

UNITED WISDOM

Which conditions am I treating as permanent?

Freedom and Action

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Epigraph

> *“slight differences in the initial conditions”.*

Henri Poincaré, Science and Method, Book I, Chapter IV, Chance, Part II, page 398 of The Foundations of Science, 1913, translated by George Bruce Halsted. This fragment belongs to a mathematical argument; it establishes no law governing changes in human agreements. The quotation allowance applies to the whole collection. Context.

What this article is about

A plan can seem clear while its conditions quietly acquire an indefinite duration. A room is available today, someone is willing to help now, and the present amount of work is manageable. We can build a proposal for a month or a year from these facts without establishing how long each supporting condition lasts. The question then concerns more than the accuracy of our initial information. We need to understand what we are continuing to treat as unchanged, and why we extend that condition through time.

We will consider a fictional voluntary arrangement among adults for board-game evenings. It can be divided into access to a room, roles, time, and the extent of participation. We propose neither predicting every change nor demanding full knowledge of another person's life. The aim is limited: distinguish a present fact, an explicitly accepted condition, and an assumption that it will continue. The practice belongs to the authors and promises no project stability. An actual change may require a new choice, but every imaginable change need not stop every available action in advance.

I. A present fact has a duration and a subject

Imagine a fictional scene. Daniil wants to hold board-game evenings on Wednesdays in a small library room. A staff member has confirmed an available evening next week. Daniil already pictures meetings every Wednesday until the end of the season. Between the confirmed evening and the seasonal schedule lies an added assumption. It might prove suitable, but the person responsible for the space has not yet communicated it. A clear present answer does not establish the room's availability for every future date or create a promise from the library.

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To see the extension, name the subject of the original message. One date, a particular room, and specified hours are confirmed. If the reply really covers the whole month, the supporting condition has a different extent. We need not assume in advance that every confirmation concerns a single occasion. We should read its actual content and preserve its scope. Sometimes the error lies here: a participant remembers the favourable overall meaning, then continues the plan for a period the other person neither discussed nor accepted.

Other information also has a duration. Daniil currently has the evening free, a friend can bring games, and some invitees have replied. What is known is the present position concerning a particular matter. It does not oblige people to preserve their schedules indefinitely. At the same time, an established agreement may create a responsibility to communicate a significant change. The right to change and accuracy in communication are connected but distinct: a person does not become an unchanging condition, and a promise does not silently disappear at the first inconvenience.

A plan therefore begins with limited material. We can use it for an available action while separately checking an extension to another period. This does not require reducing every intention to a single day. A long project can also have suitable confirmations and resources. The question is where its foundations are established and where a past or present position has quietly been extended because that makes a clear future schedule easier to imagine.

II. An assumption of continuity differs from an accepted agreement

Daniil thinks his friend will bring games every week because she happily did so once. This is an assumption about continuing participation, not a role she has accepted. If the format depends on those games, they need to discuss the specific period and amount of involvement. She may agree for a month, for one meeting, or decline. No answer becomes wrong merely because the first enjoyable occasion has already helped Daniil imagine a lasting shared activity.

An accepted agreement is not a natural constant either. It may have conditions for reconsideration and known limitations. Someone has promised to bring games on the next two Wednesdays if the time is agreed beforehand. That message is definite without securing every future possibility. We should preserve the qualification when the plan becomes familiar. Otherwise a confirmed role expands into an obligation to be available for any request, although the participant never agreed to that extent of involvement.

We can distinguish three records: what is known now, what is explicitly agreed, and what is assumed for the future. All three may concern the same subject. The room is free on Wednesday; the library has accepted three further dates; Daniil assumes continuation might be possible afterwards. This distinction needs no cumbersome table. It makes communication

clearer and shows which question will arise later. The end of one agreed period does not become a breach of an indefinite promise that was never actually made.

An assumption does not always need to be resolved immediately. A confirmed room and one set of games may be enough for the first meeting. Next month can remain a separate question. But publishing a seasonal schedule makes the assumption affect other people's expectations. Its role has changed, and it now requires an appropriate foundation. The same gap may be acceptable for a small present step and significant for the broader promise someone is preparing to make.

III. The plan's duration should fit the duration of its foundations

If the library confirms the room for three weeks, a proposal for a permanent seasonal club exceeds that support. Perhaps there is another room for the remaining dates; perhaps there is not. We need to name the available scope. Three trial meetings can be announced if participants accept that form. This is not necessarily a less valuable project. It is a proposal for the period whose conditions are currently established, with continuation retained as a separate possibility rather than an already guaranteed result.

Different supports may cover different periods. The room is available for a month, one host for two weeks, and the games belong to someone who has not promised to leave them in storage. We cannot take the longest period and apply it to all the other parts. Each meeting requires clarity about what is actually provided. This is no instruction to treat another person's participation as a resource to be extracted to the maximum. Roles belong to people and should remain voluntarily accepted within an understood extent, including the ability to discuss limitations.

Sometimes sufficient support need not cover the whole period beforehand. People may agree to confirm arrangements in stages, deciding the next meeting after the present one. But invitees should then know that a permanent schedule has not been accepted. Some may find that format unsuitable. We cannot call it convenient for everyone merely because it leaves the organiser flexibility. One person's flexibility creates no free time for another; limited certainty has its own cost, which participants assess for themselves.

Matching the duration does not provide a single correct calendar. It connects a promise with the duration of its available foundations. People may accept a long agreement with understood reconsideration, a brief trial, or decline the proposed rhythm. There is no need to declare one option mature for everyone. It is enough that the current form does not give unknown future availability the status of an already accepted possibility or hide the period to which participants' present answers apply.

IV. A small change may concern an essential condition

The first meeting runs from six to eight in the evening. Daniil thinks moving the start by half an hour changes nothing. It may indeed be insignificant for one participant and make the evening inaccessible to another. Without an answer, we cannot determine the relationship on someone's behalf. The size of a change in minutes differs from its importance to a particular person's participation. Earlier consent to one date and time does not necessarily cover the new form, even when the adjustment looks small from outside.

A similar question arises with a role. The friend brought games, but now she is asked to explain the rules every time and stay until the end. The evening's name remains the same while the extent of participation grows. We cannot treat this as the same agreement simply because the change suits the organiser. The new part needs to be communicated and an appropriate answer obtained. Sometimes the adjustment is readily accepted; sometimes it is unsuitable. The article predicts no response. It preserves the subject concerning which consent may be given or absent.

In Science and Method, Book I, Chapter IV, Part II, Poincaré examines why approximate knowledge of an initial position sometimes fails to provide an equally accurate prediction. This is a mathematical and physical argument, not an empirical account of clubs or human sensitivity. We use only a limited comparison: the size of an observed adjustment alone does not answer how much the relevant outcome has changed. A causal model drawn from physical examples cannot automatically be transferred to people's consent.

For an ordinary project, we can check the essential connection itself. What determines someone's ability to attend, what extent of a role has been accepted, and what does using the room require? We cannot declare every detail critical in advance and demand renewed agreement over every word. The subject of checking should concern the actual action. Attention to change then avoids becoming an endless search for hidden threats and preserves an understandable question: does the earlier support still sustain the present form, or does it now require another answer and another available choice?

V. Several conditions may depend on one support

The room, key, and games cupboard are available through one staff member. The plan records them as three confirmed possibilities. Yet a change in her role may require clarification of several parts at once. Three names do not necessarily mean three independent supports. This is a logical distinction concerning the project's arrangement, not a measured probability of failure. The particular situation requires finding out which responsibilities and possibilities are connected, without inventing a dependency merely because it is imaginable.

We can check who can confirm each part after a change. Perhaps another responsible person issues the key and the cupboard is assigned separately. The connection is then weaker than it appeared. Perhaps all the conditions really did belong to one accepted scope of involvement. We should preserve the factual answer. Inquiry should not lead in advance to an anxious conclusion that any shared support makes a plan bad. It shows what needs reconsidering after a specific change and which foundations remain the same.

Other dependencies concern time. A host can attend if the meeting starts after work; participants are available if they receive the announcement beforehand. Frequent repetition does not make these conditions permanent. We can consider them through actual messages. This need not require disclosure of an entire work schedule or personal reasons. Suitable clarity about the shared subject is enough for coordination. A person's private sphere remains theirs even when a fuller account would make forecasting easier for the organiser.

We are checking the arrangement of supports, not someone's overall reliability. A staff member may have a limited period of involvement; a host may decline a new date. Neither fact proves bad character. We can acknowledge that the plan assumed more continuity than was established and change our own proposal. Sometimes some actions remain possible; sometimes a pause is required. Understanding dependencies identifies the subject of reconsideration without promising that a correctly drawn diagram will preserve every original project.

VI. Resources may change with the chosen rhythm

Daniil prepared the first evening and considers the current work manageable. He then proposes doing it every week. But participating once and following a recurring rhythm involve different amounts of work. Experience of one evening does not directly establish availability for preparing the whole season. This does not assert that regularity necessarily exhausts a person. We need to consider actual tasks, time, and the accepted role, without treating a currently free evening as an indefinite reserve that remains unchanged when we expand our own task.

Repetition may also involve further actions: returning the games, clarifying the next date, tidying the room, and communicating changes. If the original assessment covered only running the meeting, these parts have not been considered. We can name them without promising to measure each month's exact cost beforehand. Some information will become clearer after several events, but that does not oblige everyone to continue for the sake of investigation. Reconsideration should remain a real choice, not a hidden test of the ability to sustain the project.

A trial rhythm can be limited by voluntary agreement. For example, people can hold several known meetings and then discuss continuation. But calling it a trial removes neither current requirements nor promises. The games require their owner's consent and the room must be used within the accepted scope. Participants should understand that continuation remains open. This preserves the distinction between exploring manageability and an already secured long undertaking. It promises no precise forecast of the club's entire future from a handful of trials.

If the demands change, we can clarify a particular element. Preparation requires more messages, the chosen date no longer suits, or the hosting role has proved broader than what was accepted. This is more specific than a general conclusion that interest has gone or someone is no longer capable of participating. Yet we should not forbid that personal conclusion if it actually describes their desire. We simply distinguish it from an established change in conditions, rather than forcing one kind of foundation to replace every other when considering the present available action.

VII. Another person's consent is not a permanent personal property

The friend willingly helped with the first meeting. Daniil can value that participation and still ask about the next role. A favourable past creates no indefinite permission. Consent concerns the subject, conditions, and period the person understood and accepted. Expansion requires corresponding clarity. This does not mean renegotiating every ordinary component of an already accepted role. It means that a role cannot quietly become another one while retaining only the pleasant old name of the shared activity.

Consequences of an accepted agreement may remain when participation ends. Where possible, a change needs to be communicated to whoever is arranging the next step. But that communication does not oblige someone to continue indefinitely. We can preserve responsibility for a known promise and acknowledge a present limit. The article establishes no legal procedure for withdrawal or universal duties. It considers ordinary accuracy: what was accepted, what is changing, and what available answer the other participants need.

An unknown reason for declining can remain unknown. The friend says she is not willing to bring games next month. Daniil knows the limit of her participation without knowing her entire story. That may be enough to change the proposal. The absence of a personal explanation does not authorise assigning a hidden motive or demanding proof of respect for the club. Interest in project stability concerns a shared action; it provides no full access to a person for conveniently forecasting all their future decisions.

Coercion or threats mean that a voluntary arrangement no longer describes the situation. Continuity of consent cannot be checked through further pressure or punishment for refusal. Appropriate protection and support are needed. In an ordinary safe context, the ability to stop preserves voluntary participation even when the project finds another format inconvenient. A plan's stability is no supreme goal that permits appropriation of another person's decision. It is considered within the limits of possibilities the adult participants actually accepted.

VIII. Every possible change need not be investigated beforehand

Conditions can change, but that does not require listing everything imaginable before the first meeting. One evening may need its necessary present information checked, with the rest left open. Daniil need not know every future reason for room closure in order to use an actually confirmed date. Continuity becomes significant where the plan or promise relies on a condition continuing. That subject limits consideration without turning every unknown into a mandatory reason to postpone an allowable action.

We can specify which actual changes would require a new decision. A reply from the library about another date, a changed hosting role, or a message from the games' owner are understandable grounds. They differ from repeating the general knowledge that circumstances sometimes change. We can retain reconsideration without investigating every participant daily. The article does not promise that such a boundary will eliminate worry. It connects additional consideration with definite new material, rather than a demand to feel completely certain about the future.

Sometimes a condition matters but its continuation cannot currently be checked. Choices then include shortening the proposal, agreeing a conditional format, finding an actually available alternative, or declining. None is guaranteed. We need not declare the unknown permanent to avoid an unpleasant pause. Nor should every gap be treated as proof of inevitable failure. Uncertainty describes the boundary of information; whether an action is available depends on the necessary conditions of its chosen form, considered separately.

Completion of checking can therefore be partial and honest. The first date is confirmed, the month is unconfirmed, and another answer will be needed after the meeting. This picture is definite enough for a limited proposal if that proposal is allowable and accepted. It needs no general conclusion about people's permanence or the unpredictability of all life. It preserves the present foundation at its actual size, allowing action and later return to the question without continually having to justify the existence of something still unknown.

IX. Naming an alternative does not make it available

Daniil says they can meet elsewhere if the room closes. But no suitable place has yet been found, and participants have not discussed a different journey. This is a desired possibility, not an available backup plan. Stability cannot be considered secured merely because a record includes an alternative line. A new action needs its own conditions. Sometimes these can be established beforehand; sometimes they remain open until a change occurs. A more confident name should not conceal their status.

If another room is actually confirmed, its duration and terms of use need checking. It may be available once or on another day. A backup option does not necessarily preserve everyone's earlier participation. Some may be able to attend and others may not. This is no established law governing relocation, but a possible difference requiring an answer in the specific situation. An alternative is useful within its real scope, not as a promise to transfer the whole project without losing any condition.

People may agree that a meeting is cancelled if the room is unavailable. That is also a definite action if they understand the condition. A means of continuing is not always required. Cancelling one date may be more suitable than an unconfirmed replacement. But a known responsibility to communicate cancellation remains. We cannot call the plan flexible while leaving participants to arrange a journey to an unavailable place. The limit of continuation should be connected to an understandable present message, not merely the organiser's inward sense of readiness.

A backup plan is therefore checked through the same questions as the main plan. What is established, for how long, accepted by whom, and with which parts still assumed? This need not double every inquiry. We simply avoid presenting a name as a completed check. Sometimes the honest record is that no confirmed alternative exists. It allows a limit or refusal to rest on an actual foundation while preserving the right to seek another option later, when its conditions can really be established and agreed.

X. A changed condition does not automatically falsify an earlier answer

If the room was available on the first Wednesday and unavailable a month later, those are two positions in time. The second does not prove the initial message deceptive. We need to consider whether the answer covered the future period and whether a promise was accepted. Sometimes an agreement was broken, sometimes its specified period ended, and sometimes a new limitation arose. These possibilities require different descriptions. The unpleasantness of change does not establish one motive or one moral assessment of a participant throughout the entire history.

A similar boundary applies to one's own assessment. Daniil may reasonably have considered the first evening manageable and later not want a weekly role. That does not necessarily mean he misrepresented his desire then. The duration, experience, or extent has changed. But if he already made a broader promise, its consequences need consideration. An honest admission of change does not automatically erase others' known expectations. He can communicate a new limit while acknowledging that the original proposal exceeded its available foundation.

After an outcome, we can identify which assumption was insufficient. The room was treated as permanently available without confirmation, a participant's role was expanded, or a general backup option had no address. This review has a specific subject. It promises no precise causal share for each element and makes no universal unreliability out of one case. We can change the way we make the next proposal, retain suitable earlier information, and avoid demanding a complete rewriting of our personality over one discovered limitation.

History remains useful when dates and scope are preserved. A present change need not destroy information about a successful first meeting. It shows the information's domain of application. We can value the experience and acknowledge that another month contains other conditions. This accuracy differs both from excusing every breach through circumstances and from demanding that everything once established remain true indefinitely. A new action again needs suitable foundations; the past cannot replace them through its age or pleasantness alone.

XI. Continuity is an assumption with a domain of application

Within a limited plan, some conditions are indeed treated as unchanged for the action's duration. Otherwise neither schedules nor agreements could be used. We need to understand the period and subject covered by that assumption. A confirmed evening has a foundation; indefinite availability needs another one. The article invites no doubt about everything. It suggests noticing the extension that begins after actual confirmation and quietly gives a present condition more time and authority than was established.

The assumption can be stated directly: for three agreed meetings we use the current format, then discuss continuation. Another situation may call for another period. This form guarantees no absence of obstacles and establishes no single measure of reasonableness. It makes the foundation's domain visible, so an actual change can be compared with an understandable proposal. If new information appears sooner, it should be considered on its merits rather than waiting for the period to end in order to preserve an attractive original record.

Participants may assess acceptable openness differently. One accepts separate confirmations; another needs a known month beforehand. We can recognise that difference and choose a suitable form or stop. Willingness to tolerate uncertainty need not become a measure of overall maturity. Actual personal conditions and the extent people freely accept matter to the decision. A stable plan should not be achieved by declaring an inconvenient answer wrong or hiding it to preserve a favourable common picture of the future.

The question of permanence thus returns to a particular action. Which conditions are currently established? Which are treated as constant, and for how long? What will actually require reconsideration? Answers may remain partial. They create no power over the future but allow a proposal at an available scale. Further change will not erase the value of an honest present step; a present step will not erase the possibility of change. Between them remain information, consent, and the right to choose another form after an actual change.

What this means in practice

For one ordinary voluntary plan, identify three layers: present facts, explicitly accepted agreements, and assumptions about continuation. Specify the subject and duration of each essential support. Then compare them with the extent of the promise you intend to make. If the proposal lasts longer than its confirmed conditions, you can clarify continuation, shorten the period, or agree an open format. A backup option's name does not confirm its availability; a personal reason for declining may remain unknown.

Name several actual grounds for renewed consideration: a changed date, a participant's reply, an expanded role, or an established error. There is no need to list the entire future or demand

continuous evidence of continuity in someone else's life. When new information appears, check which part it changes and which foundations remain. You can reduce the action or decline if a necessary support is unavailable. Where possible, clarify an already known message on which another person depends within an understandable scope.

This is the authors' form of reflection; its effectiveness has not been tested. You may decline it or stop. Threats and specialised requirements need appropriate protection and checks; a philosophical example cannot replace them. A small result is seeing the duration of a foundation more clearly and ceasing to call assumed continuity an established fact. Project continuation, calm, and freedom from obstacles are not promised. Other people's consent retains its own limits regardless of the original plan's convenience.

Key quotation

> *“Prediction becomes impossible”.*

Henri Poincaré, the same context in Chapter IV, Part II, page 398 of the 1913 collection, translated by Halsted. This concerns a specifically described limit of prediction from approximate initial data, not the impossibility of every kind of life planning. Context.

Connections between traditions

Comparison	Limited connection	Boundary
Poincaré ↔ a plan's conditions	Knowing a condition and knowing the result do not automatically coincide.	The mathematical and physical model proves no psychological mechanism or sensitivity of a particular participant.
Approximate data ↔ an assumption of continuation	The initial support's boundary needs preserving.	Measurement error and unknown future consent concern different subjects.
The authors' plan ↔ voluntary agreement	Duration, roles, and reconsideration can be made understandable.	The form guarantees no stability and grants no right to demand indefinite participation.

Primary sources

• Henri Poincaré. The Foundations of Science: Science and Hypothesis, The Value of Science, Science and Method. Authorised translation by George Bruce Halsted, The Science Press, 1913; PG39713. Metadata, contents, and selected contexts in Science and Method, Book I, Chapter IV, Chance, were read, including the continuous argument in Parts I–II about approximate knowledge and prediction. The whole collection was not read. The quotation budget conservatively covers all its included books, editions, and languages. Historical physical examples establish no contemporary social effects.

Tags

conditions, continuity, assumption, plan, duration, agreement, fact, change, participation, consent, resources, role, support, uncertainty, reconsideration, confirmation, Poincaré, chance, prediction, approximation, future, responsibility, scope, period, dependency, alternative, checking, boundary, voluntary participation, promise

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