

ESSENCE

Know thyself!

a communicative game for detecting your personal qualities
for 2-7 players 10 years or older, duration of play: ca. 90 minutes

GAME IDEA

Take a look at your own essence and gain insightful knowledge about yourself and the other players!

When you play *ESSENCE* with family, friends and colleagues, you find out, in a playful way, what kind of qualities you all have, what brings you joy, what has meaning in your lives, how you are perceived by others, and what things you have in common.

This takes you down a path of discovery, and at every step, questions will call upon you to make an appropriate assessment of yourselves and your fellow players. Whoever demonstrates the greatest capacity for perception, reflection and empathy, wins.

Discussions during the game are explicitly welcome.

GAME MATERIAL

1 Game board
with a spiral path
of discovery

7 Pawns in the
player colors (black as
substitute for indigo)

**3 Outline
Cards**



56 Question Cards
(14 each in the colors
yellow, green, blue
and white)



49 Voting Cards (7 each
in the player colors red,
orange, yellow, green,
blue, indigo and violet)



372 Phrase Cards:

144 Traits
(yellow)

72 Activities
(blue)

144 Values
(green)

12 Colors
(colorful)



PREPARING TO PLAY

❶ Place the **game board** in the middle.

❷ Sort the **question cards** by color into yellow, green, blue and white decks of cards. (If you are setting up the basic game, separate out the 9 white question cards marked “E1”. They are only needed for the “Archetypes & Emotions” expansion!)



Now shuffle each of the 4 decks separately from one another and lay them face-down next to the corresponding fields at the left edge of the game board.

❸ Just like before, sort the **phrase cards** by color, shuffle the decks separately from one another and lay them face-down in a row at the upper edge of the game board.

❹ Place the equal-sided **outline card** (2x assessment scale) at the designated place at the right edge of the game board and put out the other outline cards on the table so that all players can view them as necessary.



Lay the **voting cards**, divided by color, on the table. Each player takes one of these 7 decks of cards and holds the deck in his or her hand. Every player now has a set of numbers from 1 to 7 (front side) and a Roman numeral player number from I to VII (back side). Put the decks that you don't need back into the box.

❺ Finally, each player receives a **pawn** that matches the color of his or her voting cards and places it on the starting field of the game board.

The oldest (and possibly wisest) player goes first. In the following, the player whose turn it is is called the “active player”.

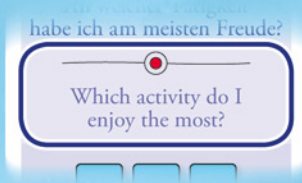
THE COURSE OF THE GAME

In each round, you take the following 4 actions:

- 1 Draw a question card
- 2 Reveal the phrase card(s)
- 3 Vote
- 4 Evaluate the results

Draw a question card

If you are the active player, draw a **question card** in the color that corresponds to the field on which your pawn stands.

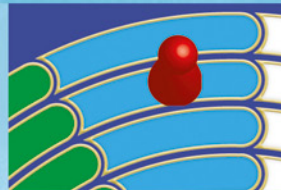


Then you read the question in the upper section of the card aloud. The depicted symbol indicates the question type:

- If the question is addressed to the active player (⊙), the active player has to assess him- or herself, and be assessed by the fellow players.
- If the question is addressed to the whole group (⊕), each player has to give an assessment of the group.

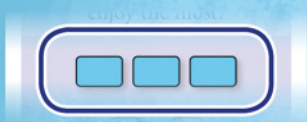
Finally, you put the card down face-up in front of you. This allows everyone to know whose turn it is.

Example: Till's pawn stands on a blue field. He therefore draws a question card from the blue deck.



Hint: Should there be any ambiguities about the meaning of questions or phrases, then agree on an interpretation!

Reveal the phrase card(s)

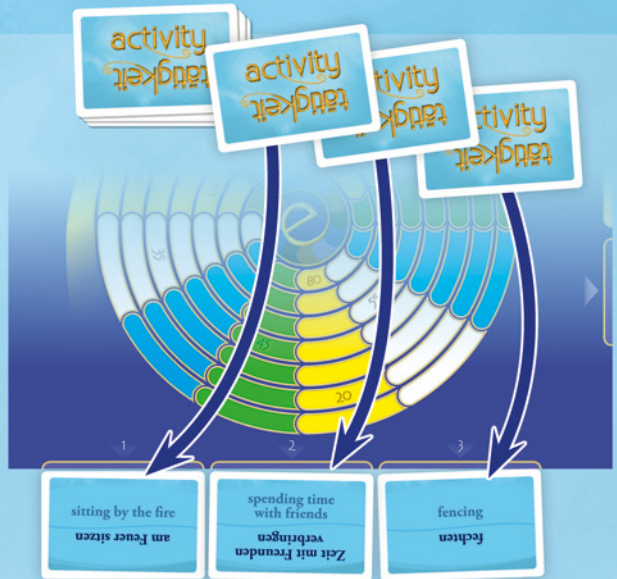


Depending on the instruction in the second section of the question card, you draw 1, 2 or 3 **phrase cards** in the indicated color and place them face-up at the edge of the game board:

- a single card at the right edge below the assessment scale,
- 2 or 3 cards next to the number fields at the lower edge.

Example:

Till's question card shows 3 blue phrase cards. Therefore, he must draw 3 cards from the deck of activities and place them at the lower edge of the game board by the numbers 1, 2 and 3.



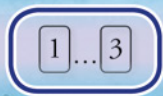
Changing answers (optional)

If you believe that answering the question will be too difficult, you can draw an additional phrase card and place it over one of the phrase cards that is already on display. (If there are 2 or 3 cards out, you can choose which card to cover; if there is only 1 card out, you can only cover this one.)

If you decide to use this option, you have to move your pawn **backwards** by 1 field. You can also do this several times, as long as you move backwards 1 field each time.

Vote

Now all of the players are asked to vote on which of the given responses best answers the question.



Depending on the instruction in the third section of the question card, you use your voting cards as follows:

- **1...2 / 1...3** : You have to select one of the **2** or **3** phrase cards displayed next to the number fields.
- **1...5** : You have to choose one of the **5** levels of the assessment scale.
- **1...7** : You have to select one of the **7** player numbers. (If there are less than 7 players in the game, then of course only those who are playing.)

Look for the matching number from your **voting cards** and lay it face-down in front of you. Once everyone has laid out their **voting cards**, you turn them over at the same time.

Example: There are 3 activities available as possible answers. Now Till has to decide which one of them brings him the most joy. He decides to go with answer number 2, fishes out the voting card with “2” from his hand, and lays it face-down in front of him. At the same time, his 4 fellow players provide an assessment of Till. Christian puts a 1 face-down, Franziska and Dagmar each a 2, and Nicole a 3. Then everyone reveals their voting cards.

Till

1 2 3

sitting by the fire
am Feuer sitzen

spending time with friends
Zeit mit Freunden verbringen

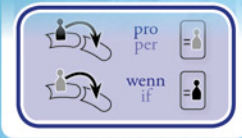
fencing
fechten

Christian Franziska Nicole Dagmar

V IV III VI

5

Evaluate the results



The lower section of the question card shows how the votes are to be evaluated. Basically, everyone checks whether there are matches and determines how many fields they can advance on the game board.

Depending on the question type, there are two ways of scoring:

1. In the case of an individual question (⊙) everyone checks whether there are matches with the active player:
 - The active player moves forward as many fields as there are matches between his voting card and those of the other players.
 - All of the players who have correctly assessed the active player move exactly 1 field forward.

Example: In the previous example, 2 of the players' voting cards match Till's voting card. Till can therefore move his pawn forward 2 fields. Because Franziska and Dagmar have correctly assessed Till, each of them can move their pawns 1 field forward. Christian and Nicole's pawns remain where they are because their voting cards did not match Till's.



2. In the case of a group questions (⊙) everyone checks whether there are matches between any players:
 - Every player whose voting card matches that of another player moves as many fields forward as his or her voting card matches those of other players.

Example: Till, Christian and Franziska have laid down a "1", and Dagmar and Nicole a "3". This means that the players with a "1" can advance 2 fields, and the players with a "3" can advance 1 field.



After evaluating all of the results, everyone takes the voting cards they have played back into their hands, and the phrase cards that have been played are taken out of the game. The current question card is also discarded. (The following only applies to the basic game: If this is a white question card, then put it back under the deck of white question cards.)

Now the player to the left of the current active player becomes the new active player. This starts the next round.

END OF THE GAME

The game ends as soon as a player's pawn has reached the center of the discovery spiral (field 84) or one of the question card decks is exhausted. The player who has advanced the farthest on the discovery path has won the game.

Hint: There are no winners when there are only two players because both players are always at the same level.

VARIANT "DOUBLE POINTS"

In the beginning of the game, deal 3 two-cent coins to each player.

At the end of the action „vote“, when all players lay out their voting cards, you as the active player may use one of your coins in order to double the points that you gain on your turn. To do so, put the coin on top of your voting card and announce your intention. After that, all voting cards are revealed.

Example: By using a coin you get 4 points for 2 achieved matches (instead of 2 points).

After the scoring, the coin is taken out of the game.

THE BACKSTORY

Do you remember?

You're going on a journey of discovery. In order to have a perfect adventure, you prepare a route and pack the right equipment in your suitcase.

Finally it's time to set out! Once you've boarded your flight, you imagine with excitement what awaits you. Then you fall asleep. The landing wakes you up abruptly, and you eagerly look out of the window and see with joyful anticipation the wilderness!

Then suddenly you realize that you can't remember where you come from – or where you were going. Your entire memory is simply erased.

The other passengers also look just as confused: "Who am I? And why am I here?" everyone asks themselves. Luckily, your suitcase is still there. You open it and find a glowing blue tool box. On it is written, in golden letters: "Know Thyself!"

Your adventure has begun.

THANK YOU NOTES

My special thanks go out to my personal coaches **Gerda Bindoni** (†), **John Oliver Haugg** and **Alois Saurugg**, who laid the foundational content for this game.

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Claas Fischer

