

## Consequence Remediation

This may be one of the most effective types of advanced **interactive** multiple-choice exercises. Instead of branching from the question to a spokesperson who tells you why something is right or wrong, or looping back to see a repeat of a lecture or demonstration, **consequence remediation** shows you the results of your choice. It gets you to do things right by showing the negative or positive consequences of your actions. The following is an example of **consequence** redemption dialog from People Skills:

CUSTOMER: What do you mean you have to place a hold on my checks? Listen, I've been a customer of this bank for 8 years. I've never bounced one check, and if you don't approve this check right now, I'm withdrawing every cent.

TELLER: [This response is choice number 2 of three choices.] Don't talk to me that way, sir. If you really had been a customer for 8 years you'd know that holds are a standard part of bank operations and we have to follow procedures.

CUSTOMER: [**Consequence remediation** to choice number 2.] Follow procedures? Well then, fine, start following the procedures to close my accounts!

[At this point the narrator can come back and offer a commentary on the transaction.]

NARRATOR: By challenging the customer's authority, you made him feel as though he had to act his toughest. He may still back down, though. Remember, we're trying to clarify the customer's feelings. Try to resolve the situation.

### **Consequence Remediation in Entertainment**

**Consequence remediation** is one of the staples of **interactive** entertainment, and we will be discussing it at length in Chapter 18. But just to mention it briefly here, the example previously presented, *National Lampoon's Blind Date*, actually uses **consequence remediation**. If you don't make the right choice and say the right thing to your date, she will present you with a **consequence** that will not

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be at all to your liking. Imagine that you are a wisecracking guy and take a look at the banter from this award-winning game. We have made some right and some wrong selections for you.

SANDY:	I think I should warn you I'm a pretty good pool player.
YOU CHOOSE TO SAY:	Go easy on me. I'm just an amateur.
SANDY:	That's why there's a bar, it's a great equalizer.
YOU CHOOSE TO SAY:	So I guess I need to get you slightly impaired?
SANDY:	This game is a lot like relationships.
YOU CHOOSE TO SAY:	The strategy is to always think one step ahead.
SANDY:	Pool's a game, relationships are work.
YOU CHOOSE TO SAY:	I forbid my chicks to work.
SANDY [gets angry]:	Now part of you won't work either.

[She clubs you with a pool cue and you're back to square one. That's what this guy gets for FORBIDDING his girlfriend from doing anything.]

**Consequence remediation** is especially powerful when used in any kind of **interactive** video because the medium can depict the **consequence** so realistically. It is an outstanding technique for teaching personal interactions or any procedure where improper choices lead to very pronounced consequences. **Consequence remediation** is also the underlying principle in many of the advanced exercise designs, which we will discuss in the following section.

## Non Sequiturs in Consequence Remediation

Notice that in *National Lampoon's Blind Date*, Sandy responds to the player's offer to buy her a drink by getting off the subject and saying, "This game is a lot like relationships." That is a non sequitur, and it is something that just doesn't feel quite right.

As a designer or a writer you may find yourself forced into building non sequiturs in your **interactive** conversations. Your users may be asking themselves, "Do they really want the character just blindly to change the subject right now?" The truth is that you may have no choice. So many different branch points may be coming together at that single response point that the answer may not make perfect sense with each path. But consider that people in real life do change the subject without bothering to respond to the previous statement, and, just as transcripts of real speech do not always read as cleanly as written dialog, so, too, non sequiturs are a real, although sometimes awkward-sounding, part of natural conversations.

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Of course, occasionally non sequiturs are of such high quality that they seem almost brilliant. My favorite example of this kind of non sequitur comes not from the semi-grown-up world of blind dates, but from the childhood world of *Peanuts*.

Linus often confides in his sister Lucy, trusting her with some profound observation about our place in the universe and the meaning of life. For example, he may say something like, "When I gaze up at the sky at night it makes me realize how small we are in relation to the stars." Lucy always shows her superiority with a comment that is pure non sequitur and total putdown at the same time, such as "I prefer eggs for breakfast."