



How To Conduct “Dramatic Choices” and The End Game

Dramatic Choices represents the Third and Final Act of the entire performance production of The Samurai Game®. This final act is NOT the place to improvise. You will have little or no opportunity to recover from errors. Of course, you must always be aware of the cultural and religious sensitivities of the participants, and always ensure their safety—but you should have thought through these sensitivities well before this Game started.

Expect that you will be tired. Even so, you must remain focused, clear, and precise in what you are saying and doing during Dramatic Choices, as this shapes the entire experience of the Game for many people.

In Dramatic Choices, you must provide a series of **approved and pre-scripted options**. It is important that you adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Your delivery should be direct, clear and simple.**
- **Your tone of voice should be neutral.**
- **Do not improvise or create new options.** Follow the script and the “logic” designed by George Leonard and taught to you during your Facilitator Training program. Every TSG facilitator should be delivering this final act with identical options, no matter where in the world the Game is being delivered.
- **Do not show favoritism towards one Army or Daimyo or the other.** Although you might have personal opinions or reactions towards one side or the other, DO NOT let this enter into your delivery or language during Dramatic Choices. Showing favoritism is unacceptable as it deprives participants of fully experiencing the consequences of their own actions.
- **Remain neutral about the circumstances or the choices/actions taken by the Daimyos.** Do not imply through your body language, tone of voice or words that that one choice is “better than” or “more honorable” than the other choice. Keep your opinions to yourself. Let the participants live with their own choices.
- **Never communicate a dogmatic belief or anything that has religious overtones regarding a concept of “the hereafter”, “spirit walk”, heaven, hell, etc.** The choices given to the Daimyo and then the remaining Samurai (and Ninja) are about each individual’s honor, dignity, responsibility and accountability. They will each relate to their own experience based on their own chosen belief system or religious orientation.

Keep in mind the following five stated purposes of The Samurai Game[®], which apply during Dramatic Choices:

- Experience the dilemma of loyalty to both self and team. Each individual must make a choice about the dilemma.
- Gain specific insights about how one makes choices and how accountability is personally held.
- Experience being fully and unconditionally supported no matter what a participant does, especially one who goes to battle and dies.
- Experience ... being respected, appreciated, and cared for, regardless of whether the Samurai won or lost.
- Gain sharp new insights on habitual patterns of behavior which may be interfering with the participant's success and fulfillment.

Synopsis of Dramatic Choices

The follow sections outline the key “decision points” and “actions” you’ll facilitate Facilitator during Dramatic Choices and The End Game. The indented text in **red** is recommended language to use. Although you may vary some of language slightly, we encourage you to adhere to the text as closely as possible.

Begin Dramatic Choices when one Daimyo has only 2 others remaining alive in his/her army (The “Outnumbered Daimyo”). Generally allow 20 to 30 minutes for Dramatic Choices and the End Game, and plan accordingly during the battles so that you have allotted sufficient time here.

Important Note: Once Dramatic Choices has begun, if anybody asks for any clarification, do not provide it. Simply say, **“No more questions!”**

To begin Dramatic Choices: Call for a truce or pause the action, approach the Outnumbered Daimyo, and follow the “script” below...

In a voice that everyone can hear:

Daimyo [of the North/South], you have only yourself and these two people left. We now begin “The End Game”, where you face a dilemma and have some hard choices to make. There is no correct choice. Of course, you are responsible for whichever choices you make. Regardless of your choice, it will be considered honorable by the Fate of War.

Do you wish to continue the battle?

If you continue, you might still win the war. Or do you wish to end the war, admit defeat and commit honorable seppuku. Before you make your choice, listen carefully to what I am going to say next.

Pause briefly, then proceed to (a) or (b) as follows:

a) IF one of the two remaining people in the Outnumbered Daimyo’s army is a ninja.

If you continue the fight, then your ninja must become a samurai and must now act according to Bushido—something he/she has not been doing before now.

OR

b) IF both remaining participants in the Outnumbered Daimyo’s army are samurai (one of which could be the Sentry),

If you continue the fight you must send your samurai (who is now your 2nd in Command) into battle.”

Next, say:

If you commit seppuku, you will die, no one in your army can become a new Daimyo, and your army will be defeated. The other army will be victorious.

Make your choice now!

NOTE: If the Daimyo chooses to commit seppuku, then skip down to the section below entitled, “If the Alone Daimyo chooses to Commit Seppuku...”

To the Daimyo who has more warriors:

Send a samurai to battle to meet this warrior.

From this point forward, the only battles will be “Shout Down” or “Rock – Paper – Scissors”. (You may call out these battles or let the samurai choose between themselves.)

When one Daimyo has only himself and a sentry left alive:

Daimyo, if you wish to continue the fight then your sentry must move into battle. He can move his feet and he will not die. No one can attack you as he goes into battle. You can still win his war and be victorious.

- OR -

You can choose to commit seppuku and honorably die. The war will end. Your sentry cannot become a Daimyo. Your army will be defeated.

Make your choice now!

When one Daimyo is alone and the other Daimyo still has others alive in his/her army, say to the Alone Daimyo:

Daimyo, your army has been defeated. You are all alone. Listen carefully. Fate now gives you the opportunity to challenge the other Daimyo to a final battle.

If you win this battle, you will be declared victorious and you will win the war. No one from the other army can become a new Daimyo. If you lose the battle, the other army will be victorious.

- OR -

You can choose to not go into battle, and instead commit seppuku. This is an equally honorable choice. If you commit seppuku, the other army will win.

Pause ... and then continue to with this Daimyo:

*Before you decide, listen to what I now say: if you decide to challenge the other Daimyo to a final battle, the Fate of War will give the other Daimyo the option to refuse your challenge. And if he/she refuses your challenge, then you **MUST** commit seppuku.*

However, if he refuses your challenge, there will be a severe consequence that will happen to him/her.

Pause.

And I will not tell you or the other Daimyo what that consequence will be until after you have made your choice – to either challenge him/her or to commit seppuku.

Make your choice now!

If the alone Daimyo chooses to challenge the other Daimyo, have him stand in the center of the battlefield and make the formal challenge.

To the other Daimyo (with more warriors):

Daimyo of the _____, before you do anything, listen to what I have to say: The other Daimyo has challenged you to a battle to the death. He has earned the privilege to do this.

If he wins this battle he will win the war, his army will be declared victorious, and your army will be defeated. No one in your army can become a Daimyo to replace you.

If you win the battle, he/she and his/her army will be defeated. You will be the victorious Daimyo and will win the war.

But—you do not have to accept his/her challenge. You can refuse him/her. And if you do that, he/she will have to commit seppuku and die. You and your army will be victorious.

However, if you refuse his challenge, there is a consequence for you. The consequence is that you will forever lose the right to commit seppuku yourself, one of the highest honors of a Daimyo and Samurai.

Make your choice now!

If the Alone Daimyo decides to commit seppuku – or if his/her challenge is refused by the other Daimyo:

- 1) Move the losing Daimyo to the center of the battlefield.
- 2) Have the other Daimyo join and face him on the battlefield.
- 3) Have them both sit down.
- 4) Give them each “The Warrior Creed” and have them read it aloud so all can hear – alternating one line per Daimyo.
- 5) Instruct the Daimyo who has chosen to commit seppuku (or who has been refused and must commit seppuku) to touch his abdomen, symbolically signifying his death, and carefully lay down.
- 6) Pause, then instruct the other Daimyo to give the “dead Daimyo” an honorable burial in the center of the battlefield.

If the Alone Daimyo challenges the other Daimyo and the other Daimyo accepts the challenge:

Walk to the center of the battlefield and say:

Both Daimyo move into the center of the Battlefield and challenge each other.

Both of you sit down, face each other and look into the eyes of your opponent.

To all of the “dead” warriors:

Everyone else - those of you in the graveyard and laying ‘dead’ elsewhere on the battlefield - open your eyes and silently sit up and come around these Daimyo so that you can watch this final battle.

Those of you still “living, come and stand directly behind your Daimyo.”

Note: You may need to move some of the “dead” warriors on the battlefield to make room in the center for this final battle.

Hand a copy of “The Warrior Creed” to each Daimyo and say:

“You are to now read this out loud – just as it was done at the beginning of The Samurai Game - one line at a time, alternating back and forth in turns -

so everyone in the room can hear. Perhaps people will hear its message differently now after having experienced what has been happening these few hours.”

Inform both Daimyo so that all can hear:

“This final battle will be paper, rock, and scissors, done with great dignity. The reason for such a simple battle is to remind all of us that it doesn’t matter how much rank or power someone has. The Daimyo – the generals – the presidents – the CEO’s – the professors – the kings and queens and prime ministers – they are all human beings just the same as the lowliest soldier or follower who has to do their bidding.”

Instruct both Daimyo to play Paper, Rock, Scissors until one of them wins and the other one dies.

To the winning Daimyo:

Daimyo of the ___ you have WON. You must now give the losing Daimyo an honorable burial in the center of the battlefield – the place of high honors. Do this with dignity and respect.

IF THE ALONE DAIMYO WINS THE FINAL BATTLE

Instruct this winning Daimyo (who is alone) to give the losing Daimyo an honorable burial (as described above) in the center of the battlefield with high honors and great dignity.

After the burial, say to the winning Daimyo:

Winning Daimyo, you have yet another difficult task. You must now approach these remaining living warriors from the other army and talk to them. They will remain silent and listen to you. You must give them a compelling reason for why they should choose to stay alive and step across the live to join you in forming a new army.

When you are done talking to them, they will have to individually decide, without any discussion amongst themselves, what they will do.

Whatever choice they make as individuals will be an honorable choice – either join you and stay alive, OR to commit seppuku and die.”

To the “living” warriors from the defeated Army:

Those of you standing here alive ... listen deeply to this Daimyo. Search yourself. Do not make your decision to live or die until AFTER you hear and feel what he/she has to say.”

To the Winning Daimyo:

Now Daimyo – speak to these warriors. What will you say? What reasons will you give them for why they should choose life and move over to join with you and form a new Army. Begin now. Speak to them.”

After the Winning Daimyo has stated his compelling reason to all survivors, the Fate of War turns to the remaining “live” warriors and says:

Warriors from the Army of the _____. You have heard this Daimyo. It is no disgrace to join him/her now that your Daimyo is dead. It is your individual responsibility now to simply and sincerely choose – to live or to die. If you choose to join the other Daimyo you will bow and walk to his/her side. If you choose not join the other Daimyo then you must sit down on the floor ... touch your abdomen ... commit seppuku... then lay down and close your eyes and move into a death position.”

“Warriors - without talking – Make Your Individual Choice NOW!”

The Winning Daimyo Speech (soliloquy).

To the Winning Daimyo:

Daimyo of the _____. You have one final action. You must now give a short talk – a speech – to all warriors of both Armies, alive and dead ... a speech that honorably summarizes what you observed from them all – the efforts from all who participated regardless of which Army and Daimyo they served.

Tell them what you observed from these people today as they engaged with each other today?

For a more dramatic ending:

- 1) Tell those who remain alive living that they will now have a opportunity to witness something.
- 2) Tell the “dead” that they will now take one last action so that the “living” and “victorious” can observe and feel the consequences the war.
- 3) Then say to all:

In a moment, I will clap my hands one time. When I do this all of you who are sitting on the battlefield (and the burial ground, if applicable), will gently lie back down where you are and close your eyes, and remain still and silent.

- 4) Clap your hands loudly once. All the “dead” will lay down. Only the “living survivors” will remain with eyes open to witness
- 5) To the winning Daimyo and survivors:

Look at what you have won.

Calling the Dead back to life and ending the three acts

The following instructions are somewhat different than what you will see in George Leonard's Official Notes. Over many years we have found that it is important to carefully and safely bring the performance production to an end in a gentle way that does not "jolt" the participants. You may choose whether you (Fate of War) or the winning Daimyo will perform the following actions, and provide instructions accordingly.

To everyone:

When you hear my hands clap, those of you laying "dead" slowly open your eyes and gently sit up."

Pause, - then loudly clap once.

When you hear my hands clap again, those of you who are sitting "dead" carefully stand up and help others who may need help to stand up.

Pause, then loudly clap once again.

On the next clap, silently begin to randomly walk into the empty spaces.

Pause, then loudly clap one more time.

As people begin to walk, play soft Japanese flute music. As the people continue to walk say in a neutral tone of voice ...

You are walking back into life, back into the life you know. Each step you take is bringing you farther away from the days of the samurai, from medieval Japan, and closer to the here and now, to [this building, in this city], on [today's day and date].

You are moving back to where you really were all of the time...a place where you can look into my eyes, where you can smile, say please and thank you, where none of these people around you are your enemy.

You can feel free to talk, to be with each other in this life. That life of a Samurai was all fictitious...but was it?

After a minute or two - clap your hands to get people's attention. We recommend giving the group of quiet break of 15 to 20 minutes. Let them know that some people like to have this time to themselves without having to talk with others, so to be sensitive to others during the break.

Ending the Day, Assigning Homework and Check-in Circle

Generally, the next day is devoted to a full debrief of TSG, along with some movement exercises.

After the Break, have the group form a standing circle. Then let them know what the homework for the evening will be, which is usually simply to ask them to reflect on the day and do some private journaling if they wish, so that they can be aware of thoughts, feeling and dreams they will have throughout the night and into the morning.

Tomorrow we will start at ____ and please be here before that because we will start on time no matter who is here or not. Before we go, however, we'll go around this circle, starting from the person next to me, answering a simple question in just one or two words:

What Are You Experiencing Right Now?

Whatever you are experiencing is OK – sadness is OK, joy is OK, relief is OK, anger is OK, confusion or disappointment are OK, etc. Any feeling you are having is OK. Every experience is a possible doorway to deeper understanding of yourself. So we ask that each of you step into and acknowledge what you are feeling and be open to see what lessons it holds for you in a responsible way.

If you do not feel ready or wish to say anything, that is also OK. Simply say “pass” and this is an acceptable answer.

Then go quickly around the room in order. Each person speaks one or two words about what he/she is experiencing. If people start to give longer answers, raise your hand and remind them to limit their answers to just one or two words.

When the circle is complete:

Thank you for your effort and participation today. I'll see you at XXXX o'clock, tomorrow. Please be safe in going home or where you will be staying, and be on time tomorrow ready to start at ____ o'clock. Good night.

If this is a one-day event, then after a 15 or 20 minute silent break, bring the group back together and proceed with the standard Debrief, referring to the instructions in “How to Conduct the Debrief of The Samurai Game®”.