

## **Four on the Couch – a parlor game**

You need at least ten people. Up to sixteen works. Or more, but your head will explode if there are too many. Best if it's even numbers, though you can get away with odd.

I will offer the "traditional" explanation.

By "traditional" I mean, the group should be evenly divided between women and men. Now, it's not necessary that those be the divisions, but there has to be an even division of two kinds of people. I have discovered this particular division is very satisfying to many, both men and women. In our games, if the numbers of men and women are uneven (8 men, 6 women, for instance), we may have some people who choose to "identify" as one of the others. In our game, there was one too many men, so I identified as "Wilhemina" and became a woman for the game (wear an identifying piece of clothing). It makes it a little more complicated, but it can be done. And is also funny. And just so you know, don't divide by age, or you older folks will find your brains have completely atrophied and you'll get skunked.

Once the division is figured out –

1. Sit in a circle of chairs, couches, or whatever (not on the floor if there's anyone who can't get down that far, since people will have to move). No particular order. But one space, defined as "the couch" (e.g., a couch) seats four people in the circle. On the couch, there should be two men and two women.

2. Everybody writes his/her/whatever name on a slip of paper.

3. With that done, each person chooses a name out of the hat. **You cannot choose your own name.** If you do, put it back and choose another. If the last person gets his/her/whatever name, repeat the whole process.

The name you choose is your name for the game. Forget your real name. Someone else has it.

**OBJECT OF THE GAME:** The object of the game is for the women to get four women on the couch, and for the men to get four men on the couch. Real men, or real women, not the names you have chosen for the game.

Now the game starts – good luck.

4. Starting at one place in the circle, the first person asks two people to change places (“Betty change places with Lou”).

**But**, the real Betty and Lou do not change places. The people who have drawn those names change places. Try and remember who those people were.

5. The game continues with the seat to the left of the person who first spoke going next. **It is the seat that chooses, not who was in the seat recently.** If you were going next, but you changed places to another place in the circle, you’ll have to wait for your chance. Whoever is sitting in the seat goes next.

Clear so far?

The women have to figure out the names of the men on the couch (could be “Tiffany”!), and replace them with a woman who is not on the couch. Men do the same, trying to get the women off the couch and replace them with men.

6. The game is won when one of the groups gets four of their team on the couch.

You will quickly discover you can’t remember anyone’s name. You think you do, but by the time it’s your turn, you will forget. It is horrible. And hilarious.