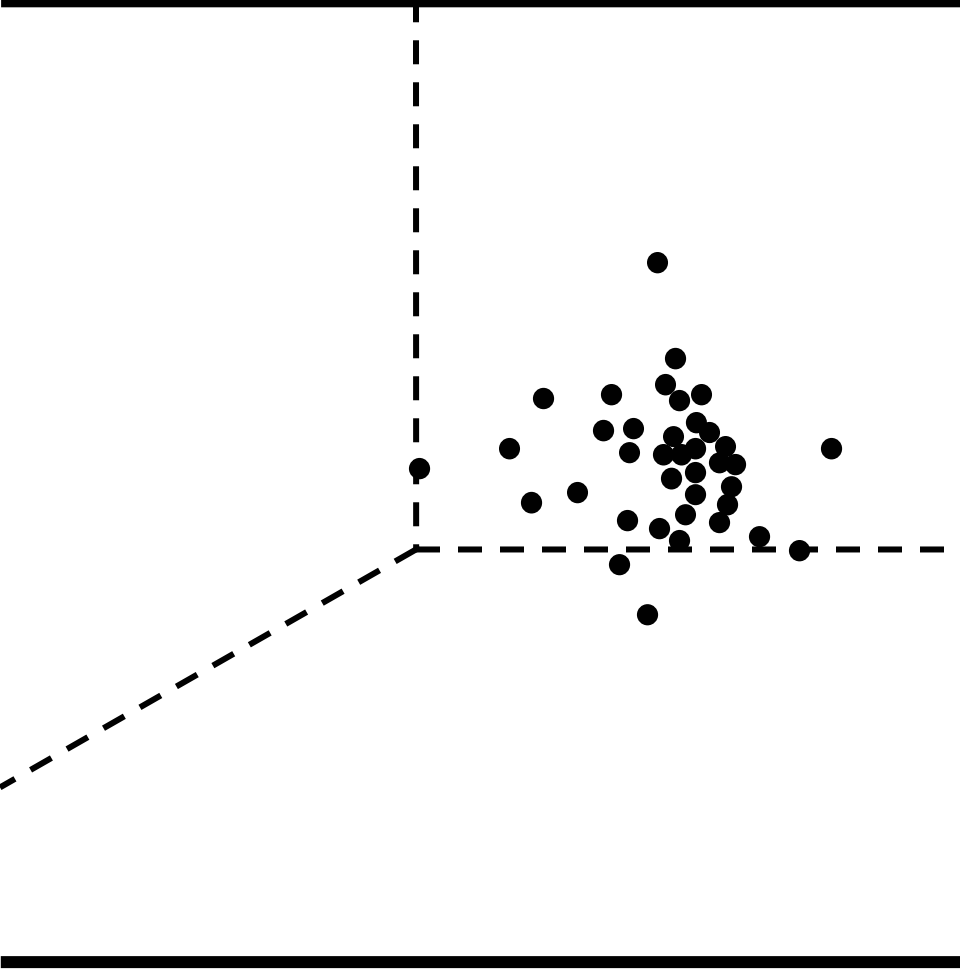
**End when you  
are in a stairwell**



**Imitate  
Influence  
Balance**

**Start when you  
hear a single voice speaking**

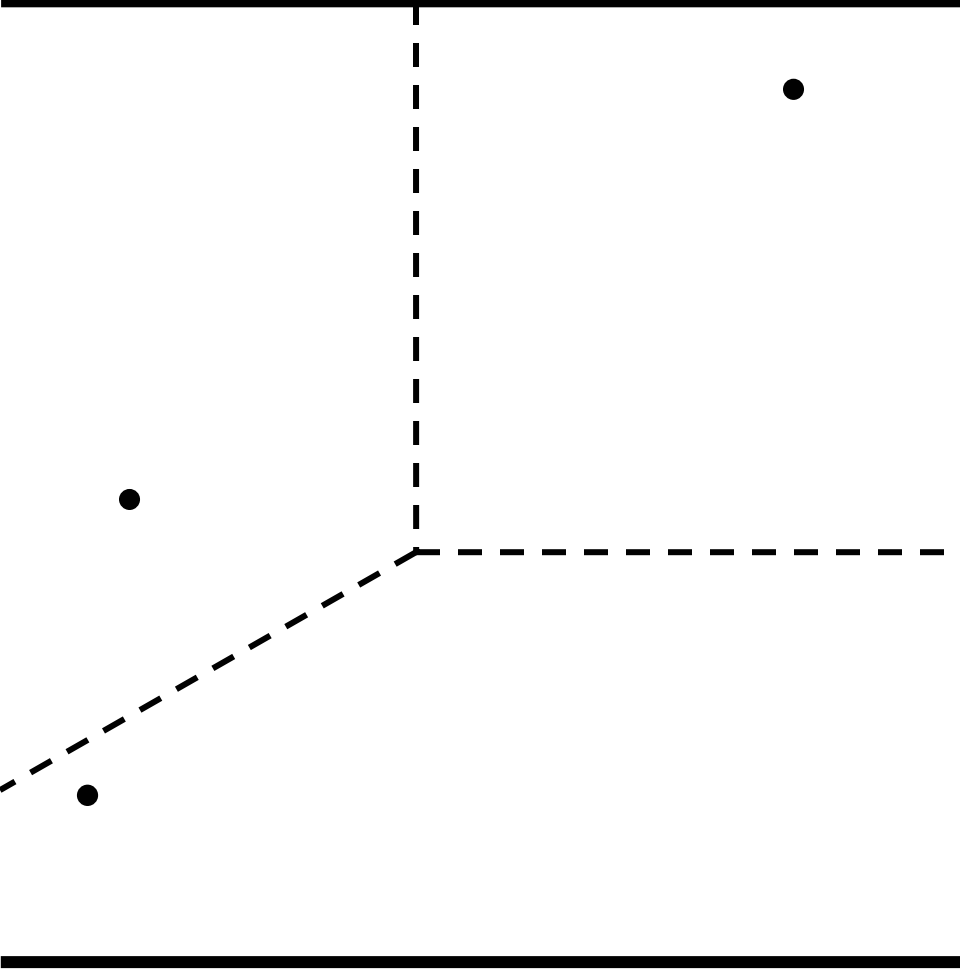
**End when you  
are near an elevator**



**Imitate  
Influence  
Isolate**

**Start when you  
hear a single voice speaking**

**End when you  
are in a long hallway**

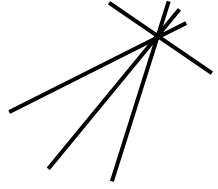


**Imitate  
Influence  
Extract**



**Start when you  
hear a single voice speaking**

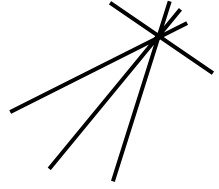
**End when you  
are in a hallway that dead-  
ends**



**Imitate  
Influence  
Engulf**

**Start when you  
hear a single voice speaking**

**End when you  
are in a lobby**

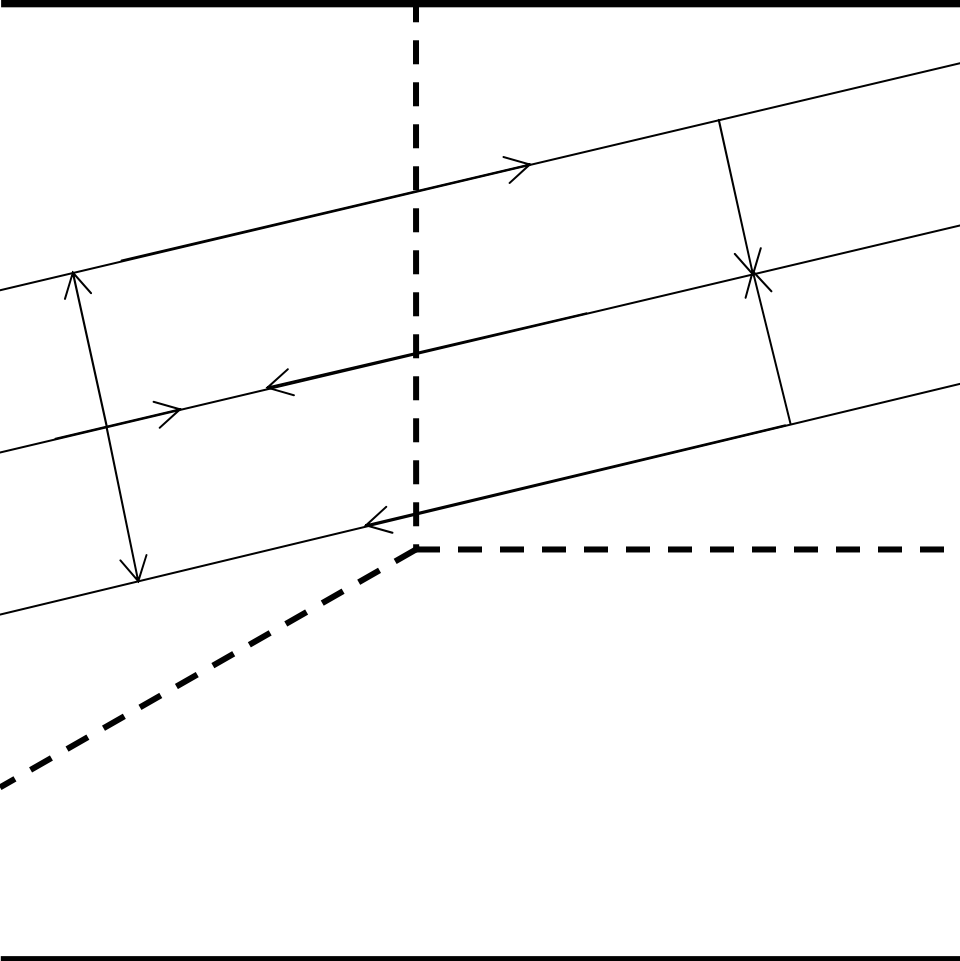


**Imitate  
Influence  
Penetrate**



**Start when you  
see someone sitting alone**

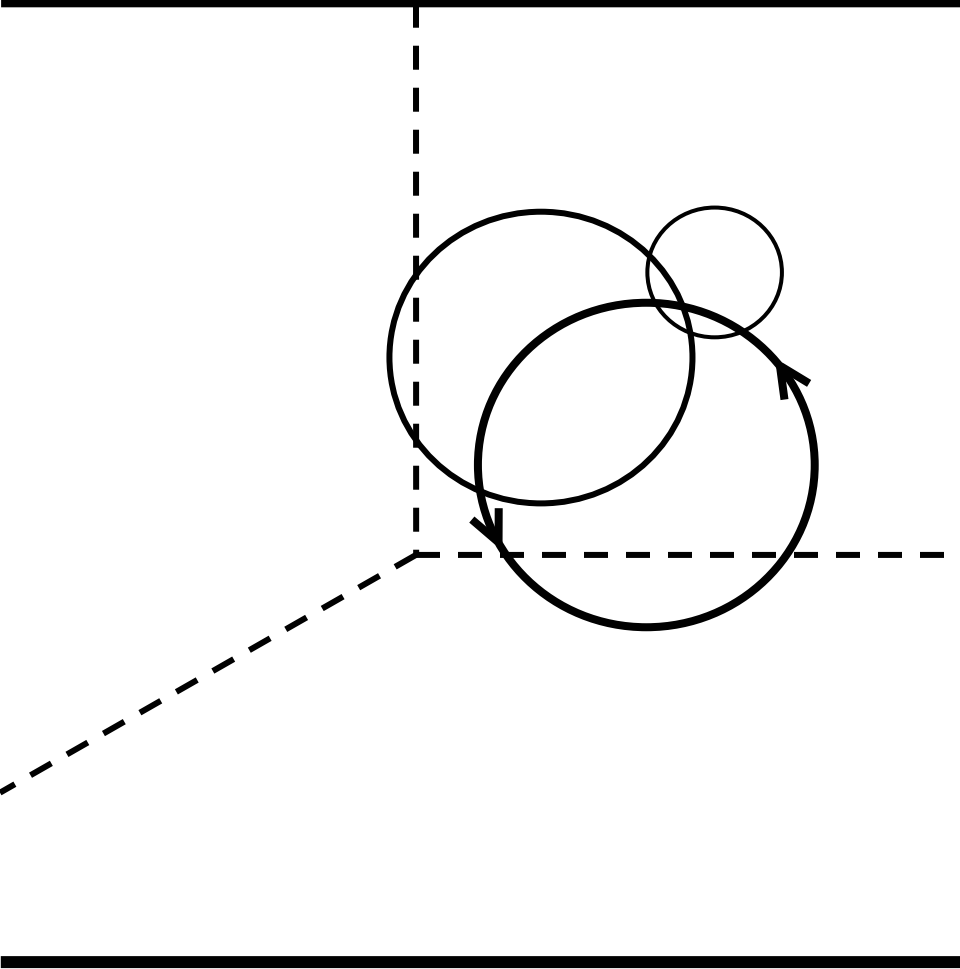
**End when you  
hear a single voice speaking**



**Radiate  
Punctuate  
Integrate**

**Start when you  
see someone sitting alone**

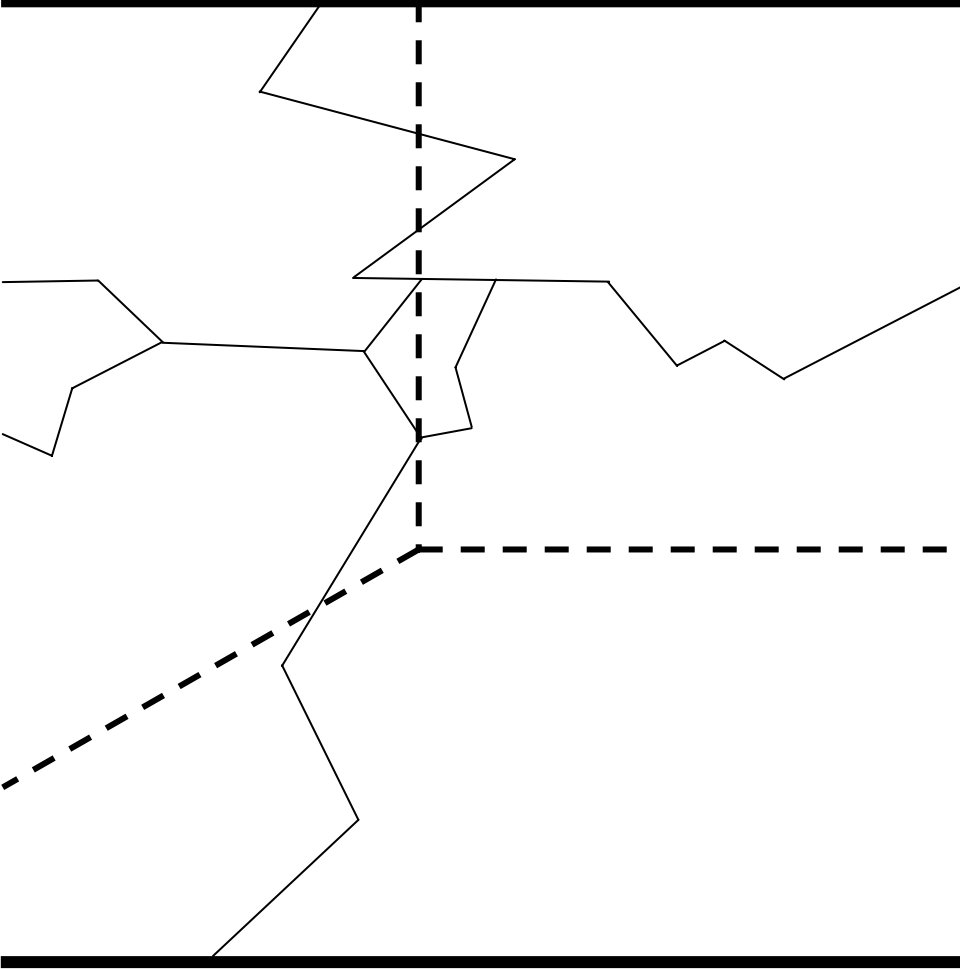
**End when you  
see someone walking  
towards or away from you**



**Radiate  
Punctuate  
Balance**

**Start when you  
are spoken to**

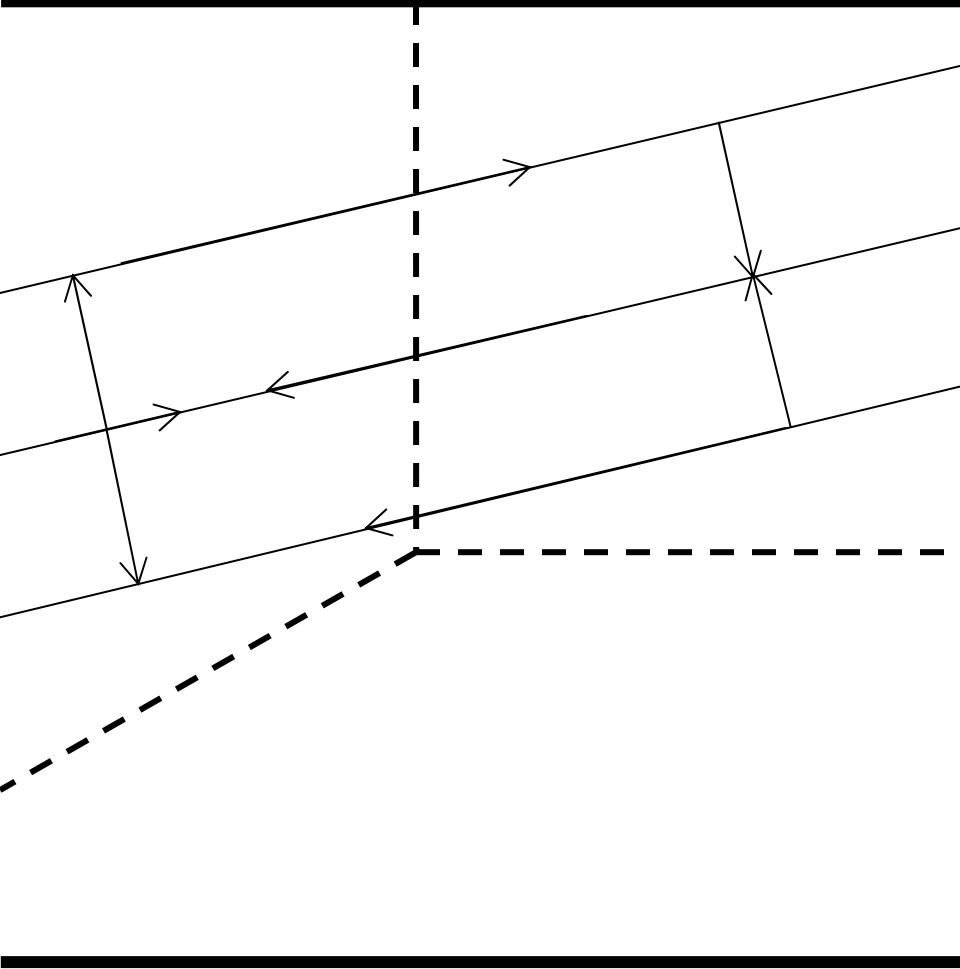
**End when you  
hear singing**



**Extract  
Integrate  
Punctuate**

**Start when you  
are spoken to**

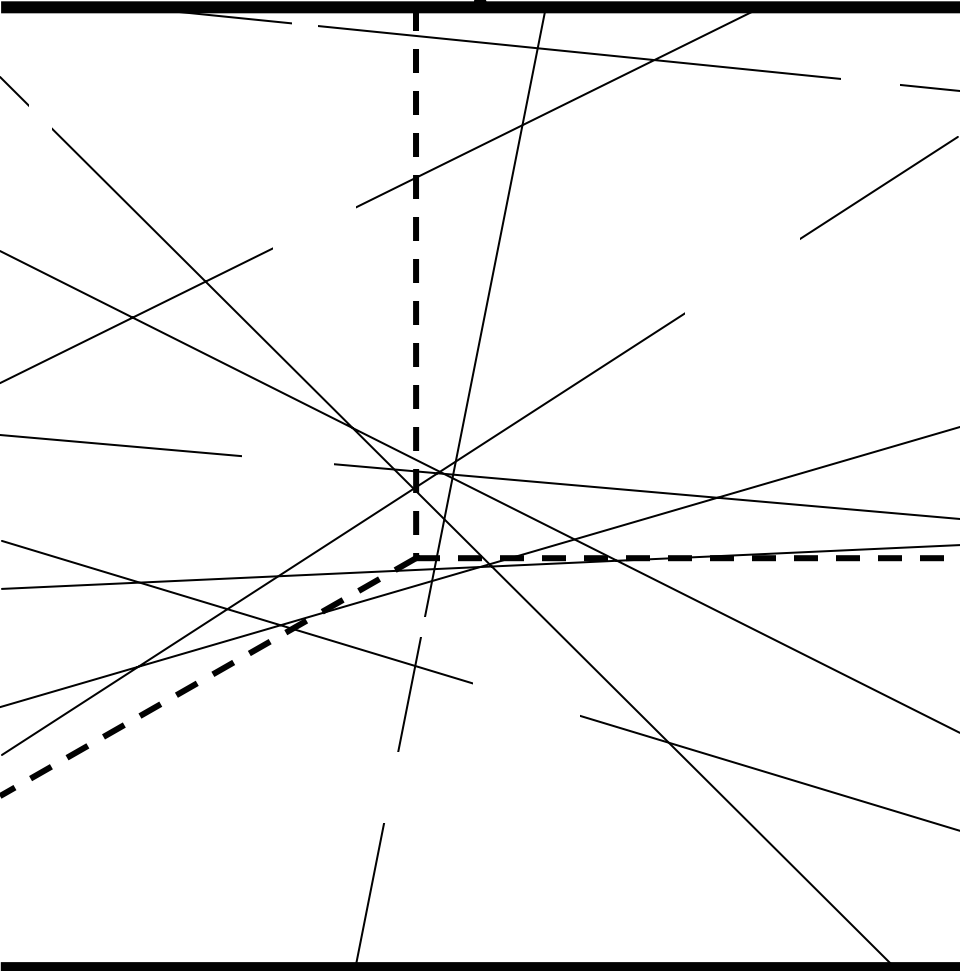
**End when you  
see someone sitting alone**



**Extract  
Integrate  
Imitate**

**Start when you  
are spoken to**

**End when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**

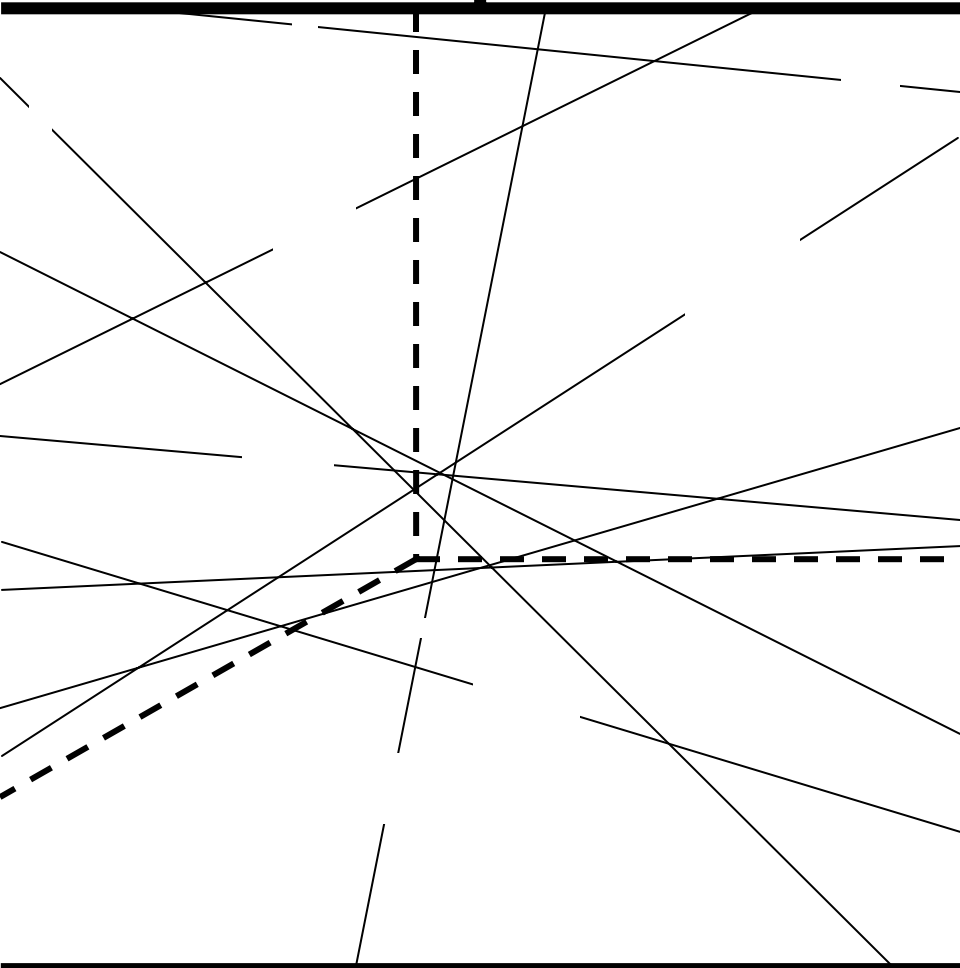


**Extract  
Integrate  
Influence**



**Start when you  
are in a stairwell**

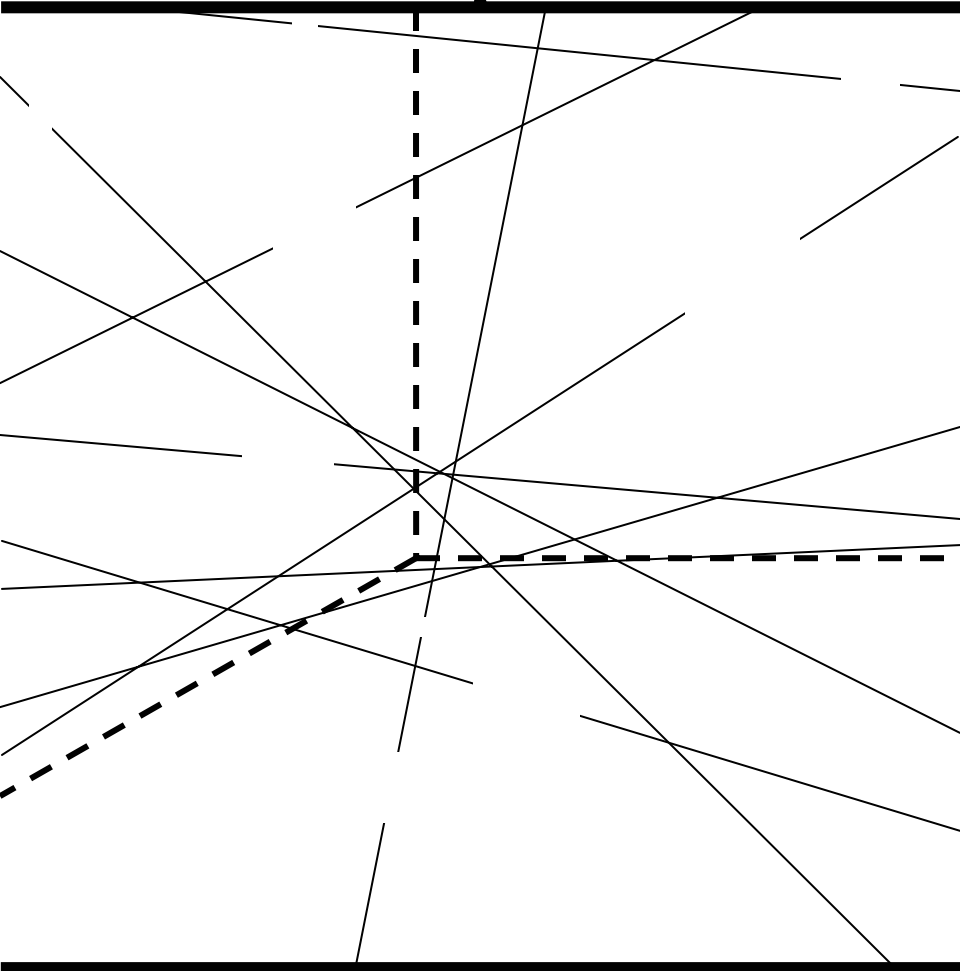
**End when you  
are near an elevator**



**Isolate  
Extract  
Oppose**

**Start when you  
are in a stairwell**

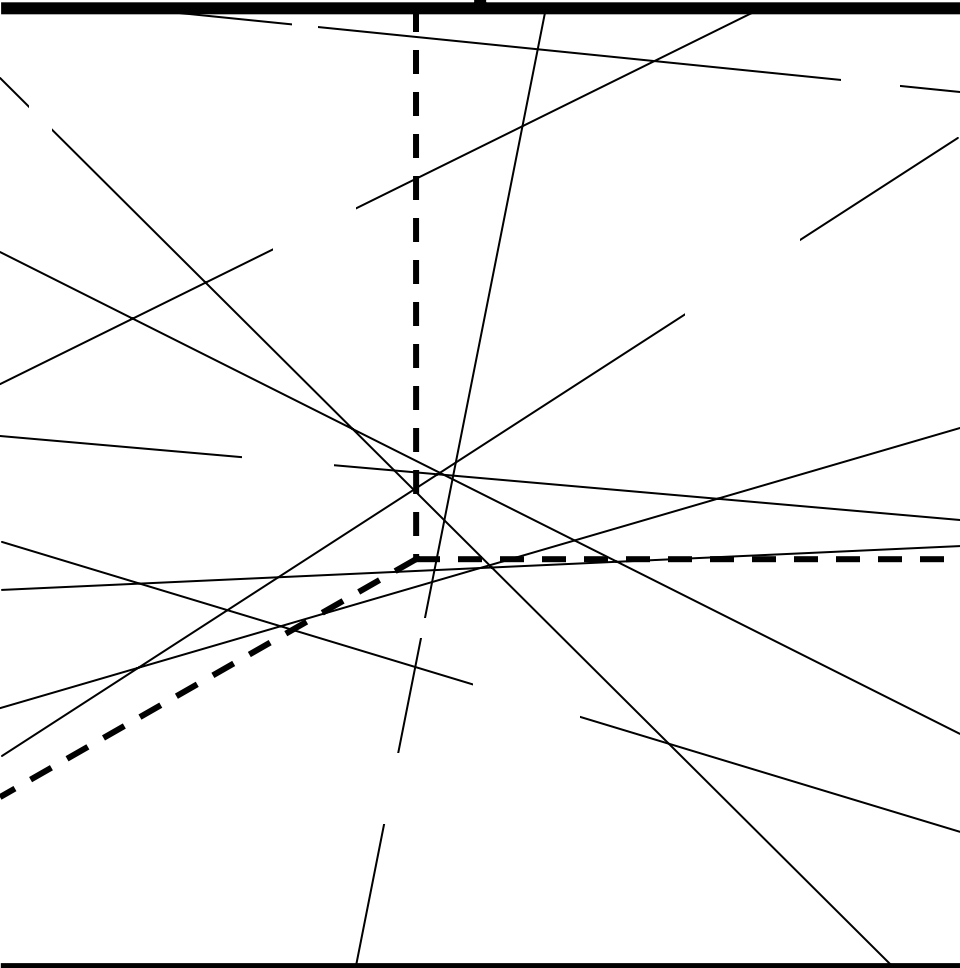
**End when you  
are in a hallway that dead-  
ends**



**Isolate  
Extract  
Imitate**

**Start when you  
are in a stairwell**

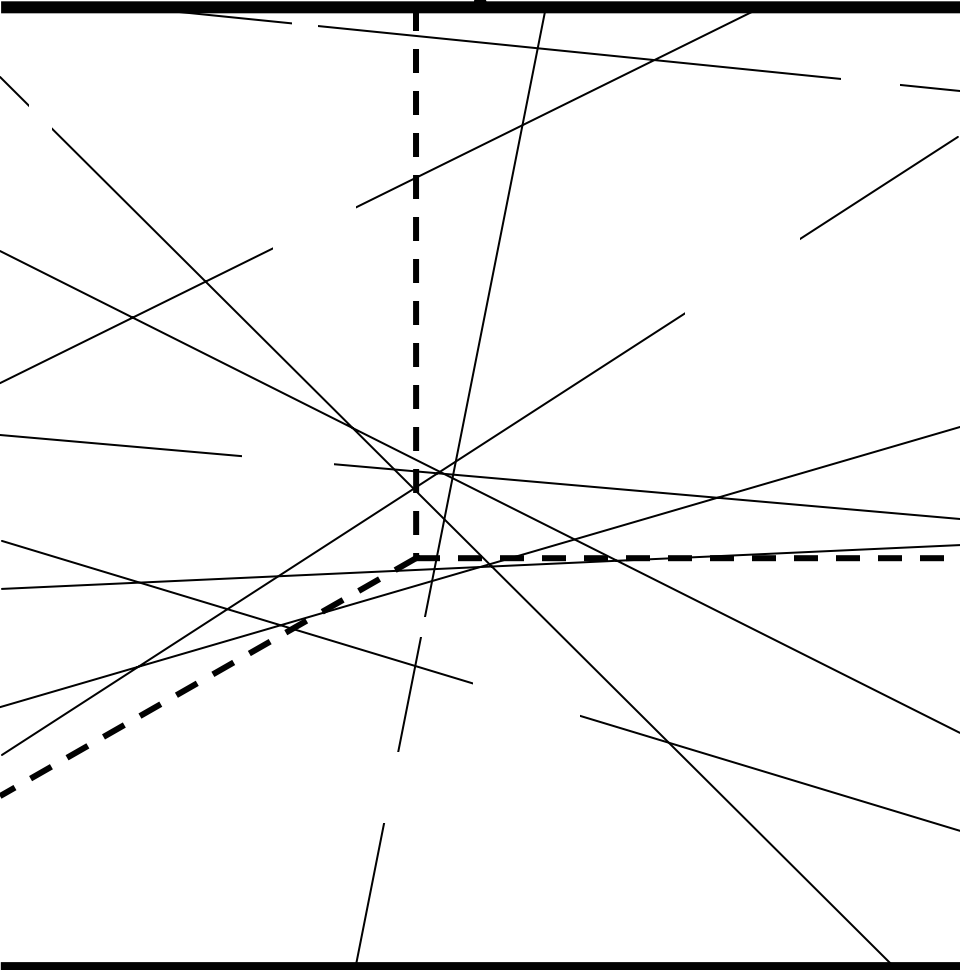
**End when you  
find a fellow performer not  
performing this piece**



**Isolate  
Extract  
Punctuate**

**Start when you  
see someone walking  
towards or away from you**

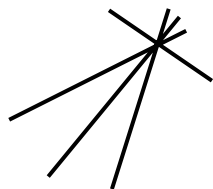
**End when you  
hear a single voice speaking**



**Punctuate  
Engulf  
Balance**

**Start when you  
see someone walking  
towards or away from you**

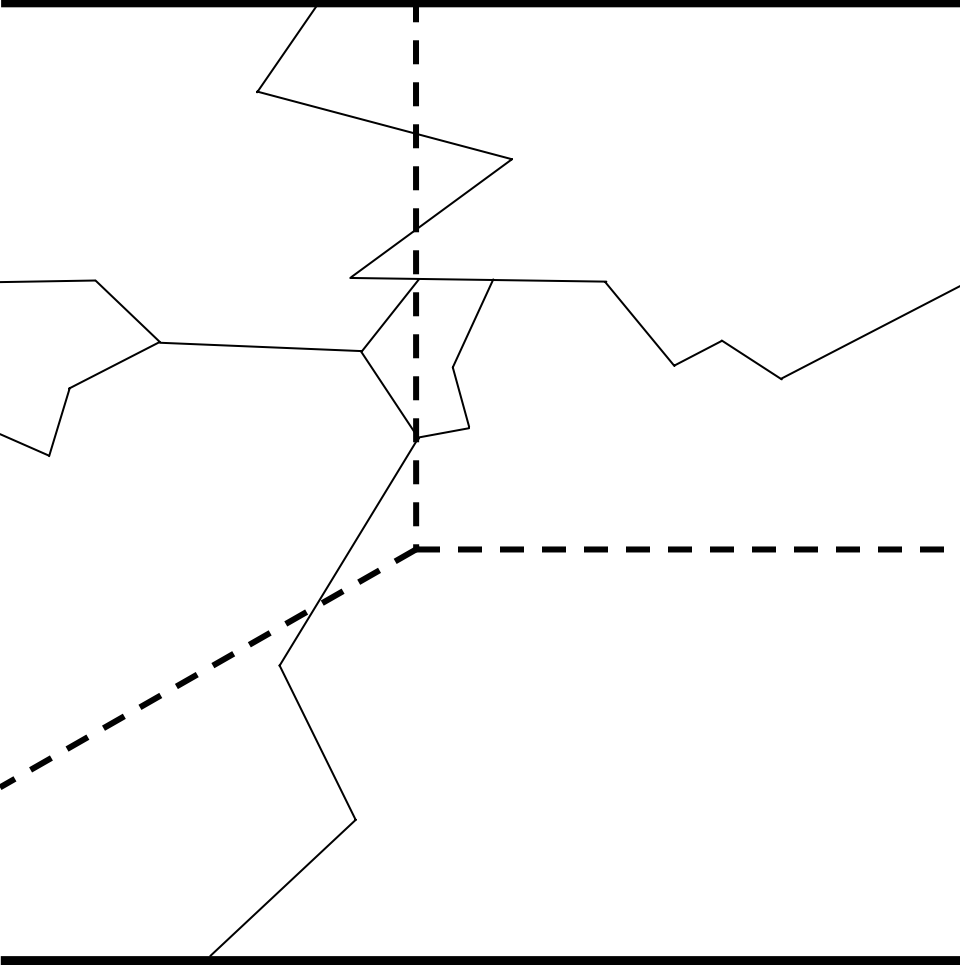
**End when you  
hear many voices speaking**



**Punctuate  
Engulf  
Isolate**

**Start when you  
see someone walking  
towards or away from you**

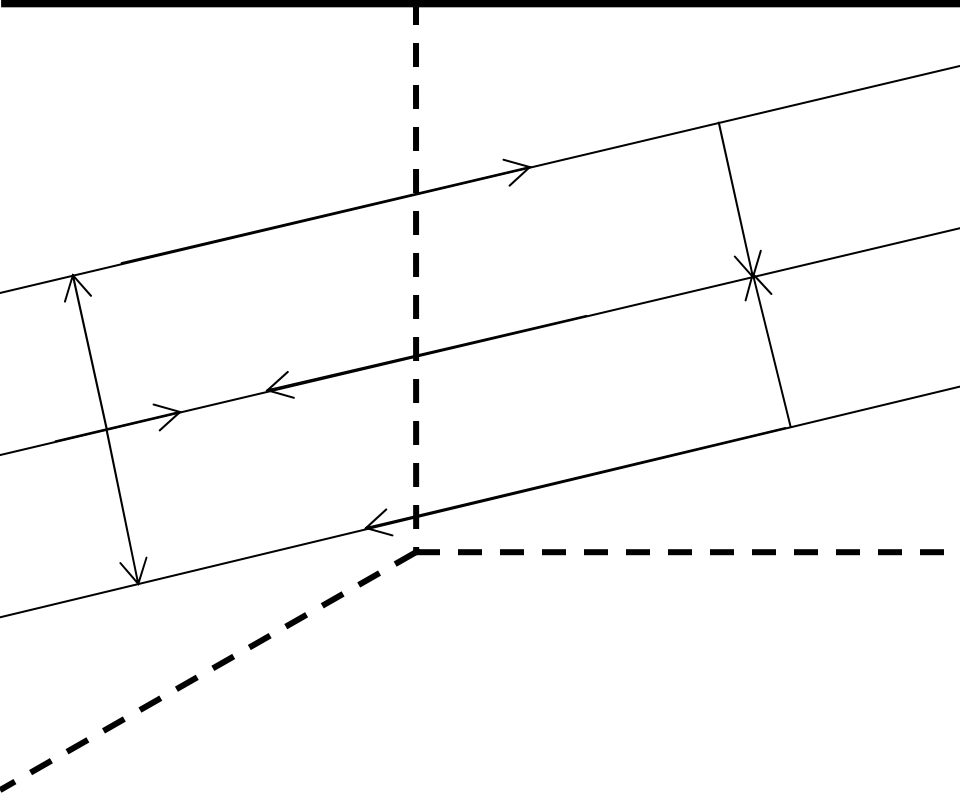
**End when you  
are alone**



**Punctuate  
Engulf  
Extract**

**Start when you  
see someone walking  
towards or away from you**

**End when you  
are in a space with seven or  
more people**



**Punctuate  
Engulf  
Integrate**