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Kompendium

EKSPERTER I TEAM/ EXPERTS IN TEAMWORK

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Compendium Spring 2021

Experts in Teamwork/ Eksperter i team

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Preface

This compendium has been produced for students in Experts in Teamwork.

The compendium contains extracts from four selected books. The purpose of the texts is to provide you with concepts and models that can be used as a basis for reflection in each student team. Common to all the texts is that they describe and discuss various group phenomena, as well as the factors that characterize and foster effective cooperation in groups/teams. With this compendium, we want to help student teams in EiT to improve their understanding of the teamwork component in the course and the importance of teamwork in the workplace.

From the book "Creating Effective Teams: A Guide for Members and Leaders" written by psychologist Susan Wheelan, chapter 5 highlights the significance of team members' behaviour and focuses on common patterns of reaction in teams and the prerequisites for developing effective teams. Student teams can use the checklist in the text to identify and reflect on their own actions as team members.

The second text is from the book "Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills" by the educational psychologist David Johnson and the behavioural scientist Frank Johnson. The chapters 1 and 10 describe key concepts and phenomena from the field of research on groups, including how to understand and manage diversity in groups. The texts contain many practical exercises that teams may use to their advantage to put the theoretical material into practice in their own team process. A special exercise, discussed in the EiT book, has also been developed based on chapter 10. The exercise is called "The Value of Diversity" and is especially recommended for students in international villages.

From the book "The Skilled Facilitator" written by the organizational psychologist Roger Schwarz, the chapters 5 and 6 are included in the compendium. In chapter 5, Schwarz provides in-depth descriptions of eight behaviours for mutual learning that increase the group's teamwork skills. Reflecting on these behaviours are useful for understanding and developing the interaction in your own team and can be made relevant using the exercise "Schwarz's Ground Rules", to which the learning assistants in the village have access. In chapter 6, the focus is on structure, effectiveness and interdependence in teams.

The last text is an extract from the book TEAM, written by the Norwegian sociologist Kjell B. Hjertø. The text includes clear definitions of the team concept and the phenomena of interdependency and shared responsibility. The text includes a discussion of challenges faced by members of virtual teams. For those who have a special interest in these topics, the book contains extensive references to research. We regret that this text has not been translated into English, but we hope that students in the international villages who speak Norwegian can convey the content to English-speaking students.

We wish you all the best with your work!

Bjørn Sortland, Head of EiT

Wheelan, Susan A. (2016): *Creating Effective Teams. A Guide for Members and Leaders.* Fifth Edition. SAGE.
Chapter 5: Effective Team Members (p 49 – 69)

FIVE

EFFECTIVE TEAM MEMBERS

So much has been written about leaders that it would take at least one large library to house all the books, journals, magazines, and other materials that focus on leadership. Materials that focus on membership still fit neatly in a corner on my desk. Leadership training and coaching leaders abound. In all likelihood, you have attended leadership training at some point in your career. But have you been to membership training? Sadly, I think your answer would be no. Have you ever seen a brochure or ad in a professional journal that describes a membership training workshop? I haven't, and advertisements for training cross my desk almost every day. Besides, who wants to go to membership training? It would be like volunteering for a remedial class in high school. Winners go to leadership training. Only losers need to learn how to be effective members.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Unless all members work to ensure group success, it won't happen. Leaders and members all have to put their oars in the water and row in the same direction to reach the group's goals. No one gets to be a bystander in the process of group development.

Actually, I'm getting tired of writing about the lack of work group membership training. The first edition of *Creating Effective Teams* was published in 1999. It's now 2014, and nothing much has changed in the membership training department. Membership training hasn't caught on. It's not fair to ask people to participate in a group at work without helping them acquire the skills they need to be effective members. For my part, I no longer offer leadership training. Instead, I train work groups in effective membership and effective leadership. Members and leaders of real work groups learn together and learn

each other's roles. This approach is much more effective because the attitudes and skills participants acquire can be put to use at the group's next meeting. Also, members and the leader can help each other become more effective by supporting each other and offering advice.

This chapter outlines what research tells us about the behaviors and attitudes of effective team members. These are presented in the form of guidelines. None of these characteristics requires any special personality type, but they all require goodwill and some degree of effort. As you read the chapter, think about a group you are working with at the moment. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I follow these guidelines?
- Can I think of times when I exhibited these behaviors and attitudes?
- Can I think of times when I should have exhibited these behaviors but, for some reason, did not?
- In what areas do I need to improve?
- What do I plan to do to improve in those areas?

If you're going to be an effective team member, you'll need to take a closer look at your own behaviors and attitudes and at the way you interact with the group. Here are some guidelines to help you evaluate your performance as a group member.

Don't Blame Others for Group Problems

One of the more difficult problems I encounter in working with groups is a general feeling of helplessness. Somehow, members of groups are convinced that they can't make a difference. I hear lots of statements like the following:

"Unless the leader is replaced, there's nothing the rest of us can do."

"These people are crazy. I don't even want to come to meetings."

"Team meetings are like swimming with sharks. I just keep my head down."

"Our meetings are a waste of time. I wish the leader were stronger."

"I'm not even sure what we're supposed to be doing, but I'm afraid to ask."

"The same people talk in circles. I just keep quiet and hope the meeting will end soon."

"There's nothing we can do. Upper management has to get into the act before things will change."

I encounter these feelings of helplessness very often among people in the workplace. Of course, I realize that things can be pretty chaotic in organizations due to downsizing, mergers, new initiatives, recessions, and the like, but I am not convinced that those are the only reasons for the passivity I observe. One reason is the human tendency to blame the other guy.

It will probably surprise many readers to learn that there's a social science term for this tendency to blame the other guy. It's called the fundamental attribution error. What it means is that humans tend to attribute the actions of others to personality characteristics without taking other factors into account. Most of the time that's an error.

Our tendency to blame the boss for poor group results without taking budgetary constraints, the lack of group member cooperation, or the lack of other necessary resources into account is an example of an attribution error. When we say that lack of upper management support is the reason for group failure, despite the fact that many group members don't even come to meetings and no one can agree when they do come, that's an attribution error. When members say that Harry is at fault because he just won't shut up despite the fact that no one else seems willing to talk, that's an attribution error.

Researchers have also uncovered general patterns in how individual group members interpret group success or failure. For example, leaders and powerful members tend to feel personally responsible for both group success and group failure. On the other hand, less powerful members take responsibility for group success but not for group failure. Instead, these members attribute group failure to leaders, powerful members, the organization, upper management, or other situational constraints.

People tend to misinterpret the behavior and motivation of others. This tendency to misinterpret increases conflict. When things aren't going well for the group, we are much more likely to blame others. Although the tendency to misjudge people, events, and actions is natural, it also has very negative effects on the group and on individuals who are wrongly judged.

For example, I often am called on to assist work groups that are mired in conflict and, as a result, are not within budget or time constraints or are not meeting target goals. There is usually a stable behavior pattern of attacks and counterattacks that has been going on for some time. My goal in working with such a group is to help the group free itself from this pattern and get back on track.

The problem confronting me in such a situation is that because the group is stuck in a pattern of conflict, members tend to focus on blaming outside forces, other members, or the leader for the group's predicament. As long as blaming is the primary pattern, the group will remain stuck. Also, the longer the blaming continues, the more powerless and frustrated group members will feel.

Changing a pattern of blame to one of collaboration and shared responsibility for group functioning and productivity is no easy task, however. Schein (1988), a well-known organizational consultant, wrote that the concept of teamwork is inconsistent with the U.S. emphasis on individualism and personal responsibility. Consequently, if the members accept shared responsibility for group function, each member will feel compelled to accept personal blame for group failure as well. Resistance to any information that disconfirms the belief that the group's problems are due to the actions of individual members, the leader, or authority figures external to the group is the inevitable result. Unless group members begin to see the situation differently, no change will occur.

One of the most powerful ways I have found to help members change their view of the situation is to talk with them about the normal human tendency to blame the other guy. Once members realize that they have made a mistake, they begin to look for other factors that are inhibiting progress. From that point on, changes happen fairly rapidly. Simply put, blaming is a symptom of a negative group pattern. Blaming is almost never a statement of fact. It is rare that one person is responsible for a group's problems. I believe that it is best to assume that is never the case, because that stops the blaming, which often leads the group in a positive direction.

Because I've heard it so many times before, I can almost hear some readers saying that, in their case, the leader really was to blame. Others are thinking it really was that member Harry's fault. Still others are thinking that upper management really was to blame.

I hear these statements so often it seems as if every leader, on every continent, is incompetent. I hear these statements so often that it seems as if every group, on every continent, contains an incompetent, evil, or mentally unbalanced member. This is simply not the case. Most groups contain people who

are trying to do a good job. They may not know how. They may not be socially skilled, but they are trying.

My advice is to give everyone the benefit of the doubt not just for his or her sake but for your own and the group's sake. Blaming doesn't help. It only starts cycles of revenge and retaliation. Instead, find other factors that might be blocking group progress and fix them. Use the checklists in this book (for instance, the Effective Member Checklist at the end of this chapter) to help you determine other things to focus on. You'll be surprised at what happens when you do that. Things will start to get better.

By the way, I want to encourage people in management roles to start taking this advice as well. Stop replacing leaders or group members for alleged incompetence. Give teams the resources and training they need to work together effectively. Supply consultants, if necessary. All of us can make attribution errors, and the human cost of these errors is very high.

I had two reasons for starting this chapter by introducing the reader to the human tendency to blame the other guy. First, it pains me to repeatedly witness these misjudgments and their aftermath (e.g., transfers, firings, hurt feelings, and stress). Second, it means that all group members and leaders have responsibility for group success and group failings. The rest of the organization does also. Chapter 2 outlined what we know from research about how organizations can help the groups functioning within them. Chapter 6 will outline what leaders can do to help their groups be successful. This chapter outlines what members can do to help their group be successful. Everybody shares in the responsibility, and that's the truth.

Encourage the Process of Goal, Role, and Task Clarification

Encouraging the process of goal, role, and task clarification is simple to implement. All it means is that when you don't understand what's going on, ask questions until you do. It helps to ask questions of the group and not just the leader, because the discussion that follows will be richer and more likely to really clarify things for everyone.

Although this is a very simple thing to do, people hesitate to ask questions in the early stages of group development. This reticence is quite natural, but try to overcome it a little. Even if you ask only one question of the group, it will make a difference.

Many people have told me that they're afraid to ask questions for fear of being perceived as incompetent or naive. I am quite aware that image is seen as an important thing at work, but image is not everything. Even if image is very important, asking clarifying questions is unlikely to hurt your image. In fact, it may improve it. Others are most likely to see you as helpful, courageous, or down to earth for asking clarifying questions. None of those qualities is bad for your image.

Encourage the Adoption of an Open Communication Structure in Which All Member Input and Feedback Is Heard

It won't surprise most readers to learn that some people talk more than others during meetings. Of course, some people are just shy or have less need to be heard than others do. However, many talk less because they don't feel invited to speak. This has happened to most of us at one time or another. You go to the first meeting of a group, and few people talk to you. When you do say something, very few people respond to what you have said. If this has happened to you, think about the kind of group it was and the kind of people it contained. Was there anything about you that was different from others? Were you:

- one of the oldest in the group?
- one of the youngest in the group?
- new to the organization or group?
- one of only a few women in an otherwise male group?
- one of only a few men in an otherwise female group?
- the only one from your profession or area?
- one of only a few minorities in the group?

Were there any other obvious differences between you and other group members?

People tend to unconsciously classify others and assign high or low status to them based on external characteristics, especially during early meetings. Sometimes, it can be things as seemingly meaningless as height, clothes, mannerisms, and the like that get you classified into a high- or low-status position in a group.

By the way, people aren't bad when they classify others and assign them high or low status based on that classification. We all do it, all the time, sometimes without even being aware of what we're doing. In some cases, our tendency to do

this can be very helpful. It can keep us out of harm's way. In work groups, however, our tendency to do this can be quite detrimental.

In the beginning of a group, communication patterns get established very quickly. Who talks to whom and who gets to talk a lot or a little become clear within a few meetings. No one talks about this; it just happens. The problem with this is that who talks to whom and who gets to talk a lot or a little are usually determined by status characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and organizational position. Once a person is assigned a position in the food chain, it's hard to break out of it.

For example, women and minorities still tend to be assigned lower status in groups. As a result, they are expected to talk less, and they may be assigned less influential group roles. They often report dissatisfaction with their lower status, and other group members sometimes report uncertainty about the status of minority and female group members. Although this is beginning to change, we still have a long way to go before this tendency to assign lower status to members of certain groups is eradicated.

Group performance suffers when member role and status assignments are inappropriate or when member contributions are ignored. Potentially valuable contributions are overlooked, and goal achievement and productivity suffer as a result. Researchers have identified individual strategies and group conditions that increase the status of women and minorities in groups, however. These strategies may be helpful to any person whose group role or status is not commensurate with his or her abilities.

People who do not accept the lower status assigned to them increase the likelihood of improving their position in the group. People who act in group-oriented, as opposed to individual-oriented, ways tend to improve their group status as well. Also, people who demonstrate their competence and abilities to the group tend to increase their status, especially if they have enough time to demonstrate that competence. Eventually, other group members see these demonstrated abilities, and there is no longer a need for the person to prove his or her worth to the group.

Although research has focused mainly on women and minorities, the same advice works for anyone who is perceived as lower in status for whatever reason. On the individual level, the research suggests that the following strategies can help to elevate one's status in the group:

- Diplomatically resisting an inappropriate role assignment or status
- Demonstrating one's competence and abilities
- Acting in a cooperative, group-oriented way

On the group level, time aids the process of redefinition or reassignment of roles and changes in communication patterns. There's also another factor that helps tremendously. When all members take responsibility to ensure that everyone is heard from and that they are all clear about and comfortable with their roles, the chances of group success increase. Valuable input and skills will be used instead of lost.

Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to be heard can be as simple as stopping periodically to check in with everyone. This takes only a few minutes but can make a big difference in group success.

Promote an Appropriate Ratio of Task Communications to Supportive Communications

In Chapter 3, I discussed the importance of supportive comments to group success. Statements focused on the group's work task are also very important, of course. If we engage only in supportive conversation, we may feel better but won't get much work done. Members of work teams that are successful spend between 70% and 80% of the time talking about goals and tasks. That means that out of 100 statements made by team members, 70 to 80 are work oriented. The next most common kind of statement made in high performance teams is supportive. The remainder are statements that express disagreement, focus on topics unrelated to the task, or express some form of dependency. If the proportion of these various kinds of statements changes very much, the group will be less successful.

What this means in practical terms is that when the group strays into an extended conversation about a football game, it is helpful to try to refocus the discussion on the task at hand. Likewise, if the group has been intensely discussing work tasks for an extended period of time, it might be helpful to compliment the group for its efforts or express support in some other way. Balance in group conversation, as in life, helps a lot.

Promote the Use of Effective Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Procedures

Before I discuss the process of problem solving and decision making, it is necessary to bring up an important question: Who should participate in solving

problems and making decisions? Most organizations encourage workers at all levels to participate in these important processes. However, research suggests that not all employees are capable of contributing to the problem-solving or decision-making process. Some people simply are not interested in these processes, and others do not think they know enough to be of help. To solve problems, group members need expertise in the problem area, confidence in their ability to help solve the problem, knowledge and experience related to the problem, interest in participating, and problem-solving skills.

Effective methods for problem solving and decision making have been studied by a number of researchers. Their results overlap. For example, Shaw (1954), a social psychologist, stated that effective group problem solving and decision making consists of four steps:

1. Recognizing the problem
2. Diagnosing the problem
3. Making the decision
4. Accepting and implementing the decision

Others have outlined a process, similar to Shaw's, that includes the following:

1. An orientation phase
2. A discussion phase
3. A decision phase
4. An implementation phase

Each of these phases has significant impact on the quality of a group's solutions and its overall productivity. For example, during the orientation phase, it is helpful to avoid dwelling on the problem, because focusing on deficiencies may lead members to become defensive. Instead, it is useful to begin by discussing good solutions that have been effective and investigating solutions developed by teams in other organizations that have proved to be effective. This puts a positive spin on the process and may expand the group's solution options. Then the problem is defined and strategies are outlined for solving the problem. Strategies include such things as how to gain needed

information about the problem, how to analyze the information, and how to make the final decision. Research tells us that groups that outline these strategies in advance are more successful than those that do not. Unfortunately, many groups spend little or no time planning strategies for problem solving and decision making. Some groups consider it a waste of time, even if members have been made aware of the fact that planning improves solution quality and group performance.

The amount of time spent discussing the problem and potential solutions increases the quality of the outcome. The amount of member participation in the discussion relates to the quality of the group's solution and overall effectiveness as well. Again, many groups do not spend adequate time discussing an issue. In some cases, a group will discuss only a few alternative solutions.

Groups can make the actual decision in a number of ways. The group may delegate the responsibility for the final decision to an individual, a subgroup, or an expert. Member inputs can be averaged to form the basis for a decision. Group members can vote on alternative proposals or may choose consensus as their decision-making method. Consensus refers to reaching a decision that is agreeable to all members. Efforts to determine which of these methods is best have been unsuccessful. People like the consensus method, but it doesn't necessarily produce better decisions. In general, people tend to like any method as long as they can live with the final decision. It is certain that participation in the decision-making process increases member satisfaction, however. It may also increase performance to some extent.

I want to insert a word of caution about using consensus inappropriately. In the last paragraph, I defined consensus as the process of reaching a decision that is agreeable to all members. This does not mean that all members would rate that proposed solution as their first choice. It simply means that they can live with that decision.

Many people think that consensus means that everyone must agree 100% with the proposal. If that is not the case, they believe, consensus has not been reached. This way of looking at consensus is very dangerous. If one person objects, the group cannot move forward. Viewed in this way, consensus is more like tyranny. One person can stop the group in its tracks. To avoid this potential pitfall, I recommend a modified version of consensus in which members assume that consensus exists if 70% to 80% of the members agree.

Implementing group decisions and evaluating those decisions are key elements in the process. Ideally, evaluation is built into the process, and the results

of the evaluation form the basis for the group's next problem-solving process. Many of us have sat on committees and made recommendations that were never implemented. This is often the case when the group making the decision does not have the authority to implement its solution. Nothing is so demoralizing to a group. It is incumbent on the group, then, to interact with other groups that will be involved in implementation throughout its deliberations. This increases the likelihood of successful implementation of group decisions.

These findings suggest that problem solving and decision making are enhanced when groups outline, in advance, the strategies they will use to solve problems and make decisions. Discussing alternative solutions, ensuring implementation and evaluation, and involving all members in these processes are also associated with high quality problem solving and decision making.

Encourage the Establishment of Norms That Support Productivity, Innovation, and Freedom of Expression

You might be surprised at the number of groups I encounter that don't expect to generate the best possible product or result. I hear about what group members think they can get away with and about why time constraints, policies, and lack of resources will prevent the group from doing a good job. Although some of these constraints are very real, if a group agrees to mediocrity, that is what it will get. When groups agree to do the best possible job and to remove as many obstacles from their way as they can, excellence is the likely result.

Freedom of expression was discussed earlier when I advocated the development of an open communication structure. If members don't feel free to offer their ideas, it will be difficult for the group to be successful. In this section, I would like to add a few additional comments about freedom of expression.

Research on the effects of diversity on work group procedures and productivity has not led to unanimous conclusions. Some findings suggest that diversity improves work group performance, but other findings conclude that diversity has negative effects on performance. Surface-level differences, such as ethnicity, gender, race, and age, have been found to have negative effects on group processes and performance. Underlying differences, such as personality, education, and life experiences, do not have as much impact on work groups. Interpersonal conflicts have very harmful effects on groups, however. Whether those conflicts are instigated by diversity, personality, or gender, these conflicts

can have very negative effects on work groups. Sometimes diversity increases interpersonal conflicts. However, diversity can also increase team learning, problem solving, and innovation.

It may be that the contradictions in research findings result from the significant increases in racial and ethnic diversity not only in the United States but also in countries all over the world. Social scientists are capturing glimpses of the rapidly changing makeup of populations across the globe and our efforts to become more inclusive.

In the meantime, what can work group members do to improve group performance and increase the participation of all members? Fortunately, the research is quite clear about one thing. Group members need to avoid interpersonal conflicts and embrace task conflicts. Functional differences among members, such as differences in expertise, background, and educational level, lead to task conflicts, which are necessary for effective problem solving, decision making, and high performance. If team members focus on the work and avoid interpersonal conflicts, diversity of all types becomes a resource. Members learn from each other, make better decisions, and improve group productivity and effectiveness. To benefit from diversity, everyone must be heard and involved in the discussion.

Go Along With Norms That Promote Group Effectiveness and Productivity

Norms are collective value judgments about how members should behave and what should be done in the group. Norms are necessary if group members are to coordinate their efforts and accomplish their goals. Establishing rules or norms about unimportant things or the wrong things has a chilling effect on groups, however. If individuals cannot express dissent, for example, things will not go well.

Sometimes norms get established about unimportant things. For example, I know of groups in which members are expected to eat lunch together every day. In other groups, members are expected to come to work at least an hour before work actually begins. Norms like these may inhibit individual freedom and cause resentment.

On the other hand, some degree of coordination and conformity is necessary for group success. It is important, then, to go along with norms that promote group effectiveness and productivity. Although you might prefer a

different way of doing things, if the established norm is likely to work, conformity is advised.

Which norms encourage productivity? Research tells us that norms encouraging high performance standards and effectiveness increase team productivity. Shared expectations of success also support productivity. A norm that encourages innovation increases the likelihood of higher productivity as well. Norms and values that support superior quality, service, innovation, and attention to detail significantly increase team effectiveness and productivity. Make sure that your team has norms like these and does not create other norms that block effectiveness, and things will go well.

Promote Group Cohesion and Cooperation

The following are some of the positive effects of cohesion in groups:

- Increased conformity
- Increased group influence over its members
- Increased member satisfaction with the group
- Increased group integration
- Increased cooperation

Box 5.1 Group Therapy

I got a call from a group leader. He said his group was a mess. When I asked what was happening, he gave me a lengthy personality profile of each group member. He also told me how each person related to other members and who was feuding with whom. The group's problem was caused by a lack of clarity about goals and tasks. When these issues were straightened out, the "personality problems" went away. Psychoanalysis was not necessary.

Cooperation, which is facilitated by cohesion and shared goals, has many positive effects on group functioning. The characteristics of cooperative groups are as follows:

- More effective communication
- A friendlier group atmosphere

- Stronger individual desire to work on group tasks
- Stronger commitment to the group
- Greater division of labor
- Greater coordination of effort
- Greater productivity
- Increased trust and the development of lasting agreements
- Increased ability to resolve conflicts

A word of caution with regard to cohesion is appropriate at this point. High levels of cohesion, in conjunction with certain factors, can have negative effects. That is, a group can make poor or, in some cases, dangerous decisions due to an overriding wish to maintain unity and cohesion. This wish can lead the group to overlook other choices or courses of action. A cohesive group may be in danger of making a poor decision, a condition called "groupthink," in the following circumstances:

- When groups deliberate in isolation and do not report or check their conclusion with others outside the group, the possibility of poor decisions increases.
- If the group's leader controls the discussion and makes his or her positions clear from the outset, poor group decisions are more likely.
- When groups are faced with important and stressful decisions, they tend to decide quickly to reduce the stress. This often results in poor decisions.

Cohesion alone does not pose a threat. As long as a group stays connected with others outside the group and has an effective leader, high levels of cohesion will have many positive effects on group productivity. How, then, can group members promote cohesion? Research tells us that when goals and methods to reach those goals are clear, cohesion increases. Also, successful conflict resolution reduces individual fears of rejection and increases trust between members. A feeling of "we-ness," or cohesiveness, results. Finally, although it is rarely clear what causes what in an interacting system, increased communication is associated with increased cohesion and vice versa.

Notice that the research does not suggest that sharing personal feelings, developing personal friendships, socializing outside work, or similar things increase group cohesion. It is not necessary to know other group members on a personal level to promote cohesion. Working to increase goal clarity and communication should occur in the work group. Conflict resolution should as well.

Conflicts continue to occur throughout a group's life. In fact, group conflict is almost as common as group cooperation. One could conclude that conflict seriously impairs group cohesion. Although this can be the result, cohesion can also be increased by conflict. Although this sounds paradoxical, it is important to note that in any relationship, the freedom to be oneself and to disagree without fear of rejection or retribution increases, rather than decreases, cohesion and trust. Also, conflict provides energy to the group and allows clarification of group values, goals, and structures. All of these have been found to be associated with increased cohesion and trust. Cohesion and conflict are linked. You can't have one without the other, so to speak.

Of course, how conflict is dealt with is the crucial factor in determining its effect on cohesion. Inevitably, conflict is resolved. How it is resolved will determine whether group cohesion is positively or negatively affected. Six methods of conflict resolution have been described by a number of researchers:

- Imposition of the position of an individual or subgroup on other members
- Withdrawal of an individual or subgroup from the group
- Inaction, whereby one or both sides of a conflict do nothing to resolve the conflict
- Yielding, in which one side gives up its position
- Compromise, in which the parties find a solution somewhere between their respective positions
- Problem solving, in which the source of the conflict is located and a mutually agreeable solution is found

The first four solutions have many negative repercussions. Imposition can result in hostility and passive-aggressive behavior on the part of group members. Withdrawal threatens the life of the group and reduces its resources through member loss. Inaction can result in simmering discontent, apathy, or alienation. Yielding may also elicit alienation and covert hostility. Compromise can be viable if the resolution of the conflict seems reasonable and acceptable to all concerned. Problem solving gives the best results, however, because it requires the actual resolution of different perspectives and a new group conceptualization of the issues involved in the conflict.

Some groups navigate their conflicts well, and others disband or become dysfunctional by dealing with their differences ineffectively. What do successful teams do to promote positive conflict resolution? Members of successful teams communicate their views clearly and explicitly. They avoid generalizations and

Box 5.2 Intensive Teamwork

Intensive care teams at higher stages of development save more patients' lives than ICU teams at lower stages of development.

are specific in their communication. They talk about trust and cooperation during the discussion. Members also initially respond cooperatively to others who are behaving competitively. If others continue to respond competitively, successful group members demonstrate their willingness to compete by arguing their position. Although this sounds like an inappropriate strategy, research suggests that it may result in cooperation from others because not to do so would result in continued stress or personal losses. Sometimes, demonstrating a willingness to compete will bring about cooperation from others. Demonstrating a willingness to compete may also result in being viewed as a more formidable opponent.

All of these strategies help maintain a reasonable trust level, which allows negotiations to proceed. Negotiation is an important conflict resolution strategy. Seeking a mutually agreeable, or win-win, solution has been found to increase communication and cooperation. It also tends to reduce conflict by breaking it down into specific issues that can be dealt with one at a time.

Sometimes the intensity and depth of the conflict are too great to be solved by the group members themselves. In such cases, a third party can help resolve the conflict. Group and organizational consultants are often asked to assist groups that are stuck as a result of seemingly insurmountable conflicts. This can be a useful strategy for conflict resolution. However, third-party intervention should be sought only if all parties want the help and if the intensity of the conflict is high. This last-resort strategy requires willingness on the part of the group and skill on the part of the third party.

Effective Member Checklist

Please read the statements below. Circle the number that most accurately describes your response to the statement. Use the following key to respond to each statement.

1 = Disagree strongly

2 = Disagree to some extent

3 = Agree to some extent

4 = Agree strongly

Section I

1. I avoid blaming others for group problems.

   1 2 3 4

2. I assume that every group member is trying to do a good job.

   1 2 3 4

3. I treat people as individuals and don't make assumptions about them based on my preconceived notions about people like them.

   1 2 3 4

4. I do not get bogged down in interpersonal issues or personality conflicts.

   1 2 3 4

Section I score: _____

Section II

5. I encourage the process of goal, role, and task clarification.

   1 2 3 4

6. I encourage the use of effective problem-solving and decision-making procedures.

   1 2 3 4

7. I encourage the group to outline, in advance, the strategies that will be used to solve problems and make decisions.

   1 2 3 4

8. I work to ensure that decisions and solutions are implemented and evaluated.

   1 2 3 4

9. I encourage norms that support productivity, innovation, and freedom of expression.

   1 2 3 4

(Continued)

(Continued)

10. I encourage the use of effective conflict management strategies.

1 2 3 4

11. I support the division of labor necessary to accomplish goals.

1 2 3 4

Section II score: _____

Section III

12. I work to ensure that the input and feedback of every member is heard.

1 2 3 4

13. I work to ensure that we all have a chance to demonstrate our competence and skills in the group.

1 2 3 4

14. I discourage any group tendency to adopt excessive or unnecessary norms.

1 2 3 4

15. I am, and encourage others to be, cooperative.

1 2 3 4

16. In conflict situations, I communicate my views clearly and explicitly.

1 2 3 4

17. I respond cooperatively to others who are behaving competitively.

1 2 3 4

Section III score: _____

Section IV

18. I act, and encourage others to act, in the best interests of the group.

1 2 3 4

19. When members contribute good ideas, I express my appreciation.

1 2 3 4

20. I encourage and work to achieve mutually agreeable solutions to conflict.

1 2 3 4

21. I support the leader's efforts to coordinate and facilitate group goal achievement.

1 2 3 4

22. I offer advice to the leader when I think the advice will be helpful.

1 2 3 4

Section IV score: _____

Section V

23. I have negotiated, or would be willing to negotiate, with other groups and individuals to help my group obtain needed resources.

1 2 3 4

24. I share information and impressions I have about other parts of the organization with the group.

1 2 3 4

25. I encourage the group not to overwhelm itself with too much external information or demands.

1 2 3 4

26. I talk positively about my group to outsiders.

1 2 3 4

27. I keep other members of the organization informed about what my group is doing.

1 2 3 4

Section V score: _____

Section VI

28. When members stray off task, I diplomatically try to bring the discussion back to the task.

1 2 3 4

29. I go along with norms that promote group effectiveness and productivity.

1 2 3 4

30. I encourage high performance standards.

1 2 3 4

(Continued)

(Continued)

31. I expect the group to be successful and productive.

1 2 3 4

32. I encourage innovative ideas.

1 2 3 4

33. I use what I have learned about group development and productivity to help my group become effective.

1 2 3 4

34. I encourage the group to frequently assess its functioning and alter it if necessary.

1 2 3 4

35. I volunteer to perform tasks that need to be done.

1 2 3 4

Section VI score: _____

Total minimum score: 35

Total maximum score: 140

My score: _____

What is your overall membership quotient?

Total Score	Your Membership Grade
126+	A
112–125	B
98–111	C

What are your section scores?

Section I: Attitudes and Feelings

Total Score	Your Grade
14+	A
12–13	B
10–11	C

Section II: Processes and Procedures

Total Score	Your Grade
25+	A
22–24	B
20–21	C

Section III: Communication and Participation

Total Score	Your Grade
22+	A
19–21	B
16–18	C

Section IV: Support and Encouragement

Total Score	Your Grade
18+	A
16–17	B
14–15	C

Section V: Intergroup Relations

Total Score	Your Grade
18+	A
16–17	B
14–15	C

Section VI: Work and Productivity

Total Score	Your Grade
29+	A
25–28	B
22–24	C

Johnson, David & Frank Johnson (2013): *Joining Together. Group Theory and Group Skills.* Twelfth Edition. Pearson. Chapter 1: Group Dynamics (p 1 – 45)

CHAPTER ONE

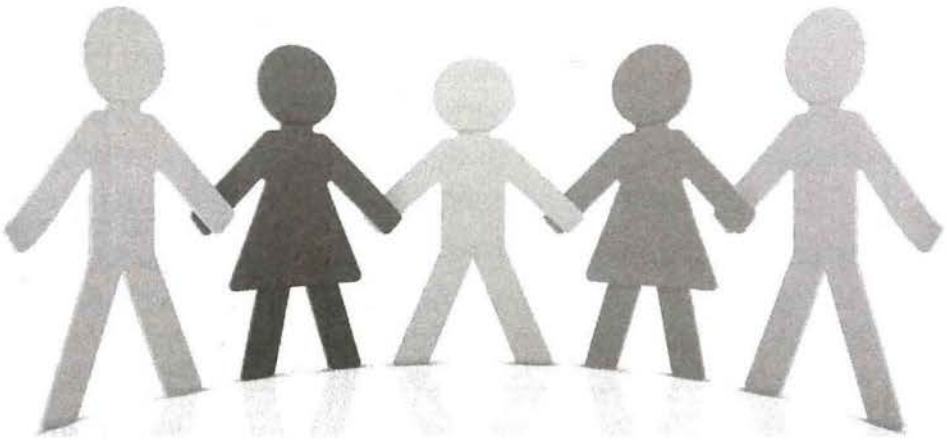
Group Dynamics

BASIC CONCEPTS TO BE COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter a number of concepts are defined and discussed. The major ones are in the following list. Students should divide into pairs. Each pair is to (a) define each concept, noting the page on which it is defined and discussed, and (b) ensure that both members understand its meaning. Then combine into groups of four. Compare the answers of the two pairs. If there is disagreement, look up the concept in the chapter and clarify it until all members agree on and understand the definition.

CONCEPTS

1. Group
2. Group dynamics
3. Group effectiveness
4. Interdependence
5. Role
6. Norm
7. Status
8. Sequential-stage theory of group development
9. Recurring-phase theory of group development
10. Primary group
11. Reference group
12. Group processing
13. Action research
14. Kurt Lewin



GROUP DYNAMICS AND ME

Although the scientific investigations of group work are but a few years old, I don't hesitate to predict that group work—that is, the handling of human beings not as isolated individuals, but in the social setting of groups—will soon be one of the most important theoretical and practical fields. ... There is no hope for creating a better world without a deeper scientific insight into the ... essentials of group life.

Kurt Lewin (1943)

Membership in groups is inevitable and ubiquitous. All day long we interact first in one group and then in another. Our family life, our leisure time, our friendships, and our careers are all filled with groups. In fact, if a person from outer space conducted a study of the people of Earth, group membership would probably be the dominant characteristic noted. We are born into a group called the family, and we would not survive the first few years of our lives, the first few weeks, or even the first few minutes without membership in this group. Within our family and peer groups, we are socialized into ways of behaving and thinking, educated, and taught to have certain perspectives on ourselves and our world. Our **personal identity** is derived from the way in which we are

Importance of Groups

- We are small-group beings
- We live in groups
- Groups and quality of life

Nature of Groups

- Group orientation
- Individual orientation

Types of Groups

- Pseudo
- Traditional
- Effective
- High performance

Group Structure

- Roles
- Norms

Stages of Group Development

Sequential Stages

- Forming
- Norming
- Storming
- Performing
- Adjourning

Recurring Stages

- Task and emotional expressions
- Depend, pair, fight or flight
- Affection, inclusion, control

Basic Elements of Effectiveness

- Positive interdependence
- Individual accountability
- Promotive interaction
- Social skills
- Group processing

Field of Group Dynamics

- Nature of group dynamics
- History of group dynamics
- Kurt Lewin
- Nature of book

Dynamics of Promotive Interaction

- Creating clear, operational, mutual goals members are committed to
- Communicating ideas and feelings accurately and clearly
- Distributed participation and leadership
- Equal access to power based on expertise, access to information
- Decision procedures flexibly matched with situational needs
- Controversy used to promote creative problem solving, critical thinking
- Conflicts are faced, encouraged, and resolved constructively

Figure 1.1 Nature of group dynamics.

perceived and treated by other members of our groups. We learn, work, worship, and play in groups. As humans we have an inherent social nature: Our lives are filled with groups from the moment of our births to the moment of our deaths.

Group dynamics is the area of social science that focuses on advancing knowledge about the nature of group life. It is the scientific study of the nature of groups, behavior in groups, group development, and the interrelations between groups and individuals, other groups, and larger entities. Knowledge of group dynamics has the potential to change the way we think about groups and, consequentially, the way we function in groups. The purposes of this text, therefore, are to help you understand the theory and research on group dynamics and improve your own small-group skills.

As a starting point, Figure 1.1 provides a helpful summary of the nature of group dynamics. The different concepts and terms listed in Figure 1.1 are discussed throughout this chapter and the rest of the text. After reviewing the information provided in

SELF-DIAGNOSIS

Each of the following seven statements describes an action related to group effectiveness. For each statement mark:

5 if you always behave that way
4 if you frequently behave that way
3 if you occasionally behave that way
2 if you seldom behave that way
1 if you never behave that way

WHEN I AM A MEMBER OF A GROUP

____ **1.** I clarify the group's goals and ensure that the goals are formulated so members "sink or swim" together and are committed to achieving them.

____ **2.** I facilitate communication by modeling good sending and receiving skills and ensuring communication among all group members is distributed and two-way.

____ **3.** I provide leadership by taking whatever action is needed to help the group achieve its goals and maintain good working relationships among members, and I encourage all other members to do the same.

____ **4.** I use my expertise and knowledge to influence the other group members to increase their efforts to achieve our mutual goals, and I let myself be influenced by other members who are knowledgeable and have relevant expertise.

____ **5.** I suggest different ways of making decisions (such as majority vote or consensus) depending on the (a) availability of time and resources, (b) size and seriousness of the decision, and (c) amount of member commitment needed to implement the decision.

____ **6.** I advocate my views and challenge the views of others to create high-quality and creative decisions.

____ **7.** I face my conflicts with other group members and present the conflicts as problems to be jointly solved. If we are unable to do so, I request the help of other group members to help us resolve the conflicts constructively.

____ **Total Score**

Figure 1.1, think carefully about each of the statements listed in the Self-Diagnosis on page 3. These statements are designed to make you think concretely about your current understanding of groups and how you participate in them.

EXERCISE 1.1

YOUR SOLITARY ACTIVITIES

1. List everything you do in a typical day from the moment you wake up to the moment you fall asleep.
2. Delete from your list all the activities you perform with groups of people and see what is left.
3. Form a group of three, and discuss the results.

EXERCISE 1.2

WHO AM I?

We are all members of groups. If we are asked to describe who we are, most of us include information about the groups to which we belong. "I'm a student at the University of Minnesota," "I'm a member of the hockey team," "I'm a Johnson," "I'm a male," "I'm an American," and so forth. Membership in groups may be formal ("I'm an employee of IBM"), aspiring ("I want to be rich"), marginal ("Sometimes I'm invited to Ralph's parties, sometimes I'm not"), voluntary ("I'm a Baptist"), and nonvoluntary ("I'm a female"). To a large extent, our memberships define who we are as individuals.

1. We can all describe ourselves in many ways. Write ten different answers to the question "Who am I?" on a sheet of paper. Answer in terms of groups you belong to, beliefs you hold, and your roles and responsibilities.
2. Rank your answers from most important to your sense of self to least important to your sense of self.
3. Form a group of three, and share your self-descriptions. Count how many memberships are represented in the triad. Discuss the role of groups in your view of who you are as a person.
4. Count how many group memberships are represented in the class.

EXERCISE 1.3

WHAT IS A GROUP?

The definition of a group is controversial. The purpose of this exercise is to structure a critical examination of the different definitions. The procedure is as follows:

1. The class forms groups of seven members.
2. Each member receives a sheet containing one of the seven definitions that appear on the following pages. Without interacting with the other group members, each member is to:
   a. Study his or her definition until it is thoroughly understood.
   b. Plan how to teach the definition to the other members of the group.
   c. Give three examples of groups that meet the criterion contained in the definition.
   d. Give three examples of two or more people in close proximity who do not meet the criterion contained in the definition.
   e. Explain in what way(s) his or her group (doing this exercise) meets the criterion contained in the definition.

   Allow ten minutes for this phase of the exercise.
3. Each group meets to derive a single definition of the concept *group*. Up to twenty minutes are allowed for this phase.
4. Each group reads its definition to the entire class.
5. If there is substantial disagreement, the class forms new groups (composed of one member from each of the previous groups). The task of the new group is to arrive at one definition of the concept *group*, each member representing the definition of his or her former group.
6. Each group reads its definition to the entire class.

WHAT IS A GROUP?

It takes two flints to make a fire.

Louisa May Alcott

In a bus trapped in a traffic jam, six passengers begin to talk to each other, comparing reactions and sharing previous similar experiences. They start to develop a plan of action to get the bus out of the heavy traffic. Is this a group? In Yellowstone National Park it is deep winter. Several cross-country skiers glide through an isolated, snow-covered valley. They are studying winter ecology and photography. Periodically they cluster around a professional photographer as he explains the ways the winter scenes may be photographed. The vacationers admire and discuss the beautiful winter scenery as they photograph it. Is this a group? Do groups exist at all? How do you tell when you are a member of a group?

If reading a book on group dynamics, you first need to understand what a group is. We all know that groups exist, but confusion and disagreements abound when we try to define the word *group.* Many social scientists think they know exactly what a group is. The trouble is, they do not agree with one another. The reasoning behind seven of the most common definitions of the word *group* is discussed in the following sections. Notice where and how the definitions are the same and where and how they are different.

Goals

A **group** may be defined as a number of individuals who join together to achieve a goal. Groups exist for a reason. People join groups to achieve goals they are unable to achieve by themselves. It is questionable whether a group could exist unless there was a mutual goal that its members were trying to achieve. Freeman, as early as 1936, pointed out

that people join groups to achieve common goals. Other social scientists who have defined *group* this way are Mills and Deutsch:

> To put it simply, they [small groups] are units composed of two or more persons who come into contact for a purpose and who consider the contact meaningful. (Mills, 1967, p. 2)

> A psychological group exists (has unity) to the extent that the individuals composing it perceive themselves as pursuing promotively interdependent goals. (Deutsch, 1949a, p. 136)

Interdependence

A **group** may be defined as a collection of individuals who are interdependent in some way. According to this definition, the individuals are not a group unless an event that affects one of them affects them all. Social scientists who have defined group in this way believe:

> A group is a collection of individuals who have relations to one another that make them interdependent to some significant degree. As so defined, the term group refers to a class of social entities having in common the property of interdependence among their constituent members. (Cartwright & Zander, 1968, p. 46)

> By this term [group] we generally mean a set of individuals who share a common fate, that is, who are **interdependent** in the sense that an event which affects one member is likely to affect all. (Fiedler, 1967, p. 6)

> Conceiving of a group as a dynamic whole should include a definition of group which is based on interdependence of the members (or better, the subparts of the group). (Lewin, 1951, p. 146)

Interpersonal Interaction

A **group** may be defined as a number of individuals who are interacting with one another. According to this definition, a group does not exist unless interaction occurs. Social scientists who have defined group in this way state:

> For a collection of individuals to be considered a group there must be some interaction. (Hare, 1976, p. 4)

> A group is a number of people in interaction with one another, and it is this interaction process that distinguishes the group from an aggregate. (Bonner, 1959, p. 4)

> A group may be regarded as an open interaction system in which actions determine the structure of the system and successive interactions exert coequal effects upon the identity of the system. (Stodgill, 1959, p. 18)

> We mean by a group a number of persons who communicate with one another often over a span of time, and who are few enough so that each person is able to communicate with all the others, not at secondhand, through other people, but face-to-face. (Homans, 1950, p. 1)

Perceptions of Membership

A **group** may be defined as a social unit consisting of two or more persons who perceive themselves as belonging to a group. According to this definition, the persons are not a group unless they perceive themselves to be part of a group. Social scientists who have defined group in this way posit:

> A small group is defined as any number of persons engaged in interaction with one another in a single face-to-face meeting or series of such meetings, in which each member receives some impression or perception of each other member distinct enough so that he can, either at the time or in later questioning, give some reaction to each of the others as an individual person, even though it be only to recall that the other was present. (Bales, 1950, p. 33)

> We may define a social group as a unit consisting of a plural number of separate organisms (agents) who have a collective perception of their unity and who have the ability to act and/or are acting in a unitary manner toward their environment. (Smith, 1945, p. 227)

Structured Relationships

A **group** may be defined as a collection of individuals whose interactions are structured by a set of roles and norms. According to this definition, the individuals are not a group unless role definitions and norms structure their interactions. Social scientists who have defined group in this way are McDavid and Harari (1968) and Sherif and Sherif (1956):

> A social-psychological group is an organized system of two or more individuals who are interrelated so that the system performs some function, has a standard set of role relationships among its members, and has a set of norms that regulate the function of the group and each of its members. (McDavid & Harari, p. 237)

> A group is a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in (more or less) definite status and role relationships to one another and which possesses a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behavior of individual members, at least in matters of consequence to the group. (Sherif & Sherif, p. 144)

Mutual Influence

A **group** may be defined as a collection of individuals who influence each other. Individuals are not a group unless they are affecting and being affected by each other, and therefore, the primary defining characteristic of a group is interpersonal influence. Shaw (1976, p. 11) stated, "A group is two or more persons who are interacting with one another in such a manner that each person influences and is influenced by each other person."

Motivation

A **group** may be defined as a collection of individuals who are trying to satisfy some personal need through their joint association. According to this definition, the individuals are not a group unless they are motivated by some personal reason to be part of a group. Individuals belong to the group to obtain rewards or to satisfy personal needs. It is questionable that a group could exist unless its members' needs are satisfied by their membership. Social scientists who have defined group in this way write:

> We define "group" as a collection of individuals whose existence as a collection is rewarding to the individuals. (Bass, 1960, p. 39)

> The definition which seems most essential is that a group is a collection of organisms in which the existence of all (in their given relationships) is necessary to the satisfaction of certain individual needs in each. (Cattell, 1951, p. 167)

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO DEFINE A GROUP?

Following are several definitions of the concept *group*. Rank them from most accurate (1) to least accurate (7). Write down your rationale for your ranking. Find a partner, and share your ranking and rationale, listen to his or her ranking and rationale, and cooperatively create a new, improved ranking and rationale. Then find another pair and repeat the procedure in a group of four.

Rank	Definition
_____	A **group** is a number of individuals who join together to achieve a goal.
_____	A **group** is several individuals who are interdependent in some way.
_____	A **group** is a number of individuals who are interacting with one another.
_____	A **group** is a social unit consisting of two or more persons who perceive themselves as belonging to a group.
_____	A **group** is a collection of individuals whose interactions are structured by a set of roles and norms.
_____	A **group** is a collection of individuals who influence each other.
_____	A **group** is a collection of individuals who are trying to satisfy some personal need through their joint association.

Some of these definitions may be overly specific. Some of the definitions may overlap in some ways. What each implies, however, is that not every collection of people is a group. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) defines a *group* as a number of persons or things regarded as forming a unit on account of any kind of mutual or common relation or classified together on account of a common degree of similarity. On the basis of the preceding definitions, a **small group** may be defined as two or more individuals in face-to-face interaction, each aware of their positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals, each aware of his or her membership in the group, and each aware of the others who belong to the group. Though there may be some groups that do not fully fit this definition, the most commonly recognized examples of groups do.

Groups may be contrasted with aggregates. An **aggregate** is a collection of individuals who are present at the same time and place but who do *not* form a unit or have a common degree of similarity. Individuals standing on a street corner, the members of an audience at a play, and students listening to a lecture are aggregates, not groups.

A distinction may be made between small and large groups. Whereas the definition of small groups usually includes member interaction, a group may also involve large numbers of members who have some common characteristic without actually meeting one other (such as a reference group, discussed later in this chapter). A community can be a large group, as can individuals with the same ethnic heritage.

Do Groups Even Exist?

Not everyone believes that groups exist. One of the more interesting social science debates centers on the nature of groups. There are two contrasting positions: the

group orientation and the individual orientation. Those that support group orientation focus on the group as a whole, as something separate from the individual group members. In explaining the actions of group members, social scientists focus on the influences of the group and the larger social system of which it is a part. They believe that when people come together as a group, they form a new social entity with its own rules, attitudes, beliefs, and practices.

Supporters of the individualist orientation, however, focus on the individual in the group; without individuals, groups do not exist. To explain the functioning of the group, social scientists study the attributes, cognitions, and personalities of the group members. One of the first supporters of an individualist orientation, Floyd Allport (1924), argued that groups do not think, feel, or act—only people do; therefore, groups are not real entities and are not deserving of study. See the Group Orientation vs. Individualistic Orientation sidebar for more information about these two positions.

Group Orientation

The *group orientation* focuses on the group as a whole. In explaining the actions of group members, social scientists focus on the influences of the group and the larger social systems of which it is part. Emile Durkheim (1898, p. 104), arguing that groups were entities different from individuals, stated, "If, then, we begin with the individual, we shall be able to understand nothing of what takes place in the group." He posited that small *primary groups* (small groups characterized by face-to-face interaction, interdependence, and strong group identification such as families and very close friends) are the building blocks of society, and he worked upward from this level to an analysis of social systems in general. He was convinced that a group mind or collective consciousness dominated an individual's will in many situations. Le Bon (1895) believed that a group mind exists separate from the minds of individual members. Cartwright and Zander (1968) maintained that a group can be emotionally healthy or pathological. Cattell (1951) described groups as possessing different personalities. Lewin (1935), as a Gestalt psychologist, noted that a group cannot be understood by considering only the qualities and characteristics of each member. When individuals merge into a group, something new is created that must be seen as an entity in itself. Changes in one aspect of a group will necessarily lead to changes in the other group features.

Individualistic Orientation

The *individualistic orientation* focuses on the individual in the group. In order to explain the functioning of the group, psychologists focus on the attitudes, cognitions, and personalities of the members. Floyd Allport (1924) argued that groups do not think, feel, or act (only people do), and therefore, groups are not real and are not deserving of study. He said, "Groups have no nervous systems, only individuals have nervous systems." To Allport, groups are no more than (a) shared sets of values, ideas, thoughts, and habits that exist simultaneously in the minds of several persons or (b) the sum of the actions of each member taken separately. His *coup de grâce* was his observation, "You can't stumble over a group." Many social scientists have agreed with Allport and have taken a rather cavalier approach to the attributes that determine whether a collection of people is a group. Groups have also been defined on the basis of individual perceptions of other members (Bales, 1950), individual reward (Bass, 1960), and individual purpose and meaning (Mills, 1967). Much of the research on groups, furthermore, has used individual members as the unit of analysis.

Solomon Asch (1952) adopted a middle ground by comparing groups to water. He argued that to understand the properties of water, it is important to know the characteristics of its elements, hydrogen and oxygen. This knowledge alone, however, is not sufficient to understand water—the combination of hydrogen and oxygen must be

examined as a unique entity. Similarly, groups must be studied as unique entities, even though it is important to know the characteristics of the individual members.

Although supporters of the individualistic orientation may argue that groups are not important, evidence suggests that groups evoke stronger reactions than an individual engaging in the same behavior. Actions by groups and individuals elicit differing preferences for redress (Abelson, Dasgupta, Park, & Banaji, 1998). When individuals are perceived to be part of a cohesive group (as opposed to an aggregate of unrelated individuals), observers express stereotypic judgments about the individuals and infer that their behavior was shaped by the presence of others (Oakes & Turner, 1986; Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1991; Wilder, 1977, 1978a). A misogynist statement delivered by an individual, for example, provokes a different reaction than a misogynist statement delivered by a group. Social scientists of both the individualistic and group persuasions have been productive in generating theories of group functioning and conducting research to validate or disconfirm the theories. They are both represented in this text.

BARRIERS TO CAPITALIZING ON THE POWER OF GROUPS

Directions: Consider the following five sources of resistance to using small groups given earlier. Rate yourself from 1 to 5 on each source.

1————2————3————4————5

Low	Middle	High
Not a Concern of Mine	Somewhat a Concern	Consistently and Strongly a Concern

The Causes of the Missed Opportunities to Capitalize on the Power of Groups

_____ **1. Belief that isolated work is the natural order of the world.** Such myopic focus blinds individuals to the realization that no one person could have built a cathedral, achieved America's independence from England, or created a supercomputer.

_____ **2. Resistance to taking responsibility for others.** Many individuals do not easily (a) take responsibility for the performance of colleagues or (b) let colleagues assume responsibility for their work.

_____ **3. Confusion about what makes groups work.** Many individuals may not know the difference between effective and ineffective groups.

_____ **4. Fear that they cannot use groups effectively.** Not all groups work. Most adults have had experiences with ineffective and inefficient committees, task forces, and clubs and know how bad groups can be. When many educators weigh the potential power of learning groups against the possibility of failure, they choose to play it safe and rely on isolated work.

_____ **5. Concern about the time and effort required to change.** Using groups requires individuals to apply what is known about effective groups in a disciplined way. Learning how to do so and engaging in such disciplined action may seem daunting.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GROUPS

No man is an island, entire of itself.

John Donne

Humans are small-group beings. We always have been and we always will be. Human evolution has depended on individuals coming together in various types of groups to live, work, and govern. For 200,000 years humans lived in small hunting-and-gathering groups. For 10,000 years humans lived in small farming communities. In the last 1,000 or so years, large cities have developed. Each of these living conditions depends on cooperative efforts of group work for its success. In fact, our ability to function effectively in groups may be the reason humans exist today. This ability certainly played a large role in the manner humans developed.

Two recent branches of the human species are Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons (modern humans). Our origins are somehow linked with the fate of the Neanderthals. We have never been proud of our extinct predecessors, partly because of their looks. Nevertheless, the Neanderthals represent a high point in the human story. Their lineage goes back to the earliest members of the genus *Homo*. They were the original pioneers. Over thousands of years, Neanderthals moved out of Africa by way of the Near East into India, China, Malaysia, and southern Europe. In recent times, around 150,000 years ago, they pioneered glacial landscapes and became the first humans to cope with climates hospitable only to woolly mammoths and reindeer.

There is no anatomical evidence that the Neanderthals were cerebrally inferior to us (the Cro-Magnons). In fact, they had a larger brain than we do. There is no doubt whatever that they were our physical superiors. Their strongest individuals could probably lift weights of half a ton or so. Physically, we are quite puny in comparison. But we gradually replaced the Neanderthals during an overlapping period of a few thousand years. It may have mainly been a matter of attrition and population pressure. As the glaciers from Scandinavia advanced, northern populations of Neanderthals moved south while our ancestors were moving north out of Africa. About 40,000 years ago we met in Europe. We flourished and they vanished about 30,000 years ago.

There are numerous explanations for the disappearance of the Neanderthals. Perhaps they evolved into us. Perhaps we merged through intermarriage. Perhaps there was an intergroup competition for food, with the Neanderthals unable to meet our challenge and dying off in marginal areas. Perhaps the Neanderthals were too set in their ways and were unable to evolve and refine better ways to cooperate while we were continually organizing better cooperative efforts to cope with changing climatic conditions.

During the time our ancestors coexisted with the Neanderthals, Cro-Magnons developed highly sophisticated cooperative efforts characterized by social organization, group-hunting procedures, creative experimentation with a variety of materials, sharing of knowledge, division of labor, trade with other communities, and transportation systems. We sent out scouts to monitor the movements of herds of animals we preyed on. The Neanderthals probably did not. We cached supplies and first aid materials to aid hunting parties far away from our home bases. The Neanderthals apparently did not.

Neanderthals probably engaged their prey chiefly in direct combat. We developed more efficient ways of hunting, such as driving animals over cliffs. We developed more sophisticated tools and weapons to kill from a distance, such as the spear-thrower and the bow and arrow. The Neanderthals probably did not. The Neanderthals used local materials to develop tools. We were more selective, often obtaining special fine-grained and colorful flints from quarries as far as 250 miles away through trade networks. We improved the toolmaking process through experimentation and sharing knowledge with other communities. The Neanderthals probably did not. The Neanderthals used stone almost exclusively for tools. We used bone and ivory to make needles and other tools. We "tailored" our clothes and made ropes and nets. Our ability to obtain more food than we needed spawned the formation of far-ranging trade and social networks. These more complex forms of cooperation directly led to the accumulation of wealth and the creation of artistic efforts, laws, and storytelling to preserve traditions. Whether we replaced or evolved from the Neanderthals, our ingenuity was evident in organizing cooperative efforts to increase our standard of living and the quality of our lives. We excelled at organizing effective group efforts.

Groups and the Quality of Your Life

Our ancestors' lives were improved greatly and dramatically by living in groups, but what about us today? It is fair to say that the quality of contemporary life is related directly to the effectiveness of our groups. With so many of our activities and social interactions taking place within groups—be it our risk-management group at work, our weekend softball team, or the people we live with—almost every aspect of our modern lives is affected by group dynamics. Knowledge of group dynamics, therefore, is a tool that can make our lives better and more meaningful because it can help us build effective groups in every part of our lives.

Understanding Group Dynamics Is Central to Maintaining a Viable Family. For thousands of years, family life has been one of the sustaining values of civilization.

Anthropologist Margaret Mead observed that the family is the toughest institution humans have, and it is one of our core small groups. The structure of the family, however, has changed significantly in the last hundred years. First came the demise of the extended family. More recently, the nuclear family has been on the decline as more single-parent households form. One child out of four today is raised by a single parent. Obviously, creating sustainable families is a hard task in our modern climate. To build and maintain a constructive family life within the diverse demands of modern life, individuals need to have a thorough knowledge of group dynamics and small-group skills.

Knowledge of Group Dynamics Is Central to Effective Businesses and Industries. During the first half of the twentieth century, mass production made the United States the world leader in manufacturing. By the end of the twentieth century, however, many businesses had turned to the high productivity generated by small groups. Today, many companies rely on employees working in teams to design and launch new products, conduct research and training, handle employee issues, facilitate interdepartmental communication, and much more. Furthermore, the dramatic new technologies made available in the past decade now enable groups to work between offices, across towns, and around the world. What makes organizations viable today is their ability to create teams dominated by a culture of learning, continuous improvement, and adaptation. In turn, what makes people viable employees is their ability to work in small groups and produce results (see Chapter 13).

Understanding Group Dynamics Is Central to Education. Over the past few generations, the teaching paradigm has changed from lecture and individual work to cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2008a, 2008b). Instead of listening to a teacher's lecture and taking notes, students now work in small groups to help one another learn a specific lesson or task. Instead of comparing students to one another and encouraging **competition,** cooperative group-based work allows students to work together in a manner that benefits all of them. Cooperative learning has been shown to produce higher achievement, more positive relationships, and greater psychological health than competitive or individualistic learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; see Chapter 11).

Knowledge of Group Dynamics Is Central to the Long-Term Maintenance of Psychological Health. Simply by watching television commercials or flipping through the pages of almost any magazine, we can infer that the country is experiencing an epidemic of depression, anxiety, and mental illness. Prescription drugs, various forms of therapy, and a host of other products and services advertised in the media are aimed at treating these problems. This proliferation is more than a marketing trend, however; surveys indicate the rate of depression over the last two generations has increased roughly tenfold. People, especially young people, are experiencing much more depression, feeling hopeless, giving up, being passive, having low self-esteem, and committing suicide. Being involved in supportive groups, however, can help prevent the occurrence of psychological problems. Networks of friends and family, group activities, and other types of productive group interaction can help people feel more connected to the world around them, making them less depressed and anxious. Furthermore, group therapy and counseling groups are a preferred method of treatment for psychological problems (see Chapter 12).

In short, knowing group dynamics theory and having small-group skills can change your life. They can make you more employable and lead to greater career success. They can improve your friendships. They can lead to more caring and loving family relationships and greater competence as parents. They can promote greater psychological health and an increased ability to cope with stress and adversity. **When it comes to group functioning, knowledge does give power.** But knowledge of group dynamics in itself is not sufficient to promote effective functioning—social skills also are required. To promote effective group functioning, you must know what an effective group is and have the necessary social skills to help create one.

As you continue reading about groups—how they operate and are constructed and why a group is effective and productive—what you are learning is the nature of groups. To that end, you should focus on the following ideas:

1. The nature of group structure
2. The relationship between group structure and group productivity
3. How the dynamics of the group determine its effectiveness
4. The ways groups develop over time

GROUP STRUCTURE

Imagine you are an ecologist whose career has been dedicated to studying ecosystems around the world. You have encountered many diverse habitats in your studies, from thick rain forests to parched deserts. They all had a set of common features: topography, weather patterns, plants, animals, and their interconnections. You have observed, for example, that plants and animals sharing certain territories develop elaborate divisions of labor and broad symbioses. You also have learned that plants and animals adapt over time to be uniquely suited for survival in their particular habitats. Thus, you expect to find a basic ecological structure when you travel to a new habitat.

Now imagine you are studying small groups. Although many diverse types of groups may be found, when you approach a new group you look for the basic features that characterize all groups. These features include a purpose that defines the territory of the group and binds the members together, a definable pattern of communication among members, different members performing different functions that fit into an overall division of labor, procedures for managing conflicts, expectations concerning acceptable and unacceptable behavior by group members, and the adaptation of the group to the organization, society, and culture within which it is based. Once the basic structure has been identified, the nature of interpersonal relations in the group can be understood as clearly as can the functioning of an ecosystem.

Just like ecosystems, groups have a structure. Groups function as their members interact, and whenever two or more individuals join together to achieve a goal, a group structure develops. Observers of groups who want to know how a group truly functions look beyond the group's unique features to its basic structure, a stable pattern of interaction among members. Two aspects of group interaction are especially important to understanding how a group is structured: differentiated roles and integrating norms. Within any group, no matter which organization, society, or culture it belongs to,

GROUP STRUCTURE

Definition		Example
Roles	Expectations defining the appropriate behavior of an occupant of a position toward other related positions	President, vice president, secretary; summarizer, recorder
Norms	Common beliefs regarding group members' appropriate behavior, attitudes, and perceptions; rules, implicit or explicit, that regulate the behavior of group members	Promptness, courtesy, reciprocity, responsibility

the group's roles and norms structure the interaction among group members. Roles differentiate the responsibilities of group members, whereas norms integrate members' efforts into a unified whole.

Roles: Differentiation Within Groups

Think of a group you have belonged to, and answer this question: Did everyone in the group act the same way or perform the same functions? In all likelihood, your answer is "no." A considerable degree of differentiation usually exists within groups, meaning different members work on different tasks and are expected to accomplish different things. In other words, different group members play different roles.

Roles define the formal structure of the group and differentiate one position from another. Formally, a **role** may be defined as a set of expectations governing the appropriate behavior of an occupant of a position toward occupants of other related positions. Often such roles are assigned in a relatively formal manner, such as appointing a president, secretary, treasurer, and so on. At other times, individuals drift into various roles on the basis of their interests and skills. Once a role is assumed, however, the member is expected (by other group members) to behave in certain ways. Members who conform to their role requirements are rewarded, whereas those who deviate are punished.

Roles ensure that the task behaviors of group members are interrelated appropriately so that the group's goals are achieved. The roles usually are complementary in that one cannot be performed without the other (e.g., the roles of "teacher" and "student"). The expectations that define a role include rights and obligations; the obligations of one role are the rights of other roles. One of the obligations of being a teacher, for example, includes structuring a learning situation, whereas one of the rights of being a student is to have learning situations structured by the teacher. Within a group, expectations of the obligations that accompany a particular role can conflict; this is called **role conflict.** What a principal and what students expect from a teacher, for example, can be contradictory. Contradictory expectations, therefore, can create one type of role conflict.

A second type of role conflict occurs when the demands of one role are incompatible with the demands of another role. Every person is required to play multiple

roles, and almost everyone belongs to more than one group. Sometimes such role conflict can provide great drama. Back in the Old West, for example, Sheriff Pat Garrett was called on to arrest the famous outlaw Billy the Kid. Billy the Kid also happened to be one of Garrett's best friends, but Garrett shot him anyway. This situation, although extreme, illustrates how roles can influence our actions in ways that make us act contrary to our private feelings or vested interests.

Stanley Milgram provided an important example of role incompatibility with his famous studies on obedience to authority (1974). In these studies, he placed paid adult subjects in the role of teacher and gave them the responsibility of giving "learners" an electric shock when they committed a memory error. Milgram began his study with the intention of showing that teachers would refuse to comply with the requirements of their role if those requirements went against their own personal beliefs. Once the study was under way, however, the findings showed a different situation. Although almost all teachers began to express reluctance and show signs of stress as the intensity of the shock increased and the learner cried out in pain, the majority of the teachers continued to administer the shocks. Over 60% of subjects administered the maximum shock (450 volts) to the learner. Even when the teachers were compelled to hold the learners' hands to the shock plate, 30% continued to administer the shocks. Milgram's results point out that many people can commit a variety of costly, harmful, and even immoral actions if role pressure is severe enough.

Different social roles usually are associated with different degrees of status. **Status** can be thought of as the degree to which an individual's contribution is crucial to the success and prestige of the group, how much power and control over outcomes that individual has, and the extent to which the person embodies some idealized or admired characteristic (such as being physically attractive). In many subhuman and some human groups, status is determined by physical dominance. In other groups, status may be determined by wealth, education, or any other determinant the group deems valuable.

Although status and power ordinarily go hand in hand, they need not. In a series of experiments, Johnson and Allen (1972) separated status and power from each other. They found that an individual having high status and high power in an organization results in an enhanced self-perception that leads to altruistic behavior but disdain for the worker. On the other hand, when an individual has high status but low power in an organization that rewards high power, he or she engages in selfish behavior (usually by deviating from the prescribed norms to increase his or her own rewards) but has respect for the workers.

Whatever determines status within a certain group, status differences have a number of important effects on group processes. High-status individuals are likely to be valued by the group and treated more tolerantly. These group members, therefore, often are less affected by group norms and peer pressure than are lower-status members, in part because high-status individuals are less likely to expect punishment for their improper actions (Johnson & Allen, 1972). High-status members also have disproportionately strong influence over group decisions and judgments, whereas those low in status tend to be ignored, even when they offer intelligent and creative advice. In fact, a situation in which a low-status person has a critical insight or piece of information but is ignored by the rest of the decision-making group is not uncommon.

Norms: Integration of Members' Actions

Whereas roles differentiate members' rights and obligations from one another, norms integrate the actions of all group members. **Norms** are rules, either implicit or explicit, established by groups to regulate the behavior of all members. Nonms tell group members how to behave, or how not to behave, in various situations. In short, the norms of a group are the group's common beliefs regarding appropriate behavior, attitudes, and perceptions for its members. These prescribed modes of conduct and beliefs not only guide the behavior of group members but also help group interaction by specifying the kinds of responses that are expected and acceptable in particular situations. Nonms thus provide a basis for predicting the behavior of other members and serve as a guide for a member's own behavior.

All groups have nonms, and they may be set formally or infonmally. A group of students that parties together, for example, often has common ideas about what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior at a party. More fonmally organized groups, such as classes, have nonms about absence, tardiness, accomplishment of assigned work, and appropriate times to speak. In any group, some norms specify the behavior expected of all group members, and others apply only to individuals in specific roles. In the classroom, for instance, some nonms govem both the teacher's and the students' behavior, but others may apply only to the teacher or only to the students. Because norms refer to the expected behavior sanctioned by a group, they have an "ought to" or "must" quality: Group members must not disrupt the group's work, group members ought to participate in discussions, and so on.

The nonns of any group vary in importance. Norms that have a low effect on the objectives and values of the group usually allow for a greater range of behavior and bring less severe pressures for members to confonn than do norms more relevant to group functioning. Because most groups insist on adherence to their nonns as a basic requirement for membership, individuals wishing to join or remain in specific groups generally follow these "rules of the game." If they do not, they soon may find themselves on the outside looking in.

For a group norm to influence a person's behavior, the person must recognize that it exists, be aware that other group members accept and follow the nonn, and accept and follow it himself or herself. A regulation that all members should be on time for group meetings, for example, becomes a nonn only to the extent that the individual group member accepts it, sees other group members accepting it, and sees them enforcing the regulation among themselves. At first a person may conform to a group norm because the group typically rewards conforming behavior and punishes nonconforming behavior. Later the person may internalize the norm and conform to it automatically, even when no other group members are present.

Nonms cannot be imposed on a group. Instead, they develop out of the interaction among group members. This concept of nonms being social products was demonstrated ingeniously by Muzafer Sherif in 1936. When a fixed point of light is viewed in total darkness, it appears to move spontaneously, a perceptual phenomenon known as the *autokinetic effect.* Sherif utilized this phenomenon to study how group nonns develop and how group members come to fonn coherent, shared beliefs about new events. Leading individuals into a totally dark room, Sherif turned on a tiny light and asked participants, first individually and then in groups, to note how much the light moved. When tested in groups, the participants reached consensus in their judgments

on the amount of movement. Sherif, however, was able to increase or decrease subjects' estimates of movement dramatically if he paid accomplices to offer particularly large or small estimates. Once a group decision was made about how much the light was moving, the norm persisted even when the group was not present. That is, individual participants continued to use the group judgment as a frame of reference to evaluate the perceived movement of the light. The important lesson Sherif's study demonstrates is many of the judgments and values that seem to belong to individual group members actually are shaped by the judgments of other group members.

Another classic study about the effect of group norms on the beliefs and values of group members was conducted by Theodore Newcomb in 1943. Born in 1903, Newcomb was a pioneer of social psychology and a cofounder of the social psychology program at the University of Michigan. He conducted a number of studies on how the college experience affected students, the most famous of which was his study of group norms at Bennington College. The students, all females from mostly well-to-do and politically conservative families, lived in a community where most of the faculty and older students were somewhat materialistic and politically liberal. A majority of the Bennington students became progressively more liberal over their careers, but some did not. Newcomb was able to relate the student's ultimate political orientation to the group she identified with—liberal if she thought of herself as primarily a member of the campus community and conservative if her primary identification was with her family. Newcomb's study marks the point where the study of reference groups began. A **reference group** is a group that people identify with, compare their attitudes to, and use as a means of evaluating those attitudes.

CREATING PRODUCTIVE GROUPS

Although this discussion of structure, rules, and norms may suggest the opposite, there is nothing magical about working in a group. Some groups are highly effective and achieve amazing goals, while others are highly ineffective and waste everyone's time. The authors have studied various types of groups for more than thirty years. We have interviewed thousands of members in a wide variety of organizations in a number of different countries to discover how groups are being used and where and how groups work best. Using our research and the findings of other researchers, such as Katzenbach and Smith (2003), we have developed a group performance curve to clarify the difference between ineffective and effective groups (Figure 1.2). Four types of groups appear on the curve: pseudogroups, traditional work groups, effective groups, and high-performance groups. The performance curve begins with the individual members of the group and portrays their performance relative to each group type. The purpose of the curve is to illustrate that the productiveness of any small group depends on how the group is structured (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003).

As the following explanations of the four groups featured on the performance curve point out, groups can be created in a variety of ways and for a multitude of reasons. In those very roots of group development, though, also may lie many of the reasons why one group is productive and another group is ineffective. Although creating and working in groups are not magical acts, attention must be paid to the reasons for the group's existence, its structure, and its motivations.

A **pseudogroup** is a group whose members have been assigned to work together but who have no interest in doing so. They believe they will be evaluated by being ranked

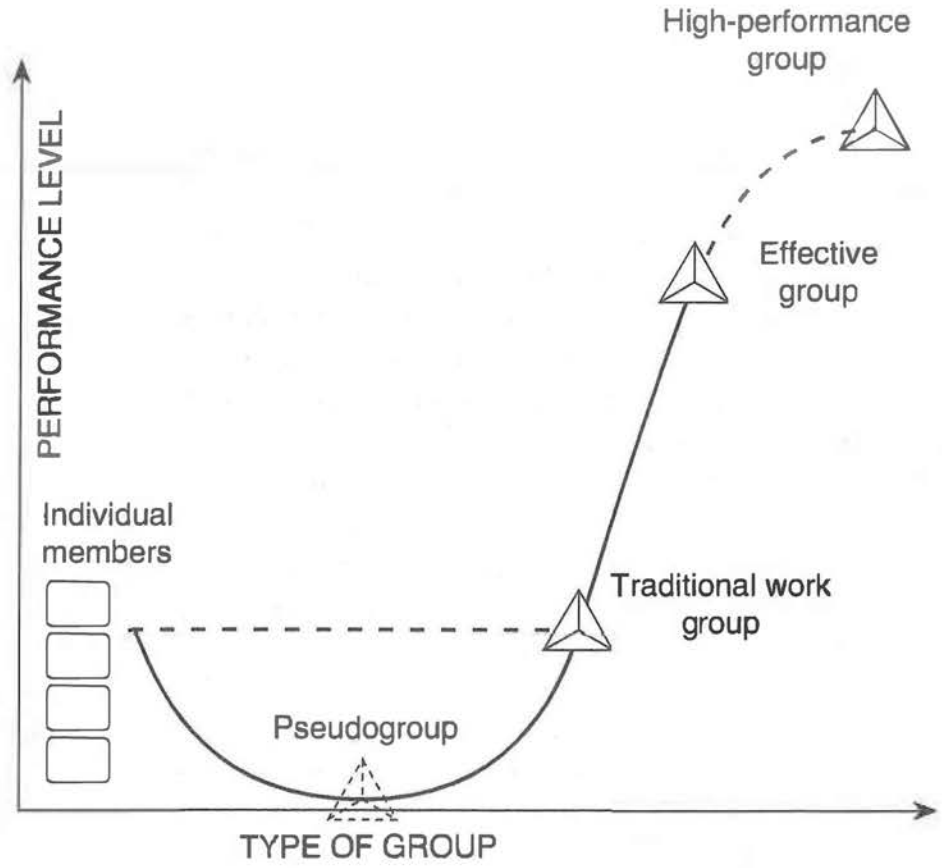


Figure 1.2 The group performance curve.

from the highest performer to the lowest performer. Although members talk to one another, they actually are competing. They see one another as rivals who must be defeated, block or interfere with one another's performance, hide information, attempt to mislead and confuse, and distrust one another. The result is that the sum of the whole is less than the potential of the individual members. In other words, members would be more productive if they were working alone. Furthermore, the group does not mature because members have no interest in or commitment to one another or to the group's future. An example of a pseudogroup might be a regional sales team that is told to work together to increase profits, only to find out that the top salesperson will receive three times the bonus any other team member will receive.

A **traditional work group** is a group whose members are assigned to work together and accept that they have to do so. Members believe that they will be evaluated and rewarded as individuals, not as members of the group. The work is structured so that very little joint work is required. Members interact primarily to clarify how the work is to be done. They seek one another's information but have no motivation to inform their groupmates. Members are accountable as separate individuals, not as members of a team. Some members loaf, seeking a free ride on the efforts of their more conscientious groupmates. The conscientious members then feel exploited and do less. The result is that the sum of the whole is more than the potential of some of the members, but the more hard-working and conscientious members would perform better if they worked alone. An example of this might be a study group designated by the teacher, in which some students do research for an upcoming test while others do nothing.

An **effective group** is more than the sum of its parts. It is a group whose members commit themselves to maximizing their own and one another's success. Members are assigned to work together, and they are happy to do so. They believe their success depends on the efforts of all group members. An effective group has a number of defining characteristics. They include positive interdependence that unites members to achieve clear operational goals, two-way communication, distributed leadership, and power based on expertise. In addition, effective groups feature a decision-making process that allows group members to challenge one another's information and reasoning and to resolve conflicts constructively. Members of effective groups hold one another accountable to do their fair share of the work, promote one another's success, appropriately engage in small-group skills, and determine how effectively they are working together.

A **high-performance group** meets all the criteria for an effective group and outperforms all reasonable expectations, given its membership. What differentiates a high-performance group from an effective group is the level of commitment members have to one another and to the group's success. Jennifer Futernick, who is part of a high-performance, rapid-response team at McKinsey & Company, calls the emotion binding her teammates together a form of love (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003). Ken Hoepner of the Burlington Northern Intermodal Team (also described by Katzenbach & Smith, 2003) stated, "Not only did we trust each other, not only did we respect each other, but we gave a damn about the rest of the people on this team. If we saw somebody vulnerable, we were there to help." As these examples demonstrate, members' mutual concern for one another's personal growth enables high-performance groups to perform far

TYPES OF GROUPS

Demonstrate your understanding of the different types of groups by matching the definitions with the appropriate group. Check your answers with your partner, and explain why you believe your answers to be correct.

	Type of Group	Definition
_____	Pseudogroup	a. A group in which members work together to accomplish shared goals. Members perceive that they can reach their goals if and only if the other group members also reach their goals.
_____	Traditional group	b. A group whose members have been assigned to work together but who have no interest in doing so. The structure promotes competition at close quarters.
_____	Effective group	c. A group that meets all the criteria for being an effective group and outperforms all reasonable expectations, given its membership.
_____	High-performance group	d. A group whose members agree to work together but see little benefit from doing so. The structure promotes individualistic work with talking.

above expectations and also to have a lot of fun. Unfortunately, high-performance groups are rare; most groups never achieve this level of development.

EXERCISE 1.4

SAVING THE WORLD FROM DRACULA

A problem-solving situation is used to provide an introduction to group dynamics.

1. Form heterogeneous groups of four.
2. Your tasks are to formulate a plan to save the world by stopping Count Dracula from initiating a new reign of terror by vampires and, on the basis of your plan, rank the items from most important to least important. Your group is to establish
   a. How vampires may be destroyed
   b. How to protect yourself from vampires
   c. A vampire's strengths and weaknesses that must be overcome and exploited
   d. The time of day vampires may be destroyed
3. Read the situation sheet, "The Danger of Dracula."
4. Create a plan of attack, and then rank the items listed on the "Saving the World from Dracula Ranking Sheet." Your goal is to rank items from most important (1) to least important (12) and write out a rationale of why you ranked the items as you did.
   a. Working by yourself, individualistically, rank the items from most important (1) to least important (12). Write out a rationale explaining your ranking.
   b. Working *cooperatively* in your group, rank the items again, coming to consensus. Write out a rationale explaining the group's ranking. There should be one ranking and rationale from the group.
5. Score your own and your group's ranking:
   a. Compute the absolute difference (ignore plus and minus signs) between your individual ranking and the experts' ranking.
   b. Compute the absolute difference (ignore plus and minus signs) between your group's ranking and the experts' ranking.
   c. A perfect ranking will have a score of zero. The lower your score, the more accurate your ranking. The criteria for success are:

0–20	Excellent
21–30	Good
31–40	Poor
41+	Terrible

6. When the group has solved the problem, answer the following questions:
   a. What is the group's goal?
   b. What were the patterns of communication among group members?
   c. How did leadership emerge in the group? Who provided what types of leadership in your group?
   d. What determined how influential each member was in the group?
   e. What method of decision making was used, and how effective was it?
   f. Why or why not did members challenge each other's conclusions?
   g. What conflicts arose among group members, and how were they managed?

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h. How do you simultaneously participate in a group and observe the processes the group uses to complete its tasks?
i. What actions by group members helped and what actions hindered the team in completing its task?

THE DANGER OF DRACULA

You are a group of scientists who specialize in public health. Your mandate is to prevent epidemics and threats to the general health of the public. Your current concern is the possibility of a proliferation of vampires resulting from the release of Count Dracula from his grave, where he has been trapped for over a hundred years.

Voivode Dracula (1431–1476) was Vlad III, Prince of Wallachia (a province of Romania bordered to the north by Transylvania and Moldavia, to the east by the Black Sea, and to the south by Bulgaria). Dracula was known as a brilliant, courageous, cunning, and clever general who defeated the Turkish army. He was also known as Vlad the Impaler, for impaling tens of thousands of victims on sharpened stakes. In 1459, on St. Bartholomew's Day, for example, Dracula had 30,000 of the citizens of the city of Brasov impaled, arranging the stakes in various geometric formations in front of the city. He was also a noted statesman and scholar. His mighty brain, iron resolution, and immense cruelty made him a formidable adversary. Although supposedly killed in battle in 1476 by the Turks, it soon became apparent that he had become a vampire. He adopted the title of Count and terrorized that region of Europe until he was imprisoned in his grave in the late 1800s by a team of English scientists and adventurers. The exact whereabouts of his grave was hidden to prevent any misguided soul from freeing him.

Archaeologists excavating an ancient castle in Transylvania have uncovered Count Dracula's crypt and coffin. They plan to open the casket, and when they do they will release Count Dracula once more into the world. Not believing in the danger, the archaeologists are inviting television crews to film the opening, hoping the publicity will help them raise money. You, however, know the truth. Vampires do exist, and once released, Count Dracula will create at least five more vampires a day, each of whom will in turn create five more vampires a day. In a very short time, vampires could be terrorizing the whole world. Your group has the responsibility of preventing this world disaster by destroying Count Dracula before he can begin. Your plan must include:

a. The procedures you will use to destroy Dracula
b. The procedures you will use to protect yourself from Dracula
c. A description of Dracula's strengths and weaknesses that must be overcome and exploited
d. The time of day Dracula will be destroyed

Pooling the resources of your group, you have 12 relevant items. **Your task is to rank these items according to their importance for your quest to prevent a reign of terror by Count Dracula,** starting with 1 for the most important item and ending with 12 for the least important item.

How to Destroy Dracula	Protection Procedures	Dracula's Strengths and Weaknesses	The Time We Will Destroy Dracula

SAVING THE WORLD FROM DRACULA RANKING SHEET

Rank the following items according to their importance for saving the world from Dracula, starting with 1 for the most important to 12 for the least important.

1	2	3	4	2–4	3–4
Item	**Your Ranking**	**Group Ranking**	**Experts' Ranking**	**Individual Difference Scores**	**Group Difference Scores**
1. Oak stake					
2. Diagram/map of Dracula's castle and key to Dracula's crypt					
3. Human ability to cooperate					
4. Table detailing sunrise and sunset in Transylvania					
5. 44-Magnum revolver and shells					
6. Branch of wild rose					
7. Sharp ax and several cloves of garlic					
8. Tickets: plane to Budapest, train to Transylvania, car to castle					
9. Collapsible steel cage					
10. Cross, holy water, communion wafers					
11. Two high-intensity flashlights					
12. Herbs mixed by a witch at midnight under a full moon					
Total					

EXERCISE 1.5

DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE GROUP

The purpose of this exercise is to give participants some practice in planning how to develop an effective group. The procedure for the exercise is as follows:

1. The class forms groups of four.
2. Groups read and discuss the following paragraph and then answer the following questions about the situation:
   a. Which alternative would you choose if you were there?
   b. Which alternative would you want your companions to choose?
   c. What kind of people would you want as companions in such a situation?

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d. What should the goals of the group be?
e. How should leadership be managed?
f. Who should have the most power in making decisions?
g. What decision-making procedure should be used?
h. How should conflicts be managed?

3. Each group decides whether its answers to the preceding questions are indicative of an effective or an ineffective group.
4. Each group shares its answers with the rest of the class.

SINKING BOAT SITUATION

On a dark summer night seven persons cling to a swamped and slowly sinking boat on a black tropical sea. They are not alone. A large shark glides below them, and soon, perhaps, there will be more. With fear thick in their salt-swollen throats, the seven are faced with a difficult choice. If they kick in unison, they may be able to fight the fierce current and tides driving them away from the shore and all make it to safety; if they stick together they have an equal chance to survive or drown. If they split up, each going it alone, one or two of the stronger swimmers might make it to safety, but the majority will certainly drown or be devoured by sharks.

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE GROUP

I will pay more for the ability to deal with people than for any other ability under the sun.

John D. Rockefeller

Having established that not all groups are effective and discussed some of the reasons why being a part of effective groups is so important, we now should dig a bit deeper into the specifics of how to create an effective group. To be effective overall, a group must do three things: achieve its goals; maintain good working relationships among members; and adapt to changing conditions in the surrounding organization, society, and world. To create such a group you should use the following set of guidelines. These guidelines provide direction for building an effective group, a framework for diagnosing how well a group is functioning, and a means for motivating group members to improve. For further clarification, Table 1.1 lists the guidelines and Table 1.2 offers a comparison between effective and ineffective groups.

Guideline 1: Establish Clear, Operational, and Relevant Group Goals that Create Positive Interdependence and Evoke a High Level of Commitment from Every Member. Groups exist for a reason: People want to achieve goals they are unable to achieve by themselves. In effective groups, goals must be stated clearly so that all members understand the nature of the goals. In addition, goals must be operational so that members understand how to achieve them. Goals also must be relevant to members' needs, so that they commit themselves to achieving the goals. Finally, the group's

TABLE 1.1 **Guidelines for Creating Effective Groups**

1. Establish clear, operational, relevant group goals that create positive interdependence and evoke a high level of commitment from every member.
2. Establish effective two-way communication within which group members communicate their ideas and feelings accurately and clearly.
3. Ensure that leadership and participation are distributed among all group members.
4. Ensure the use of power is distributed among group members and patterns of influence vary according to the needs of the group as members strive to achieve their mutual goals.
5. Match the method of decision making with the (a) availability of time and resources, (b) size and seriousness of the decision, and (c) amount of member commitment needed to implement decisions. The most effective way of making a decision is usually by consensus.
6. Encourage structured controversies in which group members advocate their views, disagree, and challenge each other's conclusions and reasoning to create high-quality, creative decisions.
7. Ensure that members face their conflicts of interests and use integrative negotiations and mediation to resolve them constructively.

goals must create positive interdependence among members. Group goals and social interdependence are discussed in Chapter 3.

Guideline 2: Establish Effective Two-Way Communication by Which Group Members Communicate Their Ideas and Feelings Accurately and Clearly. Communication is the basis for all human interaction and group functioning, and it is especially important when groups of people are working toward a common goal. Group members must send and receive messages effectively to exchange information and transmit meaning. Effective communication also can decrease misunderstandings and discord among group members. Effective communication depends on minimalizing competition among members and establishing two-way communication. Communication among group members is discussed in Chapter 4.

Guideline 3: Ensure that Leadership and Participation Are Distributed Among All Group Members. All members of a group are responsible for providing leadership. Equal participation and leadership ensure that all members are invested in the group's work, committed to implementing the group's decisions, and satisfied with their membership. Shared leadership and participation also enable the group as a whole to use the resources of every individual, thereby increasing the cohesiveness of the group. Leadership is discussed in Chapter 5.

Guideline 4: Ensure Power Is Distributed Among Group Members and Patterns of Influence Vary According to the Needs of the Group. In effective groups, members' power is based on expertise, ability, and access to information, not on authority or personality characteristics. Power struggles among group members can distract the group from its purpose and goals, ultimately making the group useless. To prevent power struggles, every member of the group must have some power of influence in

TABLE 1.2 **Comparison of Effective and Ineffective Groups**

EFFECTIVE GROUPS	INEFFECTIVE GROUPS
Goals are clarified and modified so that the best possible match between individual goals and the group's goals is achieved; goals are structured cooperatively so all members are committed to achieving them.	Members accept imposed goals; goals are competitively structured so that each member strives to outperform the others.
Communication is two-way, and the open and accurate expression of both ideas and feelings is emphasized.	Communication is one-way, and only ideas are expressed; feelings are suppressed or ignored.
Participation and leadership are distributed among all group members; goal accomplishment, internal maintenance, and developmental change are underscored.	Leadership is delegated and based on authority; participation is unequal, with high-power members dominating; only goal accomplishment is emphasized.
Ability and information determine influence and power; contracts are built to make sure that individuals' goals and needs are fulfilled; power is equalized and shared.	Position determines power; power is concentrated in the authority system; obedience to authority is the rule.
Decision-making procedures are matched with the situation; different methods are used at different times; consensus is sought for important decisions; involvement and group discussions are encouraged.	Decisions are always made by the highest authority; there is little group discussion; members' involvement is minimal.
Structured controversy in which members advocate their views and challenge each other's information and reasoning is seen as the key to high-quality and creative decision making and problem solving.	Disagreement among members is suppressed and avoided; quick compromises are sought to eliminate arguing; groupthink is prevalent.
Conflicts of interest are resolved through integrative negotiations and mediation so agreements are reached that maximize joint outcomes and leave all members satisfied.	Conflicts of interest are resolved through distributive negotiations or avoidance; some members win and some members lose or else conflict is ignored and everyone is unhappy.
Interpersonal, group, and intergroup skills are stressed; cohesion is advanced through high levels of inclusion, affection, acceptance, support, and trust; individuality is endorsed.	The functions of group members are stressed; individuality is de-emphasized; cohesion is ignored; rigid conformity is promoted.

some part of group work. As a group evolves and new goals are set, the distribution of power also needs to evolve. To this end, group members should form coalitions that help fulfill personal goals on the basis of mutual influence and interdependence. Power is discussed in Chapter 6.

Guideline 5: Match Decision-Making Procedures with the Needs of the Situation. Groups can make decisions in a variety of ways, but there must be a balance between the time and resources a group has available and the method of decision making it uses. A jury deciding a death penalty case, for example, would require a unanimous decision,

whereas a church group deciding when to hold its next meeting may not. Balance also is needed among the size and seriousness of the decision, the commitment needed to put it into practice, and the method used for making the decision. The most effective way of making a decision usually is by consensus (unanimous agreement). Consensus promotes distributed participation, the equalization of power, constructive controversy, cohesion, involvement, and commitment. Decision making is discussed in Chapter 7.

Guideline 6: Engage in Constructive Controversy by Disagreeing and Challenging One Another's Conclusions and Reasoning, thus Promoting Creative Decision Making and Problem Solving. To make effective decisions, members must present the best case possible for each major course of action and subject all other alternatives to critical analysis. Controversies over opposing ideas and conclusions are beneficial for groups because they promote involvement in the group's work, quality and creativity in decision making, and commitment to implementing the group's decisions. Controversies also help ensure that minority and dissenting opinions receive serious discussion and consideration. Controversy and creativity are discussed in Chapter 8.

Guideline 7: Face Your Conflicts and Resolve them in Constructive Ways. Conflicts of interest may result from incompatible needs or goals, scarce resources, and competitiveness. Five basic strategies can be used to manage conflicts of interest: **withdrawal,** forcing (win–lose negotiations), **smoothing, compromise,** and problem solving (integrative negotiations). Members of effective groups face their conflicts and engage in integrative problem-solving negotiations to resolve them. When problem-solving negotiations fail, mediation may occur. When they are resolved constructively, conflicts are an important and indispensable aspect of increasing **group effectiveness**. Conflicts of interest are discussed in Chapter 9.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GROUPS OVER TIME

All groups change over time. The kinds of developmental changes seen in most groups have been described by well over one hundred theories. Most of these theories have taken one of two approaches (Hill & Gruner, 1973; Shambaugh, 1978). **Recurring-phase** theories focus on the issues that dominate group interaction again and again. Robert Freed Bales (1965), for example, stated that equilibrium has to exist between task-oriented work and emotional expressions to build better relationships among group members. The group tends to oscillate between these two concerns, sometimes striving for more solidarity and sometimes striving for a more work-oriented focus. Wilfred Bion's (1961) recurring-phase theory stated that groups focus on three basic themes of dependency on the leader, pairing among members for emotional support, and fight-flight reactions to a **threat** to the group. William Schultz (1966) proposed that group development occurs as members concern themselves with three issues: affection, inclusion, and control.

Sequential-stage theories discuss the typical order of the phases of group development. Richard Moreland and John Levine (1982, 1988) suggested that group members go through predictable, sequential stages of membership: prospective member, new member, full member, marginal member, and ex-member. At each stage, the member is

concerned with a different aspect of group life. For example, the new member attempts to change the group to meet his or her needs while the group attempts to mold the new member to fit the group's needs. Later on, the full member engages in role negotiation to find a niche that is most comfortable.

Another famous sequential-stage theory, offered by Worchel, Coutant-Sassic, and Grossman (1992), proposed six stages to group development. The initial stage is discontent, when individuals feel that their present group(s) are not meeting their needs. The second stage is a precipitating event that brings members together. Members begin to identify with the group in the third stage. In the fourth stage, attention turns to group productivity. In the fifth stage, attention shifts to the individual group member, who negotiates with the group to expand task efforts to meet personal goals. In the sixth and final stage, the group begins to disintegrate.

What is probably the most famous sequential-stage theory was formulated by Bruce W. Tuckman (1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Tuckman reviewed over fifty studies on group development conducted in a variety of settings (mostly therapy and training groups of limited duration). Although the description of the stages the groups went through varied widely on the surface, Tuckman found a surprising amount of agreement beneath the diversity and hypothesized five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning.

Tuckman theorized that groups focus on specific issues at each of the five stages, and this focus influences members' behaviors. The *forming stage* is a period of uncertainty in which members try to determine their place in the group and the procedures and rules of the group. Conflicts begin to arise during the *storming stage* as members resist the influence of the group and rebel against accomplishing the task. Members often confront their various differences, and conflict management becomes the focus of attention. During the *norming stage,* the group establishes some consensus regarding a role structure and group norms for appropriate behavior. Cohesion and commitment increase. In the *performing stage,* the group members become proficient in working together to achieve the group's goals and more flexible in patterns of working together. The group disbands in the *adjourning stage.* Of all the sequential-stage theories, Tuckman's seems the most useful and has created the most interest.

Virtually all the studies that Tuckman reviewed involved group leaders who were passive and nondirective and who made no attempt to intervene in the group process. Most groups, however, have a coordinator, team leader, or instructor who tries to ensure that the group functions productively. In applying Tuckman's conclusions to such groups, the authors (with the help of Roger Johnson and other colleagues) identified seven stages of development: (a) defining and structuring procedures, (b) conforming to procedures and getting acquainted, (c) recognizing mutuality and building trust, (d) rebelling and differentiating, (e) committing to and taking ownership for the goals, procedures, and other members, (f) functioning maturely and productively, and (g) terminating. Each of these stages is discussed in tum.

Defining and Structuring Procedures

When a group begins, the members are usually concerned about what is expected of them and the nature of the group's goals. Group members want to know what is going

to happen; what is expected of them; whether or not they will be accepted, influential, and liked; how the group is going to function; and who the other group members are. Group members expect the coordinator to explain how the group is to function in a way that reassures them that their personal needs will be met. When a group first meets, therefore, the coordinator should define the procedures to be used, define the group's goals, establish the interdependence among members, and generally organize the group and announce the beginning of the group's work.

Conforming to Procedures and Getting Acquainted

As group members follow the prescribed procedures and interact around the task, they become acquainted with one another and familiarize themselves with the procedures until they can follow them easily. They also learn the strengths and weaknesses of the other group members. During this stage the group members are dependent on the coordinator for direction and clarification of the group's goals and procedures. The coordinator should also stress the following group norms: (a) take responsibility for one's own performance and the performance of the other members of the group; (b) provide help and assistance to other members; (c) respond to other members in an accepting, supportive, and trustworthy way; (d) make decisions through consensus; and (e) confront and solve problems in group functioning. During this stage the goals and procedures of the group are the coordinator's. The group members conform to the prescribed procedures and interact with one another, but they are not committed personally to the group's goals and each other.

Recognizing Mutuality and Building Trust

The third stage of group development is marked by group members recognizing their interdependence and building trust. A sense of mutuality is built as group members

SUMMARY OF THE COORDINATOR'S ROLE

1. Introduce, define, and structure the group.
2. Clarify procedures, reinforce members for conforming to the procedures, and help members become acquainted.
3. Emphasize and highlight the positive interdependence among group members, and encourage them to engage in both trusting and trustworthy behaviors.
4. Accept the rebellion by and differentiation among group members as a normal process. Use integrative negotiations to help members establish their independence from one another and the prescribed procedures.
5. Help members commit themselves to and take ownership for the group's goals and procedures.
6. Be a consultant to the group, providing resources for the group to function effectively.
7. Signal termination, and help the members move on to future groups.

recognize they "sink or swim together." Members begin to take responsibility for one another's performance and appropriate behavior. Trust is built through disclosing one's thoughts, ideas, conclusions, and feelings and having the other group members respond with acceptance, support, and reciprocation of the disclosures. Trust is discussed at length in Chapter 3 and in Johnson (2003).

Rebelling and Differentiating

Relationships among group members are often built through a cycle of establishing independence and becoming friendly, then differentiating themselves from each other through conflict, and finally committing themselves to a relationship. The fourth stage of group development is marked by group members rebelling against the coordinator and procedures and differentiating themselves from one another through disagreements and conflicts. On the road to maturity a group will go through a period (sometimes short, sometimes long) of challenging the authority of the coordinator. This is an ordinary occurrence in group development and should be expected. This swing toward independence contrasts sharply with the dependence demonstrated by members during stage 2. Group members may wish to test and challenge the coordinator's sincerity and commitment or attempt to establish their independence by doing the opposite of the group procedures.

Rebelling and differentiating are important methods by which group members establish boundaries and autonomy (Johnson, 1979, 1980a). As they are natural parts of the development process, the coordinator needs to deal with both in an open and accepting way. Some advice for doing so includes (a) do not tighten control and try to force conformity to prescribed procedures; (b) confront and problem-solve when students become counterdependent and rebellious; (c) mediate conflicts among members, helping the group establish members' autonomy and individuality; and (d) work toward student ownership of the procedures and commitment to one another's success. Coordinating a group at this stage is like teaching a child to ride a bicycle; one runs alongside to prevent the child from falling, but one must let loose so the child can learn to balance on his or her own.

Committing to the Group's Goals and Procedures

During this stage, dependence on the coordinator is replaced by dependence on the other members of the group, and conformity to the prescribed procedures is replaced by personal commitment to the collaborative nature of the experience. The group shifts from being the coordinator's group to being the members' group. Group norms become internalized, and motivation becomes intrinsic rather than extrinsic. Group members promote each other's efforts to achieve the group's goals and provide each other with support and assistance.

Functioning Maturely and Productively

As the group achieves maturity, autonomy, and productivity, a group identity emerges. Group members collaborate to achieve goals while ensuring that their relationships with

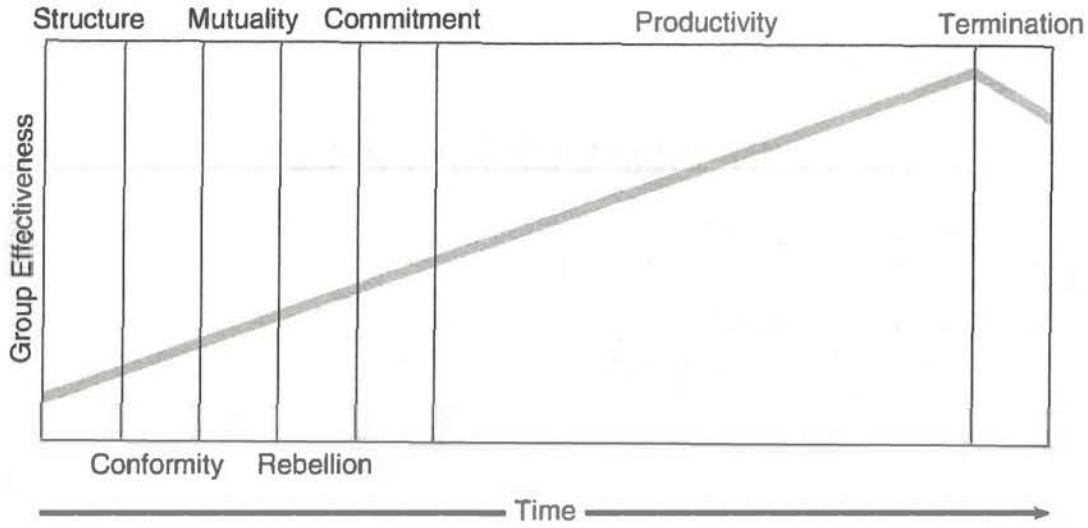

Figure 1.3 Stages of group development.

each other are maintained at a high-quality level. The coordinator becomes a consultant to the group rather than a directive leader. The relationships among group members continue to improve, as does the relationship between the coordinator and the members. In the maturely functioning group, all the guidelines for effective groups are met. Many groups never reach this stage.

Terminating

The life of every group is finite. Goals are met, projects are finished, and the group members go their separate ways. For groups that have matured into cohesive, effective groups, where strong emotional bonds exist among group members, the termination of the group may be quite upsetting. Nevertheless, group members deal with the problems of separating so that they can leave the group experience behind them and move on to new experiences.

Length of Each Stage

Not all stages last the same amount of time. Many groups move very quickly through the first five stages, spend considerable time functioning maturely, and then terminate quickly. Other groups never seem to progress past the rebelling and differentiating stage. The average amount of time groups tend to spend in each stage is presented in Figure 1.3.

Conclusion

Both the sequential-stage and the recurring-phase perspectives are useful for understanding group development, and they are not contradictory. A group may move through various stages while dealing with basic themes that surface as they become relevant to the group's work. Because the issues underlying the themes are never completely resolved, they can recur later.

EXERCISE 1.6

ARE GROUPS BENEFICIAL OR HARMFUL?

Some controversy exists over whether group membership is constructive or destructive. The purpose of this exercise is to structure a critical discussion of the issue.

1. **Assignment to Groups:** Assign participants to groups of four. Each group is to write a short statement summarizing and explaining its position on whether individual or group decision making is more effective.
2. **Assignment to Pairs and Positions:** Divide each group into two pairs:
   a. Pair One takes the position that individuals are superior to groups in making decisions and uses Briefing Sheet One.
   b. Pair Two takes the position that groups are superior to individuals in making decisions and uses Briefing Sheet Two.
3. Participants review the procedure and guidelines for constructive controversy (p. 33).
4. Conduct the exercise and monitor participants to ensure that the procedures are skillfully followed.
5. Participants process their experience.

TASKS

1. Make the best case possible for your assigned position. Ensure it gets a fair and complete hearing.
2. Critically analyze and challenge the opposing positions. Ensure the information and logic stands up under critical scrutiny.
3. Reach a consensus on the group's best reasoned judgment about the issue.

PROCEDURE

1. **Prepare Position:** Working with your partner, prepare a persuasive presentation that makes the best case possible for your assigned position. The presentation should have three parts: a thesis statement (your position), a rationale (your information organized in a logically compelling way), and a conclusion (your position). In preparing your presentation, use the overview of social-psychological research, applicable text material, and what you know from other sources. You have ten minutes to prepare (a) a forceful and persuasive three-minute presentation and (b) your arguments for the open discussion. Both members of the pair have to be ready to give the presentation.
2. **Present Positions:** Meet with a person representing the opposing position. Give a three-minute presentation of the best case possible for your position. Be persuasive. Listen to the other person's three-minute presentation; take notes and ask for clarification of anything that is not fully understood.
3. **Advocate, Attack, and Defend Discussion:** Continue to advocate the best case possible for your position. Critically analyze and challenge the opposing position. Point out the shortcomings in its information and logic. Defend your position from the attacks of the opponent. The discussion should focus on theory, research, and facts, not on opinions and impressions. You have ten minutes to discuss the issue.
4. **Reverse Perspectives:** Give a two-minute presentation of the best case possible for the opposing position. Summarize the opposing position (information and logic). The summary

should be complete and accurate. Add any additional information you may have that supports the opposing position. Listen to the opponent's presentation of your position and correct anything that is incorrectly understood.

5. **Write a Joint Report:** Drop all advocacy. Reach a consensus on the nature of your best reasoned judgment about the issue. Write one statement summarizing and explaining your joint conclusions on whether individual or group decision making is more effective. The best reasoning from both sides should be synthesized or integrated into your best reasoned judgment. Base your conclusions on theory, research, and facts.

RULES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CONTROVERSY

1. I am critical of ideas, not individuals. I challenge and refute the ideas of the opposing pair, but I do not indicate that I personally reject the members of the pair.
2. I focus on reaching the best decision possible, not on "winning." I remember that we are all in this together.
3. I encourage everyone to participate and to master all the relevant information.
4. I listen to everyone's ideas, even if I don't agree.
5. I paraphrase or restate what someone has said if it is not clear to me.
6. I first bring out all the ideas and facts supporting both sides, and then I try to put them together in a way that makes sense.
7. I try to understand both sides of the issue.
8. I change my mind when the evidence indicates that I should do so.

BRIEFING SHEET ONE: GROUPS ARE GOOD FOR HUMANS

1. Under most conditions, the productivity of groups is higher than the productivity of individuals working alone.
2. Groups make more effective decisions and solve problems more effectively than individuals working alone.
3. It is through group memberships that the values of altruism, kindness, consideration for others, responsibility, and so forth are socialized in us.
4. The quality of emotional life in terms of friendship, love, camaraderie, excitement, joy, fulfillment, and achievement is greater for members of groups than for individuals acting alone.
5. The quality of everyday life is higher in groups because of the advantages of specialization and division of labor. Our material standard of living—for example, our housing, food, clothing, transportation, entertainment, and so forth—would not be possible for a person living outside a society.
6. Conflicts are managed more productively in groups. Social influence is better managed in groups. Without group standards, social values, and laws, civilization would be impossible.
7. A person's identity, self-esteem, and social competencies are shaped by the groups of significance to him or her.
8. Without cooperation, social organization, and groups of various kinds, humans would not survive. Humans have a basic social nature, and our survival and evolution are the results of the effectiveness of our groups.
9. Friendship, love, companionship, meaning, purpose, cooperation, and all that is good in life occur in groups.

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BRIEFING SHEET TWO: GROUPS ARE NOT GOOD FOR HUMANS

1. People in groups are more likely to take greater risks than they would alone. Groups tend to take more extreme positions and indulge in more extreme behavior than their members would alone.
2. In groups there is sometimes a diffusion of responsibility such that members take less responsibility for providing assistance to someone in need or for rewarding good service.
3. In large groups individuals can become anonymous and therefore feel freer to engage in rowdy, shocking, and illegal behavior. When one member engages in impulsive and antisocial behavior, others may do likewise. Riots are often initiated and worsened by such modeling effects.
4. Being identified as part of a group may increase the tendency of nonmembers to treat others in impersonal and inhumane ways. It is easier, for example, to drop a bomb on the "enemy" than on a person.
5. Group contagion often gives rise to collective panic.
6. Millions of people have been swept into mass political movements only to become unhappy victims of the distorted visions of their leaders.
7. Groups often influence their members to conform. One type of conformity, obedience to authority, can cause a person to act in cruel and inhumane ways to others. The identity of the individual can be threatened when conformity is too extreme.
8. It is within groups that injustice, abuse, bullying, stereotypes, scapegoating, and all anti-social actions occur.

THE FIELD OF GROUP DYNAMICS

Close cooperation between theorists and practitioners can be accomplished ... if the theorist does not look toward applied problems with highbrow aversion or with a fear of social problems, and if the applied psychologist realizes that there is nothing so practical as a good theory.

Kurt Lewin (1951, p. 169)

Understanding of the field of group dynamics is not complete until one understands (a) its roots in theory, research, and practice and (b) the nature of the field's primary founder, **Kurt Lewin.**

Like all scientific fields, the field of group dynamics is a combination of theory, research, and practice. **Theory** identifies the characteristics of effective groups, research validates or disconfirms the theories, and practical procedures based on the validated theory are implemented in the "real world" to see if they work. The theory, research, and practical applications of group dynamics are not separate and succinct processes; they all interact and enhance each other (see Figure 1.4). Theory both guides and summarizes research. Research validates or disconfirms theory, thereby leading to its refinement and modification. Practice is guided by validated theory, and practical applications of the theory reveal inadequacies that lead to refining of the theory, conducting

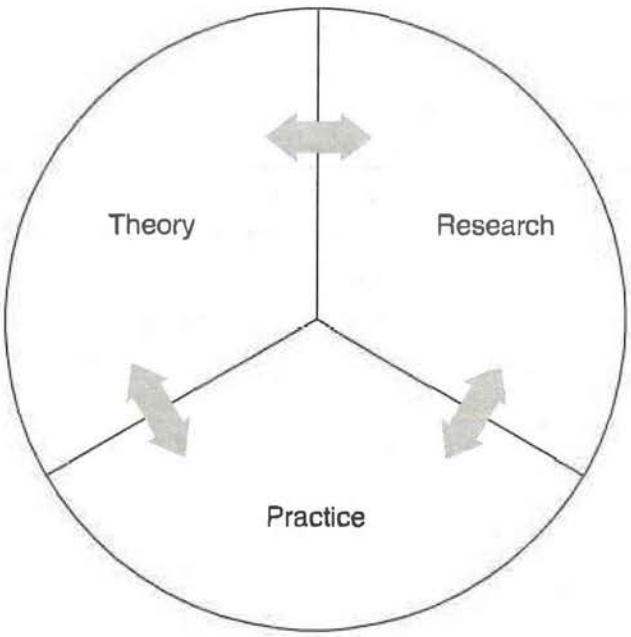


Figure 1.4 Relationship among theory, research, and practice.
Source: D. W. Johnson & R. T. Johnson, *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research* (Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company, 1989). Reprinted with permission of the authors.

Theory	Guides and summarizes research
Research	Validates or disconfirms theory, thereby leading to its refinement and modification
Practice	Guided by validated theory. Applications of the theory reveal inadequacies that lead to refining of the theory, conducting new research studies, and modifying the application

new research studies, and modifying the application. This text emphasizes the interaction among theory, research, and practice.

History of the Field of Group Dynamics

Group dynamics is a relatively young field, one that is rooted in a wide range of traditionally separate fields. Although the earliest existing philosophical literature contains a great deal of wisdom about the nature of groups, and although the basic assumptions of group dynamics were discussed from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, the field of group dynamics is a twentieth-century, North American development. Interested scientists came from many different disciplines and branches of the social sciences. The field of group dynamics, therefore, is the common property of all the social sciences.

Although its roots go back to the late 1800s, group dynamics gained prominence as a field of study in the early 1940s. After a worldwide depression, the rise of dictatorships in Europe, and World War II, most Americans were worried about the fate of their

country and the future of democracy. A general agreement existed that the country needed a better understanding of how democratic organizations could be made to function more effectively. Scientists had helped win the war, many people said, and now research should improve democracy. The field of group dynamics was thought to have significant potential for doing so. The health of a democratic society was seen as depending on the effectiveness of its component groups. Strengthening the family, the community, and the multitude of groups within our society was viewed as the primary means of ensuring the vitality of our democracy. For Americans, the scientific study of how groups functioned was needed to maintain a democratic form of government and solve current social problems.

The drive to strengthen democracy by using the scientific method to strengthen groups resulted in two interrelated movements within psychology. The first movement was the scientific study of group dynamics. Searching for ways to strengthen democracy, a new group of specialists called *social psychologists* (a) developed experimental methods of studying group dynamics and (b) began to conduct studies of group discussion, group productivity, attitude change, and leadership. The second movement was the application of group dynamics theory and research to develop methods for training leaders and group members in the social skills needed to promote effective functioning of democratic groups.

In the late nineteenth century, researchers on group dynamics focused on the question, "What change in an individual's normal solitary performance occurs when other people are present?" Norman Triplett, an Indiana University psychologist, studied the records of the Racing Board of the League of American Wheelmen. Triplett observed that cyclists' times were faster when they were racing against each other than when the cyclists simply raced against the clock. He hypothesized that the presence of other people (i.e., competitors) acts as a stimulant to the performer. If the hypothesis was valid, Triplett reasoned, it would hold for activities other than bicycle racing. Creating an analogy to bicycle racing, Triplett (1898) asked children to wind fishing reels and compared their performance when alone with their performance when another child was present. The children performed faster when the audience was present. This experiment was the first attempt to investigate the impact of social interdependence (i.e., competitive versus individualistic efforts) on achievement on a motor performance task.

Triplett's work later resulted in research on social facilitation-impairment (Zajonc, 1965), social interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), and social loafing (Harkins & Szymanski, 1987). **Social facilitation** researchers, for example, were interested in the question, "Does the impact of an audience differ on simple versus complex tasks?" If you were running a mile, would an audience make you run faster or slower? If you were asked to assemble a complex new machine you had never seen before, would an audience increase or decrease the speed with which you assembled the machine? Allport (1924), Moede (1920), and others found that on simple tasks, an audience increased an individual's speed of performance, whereas on complex tasks, an audience decreased an individual's speed of performance.

Another line of research, which became prominent in the late 1920s and 1930s, focused on the question, "Are individuals or groups more productive on problem-solving and decision-making tasks?" (Gordon, 1924; Shaw, 1932; Watson, 1928).

Overall, the results indicated that groups are more productive than are individuals. The descendants of this tradition include the research on social interdependence (e.g., Deutsch, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a), jury decision making (e.g., Kerr et al., 1976), minority influence in groups (e.g., Moscovici, 1985a), conformity (e.g., Asch, 1951), and group polarization (e.g., Myers, 1978).

By the end of the 1930s, the field of group dynamics had advanced rapidly, due largely to the efforts of Kurt Lewin and three sociologists. Muzafer Sherif (1936) studied the impact of group norms on perception of an ambiguous stimulus. In an ingenious experiment he demonstrated that the judgments made by individuals were influenced by the judgments of their fellow group members. Sherif (1906–1988) was born in Turkey and first came to the United States in 1929 to do graduate work at Harvard. He studied briefly in Germany, where he became opposed to Nazism. When he returned to the United States in 1934, he completed a doctorate at Columbia University under Gardner Murphy. Returning to Turkey, he increasingly got into trouble for his criticisms of Nazism in the German and Turkish governments. He was imprisoned in 1944, but his American colleagues secured his release and facilitated his immigration to the United States in 1945. He taught at Princeton University until 1949, when he moved to the University of Oklahoma, where he became director of the Institute for Group Relations.

Theodore Newcomb (1903–1984) was born in Ohio and, after graduating from Oberlin College, received his doctorate at Columbia University, where he worked with Goodwin Watson and Gardner Murphy. He spent most of his career at the University of Michigan. While making many contributions to the field of group dynamics, he was one of the originators through his famous Bennington study. During the years 1935–1939, Theodore Newcomb (1943) conducted his famous field study investigating the impact of social norms concerning political issues on the students at Bennington College. As discussed earlier in this chapter, his research laid the foundation for the study of reference groups.

In 1937, W. F. Whyte moved into one of the slums of Boston and began a three-and-a-half-year study of social clubs, political organizations, and racketeering. Whyte (1943) reported in vivid detail the structure, culture, and functioning of the Norton Street gang and the Italian Community Club. His study dramatized the great significance of groups in the lives of individuals and in the functioning of larger social systems. One of his most interesting findings was that expectations for performance in a given activity within the group (i.e., bowling) were stabilized in line with relative statuses of group members, despite the fact that some low-status members exhibited high skill in the task when they played against individuals outside their own group. Whyte also demonstrated the power of research conducted by a participant–observer (i.e., someone involved in the situation who makes systematic observations of the behavior of the other participants).

Although the early contributions of Sherif, Newcomb, and Whyte were important influences on the formation of the field of group dynamics, in the 1930s and 1940s the field was defined and popularized by Lewin's pioneering work, which demonstrated that the behavior of individuals should be understood in terms of the nature of the groups to which they belong (Lewin, 1943, 1948). The most influential study of group dynamics in the late 1930s was that of Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939), which

focused on the influences of different leadership patterns on groups and group members. Groups of 10- and 11-year-old children met regularly for several weeks under the leadership of an adult, who behaved in one of three ways: democratically, autocratically, or in a laissez-faire manner. The effects of these leadership patterns on the behavior of group members were large and dramatic. Severe forms of scapegoating, for example, occurred in the autocratic groups, and at the end of the experiment, the children in some of those groups destroyed the things they had constructed. This study made it clear that important social issues could be produced in the laboratory and studied experimentally.

Following this study, Lewin and his associates conducted a series of research studies aimed at developing a theory of group dynamics. Their studies focused on the effects of fear and frustration on organized versus unorganized groups (French, 1941), the impact of training on the behavior of leaders of youth groups (Bavelas, 1942), group decision-making procedures as a means of improving industrial production (Marrow, 1957), and group decision-making procedures as a means of changing eating habits related to wartime food shortages (Lewin, 1943; Radke & Klisurich, 1947), and cooperation and competition (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b). Group dynamics research was gaining popularity at this time and was being applied to an ever-increasing list of problems.

In the 1950s, Bales and his colleagues conducted research on the patterning of group members' responses and the nature of roles within a group in small discussion groups (Bales, 1950, 1953; Bales & Slater, 1955). Bavelas (1948) and Leavitt (1951) examined information exchange by imposing network structures on decision-making groups and observing their effects on subsequent productivity. Schachter (1951) researched group reactions to the opinions of deviates. Deutsch (1949a, 1949b, 1962) investigated cooperation and competition and the nature of trust.

In the 1950s the seeds were planted that ended the group dynamics movement. Festinger's theories of informal social communication (1950) and social comparison (1954) focused social psychology on the individual (not the group) as the primary unit analysis. Social psychology began to examine how attitudes, values, personality, and thoughts internal to an individual guided and influenced social behavior. This individualistic trend was accelerated by the emergence of several other theoretical perspectives during the late 1950s, such as attribution and balance theories (Heider, 1958), cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), and persuasion (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953).

In the 1960s and 1970s, most social psychologists saw the individual as a simpler unit than the group on which to base the study of social interaction. Statistical and methodological difficulties in group research pushed researchers toward the study of individual variables. Psychologists were disposed to deconstruct social variables into smaller segments (the individual) rather than integrating them into larger social structures. They preferred to use single-factor explanations for behavior rather than multifactor explanations. Studies that involved the systematic observation of groups in naturalistic settings were seen as too difficult and expensive to conduct, analyze, and interpret.

In the 1980s and 1990s, however, the investigation of group dynamics experienced a revival. Many of the pragmatic, methodological, and statistical difficulties

that thwarted group research in the 1950s and 1960s were either ameliorated or largely overcome. Research on a number of group issues, such as cooperation, conflict resolution, distributive justice, intergroup relations, and cross-cultural interaction, became major foci of social psychology (Deutsch, 1985; Johnson, 1989; Tjosvold, 1991a; Tjosvold & Johnson, 1982). In industrial psychology, the determinants of work-group productivity and modes of effective leadership were the focus of considerable research (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Tjosvold, 1991b). Clinical psychologists emphasized the client–therapist relationship and the treatment of families as dysfunctional systems (e.g., Johnson & Matross, 1977; Wolman & Stricker, 1983). In sociology, research focused on the possession and use of power, dominance hierarchies, and group structure (e.g., Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980). In Europe, interest focused on group issues such as minority influence (Moscovici, 1985a) and intergroup relations (Tajfel, 1981).

The growth of the field of group dynamics can be seen in the number of studies published in the field. From 1890 to 1940, there had been a gradual growth in the number of published studies on group behavior from one per year to approximately thirty per year. By the late 1940s, fifty-five studies were being published annually, and by the end of the 1950s, the rate had skyrocketed to about 150. During the 1960s and 1970s, the number of research studies on group dynamics persisted at about 125 per year. Group dynamics became one of the dominant fields in the social sciences. In the twenty-first century, interest in group dynamics is on the rise.

Kurt Lewin and the Field of Group Dynamics

At the heart of the group dynamic movement was one of the most important psychologists of the twentieth century, Kurt Lewin. Lewin was born on September 9, 1890, in the tiny village of Mogilno in the Prussian province of Posen, now part of Poland. In 1914, he completed his doctoral studies in philosophy and psychology at the University of Berlin. He then joined the Kaiser's army as a private in the infantry and fought for four years in World War I, during which time he was promoted to lieutenant and given an Iron Cross for bravery. At the end of the war, he returned to the University of Berlin to teach and to become part of the Psychological Institute, where Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, and Wolfgang Kohler were formulating Gestalt theory. Lewin became one of the Gestaltists, but his interests were in the area of motivation, and his work tended to be directed toward practical application. In 1933, as Hitler was rising to power, Lewin migrated to the United States. He subsequently worked at Cornell University, the University of Iowa, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he founded and headed the famous Research Center for Group Dynamics (which later moved to the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan). On February 11, 1947, Lewin died suddenly of a heart attack.

In his advocacy of the study of group dynamics, Lewin was noted for three things: his development of theory, his early championing of the use of experimental methodology, and his insistence that theory and research be relevant to social practice.

Kurt Lewin was, above all, a theorist. Lewin's contributions to theory in group dynamics included (a) an emphasis on building conceptual systems that explained

the dynamics observed in groups and (b) creating a field theory analysis of the field (Lewin, 1943, 1948). Borrowing concepts and language from force-field physics, Lewin theorized that individuals locomote through different regions of their life-space, being either impelled by forces or drawn by valences that exist along power vectors. Some of the strongest forces and valences an individual experiences stem from groups. From this theoretical orientation, he and his associates and students formulated a wide variety of theories and research programs that defined the field of group dynamics.

Lewin was an innovative researcher who had a genius for thinking of ways to study his ideas experimentally. His experimental study of group leadership is an example (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). He was convinced that the use of experimental methods in researching the dynamics of groups would revolutionize the field, and he was right.

Lewin saw the interests of the theorist and those of the practitioner as being inextricably interrelated. He believed that social science theory should do more than advance knowledge; it should also provide guidelines for action. To this end, Lewin coined the term **action research** to indicate using the scientific method to answer research questions that have significant social value. He urged social scientists to develop theories that can be applied to important social problems. Lewin saw group dynamics theory as one way to bridge the gaps between theoretical science, public policies, and democratic practices. He had a profound faith in democracy, which to him was much more than just a political system. It was also a way of life, based on mutual participation and continual interaction in decision making for purposeful change. He wanted to conduct and inspire research that made a difference in the real world of human affairs.

Although Lewin did not create the field of group dynamics, he was the major source of much of the theorizing, the development of innovative experimental research methods, and the practical application in the field. Both the content of this text as well as the entire field of group dynamics are heavily influenced by Lewin and his work.

ONLINE GROUPS

The future of most groups (and relationships) may be online. Online groups may be developed and maintained through such avenues as e-mail, designated sites such as Facebook and MySpace, blogging, texting, tweeting, and playing massive multiplayer and other games. Online interaction can supplement face-to-face groups or be the setting in which new groups are created. Online interaction can maintain previous face-to-face groups as people move to different geographic locations. New groups can be created that are entirely online. Increasingly online interaction will include the options of real-time voice chat and video (i.e., as bandwidth expands, video will become free and easy to use).

There are a number of points to be made about online groups and their connection to face-to-face groups. First, online groups are real groups. There are actual

people who read the e-mails, respond to comments on a blog, receive and send tweets, and so forth. Online groups involve interacting with real people, just in a different media.

Second, groups are based on the time members spend interacting with each other; more and more of group time is going to be online. There is only so much time a person can spend each day on his or her groups. It is a zero-sum situation. Every minute a person spends interacting online is one minute less they can spend on face-to-face groups and vice versa. Trends indicate that people will be spending more of their group time online rather than face-to-face. This means that much of a person's cooperative efforts will either be online or include online elements.

Third, electronic media offer the opportunity to expand the number of a person's groups very quickly and very easily. The barriers to entry into groups are low, and the opportunity to do so is high. A person can easily find other people with needed expertise and resources on the Internet. Entering one website may provide access to dozens of people to interact with about an area of mutual interest. It is difficult, if not impossible, to suddenly have access to large numbers of potential collaborators in face-to-face situations. The ease of creating groups enhances the ability of individuals to find collaborators and identify people who have resources essential for completing a cooperative project. In many ways, cooperation is enhanced by the Internet and online groups.

Fourth, personal geography is less relevant in Internet groups. No matter where one lives, it is possible to find collaborators all over the world. Thus, diversity of workforce or school may be less important to many people because they can find diverse colleagues on the Internet. Because cooperation and constructive conflict are enhanced by diverse perspectives and resources, the quality of cooperation and constructive conflict can be considerably enhanced by Internet groups.

Fifth, it is easy to interact with lots of people simultaneously on the Internet. The same e-mail can be sent to dozens, even hundreds, of people. What a person posts on a Facebook page can be read and responded to by dozens, even hundreds, of friends. In contrast, most face-to-face groups have limited membership. The speed at which communication can take place will enhance cooperation. If competitive messages are sent, however, more people can be alienated more quickly. In competitive and individualistic situations, communication tends to be avoided, and trust tends to be low.

Sixth, in online groups, people primarily know a person through what the person discloses about him- or herself. New avenues of assessing the nature of other group members will be developed, such as speed of keyboarding and responding, cleverness in phrasing responses, patterns of wording in messages, sense of humor, creativity in writing, and so forth.

Seventh, online groups can be highly positive and fulfilling. The arrival of an e-mail can bring joy, the honest disclosure of thoughts and feelings can be liberating, and support from online colleagues can be quite powerful. Not all online groups, however, are positive. There can be cyberbullying and other negative interactions online. But the vast majority of online groups seem to be quite positive, resulting in laughter, good humor, cheerfulness, joy, and fun. Such behaviors reflect positive groups.

Eighth, material posted on the Internet spreads rapidly and widely. That means people have to be more concerned about (a) what they post on the Internet and (b) their privacy in public and face-to-face groups. Interaction with another group member can be recorded once and sent to dozens, hundreds, and thousands of people. Pictures taken at a party can show up on a company's website 20 years later. The nature of the Internet will make group members more cautious about their behavior and what they post on group sites.

Ninth, online groups focus attention on ethics, manners, and values. As part of developing online groups, new systems of ethics and manners are being developed. In addition, online interaction (like face-to-face interaction) affects values. A recent study, for example, demonstrates that in the United States, Japan, Singapore, and Malaysia, the more people played a prosocial online game, they tended to behave in prosocial ways afterward, but when they played a violent online game, they were more likely to behave in competitive, obstructive ways afterward. In other words, the nature of present group interaction will influence future group interaction.

THE NATURE OF THIS TEXT AND HOW TO USE IT

This is not a text that you can read with detachment. It is written to involve you with its contents. By reading this text, you will learn the theoretical and empirical knowledge now available on group dynamics, and you will learn how to apply this knowledge in practical ways within the groups to which you belong. In the past, group dynamics practitioners did not often pay attention to the research literature, and group dynamics researchers often neglected to specify how their findings could be applied. Thus the knowledge about effective groups and the learning of group skills tended to be separated. In this text we directly apply existing theory and research to the learning of effective group skills. The text defines the skills needed for effective group functioning; it also provides opportunities for readers to practice these skills for themselves and to receive feedback on their performance. As you participate in the exercises, use diagnostic procedures to assess your current skill levels, and discuss the relevant theory and research provided, you bridge the gap between theory and practice.

In selecting exercises to include in this text, we tried to include those that were original, short, relevant to the theory and research being discussed, clear and simple, and easy to do. We intended each exercise to be like a supporting actor; it should do its work effectively, unobtrusively, and without upstaging the theory and research being presented. Each exercise is aimed at promoting the development of group skills.

The purpose of this text is to bring together the theory on group dynamics, the research testing that theory, and structured exercises aimed at building practical group skills and illuminating the meaning of the theory and research presented. The central aim of each chapter is to review the most important theory and research on

a given topic, analyze basic issues in group dynamics, and provide structured skill-building exercises and other instructional aids. Most chapters begin with a discussion task involving the concepts presented in the chapter. A short diagnostic instrument is presented at the beginning of each chapter to help you become more aware of your current behavior in the area under discussion. In addition, most chapters contain a controversy exercise in which you and your classmates argue different sides of one of the central issues of the chapter. At the end of many of the chapters there is a procedure for examining the changes in your knowledge and skills.

In using this text you should diagnose your present knowledge and skills in the areas that are covered, actively participate in the exercises, reflect on your experiences, read the chapters carefully, and integrate the information and experiences into action theories related to group dynamics. You then should plan how to continue your skill- and knowledge-building activities after you have finished the text.

KEEPING A PERSONAL JOURNAL

A *journal* is a personal collection of writing and thoughts that have value for the writer. Keeping a journal is an important part of using this text. You may wish to record what you are learning about group dynamics and about how you behave in group situations. A journal has to be kept up on a regular basis. Entries should be valuable to the author, have some possibilities for sharing with others, and reflect significant thinking. Such a journal will be of great interest to you after you have finished this text. The purposes of the journal are:

1. To record what you are learning about group dynamics that has personal meaning. You may also wish to include specific information you have learned about the social psychology of groups, effective behavior in groups, and the extent to which you have developed the group skills you want.
2. To record how you behave in group situations.
3. To collect thoughts related to the text's content (the best thinking often occurs when you are driving to or from school, about to go to sleep at night, and so forth).
4. To collect newspaper and magazine articles and references relevant to the topics covered in each chapter.
5. To keep summaries of conversations and anecdotal material that are unique, are interesting, or illustrate things related to group dynamics.

The journal is an important part of this text. It is not an easy part. The entries should be important to you in your effort to make this course useful to you and your fellow participants. You may be surprised how writing sharpens and organizes your thoughts.

(*Note:* If you publish your journal, as did John Holt, Hugh Prather, and others, all we ask is a modest 10% of the royalties.)

LEARNING CONTRACT

Before beginning the next chapter, we would like to propose a learning contract. The contract is as follows:

I understand that I will be taking an experiential approach to learning about group dynamics and to developing the skills needed to function effectively in groups. I willingly commit myself to the statements hereunder.

1. I will use the structured experiences in this text to learn from. This means I am willing to engage in specified behaviors, seek out feedback about the impact of my behavior on others, and analyze my interpersonal interactions with other class members in order to make the most of my learning.
2. I will make the most of my learning by (a) setting personal learning goals that I will work actively to accomplish, (b) being willing to experiment with new behavior and to practice new skills, (c) being open about my feelings and reactions to what is taking place, (d) seeking out and being receptive to feedback, and (e) building conclusions about the experiences highlighted in the exercises.
3. I will help others make the most of their learning by (a) providing feedback in constructive ways, (b) helping to build the conditions (such as openness, trust, acceptance, and support) under which others can experiment and take risks with their behavior, and (c) contributing to the formulation of conclusions about the experiences highlighted in the exercises.
4. I will use professional judgment in keeping what happens among group members in the exercises appropriately confidential.

Signed: _____

YOUR SKILL LEVEL

Before continuing on to Chapter 2, it is a good idea for you to assess your current group skill level. Doing so provides you with a baseline of what your current skills are, indicates areas you may need to work on, and serves as a point of comparison for later in the text when you learn more about group dynamics. Answer the following questions, describing yourself as accurately as you can:

1. How do you see yourself as a group member? What is your pattern of behavior in functioning within groups?
2. What are your strengths in functioning in groups?
3. What situations within groups do you have trouble with and why? How do you feel when faced with them? How do you handle them? How would you like to handle them?
4. What group skills do you wish to improve? What changes would you like to make in your present group behavior? What new strengths in group behavior would you care to develop? What new group skills would you like to acquire?

SUMMARY

Group dynamics is the scientific study of behavior in groups. Group dynamics is central to human existence, as humans are small-group beings. Groups are ubiquitous in our lives, and it is inevitable that you now belong to many, many groups. Because you spend so much time in various groups, the effectiveness of your groups relates directly to the quality of your life. Therefore, you need a working knowledge of group dynamics and the small-group skills required to put that knowledge to use in school, at work, during leisure activities, at home, in your neighborhood, and in every other arena of your life. To begin with, you must know what is and is not a group. That is harder than it seems, as social scientists have yet to agree on a single definition. Generally, however, a small group is two or more individuals in face-to-face interaction, each aware of their positive interdependence as they strive to achieve mutual goals, each aware of his or her membership in the group, and each aware of the others who belong to the group.

All groups have a basic structure that includes roles and norms. Group productivity depends on five basic elements (positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, appropriate use of social skills, group processing). Not all groups are effective. To be effective, groups members have to (a) ensure each other's commitment to clear mutual goals that highlight members' interdependence, (b) ensure accurate and complete communication among members, (c) provide leadership and appropriate influence, (d) flexibly use decision-making procedures that ensure all alternative courses of action receive a fair and complete hearing and that each other's reasoning and conclusions are challenged and critically analyzed, and (e) resolve their conflicts constructively. Groups develop over time and pass through stages, although there is little agreement as to what those stages are.

The field of group dynamics is about 110 years old in North America. One of the most important figures in the field of group dynamics is Kurt Lewin. His work, more than anyone else's, shows the interrelationships between knowledge of group dynamics and actual small-group skills. The purpose of this text is to bring together the theory on group dynamics, the research testing them, and structured exercises aimed at helping readers master practical group skills. The experiential learning procedures used in creating this integration of theory, research, and practical skills are discussed in the next chapter.

Johnson, David & Frank Johnson (2013): *Joining Together. Group Theory and Group Skills.* Twelfth Edition. Pearson. Chapter 10: Valuing Diversity (p 435 – 466)

CHAPTER TEN

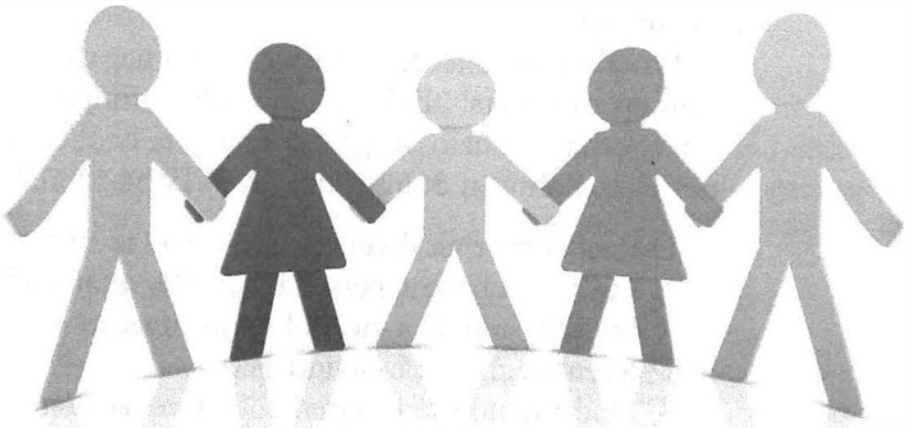
Valuing Diversity

BASIC CONCEPTS TO BE COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter a number of concepts are defined and discussed. The major ones are in the following list. Divide into pairs. Each pair is to (a) define each concept, noting the page on which it is defined and discussed, and (b) ensure that both members of the pair understand the meaning of each concept. Then join with another pair to make a group of four. Compare the answers of the two pairs. If there is disagreement, look up the concept in the chapter and clarify it until all members agree on and understand the definition.

CONCEPTS

1. Ability and skill diversity
2. Demographic diversity
3. Stereotype
4. Prejudice
5. Ethnocentrism
6. Discrimination
7. Blaming the victim
8. Causal attribution
9. Culture clash
10. Personal identity
11. Personal diversity
12. Superordinate group identity
13. Illusionary correlation
14. False consensus bias
15. Self-serving bias
16. Sophistication



INTRODUCTION

In the story *Beauty and the Beast*, Beauty, to save her father's life, agrees to live in an enchanted castle with the Beast. Although initially fearful of the Beast and horrified by his appearance, she later is able to see beyond his monstrous appearance and into his heart. Her perception of his appearance changes; she no longer is repelled by the way he looks but instead is drawn to his kind and generous nature. At the end of the story, finding him dying of a broken heart, she reveals her love for him, which transforms the Beast into a handsome prince. Beauty and the Beast not only live happily ever after, but all those who stumble into their domain in despair change, finding on their departure that their hearts are filled with goodness and beauty.

One reason *Beauty and the Beast* retains its popularity is because it strikes a familiar chord in many people. Many times we are repelled by those we do not know. But after we come to know them and they have become our friends, we cannot understand how they once seemed so foreign to us. The moral of *Beauty and the Beast* is applicable especially in small groups. Small groups almost always contain a diverse selection of individuals, and for a group to be successful and effective, diversity must be faced and eventually valued.

The diversity that exists among individuals creates an opportunity for both positive and negative outcomes when these individuals come together in groups to achieve a goal or complete a task (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). More specifically, *diversity among group members can result in beneficial consequences*, such as increased achievement and productivity, creative problem solving, growth in cognitive and moral reasoning, increased perspective-taking ability, improved relationships, and general sophistication in interacting and working with peers from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. On the other hand, *diversity among group members can result in harmful consequences*, such as lower achievement and productivity, closed-minded rejection of new information, increased egocentrism, and negative relationships characterized by hostility, rejection, divisiveness, scapegoating, bullying, stereotyping, prejudice, and racism. Both the positive and negative consequences of diversity on group life are discussed in this chapter.

Whether diversity leads to positive or negative outcomes in a group largely depends on group members' abilities and their willingness to understand and appreciate the diversity that exists in the group. Specifically, the outcomes of diversity depend on your abilities to (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1999b, 2002):

1. Recognize that diversity exists and is a valuable resource.
2. Build a coherent personal identity that includes (a) your own cultural/ethnic heritage and (b) a view of yourself as an individual who respects and values differences among individuals.
3. Understand the internal cognitive barriers (such as stereotyping and prejudice) to building relationships with diverse peers, and work to reduce the barriers.
4. Understand the dynamics of intergroup conflict (see Chapter 9).
5. Understand the social judgment process, and know how to create the process of acceptance while avoiding the process of rejection (see Chapter 3).
6. Create a cooperative context in which positive relationships among diverse individuals can be built (see Chapter 3). This requires building cooperation as

opposed to a competitive or individualistic effort. It is within a cooperative context that diverse individuals develop personal (as opposed to impersonal) relationships.

7. Manage conflicts in constructive ways. This includes (a) intellectual conflicts that are part of decision-making and learning situations (controversy; see Chapter 8) and (b) conflicts of interest that are resolved by problem-solving negotiations and mediation (see Chapter 9).
8. Learn and internalize pluralistic, democratic values.

EXERCISE 10.1

DIVERSITY: BENEFICIAL OR HARMFUL?

Task: Your tasks are to (a) write a group report on the question, "Is diversity beneficial or harmful?" and (b) individually pass a test on the information from both sides of the issue. Your report should provide details of the advantages and disadvantages of diversity. Review the rules for constructive controversy on page 33 in Chapter 1.

A controversy about the value of diversity is raging. Imagine that you are a committee of the top four officials who are trying to decide whether diversity should be encouraged or discouraged. To ensure that both sides get a complete and fair hearing, you have divided the committee into two groups to present the best case possible for each side of the issue. Your thesis will be either of the following two choices:

_____ Diversity is a resource that has many beneficial influences.
_____ Diversity is a problem that has many harmful influences.

Cooperative: Write one report for the group of four. All members have to agree. Everyone has to be able to explain the choice made and the reasons why the choice is a good one. To help you write the best report possible, your group of four has been divided into two pairs. One pair has been assigned the position that diversity is beneficial, and the other pair has been assigned the position that diversity is harmful.

PROCEDURE

1. **Research and Prepare Your Positions:** Your group of four has been divided into two pairs. Each pair is to (a) research its assigned position, (b) organize it into a persuasive argument (thesis, rationale, conclusion), and (c) plan how to present the best case for its position to the other pair.
2. **Present and Advocate Your Position:** Make sure your assigned position receives a fair and complete hearing. Forcefully and persuasively present the best case for your position to the opposing pair. Be as convincing as possible. Take notes and clarify anything you do not understand when the opposing pair presents.
3. **Open Discussion (Advocate, Refute, Rebut):** Argue forcefully and persuasively for your position. Critically evaluate and challenge the opposing pair's information and reasoning. Defend your position from attack.
4. **Reverse Perspectives:** Reverse perspectives and present the best case for the opposing position. The opposing pair will present your position. Strive to see the issue from both perspectives simultaneously.

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5. **Synthesis:** Drop all advocacy. Synthesize and integrate the best information and reasoning from both sides into a joint position on which all group members can agree. Then (a) finalize the group report, (b) plan how to present your conclusions to the class, (c) ensure that all group members are prepared to take the test, and (d) analyze how well you worked together as a group and how you could be even more effective next time.

CONTROVERSY RULES

1. I am critical of ideas, not people. I challenge and refute the ideas of the opposing pair, but I do not indicate that I personally reject the other persons.
2. I remember that we are all in this together, sink or swim. I focus on coming to the best decision possible, not on winning.
3. I encourage everyone to participate and to master all the relevant information.
4. I listen to everyone's ideas, even if I don't agree.
5. I restate what someone has said if it is not clear.
6. I first bring out all ideas and facts supporting both sides, and then I try to put them together in a way that makes sense.
7. I try to understand both sides of the issue.
8. I change my mind when the evidence clearly indicates that I should do so.

DIVERSITY IS BENEFICIAL

You represent the prodiversity perspective. Your position is: *Diversity is a resource that has many beneficial influences.* Arguments that support your position follow. Summarize the evidence given. Research your position and find as much additional information to support it as possible. Arrange your information into a compelling, convincing, and persuasive argument showing that your position is valid and correct. Plan how best to present your assigned position to ensure that it receives a fair and complete hearing. Make at least one visual aid to help you present a persuasive case for your position.

1. **Diversity decreases stereotyping and prejudice.** It is only through direct contact and interaction with diverse individuals that stereotypes can be disconfirmed, personal relationships can be built, and prejudice can be reduced.
2. **Diversity increases the positiveness of relationships.** There is evidence that we want people we work with to achieve mutual goals. Positive relationships can lead to acceptance, respect, appreciation, and a commitment to equality.
3. **Diversity renews the vitality of society** by providing a source of energy and creativity. Music, dance, art, literature, and other aspects of culture are enriched and advanced by the mixture of different cultural traditions and ways of perceiving the world.
4. **Diversity increases achievement and productivity.** Diverse groups have a wider range of resources available for completing the task and therefore tend to have higher achievement and to be more productive than homogeneous groups.
5. **Diversity increases creative problem solving.** Diverse groups tend to be more creative in their problem solving than are homogeneous groups. The conflicts and disagreements that arise from the different perspectives and conclusions generate more creativity than is available in homogeneous groups.
6. **Diversity fosters growth in cognitive and moral reasoning.** Cognitive and moral growth depend on applying at least two different perspectives to the same issue. Without such diversity, cognitive and moral growth cannot take place.

7. **Diversity fosters perspective taking** and a broader, more sophisticated view of the world and what happens in it. Without exposure to other perspectives, perspective-taking ability cannot develop. The more able a person is to take a wide variety of perspectives, the more sophisticated the person is. Being sophisticated means that one can see the world, events, and issues from a variety of perspectives. It is through diversity that sophistication is created.
8. **Diversity builds a commitment to American democracy.** It is not possible to value a fully American democracy in a homogeneous environment. The values advocated in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence can best be understood through the protection of minority rights and the ability of minorities to influence the decisions of the majority.

DIVERSITY IS HARMFUL

You represent the antidiversity perspective. Your position is: *Diversity is a problem that has many harmful influences.* Arguments that support your position follow. Summarize the evidence given. Research your position and find as much additional information to support it as possible. Arrange your information into a compelling, convincing, and persuasive argument showing that your position is valid and correct. Plan how best to present your assigned position to ensure that it receives a fair and complete hearing. Make at least one visual aid to help you present a persuasive case for your position.

1. **Diversity increases stereotyping and prejudice.** Before actual contact takes place, only vague impressions of members of other groups may exist. With actual contact with diverse individuals, stereotypes can be confirmed and prejudice can be strengthened.
2. **Diversity creates interaction strain** (feeling discomfort and uncertainty as to how to behave). Interaction strain inhibits interaction, creates ambivalence, and fosters atypical behavior, such as overfriendliness, followed by withdrawal and avoidance.
3. **Diversity increases the negativity of relationships.** There is evidence that we like people we see as similar to ourselves and dislike people who seem different. Dislike can lead to rejection, scapegoating, bullying, hostility, and even prejudice.
4. **Diversity lowers productivity.** Diversity creates difficulties in communication, coordination, and decision making. These difficulties result in spending more time trying to communicate and less time completing the task. Productivity suffers.
5. **Diversity makes life more complex and difficult.** It is easy to relate to similar people. You never have to stop and think about what to say or do. The more diverse the group, the more you have to monitor your statements and behavior to ensure that you do not inadvertently insult or hurt someone's feelings.
6. **Diversity requires more effort to relate to others.** Even talking to a person from another culture takes more concentration and effort. Accents can be distracting. Phrases can be unusual. Communicating effectively with diverse individuals takes more effort than communicating with individuals like yourself.
7. **Diversity can be threatening,** which creates defensiveness, egocentrism, and closed-minded rejection of new information. The more defensive a person is, the more closed-minded and less receptive to new information the person becomes.
8. **Diversity creates internal dissonance and anxiety** by challenging the standard ways of thinking and doing things. Strange new ways of perceiving the world and completing tasks can create dissonance about one's traditional behavior, and anxiety results. People are calmer and happier when they are with homogeneous peers.

DIVERSITY

Diversity in America

Three major sources of diversity can be identified: demographic characteristics, personality characteristics, and abilities and skills (Johnson & Johnson, 2002). On their own and in conjunction, these sources of diversity affect how people interact with one another. **Demographic diversity** includes culture, ethnicity, language, handicapping conditions, age, gender, social class, religion, and regional differences. North America, for example, is becoming more multicultural and multilingual. Historically, the United States always has been pluralistic, with citizens coming here from all over the world. In the 1980s alone, over 7.8 million people from over 150 different countries and speaking dozens of different languages immigrated to the United States (Table 10.1). Our common culture has been formed by the interaction of various cultures and has been influenced over time by a wide variety of willing (and sometimes

TABLE 10.1 **Waves of Immigration**

ORIGIN	1820–1860	1901–1921	1970–1986
Northern, Western Europe	95%	41%	6%
Southern, Eastern Europe		44	9
Latin America			37
Asia		4	41
North America	3	6	3
Other	2	1	4

Sources: Population Reference Bureau, Bureau of the Census, Immigration and Naturalization Service.

unwilling) European, African, and Asian immigrants as well as Native Americans. What we call American music, art, literature, language, food, and customs all show the effects of the integration of diverse cultures into one nation by representing all of these backgrounds.

In addition to demographic diversity, individuals have different personal characteristics, such as age, gender, communication style, economic background, and so on. Some people may be introverts whereas others are extroverts; some people approach problems randomly and others take a sequential approach. Males and females often have different opinions about interpersonal relationships. A person's education level may inform. In terms of group dynamics, group members usually have different values, attitudes, opinions, lifestyles, styles of interaction, and commitments—all of which determine the course of the group's life.

Finally, individuals differ in the **abilities and skills**—both social and technical—they bring to the group. Experts from a variety of fields, for example, may be brought together to solve a problem or conduct a project. Representatives from design, manufacturing, distribution, and sales departments may form a team to bring a new product to market. Accountants and creative artists may work together to revitalize a neighborhood. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find a productive group whose members do not have a wide variety of abilities and skills.

THE VALUE OF DIVERSITY

The more voices we allow to speak about one thing, the more eyes, different eyes we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our concept of this thing, our objectivity, be.

Nietzsche

How does heterogeneity of group membership affect group performance? Researchers have studied the degree of homogeneity–heterogeneity among members' demographic attributes, personal attributes (including personality, attitudes, values), and abilities and skills (both technical and social). The types of tasks studied include performance on clearly defined production tasks, cognitive or intellective tasks, and tasks requiring creative idea generation and decision making (Jackson, 1992; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2002; McGrath, 1984). The combination of sources of diversity and types of task is presented in Table 10.2 (Jackson, 1992).

Production tasks have objective standards for performance evaluation and require the proficient use of perceptual and motor skills (McGrath, 1984). Haythorn (1968) conducted a comprehensive review of research on group composition and **performance tasks,** covering studies conducted primarily between 1940 and 1968. Shaw (1981), McGrath (1984), Driskell, Hogan, and Salas (1987), and Williams and O'Reilly (1998) have conducted subsequent reviews. Groups composed of members with heterogeneous technical abilities may do better on production tasks than groups composed of members with homogeneous technical abilities (Jackson, 1992). Teams consisting of European, Asian, African, and Hispanic American members tended to outperform

TABLE 10.2 **Group Composition and Types of Tasks**

TYPES OF DIVERSITY INVESTIGATED	TYPES OF TASKS
Demographic attributes	Performance on clearly defined production tasks
Personal attributes (personality, attitudes, values)	Performance on cognitive or intellective tasks
Abilities and skills (technical, social)	Creative idea generation and decision making on ambiguous judgmental tasks

teams that included only European Americans (McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996). Scientists and engineers tended to be more productive when they had informal communication networks with dissimilar peers (Pelz, 1956), the performance of B-29 bomber crews tended to be higher when the crews had heterogeneous abilities and were assigned the tasks for which they were best suited (Voiers, 1956), and athletic teams with more diverse skills (such as good offensive and defensive units) tend to outperform teams with less-diverse skills (Jones, 1974).

Intellective tasks are problem-solving tasks with correct answers (McGrath, 1984). Wood (1987) reviewed the research on the impact of gender differences on group performance on intellective tasks. He found weak support for the conclusion that mixed-sex groups tend to outperform same-sex groups, whether male or female. Similar findings have been reported in studies of more complex learning tasks (R. Johnson, Johnson, Scott, & Ramolae, 1985; Peterson, Johnson, & Johnson, 1991). Laughlin and colleagues (see Laughlin, 1980), for example, have demonstrated that in problem-solving groups, "truth supported wins." Furthermore, when heterogeneity increases the probability that the group contains some members who are capable of determining the correct answer to the problems being solved, mixed-attribute groups should outperform homogeneous groups. For "eureka" tasks, the group needs only one member with the ability to discover the correct answer. Other studies have demonstrated that groups made up of individuals with different ability levels (high, medium, low) outperform individuals on intellective tasks (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

Decision-making tasks involve reaching a consensus about the best solution to a problem when the "correct" answer is not known (McGrath, 1984). Research reviews indicate that heterogeneous groups are more likely than homogeneous groups to be creative and to reach high-quality decisions (Fiedler, Meuwese, & Conk, 1961; Filley, House, & Kerr, 1976; Frick, 1973; Hoffman, 1979; Johnson, 1977; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; McGrath, 1984; Shaw, 1981; Torrance, 1961; Webb, 1977). The conclusion holds for a variety of personal attributes, including personality (Hoffman & Maier, 1961), leadership abilities (Ghiselli & Lodahl, 1958), types of training (Pelz, 1956), and attitudes (Hoffman, Harburg, & Maier, 1962b; Triandis, Hall, & Ewen, 1965; Willems & Clark, 1971).

In one decision-making task study, Ziller, Behringer, and Goodchilds (1962) created heterogeneity in some groups by changing the group members (open groups); other groups maintained the same members (closed groups). The researchers asked the groups to write cartoon captions. Captions written by the heterogeneous (open) groups were

judged to have greater fluency and originality. Pelz and Andrews (1966) also found that groups with fluid membership are likely to be more creative, even when the groups are interdisciplinary. They concluded that when scientists from interdisciplinary teams worked closely together on a daily basis, within three years they became homogeneous in their perspectives and approach to solving problems.

Although diverse perspectives are potentially advantageous, heterogeneous groups may not always function at an optimal level. Hill (1982) reviewed several studies whose results indicated that on creative and decision-making tasks, the performance of interacting groups was less than their potential, as estimated by statistical pooling. Hall and Williams (1966), however, found exactly the opposite. Furthermore, in a field study of 119 top management teams in the banking industry in six Midwestern states, Bantel and Jackson (1989) found that the more heterogeneous (in terms of job expertise) the decision-making teams, the more frequently the bank adopted new, innovative practices.

Overall, whether for better or worse, the range of skills and abilities a group can access in its diverse members affects its performance on creative and decision-making tasks. Laughlin and Bitz (1975) used a word-association task to compare the performance of groups composed of members with dissimilar ability levels with the performance of individuals whose ability was equivalent to that of the highest-ability group member. They found that the groups outperformed the high-ability individuals. Their findings suggest that high-ability members can benefit from interaction with others who have less ability, perhaps because the high-ability individuals take on the role of teacher, which leads them to sharpen their own thinking. Or perhaps the questions and input of more naive members encourage the more expert members to unbundle the assumptions and rules they automatically use when dealing with issues and problems in which they are experts (Simon, 1979). This unbundling increases the likelihood that unwarranted assumptions are reconsidered and rules are reexamined for exceptions.

Overall, the evidence indicates that when working on complex, nonroutine problems (a situation that requires some degree of creativity), groups are more effective when composed of individuals with diverse types of skills, knowledge, abilities, and perspectives. The results of the research on group composition and task performance are summarized in Table 10.3.

Heterogeneity has the potential for increasing conflict among group members (Mannix & Neale, 2005; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). When conflict is managed constructively, it will increase both productivity and creativity (Johnson, 2015). When managed destructively, it may interfere with group effectiveness.

There is little or no research on the impact of heterogeneity of demographic attributes on performance of production, intellective, and decision-making tasks. Heterogeneity of membership, both in personal characteristics and abilities and skills, tends to facilitate performance on creative and decision-making tasks. Heterogeneity of abilities and skills seems to be beneficial for performance tasks. There are too few studies on intellective tasks to make a conclusion. Homogeneity of personal characteristics and abilities does not seem to facilitate performance on any of the types of tasks.

TABLE 10.3 **Impact of Group Composition on Outcomes**

TYPES OF OUTCOMES	PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	ABILITIES AND SKILLS
Production tasks	The few studies found mixed results, so no clear effect of group composition on performance is proved.	The few studies found that heterogeneity of types and levels of ability increases productivity.
Intellective tasks	Overall, there are not enough studies to allow a conclusion to be drawn. Mixed-sex groups may outperform same-sex groups	Almost no directly relevant research
Decision-making tasks	Heterogeneous groups outperform homogeneous groups.	Heterogeneity of ability levels is beneficial.
Cohesion	Heterogeneous groups are somewhat less cohesive and have higher turnover rates.	Almost no direct research
Conflict	More conflicts tend to occur in heterogeneous groups.	Almost no direct research

BARRIERS TO INTERACTING WITH DIVERSE PEERS

We know that diversity among group members is an important resource that can be utilized to improve the group's productivity. We also know that doing so may not be easy. A number of barriers exist to interacting effectively with diverse peers (Johnson, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 1999b). They include stereotyping, prejudice, the tendency to blame the victim, and cultural clashes.

Stereotypes

When we see a red-breasted bird, we say to ourselves "robin." When we see a crazily swaying automobile, we think, "drunken driver." ... A person with dark brown skin will activate whatever concept of Negro is dominant in our mind.

Allport (1954, p. 20)

Stereotypes can be found everywhere, and everyone makes and uses them. Stereotypes are a product of the way the mind stores, organizes, and recalls information. They are used to describe differences among groups and to predict how others will behave. They reduce complexity, help us make quick decisions, fill in the gaps in what we know, help us make sense out of who we are and what has happened to us, and help us create and recognize the patterns needed to draw conclusions. In and of themselves, stereotypes do not necessarily have to be bad. Unfortunately, stereotypes often are the basis for unfairness and injustice in the way people deal with one another.

The term *stereotype* was first used in the eighteenth century to describe a printing process designed to duplicate pages of type. In the nineteenth century, psychiatrists used

the term *stereotypy* to describe a behavior of persistent repetitiveness and unchanging mode of expression. Modern use of the term *stereotype* originated with Lippmann (1922) in his book, *Public Opinion.* He argued, "there is neither time nor opportunity for intimate acquaintance. Instead we notice a trait which marks a well known type, and fill in the rest of the picture by means of the stereotypes we carry about in our heads" (p. 59).

In modern usage, a **stereotype** is defined as a belief that associates a whole group of people with certain traits. Stereotypes (a) are cognitive; (b) reflect a set of related beliefs rather than an isolated bit of information; (c) describe attributes, personalities, and characters so that groups can be compared and differentiated; and (d) are shared by individuals and groups holding them (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979). In these ways, stereotypes function as simplifiers and organizers of social information. They reduce the complexity of the social environment and make it more manageable.

People form stereotypes in two ways. First, they categorize by sorting single objects into groups rather than thinking of each one as unique. Second, they differentiate between ingroups and outgroups. People commonly assume that the members of outgroups are quite similar but recognize that the members of the ingroup they identify with are quite diverse (*outgroup homogeneity effect*). The failure to notice differences among outgroup members may result from lack of personal contact with people from these outgroups. A white person, for example, may see all Hispanics as being alike, but someone with a wide variety of Hispanic friends may see little similarity among Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Mexicans, and Argentineans.

An efficient cognitive system, which stereotyping can be, does more than simply make cognition easy for people at all costs. It also helps people in ways that maximize the informational value they can gain for the effort they expend. In this regard, stereotyping is efficient, for several reasons. First, the social categorization that precedes stereotyping reduces the amount of information that must be attended to each time an individual is encountered. In other words, when you view a certain group in one light, you reduce the need to form individualized impressions of each category member (Allport, 1954; Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Lippmann, 1922). Second, stereotypes expand your base of knowledge by allowing you to infer a person's attributes without having to attend carefully to the person's behavior (Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Medin, 1988; Sherman, 1996). Through the relatively simple act of social categorization, stereotypes allow you to gain a large amount of "functionally accurate" information (Swann, 1984), thus resulting in a beneficial ratio of information gained to effort expended.

Although stereotypes do allow people to make assumptions about individuals in a relatively efficient manner, stereotypes also have the power to cause harm. When taken to extremes, the aforementioned benefits instead become a crutch that allows people to avoid interacting with others on their own merits. Stereotyping can become a kind of shorthand that unfairly defines individuals because the person holding the stereotype does not take the time to interact with the individual as his or her own person. When this happens, we end up with stereotypes such as men are more competitive than women, black people are better athletes than white people, Asian people work harder than Americans, and so on. In short, stereotypes can lead to false generalizations aimed at an entire group of people, generalizations that prevent that group from being seen as individuals within a group.

People who hold strong stereotypes often are prone to the *fundamental attribution error*. That is, they attribute negative behavior on the part of a minority-group member to dispositional characteristics. Positive behavior by a minority-group member, on the other hand, is believed to be the result of situational factors. When it comes to judging their own behavior, however, negative behavior is attributed to situational causes and positive behavior is viewed as dispositional. When a minority-group member acts in an undesirable way, the attribution is "That's the way those people are" or "Those people are born like that." If the minority-group member is seen engaging in desirable behavior, the person holding the stereotype might view that individual as "an exception to the rule."

Stereotypes are perpetuated and protected in four ways. *First,* stereotypes influence what we perceive and remember about the actions of outgroup members. The social categories we use to process information about the world control what we tend to perceive and not perceive. Our prejudice makes us notice the negative traits we ascribe to the groups we are prejudiced against. Furthermore, when individuals expect members of an outgroup to behave in a certain way, they tend to recall more accurately instances that confirm rather than disconfirm their expectations. Hence, if an outgroup is perceived to be of low intelligence, individuals tend to remember instances in which an outgroup member was confused in class or failed a test. But they tend to forget instances in which an outgroup member achieved a 4.0 grade point average or became class valedictorian (Rothbart, Evans, & Fulero, 1979).

Second, stereotypes create an oversimplified picture of outgroup members. The act of categorization itself leads people to assume similarity among the members of a category. Even when the distinctions between groups are arbitrary, people tend to minimize the differences they see among members of the same group and to accentuate the differences between members of two different groups. When processing information about their ingroups and outgroups, people develop relatively simplistic and nonspecific pictures of outgroups. The larger the outgroup, the more likely it is that oversimplifications occur. Individuals, furthermore, do more than simply note the differences between their ingroup and the outgroups. They often attempt to emphasize the differences and take actions that discriminate in favor of their own group.

Third, individuals tend to overestimate the similarity of behavior among outgroup members. Because outgroups are perceived to be homogeneous, the actions of one member can be generalized to all. If an older person witnesses one teenager driving recklessly, it may be a short jump for the older person to stereotype that all teenage drivers are reckless.

Fourth, stereotypes can lead to scapegoating. A **scapegoat** is a guiltless but defenseless group that is attacked to provide an outlet for another group's pent-up anger and frustration. The term *scapegoat* comes from a biblical guilt-transference ritual in which a group's sins are conveyed to a goat, which then is sent out into the wilderness, taking the sins along.

Scapegoating might look like this in action: Group 1 interferes with group 2, and group 2 should respond by retaliating against group 1. If, however, group 1 is extremely powerful, too distant, or too difficult to locate, group 2 may respond by turning its aggression on group 3. Group 3, although in no way responsible for the difficulties group 2 experienced, nonetheless would be blamed and thereby become the target of group 2's aggressive actions. Stereotypes of certain outgroups can create a continual scapegoat that is blamed for all problems and difficulties, no matter what their origins.

People who are stereotyped are affected not only by the increased possibility of being treated unfairly by those holding the stereotypes, but also by the possibility of accepting the stereotype themselves. In other words, people who are stereotyped might come to accept the stereotype and believe it, modifying their behaviors and actions to fit the stereotype. When a widely known negative stereotype (e.g., poor intellectual ability) exists about a group, it creates for its members a burden

WHY DO STEREOTYPES ENDURE?

Following are several reasons why stereotypes persist. Rank them from most important (1) to least important (7). Write down the rationale for your ranking. Find a partner and share your ranking and rationale, listen to his or her ranking and rationale, and cooperatively create a new, improved ranking and rationale. Then find another pair and repeat the procedure in a group of four.

Rank	Reason
_____	The tendency for people to overestimate the association between variables that are only slightly correlated or not correlated at all (i.e., **illusionary correlation**). Many people, for example, perceive that being poor and being lazy are associated. Any poor person who is not hard at work the moment you notice him or her may be perceived as lazy. Low-power groups can acquire negative traits easily and, once acquired, the stereotype is hard to lose.
_____	Your prejudice makes you notice the negative traits you ascribe to the groups you are prejudiced against, and you more readily believe information that confirms your stereotypes than evidence that challenges them. People tend to process information in ways that verify existing beliefs. This is known as the *confirmation bias* (the tendency to seek, interpret, and create information that verifies existing beliefs).
_____	You tend to have a **false consensus bias** by believing that most other people share your stereotypes (see poor people as being lazy). You tend to see your own behavior and judgments as quite common and appropriate, and to view alternative responses as uncommon and often inappropriate.
_____	Your stereotypes tend to be *self-fulfilling*. Stereotypes can subtly influence intergroup interactions in such a way that the stereotype is behaviorally confirmed. You can behave in ways that elicit the actions you expect from outgroup members, thus confirming your stereotype.
_____	You dismiss individuals who do not match your stereotype as exceptions to the rule or representatives of a subcategory.
_____	Your stereotypes often operate at an implicit level without your conscious awareness.
_____	You often develop a rationale and explanation to justify your stereotypes and prejudices.

of suspicion that acts as a threat. This threat arises whenever individuals' behavior can be interpreted in terms of a stereotype—that is, whenever group members run the risk of confirming the stereotype.

Steele and Aronson (1995), in studying *stereotype threat*, found that negative stereotypes about blacks' intellectual ability created a "situational pressure" that distracted black students and depressed their academic performance. They suggest that stereotype threat is the reason for the underachievement of black students. Seventy percent of black college students drop out of college (as opposed to about 35% of white students), and the dropout rate is the highest among black students ranked in the top third by SAT scores. In addition, black students with the highest SAT scores fail more frequently than black students with lower scores and at a rate more than three times that of whites with similar scores. When blacks are placed in achievement situations, the negative stereotypes are activated and black students become more self-conscious and work less efficiently. Similar findings were reported on a study of lower-class individuals (Croizet & Claire, 1998). Stereotype threat is eliminated in programs such as the University of Michigan's Twenty-First Century Program, where black and white students are randomly recruited, live together, study together cooperatively, and have personal discussions on social issues.

As the program at the University of Michigan suggests, stereotypes can be changed. The more personal information you have about someone, the less likely you are to stereotype him or her. The more time and energy you have to consider the person's characteristics and behavior, the less you stereotype. The more motivated you are to form an accurate impression of someone, the less you stereotype. The more you perceive that individualized person to be typical of the stereotyped group, the more your interaction changes your stereotypes. What these factors indicate is that for stereotypes to change, members of different groups need to interact for prolonged periods of time under conditions in which they get to know one another personally and see one another as being typical members of their group.

Prejudice

To know one's self is wisdom, but to know one's neighbor is genius.

Minna Antrim

To be prejudiced means, literally, to prejudge. **Prejudice** can be defined as an unjustified negative attitude toward a person based solely on that individual's membership in a group other than one's own. Prejudices are judgments made about others that establish a superiority/inferiority belief system. If one person dislikes another simply because that other person is a member of a different ethnic group, sex, religion, or other group, we are dealing with prejudice.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to regard one's own ethnic group, nation, religion, or culture as better or more "correct" than others. The word is derived from *ethnic*, meaning a group united by similar customs, characteristics, race, or other common factors, and *center*. When ethnocentrism is present, the standards and values of our culture are used as a yardstick to measure the worth of other ethnic groups. Ethnocentrism often is perpetuated by *cultural conditioning*. As children we are raised to

fit into a particular culture. We are conditioned to respond to various situations as we see others in our culture react. Based on that conditioning, when we encounter someone from outside that culture, we may react negatively to his or her ways of doing things.

Related to ethnocentrism, **racism** is prejudice directed at people because of their race or ethnic membership. Science indicates that only one human race exists, with many variations, but many people assume biological differences exist as evidenced by physical appearances. Although race has dubious value as a scientific classification system, it has had real consequences for the life experiences and life opportunities of many nonwhite groups. Race has taken on social meaning suggesting one's status within the social system. This status structure introduces power differences as people of different races interact with one another.

Having prejudiced thoughts, however, does not necessarily make you a racist (Devine, Monteith, Zuwerink, & Elliot, 1991). Even those who completely reject prejudice may sometimes experience unintentional prejudice, including thoughts and feelings based on prior learning or experiences. In this case, racism is like a lingering bad habit that surfaces despite people's best efforts to avoid it. As with all bad habits, with enough commitment and support, racism can be eradicated.

Discrimination

When prejudice is acted on, it is discrimination. **Discrimination** is an action taken to harm a group or any of its members. It is a negative, often aggressive action aimed at the target of prejudice. Discrimination is aimed at denying members of the targeted groups treatment and opportunities equal to those afforded to the dominant group.

To reduce your prejudices, use of stereotypes, and potential to discriminate, the following steps may be helpful (Johnson 2002, 2014):

1. Admit that you have prejudices (everyone does; you are no exception) and commit yourself to reducing them.
2. Identify the stereotypes that reflect your prejudices and modify them.
3. Identify the actions that reflect your prejudices and modify them.
4. Seek feedback from diverse friends and colleagues about how well you are valuing and communicating respect for diversity.

Blaming the Victim and Attribution Theory

Many people believe the world is a just place where people generally get what they deserve. If you win the lottery, it must be because you are a nice person who deserves some good luck. If you are robbed, it must be because you were careless and wanted to be punished for past misdeeds. Any person who is mugged in a dark alley while carrying a great deal of cash may be seen as "asking to be robbed." Relatedly, most people tend to believe that they deserve what happens to them. Victims of violence, for example, often believe they "deserved" to be attacked because of some misdeed on their part. It is all too easy to forget that victims do not have the benefit of hindsight to guide their actions in the moment, however.

Errors in Making Decisions About Diverse Others	
Making a decision requires gathering information on each major alternative action and inferring from the information which alternative will maximize gain and minimize costs.	
Errors in Making Inferences	
Relying on small samples	Small samples are highly unreliable.
Relying on biased samples	People often ignore clear information about how typical and representative a sample is.
Underutilization of base-rate information	People tend to pay more attention to a single concrete instance than to valid base-rate information, perhaps because the single concrete instance is vivid and salient and thus more compelling.
Errors from Cognitive Heuristics	
Availability heuristic	Estimating the frequency of some event by the ease with which you can bring instances to mind. People tend to overestimate the frequency of events that are easy to remember.
Representativeness heuristic	Seeing how well the information matches some imagined average or typical person in the category; the closer the person is to the prototype, the more likely we are to judge the person to be in the category.
Weighing Information	
Positive frame	People avoid risks and opt for the "sure thing."
Negative frame	People take risks to avoid costs.
Postdecision rationalization	The alternative chosen becomes more attractive and the alternatives not chosen become less desirable.

So what happens when situations appear to be unjust? One method is to blame the victim by convincing ourselves that no injustice has occurred. When someone is a victim of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination, all too often he or she is seen as "doing *something* wrong." **Blaming the victim** occurs when we attribute the cause of discrimination or misfortune to the personal characteristics and actions of the victim. The situation is examined for potential causes that enable us to maintain our belief in a just world. If the victim can be blamed for causing the discrimination, then we can believe the future is predictable and controllable because everyone gets what he or she deserves.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Blaming the victim occurs as we try to attribute a cause to events. We constantly interpret the meaning of our behavior and events that occur in our lives. Many times we want to figure out *why* we acted in a particular way or why a certain outcome occurred. If we get angry when someone infers we are stupid but not when someone calls us

"clumsy," we want to know why we are so sensitive about our intelligence. When we are standing on a street corner after a rainstorm and a car splashes us with water, we want to know whether it was caused by our carelessness, the driver's meanness, or just bad luck.

This process of explaining or inferring the causes of events has been termed *causal attribution.* An attribution is an inference drawn about the causes of a behavior or event. Any behavior or event can have a variety of possible causes. We observe the behavior or event and then infer the cause. When our boss criticizes our work, for example, we can attribute his or her behavior to a grouchy mood, being under too much pressure, disliking us, or the sloppiness of our work.

Causal attribution begins early in childhood, when we begin observing our own behavior and drawing conclusions about ourselves. We seem to have a fundamental need to understand both our own behavior and the behavior of others. In trying to understand why a behavior or event occurred, we generally choose to attribute causes either to internal personal factors or external situational factors. Internal personal factors are such things as effort and ability, while external situational factors include luck, task difficulty, or the behavior/personality of other people. For example, if you do well on a test, you can attribute it to your hard work and great intelligence (an internal attribution) or to the fact that the test was incredibly easy (an external attribution). When a friend drops out of school, you can attribute it to a lack of motivation (an internal attribution) or a lack of money (an external attribution).

Dimensions of Attributions

	Stable	Unstable
Internal	Ability	Effort
External	Task difficulty	Luck

Success Orientation

	Stable	Unstable
Success	Ability	Effort
Failure	Task difficulty	Luck

People make causal attributions to explain their successes and failures. Frequently such attributions are *self-serving,* designed to permit us to take credit for positive outcomes and to avoid blame for negative ones. We have a systematic tendency to claim that our successes are due to our ability and efforts, whereas our failures are due to bad luck, obstructive people, or task difficulty. We also have a systematic tendency to claim responsibility for the success of group efforts ("It was all my idea in the first place, and I did most of the work") and avoid responsibility for group failures ("If the other members had tried harder, this would not have happened").

Attribution theorists assume that how people explain their successes and failures determines how hard they work on subsequent tasks. If minority students, for example, attribute academic failure to lack of ability, it can eventually lead to *learned helplessness* (the feeling that no amount of effort can lead to success; Seligman, 1975). Learned helplessness is associated with shame and self-doubt. Students with a long history of attributing failure to lack of ability simply make no effort to learn. Teachers should ensure that students (especially minority students) think through why they succeeded or failed, and guide them toward the conclusion that their failure is caused by either (a) a lack of effort or (b) using the wrong strategy. What emotions teachers express

toward students seems to affect the attributions students make about the causes of their success or failure (Graham, 1991). Teacher sympathy for failure tends to be interpreted as indicating low ability whereas teacher anger toward failure seems to be interpreted as indicating low effort.

Culture Clash

Another common barrier to interacting effectively with diverse groupmates is a cultural clash. A **culture clash** is a conflict over basic values that occurs among individuals from different cultures. The most common form occurs when members of minority groups question the values of the majority. Common reactions by majority-group members when their values are being questioned are feeling:

1. *Threatened:* Their responses include avoidance, denial, and defensiveness.
2. *Confused:* Their responses include seeking more information in an attempt to redefine the problem.
3. *Enhanced:* Their responses include heightened anticipation, awareness, and positive actions that lead to solving the problem. Many cultural clashes develop from threatening, to confusing, to enhancing. Once they are enhancing, they are no longer a barrier.

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

1. Recognize that diversity among members is ever-present and unavoidable.

2. Recognize that the more interdependent the world becomes, the more important it is to be able to work effectively with diverse groupmates.

3. Maximize heterogeneity among members in both personal characteristics and abilities to maximize the group's productivity and success.

4. With heterogeneous membership comes increased conflict. Structure constructive procedures for managing conflicts among group members.

5. Identify and eliminate barriers to the utilization of diversity (stereotyping, prejudice, blaming the victim, cultural clashes).

6. Ensure that diversity is utilized as a resource by strengthening the positive interdependence within the group to create a context in which diversity is a resource, not a hindrance.

7. Ensure that diversity is utilized as a strength by uniting the personal identities of members of diverse groups. Create a superordinate identity based on a pluralistic set of values. Encourage individuals to develop:

   a. An appreciation for their own gender, religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

   b. An appreciation for the gender, religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of other group members.

c. A strong superordinate identity of "group member" that transcends the differences among members.

d. A pluralistic set of values concerning equality, freedom, the rights of individual members, and the responsibilities of group membership.

8. Ensure that diversity is utilized as a strength by fostering personal relationships among members that allow for candid discussions that increase members' sophistication about their differences.

9. Ensure that diversity is utilized as a strength by clarifying miscommunications among diverse group members.

As prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination are reduced, the tendency to blame the victim is avoided, and cultural clashes become enhancing rather than threatening experiences. At this point, the stage is set for everyone to recognize and value diversity.

MAKING MEMBER DIVERSITY A STRENGTH

Diversity among members in any group is a potential source of creativity and productivity. For group members to capitalize on their differences, they must:

1. Ensure that a high level of positive interdependence exists among group members. Structuring and strengthening positive interdependence is discussed thoroughly in Chapter 3, so here we discuss the subsequent steps a group must take to make diversity work for rather than against them.
2. Create a superordinate group identity that (a) unites the diverse personal identities of group members and (b) is based on a pluralistic set of values.
3. Gain sophistication about the differences among members through personal relationships that allow for candid discussions.
4. Clarify miscommunications among group members from different cultures, ethnic and historical backgrounds, social classes, genders, age cohorts, and so forth.

Creating a Superordinate Group Identity

Diverse individuals from different gender, religious, social class, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds come together in small-group settings. The results can be positive if group members get to know one another, appreciate and value the vitality of diversity, and learn how to use their diversity for creative problem solving and enhanced productivity. For these measures to be taken, group members must internalize a common superordinate identity that binds them all together. That is, they must arrive at a single group identity that, although larger than any individual member, also encompasses all the diversity present in the group. It is the creation of one from many.

Creating an *unum* (one) from *pluribus* (many) is done in four steps. *First, group members must have an appreciation for their own historic, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds as well as their other important personal characteristics.* Members should value and recognize the culture, history, and homeland of their ancestors as part of their personal identities. A *v* is a consistent set of attitudes that defines "who you are" (see Johnson [2014] for a full discussion on developing a personal identity). An identity helps a person cope with stress, pro-vides stability and consistency to the person's life, and directs what information is attended to, how it is organized, and how it is remembered. A personal identity consists of multiple subidentities that are organized into a coherent, stable, and integrated whole. The subidentities include a *gender identity* (fundamental sense of maleness or femaleness), a *cultural identity* (sense of origins and membership in a culture), an *ethnic identity* (sense of belonging to one particular ethnic group), a *religious identity* (sense of belonging to one particular religious group), and so forth. Each of these subidentities should be recognized and valued, and they need to be organized into a coherent, stable, and integrated overall sense of self. Respect for one's subidentities may be the basis for self-respect.

BEING AN AMERICAN

Being an American is creedal rather than racial or ancestral. It is our belief that "all [humans] are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights" (i.e., our commitment to the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Declaration of Independence of the United States) that provide our superordinate identity as Americans. To be an American is to adopt a set of values concerning democracy, freedom, liberty, equality, justice, the rights of individuals, and the responsibilities of citizenship (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). It is these values that form the American creed. The common commitment to equality, justice, and liberty for all unites us as one people, even though we are the descendants of many cultures, races, religions, and ethnic groups. Each cultural group is part of the whole, and members of each new immigrant group, while modifying and enriching our national identity, learn that they are first and foremost Americans. America is one of the few successful examples of a pluralistic society where different groups clashed but ultimately learned to live together by achieving a sense of common nationhood. In our diversity, there has always been a broad recognition that we are one people. Whatever our origins, we are all Americans. It is from the following four steps that the United States creates an ***unum*** from ***pluribus***.

1. I respect, appreciate, and value my religious, ethnic, and cultural background.
2. I respect, appreciate, and value the religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of others.
3. I have a strong superordinate identity as an "American." Being an American is creedal. I believe in the American creed.
4. I have pluralistic values. I value democracy, freedom, liberty, equality, justice, the rights of individuals, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Second, group members develop an appreciation for the historic, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds and other important personal characteristics of other group members. A critical aspect of developing a historical, cultural, and ethnic identity is whether ethnocentricity is inherent in one's definition of oneself. A personal identity that includes one's heritage must be developed in a way that does not lead to rejecting the heritages of other people. The degree to which a group member's identity leads to respect for and valuing of other members' diversity depends on developing a superordinate identity that subsumes both one's own heritage and the heritage of all other group members. Members need to learn how to express respect for diverse backgrounds and value them as a resource that increases the quality of life and adds to the viability of the group.

Third, encourage members to develop a strong superordinate identity of "group member" that transcends the differences among members. Being a member of a work group is decided by circumstance rather than by ancestry or religion. The work group unites widely diverse people. In essence, the work group has its own culture that supersedes the individual cultures of members. Members need to learn how to highlight the group's superordinate identity and use it to resolve conflicts based on members' differences.

Fourth, group members adopt a pluralistic set of values concerning democracy, freedom, liberty, equality, justice, the rights of individuals, and the responsibilities of citizenship. All members have a say in how the group operates. All members are free to speak their minds and give their opinions. All members are considered to be of equal value. Every member has the right and responsibility to contribute his or her resources and efforts toward achieving the group's goals. Each member has a right to expect the group to be considerate of his or her needs and wants. All members must at times put the good of the group above their own needs and desires. It is these values that form the group or organizational culture. In the group, members must respect basic human rights, listen to dissenters instead of rejecting them, have freedom of speech, and have open discussion of differences. It is these values that bind group members together. Most groups are or will become a multicultural unit knitted together by a common set of values.

Gaining Sophistication Through Intergroup Relationships

Some people are *sophisticated* about how to act appropriately within many different cultures and perspectives; they are courteous, well-mannered, and refined. Other people are quite *provincial,* knowing how to act appropriately only within their narrow perspective. To become sophisticated, a person must be able to see the situation from the cultural perspective of the other people involved. Much of the information available about different cultural and ethnic heritages and perspectives cannot be attained by reading books and listening to lectures. Only by knowing, working with, and personally interacting with members of diverse groups can individuals really learn to value diversity, utilize diversity for creative problem solving, and work effectively with diverse peers.

To gain the sophistication and skills required to build relationships with diverse peers, you need to develop relationships with people from a wide variety

of cultural, ethnic, social class, and historical backgrounds. Many aspects of relating to individuals different from you are learned only from friends who are candid about misunderstandings you inadvertently are creating. To gain the necessary *sophistication* and skills to relate to, work with, and become friends with diverse peers, you need:

1. *Actual interaction:* Seek opportunities to interact with a wide variety of peers. You do so because you value diversity, recognize the importance of relating effectively to diverse peers, and recognize the importance of increasing your knowledge of multicultural issues.
2. *Trust:* Build trust by being open about yourself and your commitment to cross-cultural relationships and by being trustworthy when others share their opinions and reactions with you. Being trustworthy includes expressing respect for diverse backgrounds and valuing them as a resource that increases the quality of your life and adds to the viability of your society.
3. *Candor:* Persuade your peers to be candid by openly discussing their personal opinions, feelings, and reactions with you. Sometimes events or individuals' use of words or expressions that seem neutral to you are offensive and hurtful to individuals from backgrounds different from yours. To understand what is and is not disrespectful and hurtful, your peers must be candid about their reactions and explain them to you.

If you are not sophisticated and skilled in building relationships with diverse peers, you are in danger of colluding with current patterns of discrimination. **Collusion** is conscious and unconscious reinforcement of stereotypic attitudes, behaviors, and prevailing norms. People collude with discriminatory practices and prejudiced actions through ignorance, silence, denial, and active support. Perhaps the only way not to collude with existing discriminatory practices is to build friendships with diverse peers that allow you to understand when discrimination and prejudice occur.

Clarifying Miscommunications

Imagine that you and several friends went to hear a speaker. Although the content was good and the delivery entertaining, two of your friends walked out in protest. When you asked them why, they called your attention to the facts that the speaker continually used "you guys" even though half the audience was women, used only sports and military examples, quoted only men, and joked about senility and old age. Your friends were insulted.

Communication is one of the most complex aspects of managing relationships with diverse peers. To communicate effectively with people from different cultural, ethnic, social class, and historical backgrounds, you must increase your:

1. *Language sensitivity.* Knowledge of words and expressions appropriate and inappropriate for communicating with diverse groups. The use of language can play a powerful role in reinforcing stereotypes and garbling communication. To avoid

this, individuals need to heighten their sensitivity and avoid using terms and expressions that ignore or devalue others.

2. *Awareness of stylistic elements of communication.* Knowledge of the key elements of communication style and how diverse cultures use these elements to communicate. Without awareness of nuances in language and differences in style, the potential for garbled communication is enormous when interacting with diverse peers.

Your ability to communicate with credibility to diverse peers is closely linked to your use of language. You must be sophisticated enough to anticipate how your messages will be interpreted by the listener. If you are unaware of nuances and innuendoes contained in your message, then you are more likely to miscommunicate. The words you choose often tell other people more about your values, attitudes, and socialization than you intend to reveal. Receivers react to the subtleties conveyed and interpret the implied messages behind your words. The first step in establishing relationships with diverse peers, therefore, is to understand how language reinforces stereotypes and to adjust your usage accordingly.

You never can predict with certainty how every person is going to react to what you say. You can, however, minimize the possibility of miscommunicating by following some basic guidelines:

1. Use all the communication skills discussed in this book and in Johnson (2006).
2. Negotiate for meaning whenever you think the other person you are talking with misinterpreted what you said.
3. Use words that are inclusive (e.g., women, men, participants) rather than exclusive.
4. Avoid adjectives that spotlight specific groups and imply that the individual is an exception, such as *black doctor, woman pilot, older teacher,* or *blind lawyer.*

5. Use quotations, references, metaphors, and analogies that reflect diversity and are from diverse sources—for example, from Asian and African as well as European and American sources.
6. Avoid terms that define, demean, or devalue others, such as *cripple, girl, boy,* or *agitator.*
7. Be aware of the genealogy of words viewed as inappropriate by others. The connotations the receiver places on your words are what count, not your own connotations. These connotations change over time, so continual clarification is needed. Some words that seem neutral to one person may be "loaded" or highly judgmental to people of diverse backgrounds. The word *lady,* for example, was a compliment some years ago, but today it fails to take into account women's independence and equal status in society and, therefore, is offensive to many women. Words such as *girls* and *gals* are just as offensive.

SUMMARY

In our increasingly global community, highly diverse individuals interact daily, studying, working, and playing together in small groups. Rapidly growing global interdependence and the increasing emphasis on teamwork result in groups with quite diverse membership. Diversity among members is no longer exceptional or optional; it is the everyday rule. You will be expected to interact effectively with people with a wide variety of characteristics and backgrounds. Doing so has many advantages, including increased group productivity on a variety of tasks. Heterogeneity in groups also increases the difficulty of developing cohesive relationships among members and increases the potential for conflicts among members. Diversity among members is advantageous, but it is not easy to manage.

Accepting others begins with accepting yourself (see Johnson [2006] for a thorough discussion of self-acceptance). But even for individuals who are quite accepting of themselves and others, there are barriers to building positive relationships with diverse peers. The most notable barriers are prejudice, blaming the victim, and culture clash. Minimizing these barriers makes it easier to recognize that diversity exists and that fundamental differences among people are to be both respected and valued.

For group members to capitalize on their differences, they must ensure that a high level of positive interdependence exists among group members, highlight important mutual goals that require cooperative action, and develop a common ground on which everyone is co-oriented. They also must create a superordinate group identity that unites the diverse personal identities of group members. The superordinate group identity should be based on a pluralistic set of values, and it should enable members to gain sophistication about the differences among members through personal relationships that have sufficient trust to allow for candid discussions. Finally, the superordinate identity should help clarify miscommunications that arise when group members from different cultures, ethnic and historical backgrounds, social classes, genders, age cohorts, and so forth work together.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Demonstrate your understanding of the following concepts by matching the definitions with the appropriate concept. Find a partner. Compare answers.

	Concept	Definition
____	1. Prejudice	a. Belief that associates a whole group of people with certain traits
____	2. Ethnocentrism	b. An action taken to harm a group or any of its members
____	3. Stereotype	c. Unjustified negative attitude toward a person based solely on that individual's membership in a group other than one's own
____	4. Illusionary correlation	d. Attribute the cause of discrimination or misfortune to the personal characteristics and actions of the victim
____	5. Discrimination	e. Conflict over basic values that occurs among individuals from different cultures
____	6. Blaming the victim	f. Conscious or unconscious reinforcement of stereotypic attitudes, behaviors, and prevailing norms
____	7. Collusion	g. Tendency to overestimate the association between variables that are only slightly correlated or not correlated at all
____	8. Scapegoat	h. Prejudice directed at people because of their ethnic membership
____	9. Racism	i. Believing that most other people share their stereotypes
____	10. Modern racism	j. Guiltless but defenseless group that is attacked to provide an outlet for pent-up anger and frustration caused by another group
____	11. False consensus bias	k. Subtle forms of prejudice in which people appear, on the surface, not to harbor prejudice but actually do hold prejudiced attitudes
____	12. Stereotype threat	l. Tendency to regard one's own ethnic group, nation, religion, culture, or gender as being more correct than others
____	13. Culture clash	m. Whenever group members run the risk of confirming the stereotype

EXERCISE 10.2

STEREOTYPING

Once you realize that everyone is socialized to be prejudiced and to stereotype others, you need to clarify exactly what stereotypes you hold. This exercise is aimed at clarifying (a) what stereotypes you have been taught about other groups, (b) what stereotypes they have been taught about you, and (c) how the process of stereotyping works.

1. Post each word from the following list on sheets of paper around the room:

Male	Roman Catholic	Hispanic American
Teenager	Southern	Deaf
Asian American	Female	Middle income
Native American	Over age 70	Protestant
Blind	African American	Midwestern
Lower income		

2. Each participant is to circulate around the room, read the various words, and write one stereotype he or she has heard under each heading. Participants are told not to repeat anything already written down. They are not to make anything up. They are to write down *all* the stereotypes they have heard about each of the groups listed.
3. After everyone has finished writing, participants are to read all the stereotypes under each category.
4. Participants discuss:
   a. Their personal reactions.
   b. How accurate the stereotypes of the identities are.
   c. What they have learned about stereotyping others.

EXERCISE 10.3

INTERACTING ON THE BASIS OF STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are rigid judgments made about other groups that ignore individual differences. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate how stereotypes are associated with primary and secondary dimensions of diversity.

1. Divide participants into groups of five. The groups are to role-play a discussion of employees of a large corporation about the ways in which the percentage of people of color and women in higher-level executive positions may be increased from 10% to 50%.
2. Give each member of each group a headband to wear with a particular identity written on it for other group members to see. **Group members are not to look at their own headbands.** The five identities are

Single mother of two young children, unemployed	
Employee with physical disability	Woman, age 72
White male, company president	Black female, union official

3. Stop the discussion after ten minutes or so. Then have the groups discuss
   a. What each person thinks the label on his or her headband was.
   b. Their personal reactions.
   c. The participation pattern of each member—who dominated, who withdrew, who was interrupted, who was influential.
   d. What they have learned about stereotyping others.

EXERCISE 10.4

GREETINGS AND GOODBYES

This exercise increases awareness of how different cultural patterns of greetings and goodbyes can create communication problems. The procedure is as follows:

1. Divide the class into groups of four. Divide each group into two pairs, Americans and Lakians (from a fictitious country named Lake). If possible, give each pair something such as colored ribbons or armbands that visually distinguish them from each other.
2. Ask all American pairs to go to one end of the room and all Lakian pairs to go to the other. They receive separate briefings.
3. The participants are to role-play that they are business associates who are to engage in an informal discussion of general economic conditions in their countries.
   a. The **American pairs** are instructed to greet their Lakian business associates in the traditional North American fashion. They are to shake hands, say "Good to see you again," talk about the economic conditions of North America for a while, and then say goodbye by shaking hands and waving.
   b. The **Lakian pairs** are instructed to greet their American business associates in the traditional Lakian fashion. They are to give the Americans a warm embrace and then to take and hold their hands for at least thirty seconds. They are to talk about the economic condition of Lake for a while. Then they are to say goodbye by giving the Americans a warm embrace, holding their hands for at least thirty seconds, and telling them how great it was to talk to them.
4. The group of four meets. If they finish the conversation before other groups in the room do, each pair should find another pair from the other country and repeat the experience.
5. The group of four discusses the experience:
   a. What were the cultural differences?
   b. What communication barriers did the cultural differences create?
   c. How did the participants feel during the interchange between the Americans and Lakians?
   d. What are three conclusions about cross-cultural communication that can be drawn from the experience?

The English and their North American counterparts are sometimes seen as being impoverished when it comes to kinesic communication, using words to denote what gesture or tone would express in other cultures. In North America, for example, people often are reserved when greeting others. Body contact is avoided. Yet in some Arab countries, men kiss each other on the street when they meet. Nigerian men often walk hand in hand. Italian men embrace warmly and remain touching when engaged in conversation. In some African countries, handshakes may be extended for long periods of time, and a hand on the knee among males is not an offense. All of these differences create potential communication problems when members of different cultures meet.

EXERCISE 10.5

TIME

The purpose of this exercise is to focus attention on the differences in time and timing in different cultures. The procedure is as follows.

1. Divide the class into groups of four. Divide each group into two pairs, Americans and Pinians (from a fictitious country named Pine). If possible give each pair something such as colored ribbons or armbands that visually distinguishes them from one another.
2. Ask all American pairs to go to one end of the room and the Pinian pairs to go to the other. They receive separate briefings.
3. The participants are to role-play that they have an appointment with a photographer at 12:00 to have their picture taken.
   a. The **American pairs** are instructed that the appointment is at 12:00 sharp because the photographer has another appointment at 12:30 in another part of town. The photographer asked them not to be late.
   b. The **Pinian pairs** are instructed that to them time is not important. Today or tomorrow, it does not matter. Twelve o'clock or one o'clock, what difference does it make? Take it easy, have a cup of coffee, why rush?
4. The group of four meets. It is 11:55 in the morning and it takes five minutes to get to the photographer's studio.
5. The group of four discusses the experience:
   a. What were the cultural differences?
   b. What communication barriers did the cultural differences create?
   c. How did the participants feel during the interchange between the Americans and Pinians?
   d. What are three conclusions about cross-cultural communication that can be made from the experience?

Individuals living in industrialized societies are often seen as being "slaves of time." Individuals living in nonindustrialized societies are sometimes seen as being inconsiderate and unreliable. What happens when the two cultures meet?

EXERCISE 10.6

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The purpose of this exercise is to increase awareness of how cultural differences can create barriers to communication among group members. The procedure is as follows:

1. Form groups of six and divide each group into three pairs.
2. Each pair is assigned a particular cultural identity based on being a citizen of the country of Winkin, Blinkin, or Nod. Their task is to plan how they will act during the exercise based on the information about their country given on their briefing sheet. The pair is to work together cooperatively to ensure that both members understand how to act appropriately as a citizen of their country. They have ten minutes to prepare.

3. Two triads are formed, one member from each country. Each triad is assigned the task of identifying the ten most important principles of cross-cultural communication. They have fifteen minutes to do so.
4. The group of six discusses the following questions:
   a. How are the two lists different? How are they the same?
   b. How did members react to their assigned roles? Were there any difficulties in enacting them?
   c. What were the communication barriers among the citizens of the three countries? Why did they occur?
   d. How could the communication barriers be avoided or overcome?
   e. What conclusions can be drawn from the exercise?
   f. What applications does the exercise have for everyday life?

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Behavioral Characteristics of the Country of Winkin

1. **Orientation Toward Touch:** Touch as much as possible, stand and sit close to people, and give a long handshake (about fifteen to thirty seconds) when you greet a person.
2. **Orientation Toward Eye Contact:** Look other people in the eyes when you talk to them.
3. **Orientation Toward Disclosure:** You are interested only in yourself, and you love to share yourself with other people. Talk only about yourself and what interests you. Do not listen to other people—they are boring. You do not want to understand other people better; you want them to understand you. Whenever they start talking, you interrupt them and refocus the conversation on yourself.
4. **Orientation Toward Conflict:** You like to argue for the sake of arguing so that people will pay attention to you.
5. **Orientation Toward Helping Others:** You avoid helping people under any circumstances.

CONFIDENTIAL: TO BE SEEN BY BLINKIN CITIZENS ONLY

Behavioral Characteristics of the Country of Blinkin

1. **Orientation Toward Touch:** Do not touch other people. Stand and sit far away from other people. Greet other people by nodding your head—do not shake hands.
2. **Orientation Toward Eye Contact:** Do not look other people in the eyes when you talk to them. If you happen to look a person in the eyes, look for only a split second.
3. **Orientation Toward Disclosure:** You are genuinely interested in other people. You are inquisitive. You get to know other people by asking them questions about what they

are interested in. You listen carefully and let other people finish what they are saying before you speak. You never interrupt. You never talk about yourself.

4. **Orientation Toward Conflict:** You are very uncomfortable with conflict and want to avoid it at all costs. You never argue about a point with which you disagree. Instead you change the subject and try to find something else to talk about.
5. **Orientation Toward Helping Others:** You try to help other people (especially in solving a problem) as much as possible.

CONFIDENTIAL: TO BE SEEN BY NOD CITIZENS ONLY

Behavioral Characteristics of the Country of Nod

1. **Orientation Toward Touch:** Touch people only occasionally when you are talking. Stand and sit about an arm's length from a person. Give a short handshake when you are greeting a person.
2. **Orientation Toward Eye Contact:** Look other people in the eyes for only about three seconds at a time when you talk to them.
3. **Orientation Toward Disclosure:** You want to exchange ideas and thoughts. You share your interests and opinions, and you want other people to share theirs with you. You want to talk *with* other people instead of *to* them.
4. **Orientation Toward Conflict:** You seek reasoned judgments. You ignore who is right and who is wrong. You focus on the quality of ideas, seeking a synthesis or integration of different points of view. You listen carefully, add what you want to say, and make an informed judgment based on all positions and perspectives.
5. **Orientation Toward Helping Others:** You help other people only when it benefits you, that is, when it is rational to do so.

EXERCISE 10.7

MERGING DIFFERENT CULTURES

This exercise merges individuals from two different cultures into one group. The procedure for the exercise is as follows:

1. The materials you need to assemble for the exercise are
   a. Using poster board, construct ten sets of Figure 10.1 for each participant in Atlantis and one set of Figure 10.2 for every participant taking part in the exercise.
   b. One envelope per participant.
   c. One die for each group in Atlantis.

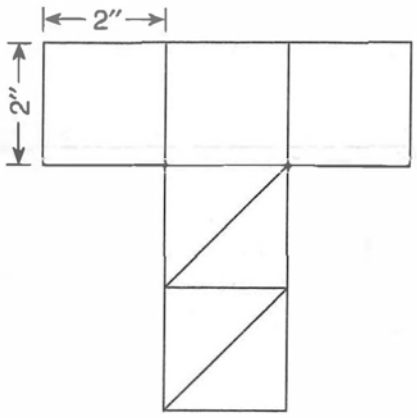

Figure 10.1

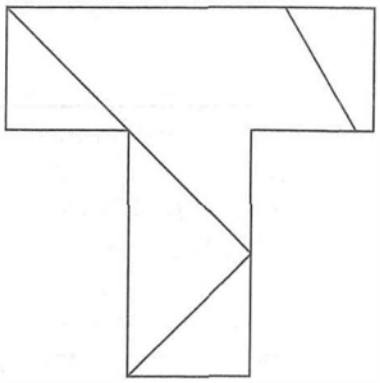

Figure 10.2

2. Divide the class into citizens of Atlantis and Mu. Assign participants to the society of Mu for every participant assigned to Atlantis. The citizens of Atlantis meet at one end of the room, and the citizens of Mu meet at the other end.
3. At the Atlantis end of the room, assign participants to groups of four and seat each group around a table.
   a. Place enough pieces for ten complete Ts per member in the center of each group (pieces for forty Ts).
   b. Tell the participants

> You are a worker in Atlantis who earns his or her living by constructing Ts. A T is formed using four triangles and three squares. Life is hard in Atlantis, so everyone looks out for "number one." You build your Ts by taking pieces from the center of the table. You will take turns in acquiring the shapes. When it is your turn, you acquire shapes by either (a) taking two pieces from the pile or (b) rolling the die (if you roll an even number [2, 4, 6] you can select that number of pieces, but if you roll an odd number [1, 3, 5] you lose that number of pieces from those you have accumulated thus far, including those composing complete Ts). The member with the greatest number of Ts will be declared the wealthiest and will survive. The poorest will perish. You can begin.

4. At the Mu end of the room, a second instructor divides the citizens into groups of four members and seats each group around a table. Their task is to earn their livelihood by constructing Ts. Each citizen of Mu is to form a T using the five pieces as shown in Figure 10.2. The instructor takes the pieces to make up the four Ts for each group and randomly divides the pieces into four envelopes (five pieces in each), making sure that no one envelope contains the correct five pieces for completing a T. One envelope is given to each group member. The instructor tells the participants

> You are a worker in Mu who earns his or her living by constructing Ts. Life is hard in Mu, so everyone looks out for everyone else. There are enough pieces among the members of your group to form one complete T for each member, but no one member has the right combination of pieces to complete his or her T. Mu, however, is a heterogeneous society that does not have a common language. The members of your group, therefore, will not speak to each other. **No verbal communication is allowed.**
>
> Group members must share pieces in order to be successful. You may offer pieces to another group member and accept pieces offered to you by another group member. You cannot offer pieces to more than one person at the same time. You may not ask for a particular piece by pointing, talking, nudging, grimacing, or any other method. When you give a piece to another member,

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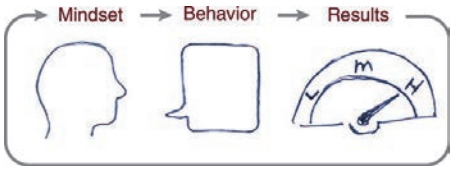
simply hand it to the person without demonstrating how the piece fits into his or her T. You have five minutes to complete this task. You may open your envelopes.

After five minutes, the instructor collects each group's pieces and again places the pieces randomly in the envelopes.

5. The Mu groups repeat the task, except that this time they may use any form of communication they wish. All other rules remain in effect. They have five minutes to complete the task.
6. Bring the Atlantis citizens to join the Mu society. Evenly distribute the citizens of Atlantis among the Mu groups. Add to each group's Ts one additional T for each new member. Take the combined pieces and randomly distribute them in envelopes, one for each member of the integrated groups. Tell the participants

   The citizens of Atlantis are immigrants to Mu. They are to have a part in the work of Mu, and the sooner they learn to earn a livelihood, the better off Mu will be. Members of Atlantis, however, do not speak Mu's language and the meaning of nonverbal gestures in the two societies is quite different. **There will, therefore, be no talking and no nonverbal signaling such as pointing or gesturing**. Your task is to build Ts. The Ts are formed differently from those made in Atlantis. You can begin work.

   Stop the groups when all groups have built their Ts or after ten minutes, whichever comes first.
7. Have the groups discuss
   a. How did the members of each society feel about working in integrated units?
   b. How did the two societies differ?
   c. Why was your group successful or unsuccessful in integrating the two societies?
   d. What conclusions can be drawn about work groups consisting of members from more than one society?
   e. The Mu society is orientation towards integration, interdependence, and cooperation.
   f. The Atlantis society is oriented toward individualism, independence, and competitiveness among its members.



CHAPTER FIVE

Eight Behaviors for Mutual Learning

In this chapter, I describe the eight behaviors of mutual learning, describe what each behavior means, and show how you can use them to help a group become more effective.[1]

USING THE EIGHT BEHAVIORS

The eight behaviors for mutual learning describe specific behaviors that improve group process and lead to the three mutual learning results: solid performance, stronger working relationships, and individual well-being. The behaviors stem directly from the mutual learning core values and assumptions.

Three Purposes for the Behaviors

The eight behaviors (Figure 5.1) serve several purposes. First, **they guide your behavior in your facilitative role**. To help groups become more effective, you need to act effectively. You use the behaviors to guide your talk, increase your own effectiveness, and help the group better accomplish its goals. By modeling the behaviors, you demonstrate how group members can do the same.

Second, **the behaviors help you diagnose group behavior and intervene**. By becoming familiar with the behaviors, you can watch a group in action and immediately identify when group members are reducing their effectiveness by

Parts of this chapter are adapted from *Smart Leaders, Smarter Teams*.

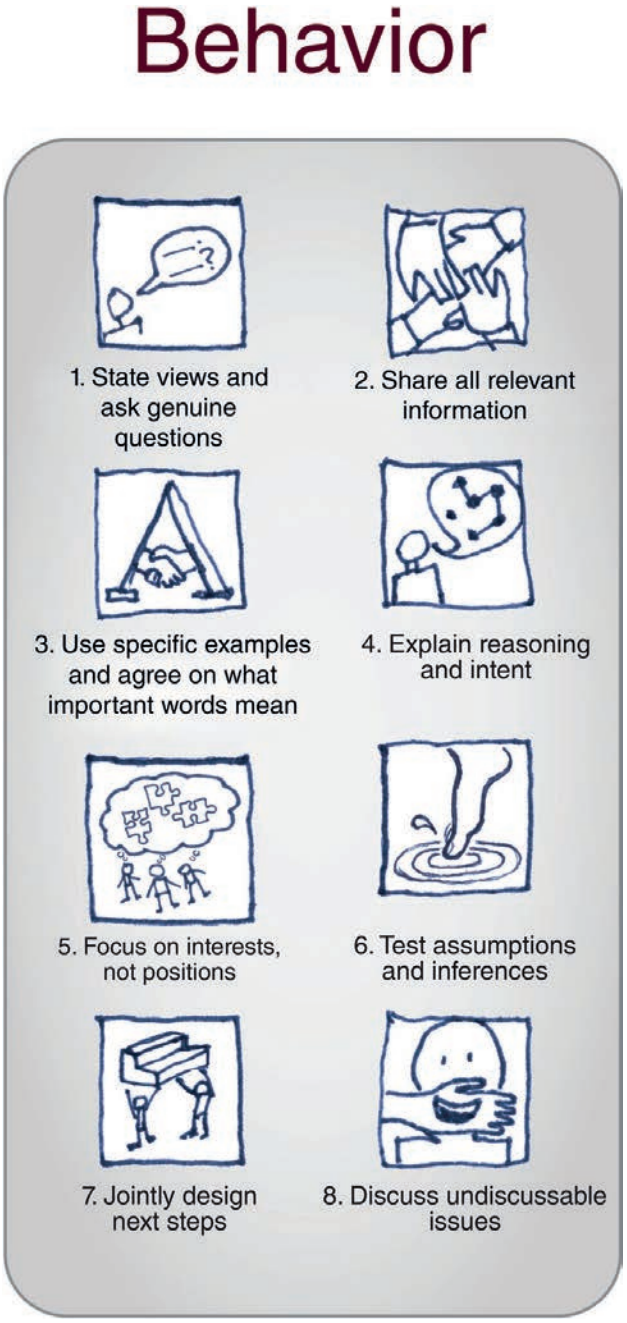


Figure 5.1 Eight Behaviors for Mutual Learning

not using one or more of the eight behaviors. Then you use the behaviors to intervene with the group to help increase its effectiveness.

Finally, **the behaviors can serve as ground rules for the groups you work with**. In the Skilled Facilitator approach, the behaviors that are effective for your facilitative role are the same behaviors that are effective for group members. When a group understands the behaviors and commits to using them, they become the ground rules—expectations for how members will interact with each other.[2] This enables the group to share responsibility for improving its process, a

goal of developmental facilitation. In other words, when a group commits to using the behaviors as ground rules for interactions between group members, you can help the group learn to use the behaviors just as you do: to guide its own behavior and to serve as a diagnostic frame for improving that behavior.

In this chapter, we will focus on the first use of the behaviors—using them to increase your effectiveness. In later chapters, we will explore how to use the behaviors to diagnose and intervene, and how groups can use them as their ground rules.

Although the behaviors are numbered, you don't use them in any particular order. You use the behavior that is called for, often using several at the same time. I think of them as dance steps to be combined in a variety of ways, depending on the specific situation.

BEHAVIOR 1: STATE VIEWS AND ASK GENUINE QUESTIONS

When you state your views and ask genuine questions together, you are being both transparent and curious. **To use this behavior, you do three things: (1) express your point of view, (2) explain the reasoning that leads to your view, and (3) ask others a question about your view.**[3] As a facilitator, the view you're expressing is often a process you're recommending that the group follow or an observation about what's happening in the group. For example, you might say, "As a first step, I suggest you identify the needs that you believe have to be met for any solution you agree on. This will give you a set of criteria from which you can generate and evaluate potential solutions. Any concerns about doing this as the first step?" If you're a facilitative consultant, you will also be stating your views about the content of the group's discussions, because the content is your area of expertise. In this role you might say, "I recommend you give division heads their own budgets to manage. This will create a level of accountability and decision-making autonomy that is commensurate with their current level of responsibility. What are your thoughts about this? What, if anything, do you see differently?"

What Stating Your View and Asking a Genuine Question Accomplishes

Stating your view and asking a genuine question accomplishes several goals. First, it helps others understand your thinking and helps you understand what others are thinking. When you share your view, others understand what you're thinking. When you ask others questions, you understand what they're thinking. When everyone understands what everyone else is thinking, you and the group have the relevant information to better solve problems.

If you only inquire, you don't help others understand your reasoning and why you're asking. Alone, either stating your view or asking a question are both ways of unilaterally controlling the conversation; both can easily contribute to defensive behavior in others.

Second, stating views and asking genuine questions shifts a meeting from a series of comments to a focused conversation. If you watch meetings, people take turns saying what they think, but often members make comments that don't build on the previous person's comments, and in some cases they make comments that don't even seem to be related. This happens partly because when one person finishes talking, he or she doesn't ask others what they think. When you finish your comment by asking the group an explicit question, you immediately increase the probability that the person who responds will address your question. If everyone follows their statements by a question, then the group creates a focused conversation.

Third, the behavior increases the speed at which you and the group can learn. One of the mutual learning assumptions is that differences are opportunities for learning. **One of the mutual learning principles is to move toward the differences.** When you share your view and your reasoning and then ask others about it, group members can determine whether they agree with your reasoning or see parts of it differently. By identifying where members' reasoning differs from yours, you can help the group explore what leads to the different reasoning. Are they using different data, are they considering different interests, are they using different assumptions or values, or are they assigning different priorities to certain issues?

Whatever your facilitative role, it's essential that you know whether the group shares your views and if not, why not. If it doesn't share your views, it is unlikely to accept your action or any recommendations that are based on it.

Some facilitators, consultants, and trainers tend to avoid or minimize differences in the group, including differences between them and the group. If you minimize differences, you may be concerned that focusing on different views creates unnecessary conflict and defensive behavior that you won't be able to handle effectively. You may have learned inaccurately that by first focusing on common ground, you build the group's ability to deal with any differences. This will lead you to spend unnecessary amounts of time on what the group agrees on, which reduces the amount of time for identifying the differences and resolving them. The sooner you identify the differences, the sooner you can help the group address them.

Finally, stating views and asking genuine questions reduces defensive behavior. If you state your view without asking a genuine question, others will respond in kind by stating their own point of view, which leads you to respond in kind. This creates a negative reinforcing cycle in which each person is stating

his or her view, trying to convince the others. But when you state your views and ask a genuine question, others see your comments not as a challenge, but as an invitation to share a different view. Therefore, they have less need to respond defensively. Your ability to increase learning and reduce defensive reactions depends on how you ask questions.

Make Sure Your Questions Are Genuine. Not all questions are genuine. And only genuine questions increase learning and reduce defensive behavior. A *genuine question* is one you ask with the intent of learning something you don't know. A nongenuine or rhetorical question is one you ask to indirectly make a point. The question, "Why don't you just try it my way and see how it works out?" is not genuine because embedded in the question is your implicit view, "just try it my way." In contrast, a genuine question would be, "What kind of problems do you think might occur if you were to try it the way I'm suggesting?" Notice that with the genuine question, you're not embedding your own point of view in the question.

The difference between genuine and nongenuine questions is not simply the words; it's also a difference in your intent and the kind of response you help to generate. If you use nongenuine questions, people infer (usually correctly) that you're trying to judge or persuade them with your question. In the extreme, if you ask several nongenuine questions in a row, others can feel like you're interrogating them, and they will become cautious, withhold information, and turn defensive.

One form of nongenuine question is called easing in. When you ease in, you indirectly try to raise an issue or advocate your point of view. One way of easing in is to use your question to get the other person to see your point of view without explicitly stating it. For example, you might ask, "Do you think it would be a good idea if we . . . ?" while privately thinking, *I think it would be a good idea if we. . . .*

You may ease in because you're concerned that explicitly sharing your view first will influence or simply reduce the input from others. But easing in telegraphs your view. It leads people to believe (again, usually correctly) that you're simply stating your view in the form of a question. This can lead people to respond defensively because you aren't being transparent about your thinking and you're asking others to be transparent about theirs. By stating your view and asking a genuine question, you're less likely to make others defensive.

Determine If Your Question Is Genuine. We typically ask nongenuine questions when we're feeling frustrated with whoever is not agreeing with us. We're usually thinking that the person doesn't understand the situation, is just plain wrong, has questionable motives, or all three. How can you tell if your

questions are genuine or not? If you answer yes to any of the following questions, the question you're about to ask isn't genuine.

- Do I already know the answer to my question?
- Am I asking the question to see if people will give the right (preferred) answer?
- Am I asking the question to make a point?

Take the "You Idiot" Test. Another way to figure out if you're about to ask a nongenuine question is to apply what I call the "you idiot" test. It's a thought experiment you can do in the privacy of your own mind. Here's how it works:

1. **Privately say to yourself the question you plan to ask.** For example, team members have just said that they don't need to spend time agreeing on the purpose of the meeting because everyone understands it and agrees. You've seen a pattern of the team taking an inordinate amount of time to get things done because it hasn't agreed on what it is trying to accomplish. You're tempted to respond, "Why do you think your team takes so long to get anything done?"
2. **At the end of your private question, add the words "you idiot."** Now you're saying to yourself, "Why do you think your team takes so long to get anything done, you idiot?"
3. **If the question still sounds natural with "you idiot" at its end, don't ask it.** It's really a statement—a pointed rhetorical question. If you ask your question, people will hear the words *you idiot* even if you don't say them. Change the nonquestion to a transparent statement that appropriately (1) expresses your view, (2) explains your reasoning, and (3) immediately follow it with a genuine question. You might say, "I'm thinking that spending time agreeing on the meeting purpose will save you time in the long run. In previous meetings, when you were frustrated about not accomplishing the task, you didn't have agreement on the meeting purpose. Do you see that differently? If you get agreement on the purpose, then anyone can quickly identify when he or she thinks the conversation is off purpose and save team time. If you're correct that everyone agrees on the purpose for this meeting, then that conversation will be very short. What are your thoughts about my suggestion?"

In this behavior, we have explored how to state your view and how to ask genuine questions, but we haven't fully considered what to say when you explain the reasoning that leads to your view. Behaviors 2 through 5 address that question.

What to Be Curious About

When you become genuinely curious, you will naturally find the questions you want to ask. Until then, here are some examples of types of questions that are useful to ask.

Questions to Create Shared Understanding. Shared understanding of a situation or a problem is the foundation of effective problem solving and decision making. This begins with asking group members how they understand the situation and how it differs from others' understanding:

- What is your understanding of what X is saying?
- How do you understand the situation?
- What do you see as the differences between the ways you and others see the situation?

Questions to Explore Reasoning. The solutions and decisions that group members prefer result from their reasoning. This includes the relevant information and interests they consider and the assumptions and values they hold. But unless group members make public their private reasoning, other group members won't understand each other's reasoning. Here are questions that help others explain their reasoning and respond to your reasoning:

- Can you help the group understand the reasoning you used to get to your preferred solution?
- What are the relevant pieces of information, interests, and assumptions and values that you think are important to consider when solving this problem?
- What, if anything, in X's reasoning do you see differently?
- Given that you have different views about X [a piece of relevant information, an interest, or an assumption or value], how can you jointly design a way to decide what view to include in deciding how to solve the problem?

Questions to Determine Support. At the end of the conversation, the group needs to know if it has sufficient support to reach a decision. The following questions explore this and identify what needs to occur to develop that support if it doesn't currently exist.

- Are you willing to support the proposal?
- What concerns, if any, do you have about supporting this?
- What would need to happen for you to support this decision?

- Is this a decision you can support and implement, given your role in the organization?
- Are you open to being influenced about this decision?

General Purpose Questions. Sometimes you know you should be curious, but you're not sure what to be curious about. These questions are useful in many situations.

- How do you see it?
- What do you think?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- What led you to _____?

BEHAVIOR 2: SHARE ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION

Behavior 2 means that you share with the group all the relevant information you have. When you share all relevant information, you're being transparent and accountable to the group. Sharing relevant information also ensures that group members have a common base of information on which to make informed choices. If the group members make a decision and later find out that you prevented them from making an informed choice by withholding relevant information, they may feel frustrated, annoyed, or angry. They may also implement their agreement with little commitment or may even withdraw their agreement. You've probably withheld some information if a group member says, "I wouldn't have agreed to do that if you had shared this information with us before we made a decision."

What's Relevant Information?

Relevant information is any information that might affect the decision that you or others make, how you go about making the decision, or your thoughts and feelings about it. Sharing relevant information doesn't necessarily mean that you say everything you know about a topic or everything that enters your mind during a conversation. For each situation, you need to make some judgments about what is relevant information.

Unfortunately, in challenging situations, people use a unilateral control approach. That leads you to strategically withhold information, leaving a significant gap between what you're saying and what you're thinking and feeling. Sharing relevant information means reducing that gap in a way that's

productive. Here are several principles for deciding whether you're sharing all relevant information.

- Share information consistent with your facilitative role.
- Carry your own water; have other people carry theirs.
- Share information that doesn't support your view.
- Share your feelings.

Share Information Consistent with Your Facilitative Role

If you're a facilitative consultant, trainer, or coach, your content expertise is relevant information to share. That's why groups hire you. But, as I described in Chapter 2, if you're a facilitator, sharing your content expertise is inconsistent with your role, unless you and the group have explicitly agreed when you can temporarily leave your role as a content-neutral facilitator to share your expertise on a particular topic. If you share information—even relevant information—that is at odds with your role, you risk reducing your credibility and the group's trust in you, and undermining your effectiveness. The same is true for facilitative coaches.

Don't Carry Others' Water

Share information for which you are the source, but don't share others' information for them. When you share information that others should be sharing, you are carrying their water. This reduces their transparency and accountability and inappropriately shifts it to you. In addition, because it's not your information, you can't fully answer questions people have about the reasoning underlying the information. For example, if a senior leader asks you to convey to one of his teams his purpose in having you work with the team, he's asking you to carry his water.

The information that others are asking you to share is usually relevant; it's just not *your* relevant information—it's theirs. The way to address this is to talk with the persons who are asking you to carry their water. We'll explore this in Chapter 13, on contracting.

Share Information That Doesn't Support Your View

Sharing relevant information includes sharing information that doesn't support your preferred solution. If you believe that the group would be better served by taking more time on the current agenda item and not discussing all the

scheduled topics, you share your reasoning and you also explain the potential risks of not completing the scheduled agenda. If you're a facilitative consultant discussing a particular performance management plan that you strongly support, you also share the potential challenges of the plan. When you share information that doesn't support your preferred solution, it's fine to put it in context. You might say something like, "Even though there are a couple of challenges to using the X performance management plan, on balance I think it's the best option for you because . . ."

Share Your Feelings

There is no place for feelings in unilateral control—especially negative feelings. But in mutual learning, feelings are an essential part of the conversation and solving problems. When you share your feelings appropriately, you are sharing an essential and often ignored part of relevant information. You're also modeling effective behavior for the group that may seem counterintuitive to the group. Sharing your feelings helps people better understand how you view the content of the conversation.

Are you surprised—pleasantly or unpleasantly—when the group does something? Are you frustrated when the group seems not to follow through on commitments it made to you? Do you feel empathy for the challenge that the team is facing? Feelings are a natural and important part of the human condition; sharing them helps the groups you work with better understand and respond to you.

The challenge with sharing your feelings is to make sure you're sharing them effectively. As Aristotle wrote in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, "Getting angry is easy. But to get angry with the right person, in the right way, for the right reasons . . . that is not easy." Sharing your feelings effectively means that the feelings you're expressing are based on what has happened with you and the group, not on assumptions, inferences, or attributions you're making about the group. It means not only *sharing* the appropriate degree of feeling but also *feeling* the appropriate degree of feeling. Feeling annoyed, angry, or enraged are increasing degrees of the same basic feeling. There have been only a few times when I have felt very angry toward a group I was working with, but even those times were unwarranted. When faced with emotionally difficult situations, a unilateral control mindset leads us to feel stronger negative feelings and weaker positive feelings than are sometimes warranted based on the facts. We'll explore addressing feelings—group members' and yours—in Chapter 12, on emotions.

The next three behaviors are about the types of relevant information to share.

BEHAVIOR 3: USE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES AND AGREE ON WHAT IMPORTANT WORDS MEAN

In any conversation, it's essential to make sure everyone is talking about the same thing. That means everyone is using the same words to mean the same thing. Behavior 3 ensures that this happens.

When we don't agree on what important words mean, there are several causes: (1) We are using different words to mean the same thing, (2) we are using the same word to mean different things, or (3) we are not saying exactly what we mean to say. Here are several steps to take to reduce these problems:

- Say what you mean to say.
- Name names.
- Use specific examples.

Say What You Mean to Say

Facilitators, consultants, coaches, and trainers sometimes don't say what they really mean. We use indirect language and create misunderstanding. Trainers often ask participants whether they completed an assignment by saying, "Did you get a chance to . . . ?" I used to ask this question too, until a group of police chiefs broke me of the habit. I was helping the group learn how to manage conflict and started by asking, "How many of you had a chance to read the article I asked you to read?" To my pleasant surprise, all 50 hands went up. "That's impressive," I said. "This is the first group I've worked with where everyone has read the article." One of the police chiefs spoke up. "Roger, you didn't ask us if we read the article; you asked us if we had a chance to read it. We all had a chance." "You're right," I said. "Let me try this again. How many of you read the assignment?" This time only about one third of the police chiefs raised their hands. At that moment, I realized I had asked, "Did you have a chance to . . . ?" because I was trying to save face for those people who might not have completed the assignment. But, in doing so, I wasn't asking what I really meant and I wasn't asking people to be accountable.

It's easy to literally speak the words, "Did you read the assignment?" but to be willing to say them, you may need to change your mindset. Instead of thinking that by directly asking people if they completed an assignment you're putting them on the spot, when you operate from mutual learning, you see this as being transparent, accountable, curious, and compassionate.

Name Names

If you want the group to understand whom you are talking about, it helps to name names. If you're concerned that Erin and Eduardo haven't shared their

view and Joan is speaking repeatedly on the topic, saying, "Let's hear from some people who haven't spoken yet" doesn't tell people whom you want to hear from. Even if you say, "Erin and Eduardo, I'd like to hear what your thoughts are," you're omitting the point that Joan's frequent comments seem to be hindering their speaking. To be transparent and accountable, you would say, "I haven't heard Erin and Eduardo's thoughts yet. Joan, you've spoken a number of times on this topic—have I missed anything? If not, would you be willing to let Erin and Eduardo share their thoughts at this point?"

If you're concerned about saying what I suggested, it may be because you see my comment as criticizing Joan, and you may be operating from the principle "praise in public, criticize in private." Unfortunately, the principle stems from a unilateral control assumption: Discussing your concerns about others' behavior is criticism, and criticism in the group is at odds with minimizing the expression of negative feelings. The principle is based on saving face—for others and for yourself. But, as you shift toward a mutual learning approach, you begin to think of these situations differently—as an opportunity to learn something you may have missed and to help members understand how they may have acted in a way that, perhaps without intention, reduced the group's effectiveness.

Use Specific Examples

Ironically, people often disagree on the meaning of words that they most commonly use. In a strategy meeting, people often have different definitions of *strategy*. In HR meetings, people often have different meanings of the word *accountability*. And people often have different definitions of what it means to start a meeting on time. In your facilitative role, you probably use terms from your field that have a meaning that is different from the general meaning of that term.

One way to determine whether you're using a word to mean the same thing as others is to give an example. If you suggest that the group make a decision by consensus, it's likely that members will have different definitions of *consensus*. To some members, it may mean that a simple majority of people support the decision; to others it may mean that most people support it; and to still others it means unanimous support. The first time the group agrees to make a decision by consensus and the decision has majority but not unanimous support, you'll discover that people have different definitions.

To agree on what consensus means, you can say,

> When I say *consensus*, I mean unanimous support and not majority support. In practice, this means each of you can say you will implement the decision, given your role in the organization. If the decision is about IT, supporting it means that you, Pradeep, will have a significant implementation job, given your role as CIO. For Angie and Yosef, as heads of marketing and sales, supporting it may mean that your folks simply use the

new system. My definition doesn't mean that you can't tell your direct reports about any concerns you might have about implementing the decision. It does mean saying something like, "Even though I have these concerns, I support the decision to implement it." Does anyone have a different definition of *consensus*?

Notice that giving an example with specific behaviors is part of describing what a word means and that it helps also to give an example of what it does not mean.

BEHAVIOR 4: EXPLAIN REASONING AND INTENT

Human beings are hard-wired to make meaning from what others do and say. If you don't explain your reasoning, group members will generate their own explanations of your reasoning, and their explanations may differ greatly from yours. *Explaining reasoning and intent* means explaining what leads you to make a comment or ask a question or take an action. Reasoning and intent are similar but different. Your intent is your purpose for doing something. Your reasoning represents the logical process that you use to draw conclusions and propose solutions based on the relevant information, your values and assumptions, and your interests.

Explaining your reasoning and intent includes making your private reasoning public so that others can see how you reached your conclusion and can ask you about places in your reasoning where they may reason differently. It's like when your fifth-grade teacher told you, "Show your work." If your answer to the math problem didn't match hers, she wanted to see if you used incorrect information, misapplied some formula, or made a mathematical error. In short, she wanted to see where her reasoning differed from yours.

To explicitly highlight your reasoning, you can follow your statement or question with something like this:

- "The reason I'm *suggesting* this is . . ." or "I'm *suggesting* this because . . ."
- "The reason I *say* this is . . ." or "I'm *saying* this because . . ."
- "The reason I'm *asking* is . . ." or "I'm *asking* because . . ."
- "The reason I'm *doing* this is . . ." or "I'm *doing* this because . . ."

For example, you might say, "Rather than have the group address each of your concerns as you raise them, I suggest we find out everyone's concerns and then quickly decide the order in which you want to address them. I'm suggesting this so you'll know all the concerns up front and be able to address them in an order that makes the most sense. Any concerns about doing it this way?"

Be Transparent about Your Strategy

One of the most important types of reasoning to be transparent about is the strategy you're using to work with and influence the group. This includes the process you're using to help a group solve a problem, how you move from topic to topic, and even how you handle ineffective behavior in the group. In your facilitative role, you're often responsible for designing and managing the group process. If the group doesn't know why you are doing what you're doing, you're not being transparent about your strategy. In Chapter 3, Barbara's strategy was to use unilateral control strategies that she would have found difficult to share with the group.

When you're not being transparent about your strategy, group members may become concerned that you're trying to manipulate them—even if you're not. When you're being transparent about your strategy, group members can understand the reasoning for your actions and you build trust with them.

Often you may not share your strategy simply because you think it's too much detail. When you operate from a unilateral control mindset, you withhold your strategy because sharing it reduces your ability to implement it. If people knew your strategy, they might not agree to follow it.

Take the Transparency Test

Here's a simple and powerful three-step thought experiment to figure out if you're about to use a unilaterally controlling strategy. I call it the transparency test. To show you how to use it, I'll use one of my favorite examples of strategies that people don't explain—the sandwich approach to negative feedback. If you've learned this approach, you know that when you have negative feedback to give someone, you sandwich it between two pieces of positive feedback. Here are the three steps for determining if your strategy is a unilateral controlling one:

1. **Identify the strategy you're using to have the conversation.** In the sandwich approach, the strategy when you have negative feedback to give is to start off on a positive note to make the person or people feel more comfortable and to make it easier to hear your negative feedback without getting defensive. Next, give the negative feedback, which is the reason you wanted to talk. Finally, give some more positive feedback, so the person or people will leave the meeting with self-esteem in place and won't be as angry with you.
2. **Imagine explaining your strategy to the ones you are using it with.** Also, imagine asking them how the strategy will work for them. Let's imagine you're using the sandwich approach with a group: "I called you in here to give you some negative feedback, and I want to let you know my strategy for having the conversation and see if it will work

for you. First, I'm going to give you some positive feedback to make you feel more comfortable and get you ready for the negative feedback, because I think you're going to get defensive. Then, I'll give you the negative feedback, which is why I called you in here today. Finally, I'll give you some more positive feedback so you'll feel better about yourself and won't be as angry with me. How will that work for you?"

3. **Notice your reaction.** If you find yourself laughing at the absurdity of what you're thinking, or if you're thinking *I could never share* that *strategy,* you've probably identified a unilateral control strategy that keeps you from being transparent. You keep your unilateral control strategies private because they work only when others don't know what you're doing or when they agree to play along.

The solution here isn't being transparent about your unilaterally controlling strategy; it's shifting your mindset so you begin using mutual learning strategies that become more effective when you share them with others.

BEHAVIOR 5: FOCUS ON INTERESTS, NOT POSITIONS

Focusing on interests is another way of sharing relevant information. *Interests* are the needs and desires that people have in regard to a given situation.[4] *Solutions or positions* are how people meet their interests. In other words, people's interests lead them to advocate a particular solution or position. The reason for focusing on interests is that often people's positions are in conflict even when their interests are compatible. By focusing on interests, you make it possible to agree on a solution or to solve a problem even when people have conflicting positions.

If you're part of a group buying a car and you say you want a Honda Accord and another group member says she wants a Toyota Prius, those are positions. If I ask you, "What is it about buying a Honda Accord that is important to you?," you will probably answer by describing your interests—the needs you are trying to meet. You might say that you want a Honda Accord because it's a reliable car, with low repair costs, and high resale value. Those are the needs you are trying to meet. If I ask the group member what it is about a Toyota Prius that's important to her, she may say that she wants a car that gets good gas mileage and that she can easily maneuver in tight spaces. If each of you agree that the other's needs are reasonable to take into account, then your joint task becomes finding a vehicle that meets both sets of needs. Because groups are often trying to develop solutions rather than choosing between two predefined alternatives, identifying interests enables them to get creative about how to meet the set of agreed-upon interests.

Explaining your interests is a central part of sharing your reasoning. When you recommend that a group use a particular process to discuss an issue or, as a facilitative consultant, when you recommend a solution for a problem a group is facing, you're implicitly offering recommendations that meet what you believe are the group's interests. Using this behavior means stating the interests explicitly.

As a facilitative consultant, you might say, "I'm recommending this solution because I think it meets the two interests you've identified—a solution that can be implemented within your current budget and that can be scaled up or down if your budget changes in the next few months. Did I hear your interests correctly, and, if so, do you think this solution meets your interests?

Here are four steps to help a group develop a solution based on interests:

Step 1: Identify interests. Ask group members to complete this sentence as many times as possible: "Regardless of the specifics of any solution we develop, it needs to be one that . . ." Record the answers in a single list of interests. If people keep identifying positions instead of interests, ask them, "What is it about your solution that's important to you?" This helps them to identify their underlying interests.

Step 2: Agree on interests to consider in the solution. In this step, you help the group clarify what each interest means and reach agreement on which interests it will consider in developing solutions. One way to ask this question is, "Are there any interests that someone thinks we should not take into account when developing a solution?" "Take into account" doesn't mean that everyone agrees that a given interest is important; just that everyone sees it as relevant. In the end, the group won't necessarily be able to craft a solution that meets all the relevant interests, though that is the ideal outcome. At the end of this step, the group will have a single list of the interests that an ideal solution would address.

Step 3: Craft solutions that meet the interests. Help the team generate solutions that meet as many of the interests as possible—ideally, all of them. At this step, you can say something like, "Let's come up with some possible solutions that meet all of your interests. You're not committing to any of these solutions yet; you're just getting them on the table." The group begins to identify possible solutions. This is a time for you to help members to play off and build on each other's ideas, seeking solutions that incorporate as many interests as possible. If the group members can't find a solution that meets the agreed-upon interests, help them explore whether all the proposed solutions have a common unnecessary assumption embedded in them. For example, if every proposed solution assumes that the work has to be performed only by full-time employees, ask whether that assumption is necessary to make. If it's not, ask them to generate other solutions without that assumption. If this doesn't help,

then the team can prioritize or weight the different interests to find a solution that addresses the most important ones.

Step 4: Select a solution and implement it. Using this approach doesn't guarantee that the group will reach a decision that meets everyone's interests. It does, however, increase the chance that you will help the group find a solution that everyone can support.

BEHAVIOR 6: TEST ASSUMPTIONS AND INFERENCES

I said in discussing behavior 4 that human beings are hard-wired to make meaning. Behavior 6 explains how you make meaning; how, if you're not careful, you can create problems for yourself and the groups you are trying to help; and how you can test out the meaning you're making to help groups become more effective.

There are several kinds of meaning you can make. When you make an *assumption*, you believe that it is true without any proof. When you make an *inference*, you draw a conclusion about something you don't know based on things that you do know. Finally, when you make an *attribution*, you are making an inference about someone's motives—why that person is acting in a particular way. Here is an example of the differences between the three:

1. *Assumption:* The team leader will lead the meeting (because that is what team leaders do).
2. *Inference:* The team leader isn't telling people what needs to be done; therefore, she's not leading the meeting.
3. *Attribution:* The team leader isn't leading the meeting because she doesn't care about this project.

Assumptions, inferences, and attributions work in the same way. If you act on them believing you're right and it turns out you're wrong, you create problems for yourself and the group. Everyone makes assumptions, inferences, and attributions. That's not the problem. The problem is your lack of awareness. If you're not aware that you're making an assumption or inference, then you can't test whether it's true before you act on it and potentially create negative consequences. In this section, I'll be using the term *inference* to substitute for the lengthy phrase assumptions, inferences, or attributions.

Behavior 6 uses several skills. The first skill is becoming aware when you're making inferences—at the time you are making them. The second skill is deciding whether to test your inference. It's neither possible nor desirable to test every one. If you decide to test your inference, the third skill is testing it in a way that doesn't contribute to people getting defensive.

We'll start with the first skill—becoming aware of how you make meaning—by using a tool called the ladder of inference.

How You Make Meaning: The Ladder of Inference

To understand how we make meaning, let's consider a facilitator called Tye who is making a high-level inference about Cheryl, who is part of the team he is facilitating. The short left-hand column case (Exhibit 5.1) shows Tye's conversation with Cheryl and his thoughts and feelings. We'll use this example to explain the ladder of inference and how to test an inference you make.

How you make meaning is illustrated in the ladder of inference (Figure 5.2), which I have adapted from Argyris and Schön and also from Action Design, which built on Argyris and Schön's work. Like a real ladder, you start at the bottom of the ladder of inference and climb up.

At the bottom of the ladder of inference is all the observable information available to you. As you climb the ladder, you encounter three rungs: (1) observe

The Facilitator's Thoughts and Feelings	The Conversation
I need to get some specific examples, otherwise this is going to deteriorate into a "he said, she said" discussion.	TYE (THE FACILITATOR): Cheryl, you said that Jim and Lena are slowing down your marketing project. Can you give some specific examples of what they have done or not done that leads you to say they've slowing down your project?"
All right, shake your head. It's your choice. I'm just trying to help you. I'll move on.	CHERYL (A TEAM MEMBER): [Shaking her head] No. I told you earlier, and you didn't respond. They know what they've done. [Twenty minutes pass, and the team conversation moves on.]
Cheryl hasn't said a word for 20 minutes. All I did was to ask her to give some examples of how Jim and Lena were slowing down her marketing project. She just got annoyed and shut down. I'll try to get her back into the conversation.	TYE: Let's hear from some others. Cheryl, what are your thoughts about Lena's and Jim's suggestion to start their marketing project next quarter?
Now, I'm annoyed. You're not fine. You're fuming. Now you don't want Jim and Lena's project to start at all. You're just trying to get back at Lena and Jim for not supporting your earlier proposal.	CHERYL: Whatever they want to do is fine. I don't really care.
Okay. I gave you a chance. I'm done.	TYE: Okay.

Exhibit 5.1 Making a High-Level Untested Inference

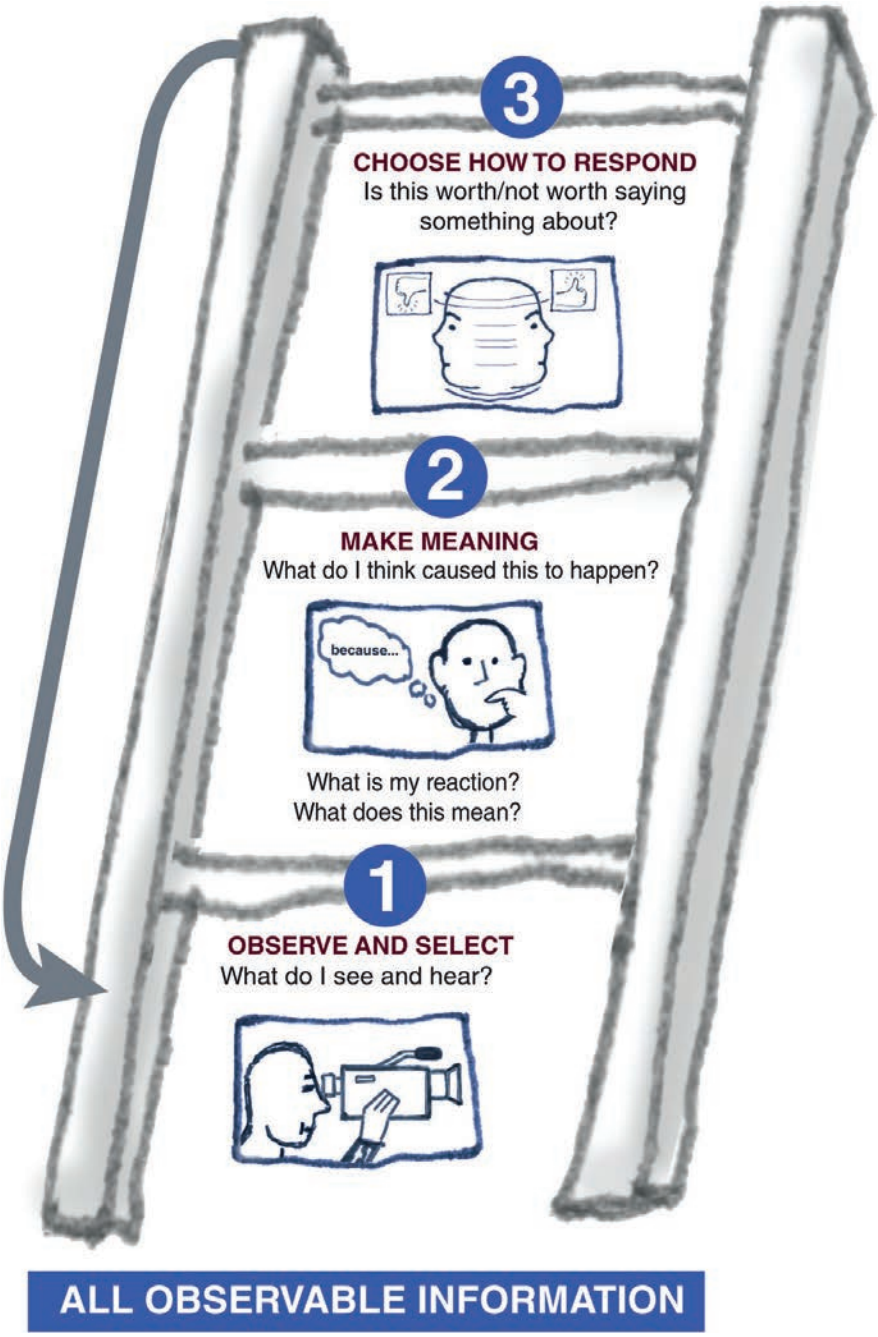
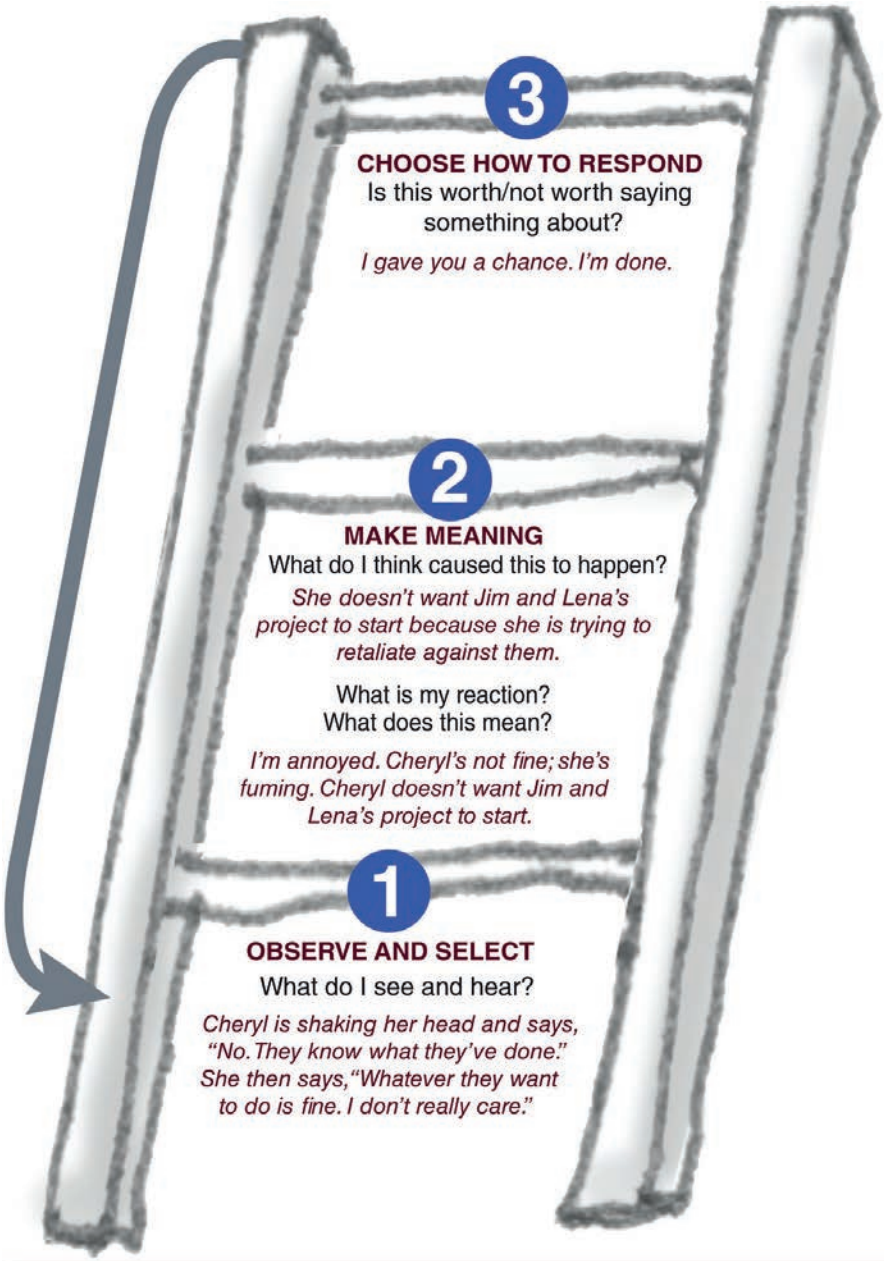


Figure 5.2 The Ladder of Inference

Source: Adapted from Argyris, C. (1985). *Strategy, change, and defensive routines.* Boston: Pitman, and Action Design (1997). Notebook materials, www.actiondesign.com.

and select information, (2) make meaning, and (3) decide how to respond. Let's start at the bottom and explore each part. Figure 5.3 shows Tye's ladder of inference during his conversation with Cheryl.

All Observable Information In a conversation or meeting, you're faced with a lot of directly observable information. Think of directly observable information



ALL OBSERVABLE INFORMATION

Cheryl is shaking her head and says, "No. I told you earlier, and you didn't respond. They know what they've done." Later, when I asked her, "What are your thoughts about Lena's and Jim's suggestion to start their marketing project next quarter?," she replied, "Whatever they want to do is fine. I don't really care."

Figure 5.3 Tye's Ladder of Inference

as whatever you can capture on video. This includes what people are saying and their nonverbal behavior, and spreadsheets and other documents, whether in hard copy or on a screen. In our example, everything that Tye and Cheryl have said is observable information and so is Cheryl's shaking her head.

Observe and Select Information At this first rung, it's as if you're answering your own question, "What do I see and hear?" I say *as if* because you do it unconsciously. Even in a one-on-one conversation, there is too much observable information to attend to. So, you observe and select certain data while ignoring other data. In our example, Tye pays attention to Cheryl shaking her head and saying, "No, . . . they know what they've done," but he doesn't select the part in which she says, "I've told you earlier and you didn't respond."

Make Meaning At the second rung, you begin to infer meaning from the information you selected, for example, *what's my reaction*? What does it really mean when this person says or does this? When Cheryl says, "Whatever they want to do is fine. I don't really care," Tye gets annoyed. He infers that Cheryl is not fine but is fuming. He then infers that Cheryl does not want Jim and Lena's project to start. Notice that Cheryl never said she didn't want Jim and Lena's project to start. After answering your own questions, you ask yourself, *What do I think caused this to happen?* As human beings, we like causal explanations because they help us figure out how to respond. In our example, Tye attributes to Cheryl that she doesn't want Jim and Lena's project to start because she is trying to retaliate against them.

Decide How to Respond At the third and final rung, you decide whether and how to respond. In unilateral control, if you decided to respond, you might make a comment or perhaps ask a question. In mutual learning, if you decided to respond, you would test your assumption or inference to see if it was accurate.

In our example, Tye is thinking, *I gave you a chance. I'm done.* He chose not to respond. Tye might have chosen to respond by telling Cheryl that her behavior wasn't helpful—a response that would also not be helpful.

Your Inferences Become Data

The ladder of inference is self-reinforcing. Notice the arrow on the left side of the ladder? It's called a reflexive loop. It turns the untested assumptions, inferences, and attributions you make into "facts" that lead you to look for data that confirm your "facts" and to also interpret ambiguous data as confirming your "facts." For example, Tye will use his inference—that Cheryl doesn't want Jim and Lena's project to start—to systematically select data from future interactions with the team to confirm his inference and attribution about Cheryl. If Cheryl makes an ambiguous comment, Tye is likely to interpret it as another example of the same. This reflexive loop leads you to create what you *think* is a solid basis for a conclusion. However, you create a large set of untested inferences that may be completely flawed.

Lower Your Ladder: Make Your Inference Testable

The main rule for using the ladder of inference is the same as a real ladder: Don't climb any higher than you need to. Just like a real ladder, the higher you climb, the more dangerous it becomes. We climb up the ladder higher than we need to when we make an inference that is further removed from the data than necessary. I call these high-level inferences. You've probably seen others make these high-level inferences. Imagine that you make a suggestion for how to improve a project and a group member responds, "You're just trying to make me fail!" You're probably thinking, *How did he possibly reach that conclusion? That's so far removed from what I said!* In the CIO case in Chapter 3, Barbara made several high-level inferences, including one at the very end of the case. When Frank said, "How about a break now? I'd like us to mull this question over and revisit it this afternoon," Barbara thought, *Oh, that's great. He obviously thinks I'm an idiot and doesn't want to release the stuff.* Her inference that Frank obviously thinks she's an idiot is greatly removed from the data she used to reach the conclusion. Similarly, in our example above, Tye's high-level inference was that Cheryl wanted Jim and Lena's project to fail and his high-level attribution was that Cheryl was seeking retaliation.

When you make a high-level inference, your final inference is supported by many other intermediary inferences. Like a house of cards, if one of the intermediary inferences is false, the logic collapses and the final inference can't be supported. We have a clinical term for people who routinely make certain types of very high-level negative inferences (and attributions) with little or no data: *paranoid*. Still, all of us make high-level inferences at times, especially when we are faced with challenging situations, including ones that make us anxious. Although you may make positive high-level inferences about others (she gave me a big smile—she's attracted to me), in challenging situations, our high-level inference is usually negative (as in Barbara's case: *Frank asked for a break; he obviously thinks I'm an idiot*).

With practice, you will make fewer high-level inferences that you need to lower. But you will still make high-level inferences at times. To test these inferences without getting others defensive, you need to realize when you're making a high-level inference and convert it to a low-level inference. I call this lowering your ladder. Figure 5.4 shows the two-step process. First, after you have made meaning and before you choose how to respond, ask yourself, *What did the person say or do that leads me to believe this?* This leads you to climb back down the ladder and recall and reexamine the data you used to make your inferences. You may realize that the person didn't say what you thought she said or that you didn't pay attention to something she did say. In Tye's case (see Figure 5.5), he would discover that Cheryl had also said, "I told you earlier, and you didn't respond."

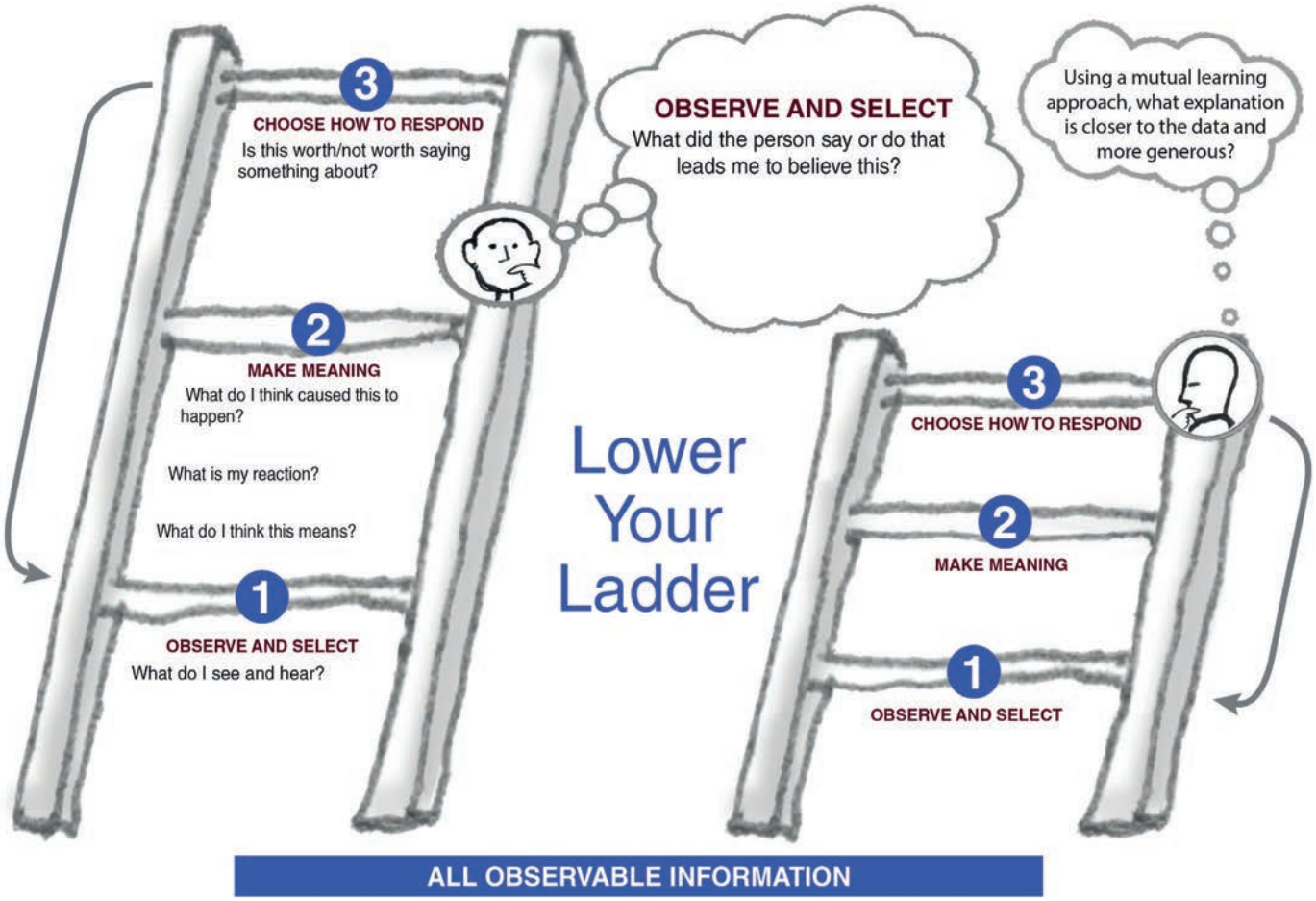


Figure 5.4 Lowering Your Ladder of Inference

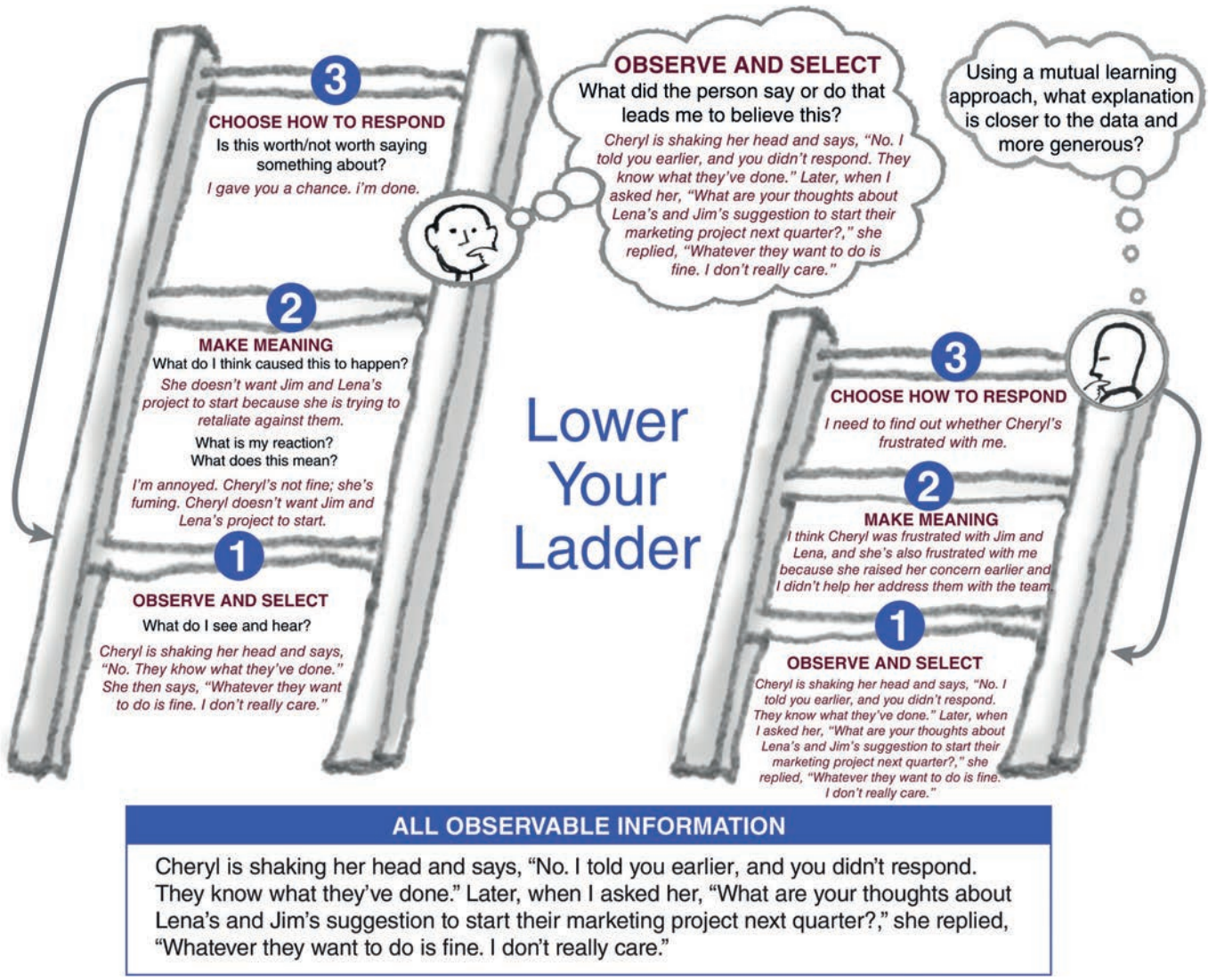


Figure 5.5 Tye Lowering His Ladder of Inference

Second, ask yourself, "Using a mutual learning approach, what explanation is closer to the data and more generous of spirit?" In other words, what inference would be reasonable to make using mutual learning and generosity as your guide? I'm not asking you to abandon reality or to be naïve. Your new inference still needs to fit with the data. In Tye's case, he might have inferred that Cheryl was frustrated with Jim and Lena and also frustrated with him because Cheryl had raised her concern earlier and Tye hadn't helped her address it with the team.

Decide Whether to Test Your New Inference

After you've made a new inference based on mutual learning and a generosity of spirit, you can decide whether you want to test it to see if it's true. You may decide it's still worth testing or it's not necessary. You can't test out every inference you make. If you did, you would drive people crazy.

To decide whether to test an inference, I ask myself, *What are the consequences if I act on my inference as if it is true and it is false?* Tye might decide that he needs to test out his inference because he needs to determine if he did not respond to Cheryl's earlier concern.

Testing Your Inference: The Mutual Learning Cycle

The mutual learning cycle (see Figure 5.6) is a tool for productively testing your inferences. The cycle has two sides. The left side is what you are thinking and feeling, and the right side is what you say. You've already learned the left side; it's your ladder of inference using a mutual learning approach.

Once you've completed the left side, the right side is easy to complete. You take your thoughts and feelings from the left side and share them on the right side (Figure 5.7). Here is how it works, step-by-step, using Tye's example:

Step 4:

"Cheryl, you said that you told me earlier about what Jim and Lena had done that led you to say they were slowing down your project, but I didn't respond to you. Did I get that right?" [If Cheryl says yes, Tye continues.]

Step 5:

"I'm thinking you're frustrated that I didn't follow up with you as well as frustrated with Jim and Lena. Is that what you're feeling, or am I wrong?" [If Cheryl agrees this is what she is feeling, Tye continues.]

Step 6:

"I didn't mean to not respond or frustrate you. I suggest we go back to your concern and find out what Jim and Lena's thoughts are. How does that sound to you?"

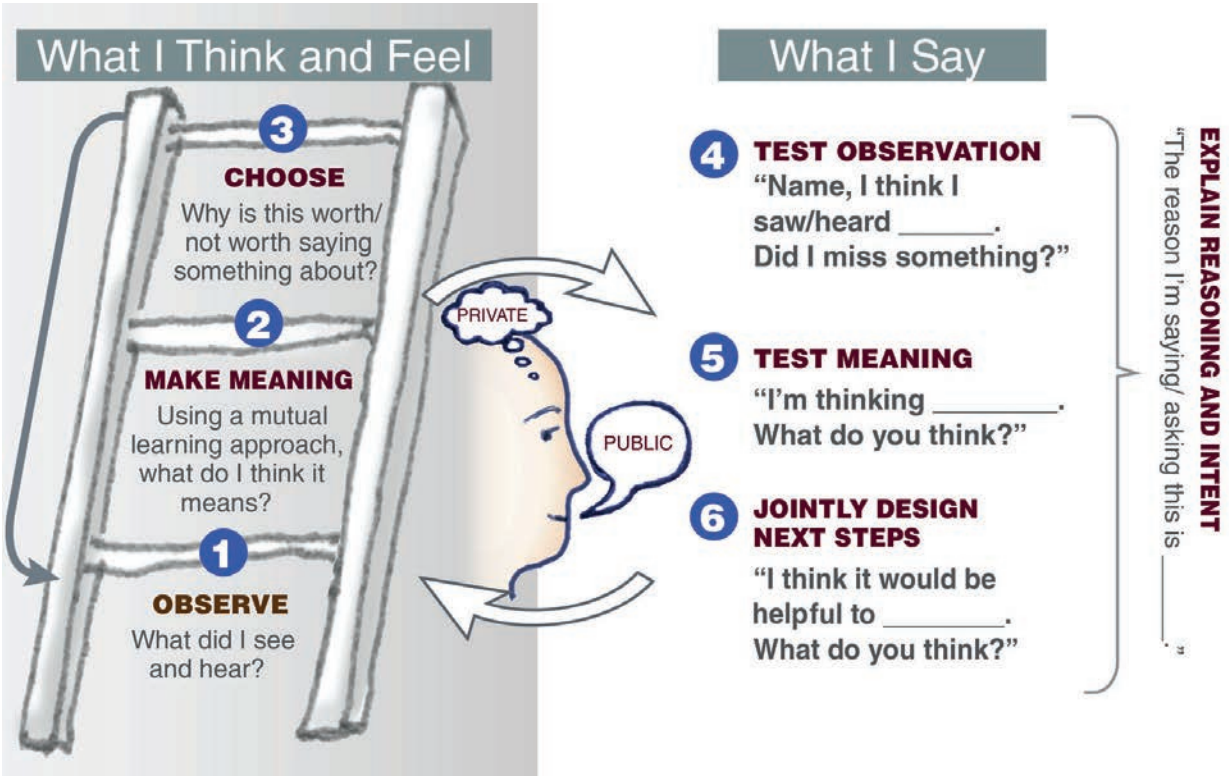


Figure 5.6 The Mutual Learning Cycle

The Mutual Learning Cycle Uses Most of the Eight Behaviors

The mutual learning cycle is powerful in part because it uses most of the eight behaviors. In step 4 of the cycle, you test your observation by using specific examples so you can agree on what important words mean (behavior 3) and you share all the relevant information (behavior 2) that leads you to make your inference. Step 5, testing your meaning, is the same as testing inferences and assumptions (behavior 6). In step 6, you jointly decide with others how to move forward (behavior 7, which we will explore next). Steps 4, 5, and 6 each have two parts. In the first part, you state your view, and in the second part, you ask a genuine question (behavior 1). Finally, the right side of the cycle states, "Explain reasoning and intent" (behavior 4). By using the mutual learning cycle, you are naturally using a mutual learning approach.

A note about language: You don't have to use the words *infer* and *inference*. If these words sound unnatural or like jargon, you can say, "I'm thinking that . . . ," "It sounds to me like . . . ," or something similar. Honor the meaning of the words and find your own voice.

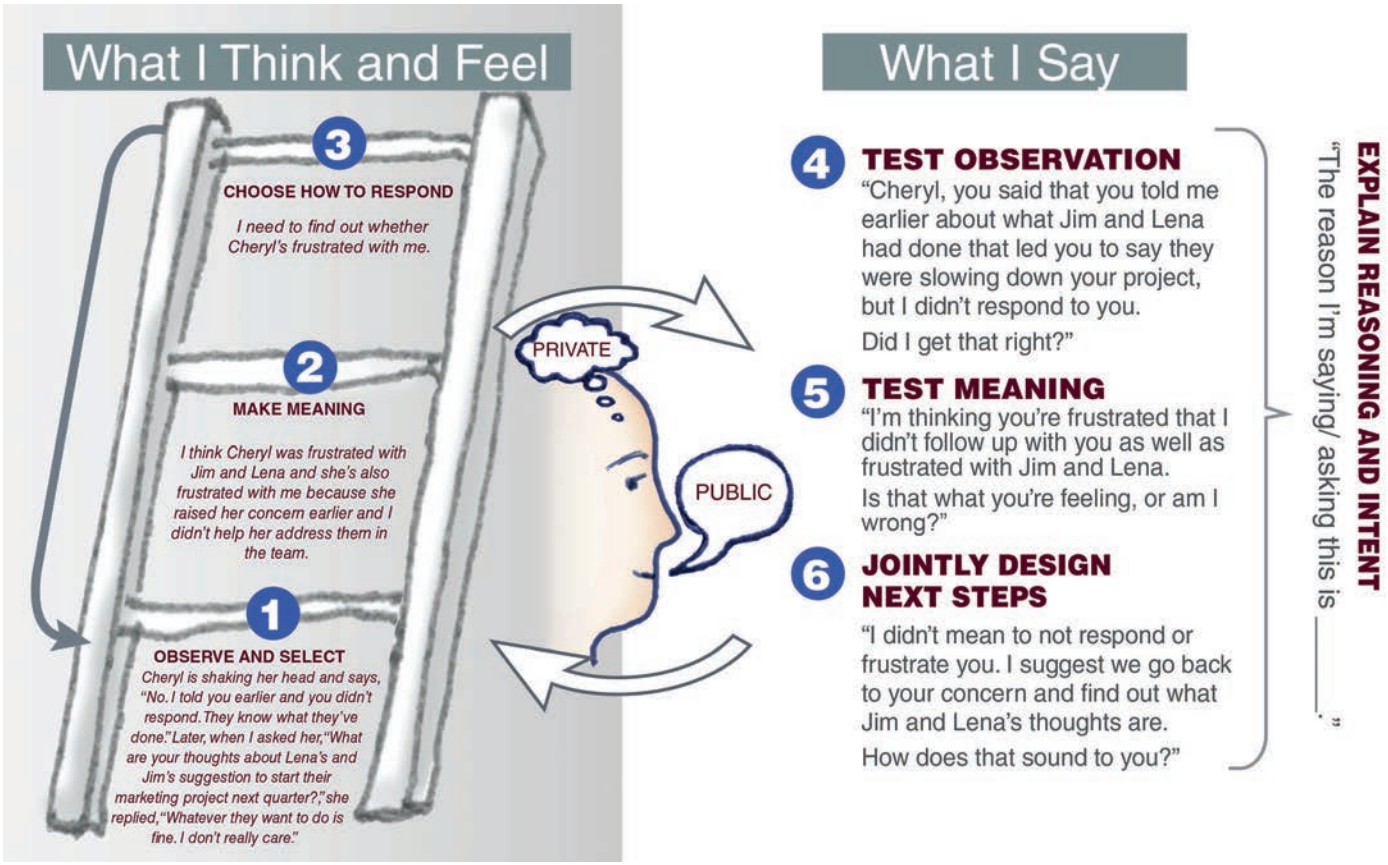


Figure 5.7 Tye Using the Mutual Learning Cycle

Using the Mutual Learning Cycle to Diagnose and Intervene in Groups

In the beginning of this chapter, I said that you can use the eight behaviors to guide your own behavior as well as to diagnose and intervene in the group. The mutual learning cycle is the fundamental tool you use to diagnose and intervene, no matter what behaviors you're diagnosing and intervening on, and no matter what your facilitative role. The mutual learning cycle structures how you think and how you say what you're thinking. In Chapters 7 through 10, I show you how to use the cycle to diagnose and intervene with groups.

BEHAVIOR 7: JOINTLY DESIGN NEXT STEPS

Jointly designing next steps means deciding with others, not for others, when and how to move forward. When you jointly design next steps, you're being transparent about your strategy, developing mutual accountability for the process, and enabling the group to make an informed choice with you.

Jointly designing next steps is a specific form of behavior 1: Make statements and ask genuine questions. In joint design, you (1) state your point of view about how you think the group should proceed; (2) explain your reasoning, including your interests, relevant information, and assumptions; (3) ask others how they may see it differently; and (4) jointly craft a way to proceed that takes into account group members' interests, relevant information, and assumptions.

Jointly designing a next step can be as simple as saying, "I suggest we take a 15-minute break at this point. It's about halfway through the morning, and the break food is here. Any concerns?"

There are many things you can jointly design with the group. Here are four main categories we'll explore:

1. Beginning meetings: purpose and process
2. When to move to the next topic
3. When someone is off track
4. When people disagree about the facts

Beginning Meetings: Purpose before Process before Content

Effective meetings have an agreed-upon purpose and process. Unless the meeting was called spontaneously, the purpose and process should be agreed on before the meeting occurs. This enables everyone attending to prepare for the items on the agenda and even to find out if their attendance is needed given the

topics. Meetings can have more than one purpose, and each agenda topic can reflect a different purpose. If you're a facilitator or facilitative consultant, you may be responsible for recommending a process to accomplish the meeting purpose and you may even be involved in helping the group shape the purpose of the meeting.

While effective meetings begin with an agreed-upon purpose and process, you may need to revisit and modify the purpose and/or process during the meeting. Sometimes a group discovers that it needs to accomplish another purpose before it is able to achieve the original purpose of the meeting. Sometimes, a group discovers that the process they are using to achieve a purpose fails to address all the issues that need to be considered to achieve the purpose.

Whether you are setting the purpose and process initially or modifying them during the meeting, the key point is to design them jointly with the group. Even if you're the person drafting a recommendation, you would share the meeting purpose and process with the group, explain your reasoning for structuring the purpose and process, and then ask, "What changes, if any, do you think we need to make to the proposed purpose and process?"

Agreeing on Whether Someone Is Off Track

Keeping a group focused on their topic is an important part of your facilitative role. But you may be doing this unilaterally. For example, consider a group discussing how to increase sales to current customers. If group member Yvonne says, "I think we have a problem with our billing cycles," and you respond, "That's a different topic," you're unilaterally controlling the conversation. Your comment assumes that Yvonne's comment is unrelated to the current topic. If she thinks her comment is on topic, she may stop participating in the meeting. As a result, the group doesn't get the benefit of using her relevant information in deciding a course of action. In addition, she may end up not being committed to the course of action that the group decides on.

If you're using the behavior of jointly designing next steps, you would say something like, "Yvonne, I don't see how your point about the problem with billing cycles is related to increasing sales to current customers. Maybe I'm missing something. Can you help me understand how you see them being related?" When Yvonne responds, you and the group members might learn about a connection between the two topics that you and they haven't previously considered. For example, the organization's billing cycles may create a long enough time lag that salespeople don't have real-time data about their customers' inventory. If there is a connection, the group can decide whether it makes more sense to pursue Yvonne's idea now or later. If it turns out that her comment isn't related, you can ask the group whether and when it wants to address it.

Designing Ways to Test Differences about the Facts

Sometimes groups get stuck when they can't agree on what the facts are. Without agreement on the facts—a key part of relevant information—it's difficult to make decisions that all group members are committed to. Unfortunately, when groups find themselves in this situation, they often create an escalating cycle in which each member tries to convince the others that his or her own position is correct. Each member offers evidence to support his or her position. Each doubts the other's data, and none are likely to offer data to weaken their own positions. Even after the disagreement is over, the "losers" are still likely to believe they are right.

When you help a group jointly design a way to test disagreements about the facts, you help it move forward in a way that all members agree on the facts. When I think of this behavior, I imagine two scientists with competing hypotheses who are able to design only one experiment to test their competing hypotheses. To conduct the experiment, they need to jointly design it so that it is rigorous enough to meet both of their standards and for them to accept the data and the implications that result from the data.

Consider an IT leadership team in which members disagree about the amount of time that it currently takes IT support staff to respond to and resolve employee IT problems. As a facilitator or consultant, you might begin by asking, "How can you jointly design a way to figure out what the current response time is?" You can begin helping the team develop a joint design by agreeing on what it means by the words *current*, *respond to*, and *resolve*. Next, you might ask the team how it can analyze available data and/or collect new data to answer the team's question.

It's essential that the team jointly design the methods it will use to answer its question. If the team doesn't, when the results are generated, some team members are likely to state that the team used a nonrepresentative sample, didn't collect the right data, or analyzed the data incorrectly. It's also important to have the team agree in advance on what kinds of results will lead the team to take certain actions. For example, what percentage of the IT problems would have to take longer than a certain amount of time for IT staff to resolve for the team to agree that there was a problem that needed to be solved.

Some disagreements are easier to address than others. Deciding what a particular memo says may be as simple as opening the file and looking at it together. Agreeing on what has been said in previous meetings may require talking to a number of people and trying to reconstruct the conversation. Particularly difficult is deciding what the effects will be of implementing a strategy or policy. Still, if the effects of the choice are significant, group members can collect data from other organizations that have already implemented a

similar strategy or policy; or you can help the group simulate the effects by using systems-thinking modeling.

Degrees of Joint Design

No matter what your facilitative role, there is a continuum of joint design. At one end of the continuum, you design the next step on your own with no input from group members, except to ask if they have any concerns. This is often the case with simple next steps, such as suggesting that it looks like a good time to take a break or to recommend how the group get out all the relevant information needed for the decision. At the other end of the continuum, you and the group are full partners in designing the next step. This is often the case, when a group realizes it needs to change the purpose of the meeting or when a team is concerned that the current meeting process is not helping it accomplish the meeting's purpose.

BEHAVIOR 8: DISCUSS UNDISCUSSABLE ISSUES

Undiscussable issues are issues that are relevant to the group's task and are having or will have a negative effect on the group's results, but that individuals believe they cannot discuss openly in the group without some negative consequences. People often talk about undiscussable issues before and after meetings with others who have similar views, but not in the one place they can resolve them—in the group meeting.

Part of your facilitative role is to help the group address undiscussable issues that are reducing its effectiveness. We'll discuss how to do this in Chapter 10, on intervening with the mutual learning behaviors. For now, let's focus on undiscussable issues that you may have with a group you're working with.

Here are examples of undiscussable issues that you might face working with a group: (1) The group consistently doesn't follow through on its commitments, making it difficult for you to perform your role effectively during the meetings; (2) the group consistently asks you to share your view on the topics it is discussing or to behave in ways that are outside your facilitative role; and (3) you infer that the group does not have the knowledge, skills, or motivation necessary to accomplish its stated goals, even with your help. Keep in mind that these issues are not inherently undiscussable. You make the choice whether they are undiscussable.

The Problem with Not Discussing Undiscussable Issues

You create undiscussable issues when you operate from a unilateral control mindset. If you value minimizing the expression of negatives feelings, you're

concerned that if you raise these difficult issues, others may get defensive, you may get defensive, and you will negatively affect your working relationship with the group you're supposed to be helping. Ironically, by not discussing the undiscussable issue, you create the negative effect you're trying to avoid.

If you value minimizing the expression of negative feelings, you also want to save face for others—and often for yourself, too. In short, you see discussing undiscussable issues as putting people on the spot and not being compassionate. But when you don't discuss undiscussable issues, you withhold relevant information from others and prevent them from making an informed choice. Here, too, you might ironically create the opposite of what you're trying to create. Instead of being compassionate, you create problems for others. In the extreme, preventing the group from making an informed choice can be cruel instead of compassionate.

Finally, if you're also operating from the unilateral control value of "win; don't lose," you may be concerned that raising an undiscussable issue will reduce the chance that you will win.

In short, unilateral control teaches us to praise in public, criticize in private. That prevents us from discussing undiscussable issues with the group.

How to Raise Your Undiscussable Issue

Using mutual learning means raising the undiscussable issue in the place where the relevant information is and the people who are present can address the problem. If the undiscussable issue involves the group and you, you raise it with the full group.

Discussing undiscussable issues doesn't involve any new mindset or behaviors. I made this a separate behavior only because it feels much more difficult to use. But to use the behavior, you use the mutual learning mindset and behaviors that we've already discussed. You assume that you may be missing things that others are seeing and that you may be contributing to the problem you're privately complaining about. You also assume that others' motives are pure, and value compassion for others and yourself. When you raise and discuss an undiscussable issue, you share relevant but difficult information with the group so that you and the group can jointly make an informed choice about what if anything to do differently. You state your views and ask genuine questions, use specific examples, agree on what important words mean, share your reasoning and intent, focus on interests, test your assumptions and inferences, and jointly design next steps with the group.

Here is what you might say if you were raising the undiscussable issue of the group not completing work that makes it difficult for you to perform your role:

> I want to raise an issue that I think is keeping me from helping you achieve your goals. I've noticed in the last three meetings that, as a group, you've

not completed the assignments you committed to get to me before the meetings, and as a result I haven't been able to adequately prepare to help you make decisions in the meetings. Is each of you willing to discuss this issue? [If yes, continue.] Okay, I want to suggest a process we can use to discuss the issue and check to see if it works for everyone. First, I'd like to provide a few examples of the issue and check to see whether each of you is seeing what I saw or is seeing it differently. I want to make sure we agree on what's happened before we move forward. Second, if we agree this is happening, I'd like for us to explore what is causing the behavior. I'm open to the possibility that I'm doing things that are making it difficult for you to complete the assignments you agreed to. Third, I'd like for us to identify the interests we need to meet for any solution to work. Finally, I'd like us to craft a solution that addresses the root causes and meets everyone's interest. Does anyone have any concerns about the process I'm suggesting or want to suggest an improvement? [If not, continue.] OK, is each of you willing to use this process?

Notice that when I raise the undiscussable issue, I am jointly designing next steps with the group, stating my views and asking genuine questions, explaining my reasoning, and identifying people's interests.

LEARNING TO USE THE BEHAVIORS

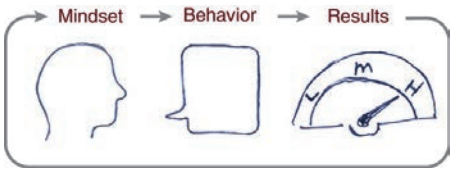
The behaviors are like individual dance steps. I have focused on the eight behaviors individually as a way to introduce them and show how to use each one. But the power of the behaviors comes from using them together, much like you would combine dance steps in different ways to move gracefully across the dance floor. When you use the behaviors, you are almost always using several of them at the same time.

You may feel awkward as you start using the behaviors. You may feel that it doesn't sound like you; instead, it sounds like you imitating something you read in a book (well, actually you have) or heard in a workshop. It's natural to feel unnatural as you begin to use the behaviors. The unnaturalness comes from a number of sources, notably trying to translate your left-hand column into sentences that use the grammatical structure of the behaviors, trying to integrate the behaviors with your own natural speech pattern and word choice, and trying to put it all together so you can talk at the speed of normal conversation.

It takes practice to find your own voice in using the behaviors. With regular practice, you will find that you can use the behaviors so it sounds like you are talking at your normal speed.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have described the set of eight mutual learning behaviors at the heart of the Skilled Facilitator approach. I explained how to use the behaviors to put into practice the mutual learning mindset. In the next chapter, we will explore what it takes to create an effective group and how you can help groups design themselves to be more effective. We have already discussed two of the three main factors: (1) a mutual learning mindset and (2) a set of mutual learning behaviors.



CHAPTER SIX

Designing and Developing Effective Groups

In this chapter, I describe how you can use the Team Effectiveness Model (TEM) to help the groups and teams you work with. I begin by describing why it's important to have a group or team effectiveness model as part of your work, whether you're a facilitator, consultant, coach, or trainer. Then I define the difference between a team and a group and why the difference matters so much for the teams and groups you work with and for how you work with them. I complete the chapter by describing the TEM and show how you can use it to design, diagnose, and intervene with teams and groups.

Groups and teams can be designed in different ways, even if they have the same task. Some designs lead to better results. If you're helping a new team design how it will work together or helping a current team figure out how it can work more effectively, it's probably obvious that how a team is designed will make a big difference in the results it can achieve. But if you're not helping teams and groups in this way, why should you care? The answer is that if a team or group is designed poorly, the poor design can hinder anything it tries to accomplish, including your ability to facilitate or consult with the team. Team design is an invisible but powerful force that shapes the system. If you don't know how the system works, you can't work effectively with it.

This particular section is adapted from the chapter "Designing for Mutual Learning" in *Smart Leaders, Smarter Teams*.

HOW A TEAM EFFECTIVENESS MODEL HELPS YOU AND THE TEAMS AND GROUPS YOU WORK WITH

If you're helping teams become more effective, you need a model of what an effective team looks like. That's true whether you're working with the full team, the team leader, or other members of the team. **A good team effectiveness model helps you and the team in three ways: as a design tool, a diagnostic tool, and an intervention tool.**

As a design tool, you can use the model to help a newly formed team design itself effectively. This work can and should be part of launching a new team. As a diagnostic tool, you can use the model with existing teams that are less effective than they need to be. Here, you and the team would compare the elements in an effective team model with the team's current design and functioning, identifying gaps that the team wants to close. As an intervention tool, you can use the model to watch the team in action. When you see behaviors that lead you to infer an ineffective team design, you can test your inference with the team, see if the members agree, and if so, ask whether they want to begin to redesign that element of the team.

Before looking at the TEM, it's important to understand the difference between a team and a group. That difference affects the team or group and how you work with the members.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TEAMS AND GROUPS—AND WHY IT MATTERS

As a facilitator, consultant, coach, or trainer, you're likely to be working with a variety of groups and teams. I have used the terms *group* and *team* interchangeably, but now I want to distinguish between the two. This is not an irrelevant abstract exercise. Teams and groups differ in fundamental ways. Those differences call for designing groups and teams differently, and require that you work differently with each. Let's start by distinguishing between the two.

What Makes a Team?

Team researcher J. Richard Hackman identifies four criteria for defining *a team*:

1. Members are interdependent around a team task.
2. Members know who is a member of the team.
3. Members know the extent of the team's authority.
4. Membership is stable over time.[1]

Hackman uses the term *real team* for teams that meet these criteria, as opposed to teams in name only. Where Hackman uses the term *real team*, I use the term *team*. Let's explore each of these criteria that make a team.

Team Members Are Interdependent around a Team Task. I consider interdependence the most important criterion for identifying a team. **To be a team there has to be a team task—a task that can be accomplished only by team members acting interdependently with each other.** Team researcher Ruth Wageman defines task interdependence as "the degree to which a piece of work requires multiple individuals to exchange help and resources interactively to complete the work."[2]

Many so-called teams aren't interdependent around a team task. For example, in many senior sales teams, each member is responsible for the sales of part of the organization's product line or services or for sales in some part of the world. Like a gymnastics team that has only individual events, members work largely independently of each other, without having to rely on each other to accomplish their task. At the end of the month or quarter, they report their respective sales to the team leader, who aggregates them for the total sales for that period. However, if the sales team sells as a team, jointly planning customer presentations and meeting together with potential customers, with each member contributing unique knowledge, skills, and resources to make a sale, the team would have significant task interdependence. Because a team's interdependence has a significant impact on how it needs to be designed and how you work with it, we'll return to this topic a little later, but first let's consider the three other criteria for a team.

Members Know Who Is a Member of the Team. If team members are interdependent around a team task, then they need to know who is on the team and who is not. One study found that fewer than 7 percent of the leadership teams they studied, when asked, could agree on who was on the team.[3] I have worked with executives who could not tell me exactly who was on the leadership team they led!

In my experience, when the team membership is unclear, there are two subgroups in the team: a core group of people, who everyone agrees are members, and a second group of individuals, who even among themselves aren't sure if they are team members. There are a number of reasons that team membership can be unclear. For example, the leader has never formally designated the team, has shifted members to new roles but is reluctant to move those people off or onto the leadership team, or has kept a member off the team who, organizationally, would be expected to be on the team. Whatever the cause, the lack of clarity undermines the team. If you're consulting to a team in which the membership is unclear, keep in mind that this can hinder your ability to help the team until the membership issues are resolved.

Members Know the Extent of the Team's Authority. Because teams have some decision-making authority, team members need to know the limit of their decision-making authority. What decisions are team members permitted to make, and what decisions are reserved for the team leader? Is the team allowed to make decisions only about executing the team task, or can the team also make decisions about how to monitor and manage work processes and progress? What about designing the team and its context or even setting the overall direction? Each of these areas gives greater decision-making authority to the team. Without this clear agreement, team members may either underuse or overreach their authority.

The Team Membership Is Stable over Time. Finally, a team needs to have a stable membership over time. There is a belief in popular culture that regularly changing the team membership infuses the team with new ideas and energy. That's an interesting idea, but research shows the opposite.[4] It takes time for a team to understand and agree on its purpose, agree on how it will work together, and then put those agreements into action, improving over time. If members are regularly joining and leaving the team, the team doesn't get to benefit from the shared understanding members created with each other: Members either spend too much time integrating new members or suffering when the team doesn't spend this time.

Why Interdependence Matters So Much

The reason that interdependence matters so much is that poorly managed interdependence becomes a root cause of many team and group problems. When team members are interdependent with each other, they need to rely on each other to produce a joint result. This leads team members to develop expectations for how other team members should work with them. These expectations lead members to hold others accountable. When team members' expectations or sense of accountability aren't met, it reduces their ability to achieve the joint result, and it also negatively affects working relationships and individual well-being.

Teams and groups accomplish their work and avoid these problems by dividing the collective task among members and, where they are interdependent, coordinating their work. The type and degree of interdependence and the type of coordination needed to manage it affect many elements of the team or group's design. As the level of interdependence increases, so does the level of expectations and accountability between team members. Teams have a greater need to coordinate, it's more difficult to coordinate, and their inability to coordinate well has a stronger negative impact on their performance and working relationships.[5,6] If the team elements are designed well—if they

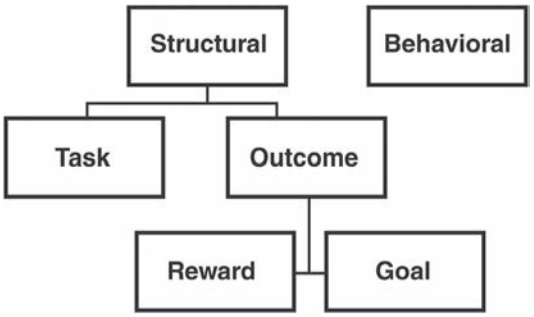


Figure 6.1 Types of Interdependence

support the level of interdependence and coordination needed—the team can achieve better results.

There are different types of interdependence, which I've shown in Figure 6.1.[7] Each type of interdependence is created by designing some element of the team, and each influences team behavior in a different way. Let's begin by defining them and how they work. The two main types of interdependence are structural and behavioral. The first main type, s*tructural interdependence*, as its name states, refers to how elements of the team are designed or structured so that team members will work together to accomplish the task.

There are two kinds of structural interdependence—task interdependence and outcome interdependence. *Task interdependence* is the extent to which various elements of the team's work are designed so that team members need to interact with each other to accomplish the task, such as a sales team that sells as a team. The second type of structural interdependence is *outcome interdependence*, and there are two kinds. *Goal interdependence* is the extent to which performance is measured as a team, as individuals, or some combination. A team's goal interdependence increases the more that performance is measured as team goals rather than only individual goals. For example, if sales team members' goals were focused only on their parts of the sales, then goal interdependence would be low; if they were focused on the overall goals of the team, goal interdependence would be high. The second kind of outcome interdependence is *reward interdependence*—the extent to which rewards that individual team members receive depend on other team members' performance. If the year-end bonus a team member receives is determined only by that member's individual performance, reward interdependence is low. If the bonus is determined by the overall team performance, then reward interdependence is high. For example, if sales team members were rewarded only for how well they performed their part of the sales, reward interdependence would be low; if they were rewarded based on the sales for the entire team, reward interdependence would be high.

To create task interdependence and outcome interdependence, you design different elements of the team, which affect the team in different ways. You design the level of task interdependence by changing how the work itself is conducted; you design the level of outcome interdependence by changing the consequences that follow from accomplishing the work.

The other main type of interdependence, *behavioral interdependence,* is the extent to which team members *actually* interact with each other to accomplish their task. It's important to distinguish between structural and behavioral interdependence because designing a team with high structural interdependence—task interdependence, reward interdependence, and goal interdependence—doesn't necessarily ensure that team members will actually act interdependently. The opposite is also true. Sometimes teams with little structural interdependence choose to work together in a way that creates high behavioral interdependence.

When you're helping a team increase its effectiveness, interdependence is one of the first places to look. This includes understanding the main team tasks that need to be performed, and how task interdependence and outcome interdependence are designed into the team—or need to be designed into the team—to increase the three types of team results.

Teams Aren't Better than Groups: It's a Matter of Fit

A group that performs very well doesn't become a team. There are high-performing groups and high-performing teams. How well an entity (that is, team or group) performs doesn't determine whether it's a group or a team. What distinguishes a group from a team is the design. **If the work is designed so that members are interdependent around a team task, they are a team; if they're not interdependent, they're a group.** Whether a group or a team is effective depends partly on the fit between how the work is designed and how members act. If members are interdependent around a task but act as if they're not, they're a less effective team—but still a team.

Unfortunately, since teams became popular again in the 1990s, many organizations have pushed to make teams the default unit of work, even when the work could be better accomplished as a group. Simply telling a group that it's a team or exhorting it to act like a team doesn't make it a team.

Deciding whether to be a group or a team is an important decision; it affects the way many elements of the group or team are designed and the ability to achieve results. And whether to be structured as a group or a team isn't always clear. Often the task to be accomplished doesn't predetermine a certain degree of interdependence, especially among knowledge workers; the task could be designed with a little or a lot of interdependence. What matters is that there is a good fit between the task to be accomplished and the degree of interdependence used to accomplish it.

You can tell when there isn't a good fit. When a group is inappropriately made to work like a team, members don't see the need to attend team meetings. They consider them a waste of their time. When they do attend, they get frustrated being asked to solve problems that don't significantly involve them and to spend time deciding how to work together on issues that don't require the level of coordination being asked of them. As a result, they often tune out, unless the topic focuses on their particular part of the business. When members do participate, they focus on their own interests rather than also considering the needs of teammates or the larger organization. At other times, they are quiet or engaged on their smartphones. There is little curiosity and accountability because members don't consider that anything of consequence to them is on the agenda.

You can also tell when what should be a team is designed as a group, with little or no interdependence. The team spends its time listening to updates but not addressing the real issues that are affecting the team. Members become frustrated with other members because they don't get the information, collaboration, or other resources they need from each other. Their frustration mounts because they don't have a venue to solve these problems directly with each other; instead, they must work through their common boss or handle the issues one-on-one.

A Better Question: For What Tasks Do We Need to Be a Team?

I've been discussing interdependence as if an entity is either a group or a team, but that's an oversimplification. Even though a team may have a primary task, a team often has several tasks, some for which they need to be interdependent and others not. **Rather than asking whether we are a team or a group, a more useful question is: "What are the tasks around which we need to be a team and what are the tasks around which we need to be a group?"** This enables the team or group to design its elements to reflect different levels of interdependence, depending on the task. For example, effective teams solve problems and make decisions in different ways, depending on whether they are dealing with an issue on which they are interdependent or not interdependent.

HOW INTERDEPENDENCE AFFECTS YOUR WORK WITH TEAMS AND GROUPS

Whether you're working with a team or a group, and how well the members are managing their interdependence, can affect your work with them in several ways. First, it may affect how the group responds to you. If you're working with a group in which members believe the leader is requiring more interdependence than necessary, the members may see your work with them as another example of this unnecessary interdependence and may be disengaged or seem frustrated

with you. Second, if the team or group members are having problems working together and getting the results they need, the issue of interdependence may be a root cause and one you want to explore with them. Third, if the team or group is new and looking for you to help it design how best to function, one of the first questions to explore is what degree of interdependence do the tasks require.

Toward the end of the chapter, I will explain how you can help teams and groups identify the appropriate level of interdependence for do the tasks, and how to design their team or group elements accordingly. To do this, we first need to understand all the elements that make a team or group effective.

THE TEAM EFFECTIVENESS MODEL

Until this point, I've been talking about team effectiveness models in general. Now I want to make the connection between team effective models in general and the TEM by describing what makes a practical team model. Remember that the Team Effectiveness Model applies to both groups and teams.

What Makes a Good Team Effectiveness Model

Models and theories are essential to your work. As the statistician George Box said, "All models are wrong, but some are useful."[8] Just as some teams are designed better than others, so are some team effectiveness models. To the extent that you use models that are well designed, you increase the chance of improving your practice and helping groups. A well-designed team effectiveness model will improve your ability to design, diagnose, and intervene with teams and groups. As the social psychologist Kurt Lewin said, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory." Here are some of the ways that the TEM is useful.

The TEM is a normative model, which shows you what a team *should look like* if it's effective. In contrast, a descriptive team model explains how teams function, not how they should function. It's not designed to help you identify whether the team is effective, and if it's not, what to do. A good example of a descriptive model is the widely cited, four-stage Tuckman model of group development.[9] Based on his review of 50 studies of mostly therapy groups, Tuckman identified four developmental stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing (he later added a fifth stage adjourning). Tuckman wasn't describing how these therapy groups should evolve, only how they did evolve. Unfortunately, many team practitioners have treated Tuckman's descriptive model as a normative model, assuming that for teams to be effective, they should move through all of these four stages in the order described. Because many descriptive models identify less than effective behavior, if you confuse a descriptive model with a normative model, you may be contributing to a group

being less effective than it could be. In contrast, a normative model enables you to watch a group in action and identify gaps between how the team is currently functioning and how it would function if it were more effective.

The TEM is a causal model. It describes how the team elements interact to create the team results. This enables you to predict what's likely to happen to a team if you see certain structures, processes, or behaviors. It also enables you to help a team conduct a root cause analysis so it can make changes that solve problems instead of simply addressing symptoms. In other words, a causal model helps you identify the points of leverage for helping a team improve its effectiveness. A simple list of five or seven things that teams need to do to be effective isn't a causal model.[10] It may be easy to understand, but it doesn't help you understand what to do if a team isn't effective.

The TEM is internally consistent. If a model is internally consistent, then all of its parts fit together. They aren't in conflict. Internal consistency is important because it ensures that when you use the model to intervene and design, you don't create conflicts for yourself or the team you're helping.

The TEM is relatively comprehensive; it captures much of what the research has found to contribute to effective teams. Like any model, it's a simplified way to describe how something works, but it identifies the factors that explain most of what contributes to effective teams.

The Team Effectiveness Model: The Big Picture

The TEM (Figure 6.2) defines (1) the results an effective team achieves, (2) the elements that a team needs to achieve these results, (3) how each of these elements should be designed, and (4) how the elements are related to each other. Although it's called the Team Effectiveness Model, it's equally relevant for groups and teams. That's because **the elements that make work groups and teams effective are the same; what may differ is how the elements are designed**. You can use the TEM with a variety of groups and teams, including leadership teams, functional teams, cross-functional teams, project teams, and task forces. It's designed for groups and teams that discuss work issues and make decisions about them. You can use the TEM for groups and teams whose members come from one part of an organization, many parts of an organization, or more than one organization.

The TEM has three parts—mindset, design, and results—and incorporates the mutual learning approach. **The results of the TEM and the mutual learning approach are the same: (1) performance, (2) working relationships, and (3) individual well-being. The mindset of the TEM and the mutual learning approach are also the same** (see Chapter 4 to review the mutual learning and TEM results and mindset). However, the mindset in the TEM represents a collective team mindset rather than an individual mindset.

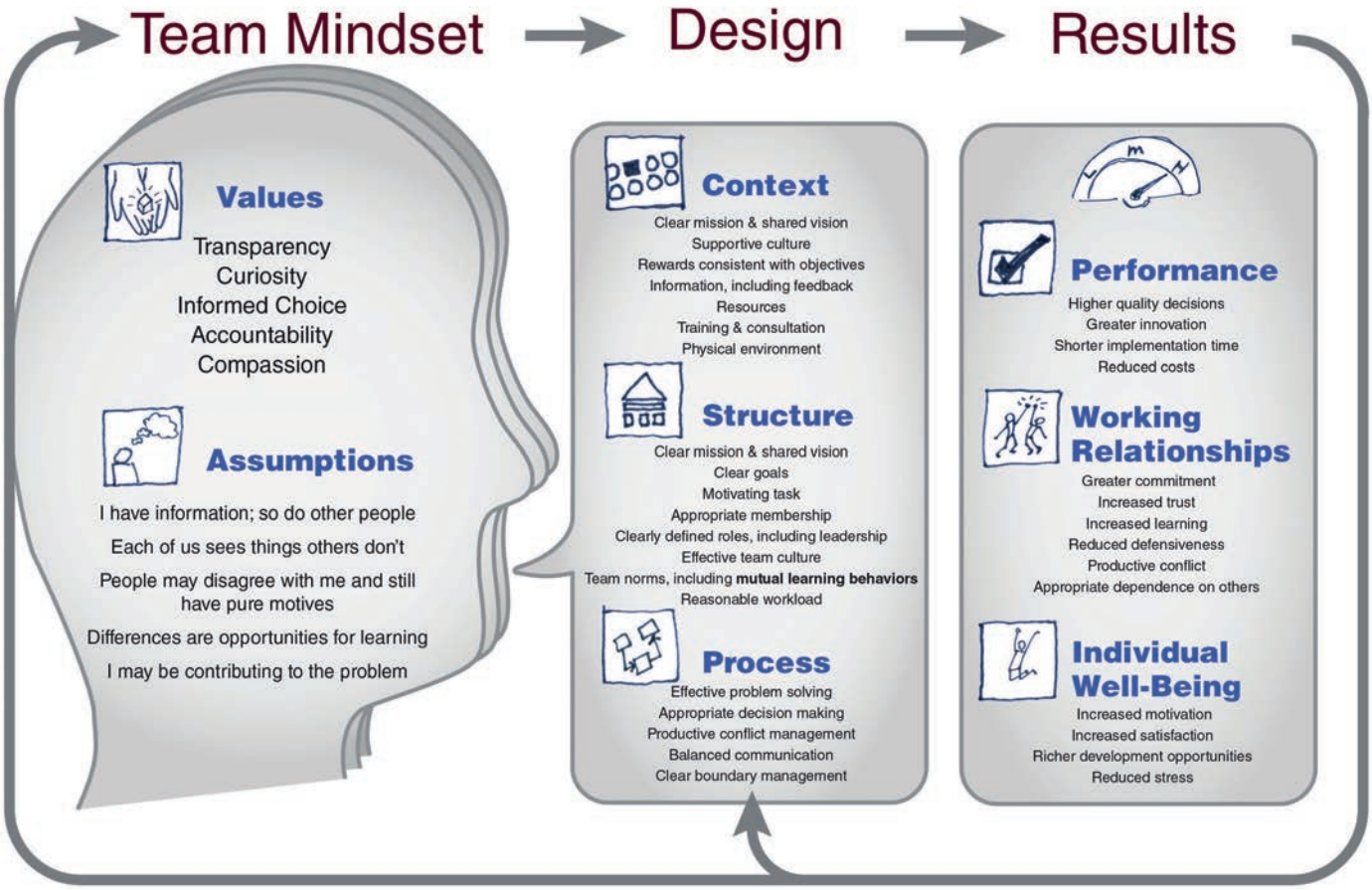


Figure 6.2 Team Effectiveness Model

The main difference between the TEM and the mutual learning model is their middle columns; in the TEM, it's design, and in the mutual learning approach, it's behavior. The TEM design column includes three factors that contribute to team effectiveness—context, structure, and process. These include organizational and team-level factors, indicating that it takes more than effective behaviors to create an effective team. Still, as Figure 6.3 shows, the TEM includes the eight mutual learning behaviors within the structure element called team norms, including mutual learning behaviors.

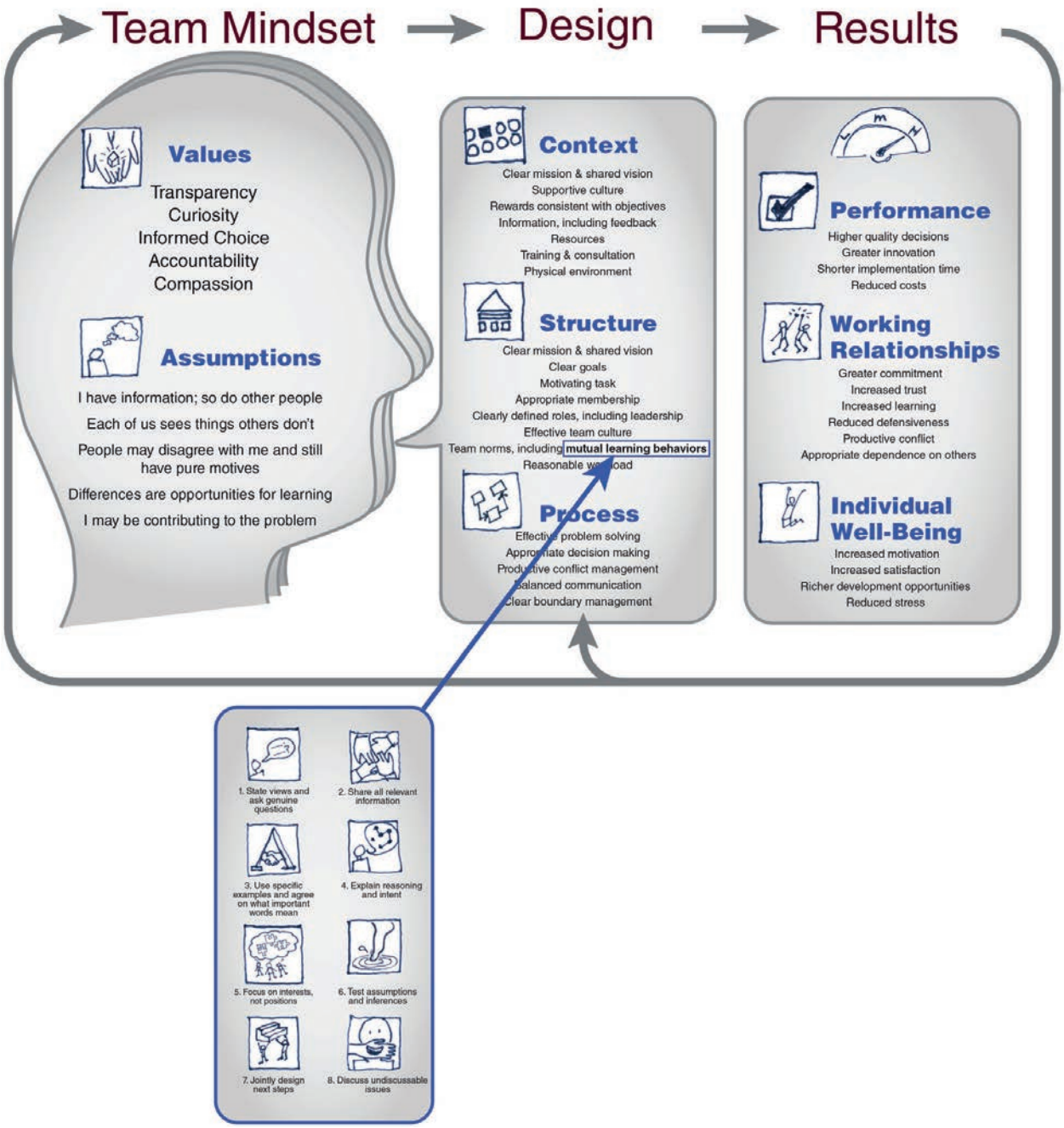


Figure 6.3 Eight Behaviors as Part of Team Effectiveness Model

WHAT'S YOUR MINDSET AS YOU DESIGN?[11]

How you think is how you design. If the people who design the team do so with a unilateral control mindset, then they will embed elements of unilateral control in the team structures and processes. This will create the results that the team is trying to avoid: poorer performance, weaker working relationships, and lower team member well-being.

Here are two performance management examples of how using a unilateral control mindset leads to ineffective team design:

- Many teams have a performance management process that leaders use to assess their direct reports' performance and to give them feedback. This process is usually designed so that, before actually meeting with the direct report, you assess that person's performance and generate examples to support your conclusion. Your leader approves your assessments of your direct report's performance before you have the conversation with the direct report. This preemptive oversight is supposed to ensure that leaders fairly assign performance ratings. But it also makes it much harder to be curious about what your direct report thinks, because if you learned that you'd missed some significant elements of your direct report's performance, you'd need to go back to your leader and correct yourself, and say that person deserved a higher rating than you'd thought. When a performance management process is designed like this, your curiosity easily gives way to defending your initial assessment.
- In many teams, the leader's assessment of a direct report comes from information that is provided by the direct report's peers or other managers. But there's no place in the process where the leader shares that with the person he or she is assessing or reveals the source of his information. As a result, team members and others working with the direct report aren't accountable to the person being assessed.

These examples describe how unilateral control core values and assumptions get embedded in one aspect of team design and how they can lead to unintended negative consequences. My point is that **every element of team design reflects the mindset of the person or people designing it.**

Just as leaders are usually unaware of how they're using their mindset to design behavior, they're unaware of how they're using their mindset to design elements of the team. They don't necessarily intend to design the team in a way that may undermine its effectiveness; it's just how their operating system works. That's one reason that leaders are often surprised when their teams aren't consistently following the core values they espouse. The team's design reflects and reinforces a different set of values and assumptions than the ones the leader may be espousing.

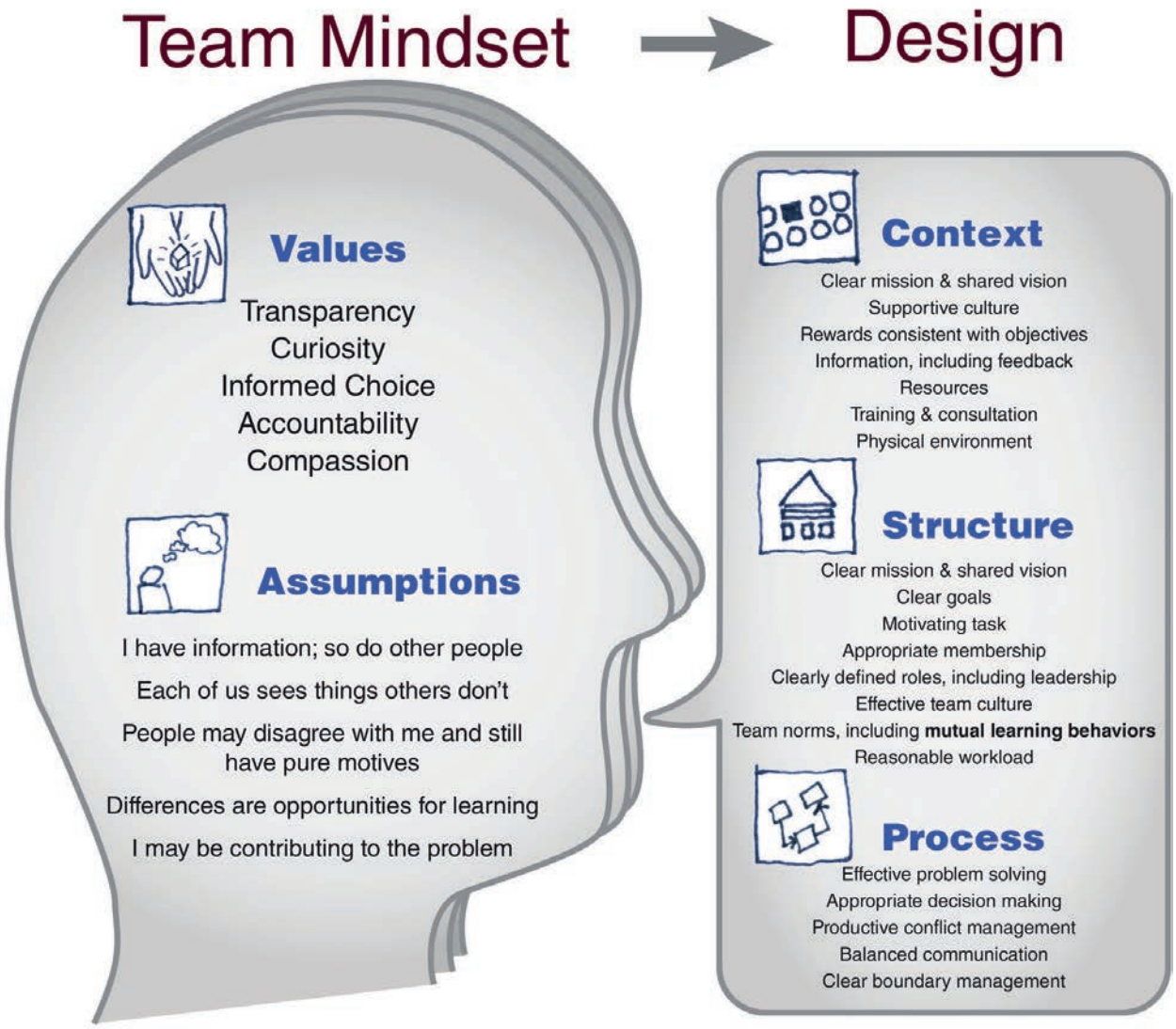


Figure 6.4 Team Mindset and Design

In addition to structures and processes, team design involves shaping the context in which the team exists, so the rest of this chapter will break down the design challenge into those three topics. Figure 6.4 reiterates the connection between mindset and team design and previews the discussions.

TEAM STRUCTURE, PROCESS, AND CONTEXT[12]

Team structure **comprises the relatively stable characteristics of a team.** When people think of structure, they usually think first of organizational structure—who reports to whom. But a team's structure also includes its mission and vision, the task, the membership, and the roles that each person plays.

***Team process* is *how* things are done rather than *what* is done.** To be effective, teams need to manage a number of processes, including how they solve problems and make decisions. Structure is simply a stable, recurring process that emerges from team members continually interacting with each other in the same way.[13]

***Team context* includes elements that are usually designed or that emerge from the larger organization and that influence how a team works.** This includes how clear the organization's mission is, how supportive the organization's culture is, and the extent to which the organization's reward system is consistent with the team's objectives and how the team works together.

In general, teams located at higher levels in the organizational hierarchy have more authority to design their team elements. Work teams may have their problem-solving and decision-making processes as well as team goals and roles set for them, whereas leadership teams decide these for themselves. Teams located at higher organizational levels usually have greater ability to influence the context in which they work.

Let's look at how structure, process, and context contribute to a team's results, and how the mutual learning mindset and interdependence affect the design. As you read through structure, process, and context, keep in mind that a team is a system. To get the best team results, all of the elements that constitute it need to be congruent with each other, including with the team's mindset.

TEAM STRUCTURE

These are the elements that make an effective team structure: (1) clear mission and shared vision, (2) clear goals, (3) motivating task, (4) appropriate membership, (5) clearly defined roles, including leadership, (5) effective group culture, (6) group norms, including mutual learning behaviors, and (7) reasonable workload.

Clear Mission and Shared Vision

The mission is the purpose of a team; it answers the question, "Why do we exist?" A team achieves its mission by accomplishing various goals, which in turn are achieved by performing various tasks. A vision is a mental picture of the future that an organization seeks to create. Whereas a mission clarifies why the team exists, a vision identifies what a team should look like and how it should act as it seeks to accomplish its mission. Together, a mission and a vision provide meaning that can inspire and guide the members' work. Many teams have mission and vision statements in their conference rooms. But the value of a mission and vision lies in the shared commitment that members make to achieving them, not in the laminated poster on a wall.

Ultimately, it's the team leader's responsibility to set or confirm the mission for the team. But mutual learning leaders don't simply lay out a compelling mission and then expect people to sign up for the trip. Using the mutual learning mindset, they are transparent about not only what the mission is but why it's that mission as opposed to other plausible missions. They're also curious about others' views of the mission and seek to incorporate their interests and ideas. When others make suggestions that the leader finally decides not to incorporate into the mission, the leader is accountable for explaining his or her reasoning. The leader also asks team members to be accountable by saying whether they are willing to commit to the final version of the mission the leader and the team developed. Assuming that members are committed to the team's mission simply because they're on the team is too big an assumption to leave untested.

Ultimately, mission and vision are personal. For team members to commit to them, the mission and vision need to speak to them directly. When members aren't able to commit to the mission and what's required of them to achieve it, mutual learning leaders respond with compassion rather than seeing this as an act of insubordination or organizational treason.

Clear Goals. The team's goals need to be clear enough that the team agrees on what they mean and can measure its progress toward them. The team's goals also need to be consistent with the larger mission and vision. Consistent with the research, in a mutual learning team, whether the goals are set by the leader or with team members, the reasoning underlying the goals is clear.[14] To increase goal interdependence, goal accomplishment is also measured at the team level, instead of only the individual level.

Motivating Task

Even when team members are interdependent with each other, team members can become disengaged because the team task isn't motivating. What makes a team task motivating isn't how charismatic or compelling the leader is or the rewards that follow from strong performance; it's the design of the team task itself. Some teams design members' work in ways that doing it becomes uninteresting; other teams design their work so that doing the work is itself motivating. Research shows that for a team task to be motivating, it should meet the following conditions:[15]

- It requires members to use a variety of their skills.
- It involves a whole and meaningful piece of work with a visible outcome.
- The outcomes have significant consequences, either for customers or others in the organization.

- It gives members significant autonomy over how they accomplish the task so that they feel ownership of their work.
- It generates regular and trustworthy feedback to team members about how well the team is performing.

For the team leader, providing informed choice means enabling the team to jointly design the task. It's difficult to know the variety of skills that members have and want to use, what they consider a meaningful piece of work, and what they consider autonomy. By jointly designing the task with the team and being curious, the team increases the chance that the task meets these conditions.

To increase the degree of task interdependence, the team designs the task so that multiple team members exchange help and resources interactively to complete the work.

Appropriate Membership

An effective team has a carefully selected membership. Of course, members need to bring an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills to successfully complete the team's goals. But there are also many team member characteristics that are strong predictors of team performance. Some of these include personality factors such as team member agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and preference for teamwork.[16]

Selecting team members that prefer to work as a team is particularly important if a team is interdependent around its task. Research shows that teams whose members share egalitarian values create more interdependence than teams with shared meritocratic values.[17] Team members who prefer to work individually are not very influenced by team or organizational values that promote cooperation, but, unfortunately, team members who prefer to work cooperatively are influenced by individualistic cultures to become more individualistic.[18] This is one example of how building a team in which interdependent members actually work as a team is a multifaceted task that means taking into account individual characteristics, team design, and the context in which the team functions.

Teams also need to decide how many members will comprise the team. When Abraham Lincoln was asked how long a man's legs should be, he responded, ". . . long enough to reach from his body to the ground."[19] Similarly, the answer to the question, "How many members should be on a team?" is "Just enough to complete the task." A team with more members than it needs to complete the task will spend unnecessary time on coordination that could be spent working directly on the task. In addition, as the team grows, members can lose interest in the work and reduce their effort. Still, the research does not show a clear relationship between team size and team performance, perhaps because the appropriate size of a team depends on its task.[20]

As we discussed earlier in this chapter, a team must also have clear understanding of who is on the team and a team membership that is stable enough to have the time to learn how to work together well.

Clearly Defined Roles, Including Leadership

In many teams, team members consider the formal leader solely responsible for the team and the formal leader takes on this role. By formal leader, I mean the head of the team. As a result, the formal leader leads the meetings, sets team agendas, guides the flow of discussion, and identifies next steps. Members participate but leave the leadership roles to the formal leader. This is what I call a one-leader-in-the-room mindset. If you've consulted to a team like this, even if the team accomplished its goals, you probably saw that the team members were overly dependent on the formal leader.

In teams using mutual learning, team member roles are more fluid. Members may rotate chairing the meetings, taking responsibility for coordinating agendas, and identifying next steps. More important, leadership isn't confined to the formal leader. It's a shared role and responsibility. Operating from the assumption that each person may see things that others miss, each member is accountable for ensuring that the team is functioning well. When a member sees something happening in the team that may reduce its effectiveness, it's that person's role to raise it with the team, whether that person is a member or the formal team leader.

Research suggests that as teams have higher task interdependence, leadership behaviors have a more significant impact on team effectiveness.[21] This makes sense, given that teams with greater task interdependence require more complex coordination.

Effective Team Culture

Culture is powerful but intangible. *Team culture* is the set of values and assumptions that team members share and that guide their behavior. A team's culture can influence how it deals with issues of quality, timeliness, authority, or any other issue relevant to the team's work. For example, one leadership team I worked with shared—and operated consistently with—the belief that if you give intelligent people the right information and let them do their work, they will create a great product. As a result, there were very few complaints of micromanaging; people were given a large amount of autonomy. They produced innovative solutions that met their customer's needs. In contrast, other organizations have a belief that people need to be told exactly what to do or carefully monitored, or otherwise negative consequences can result. In these organizations, team members have little autonomy and feel underutilized.

The core values and assumptions that constitute a team's mindset can also be considered part of that team's culture, but I have identified them separately because they are so fundamental that they influence how a team engages other aspects of its culture. Still, it's fair to say that **changing a team's mindset is changing a team's culture**.

You can't identify a team's culture simply by listening to what members say they value or believe. We often espouse values and beliefs that are inconsistent with our actions, and we are often unaware of our inconsistencies.[22] The values and beliefs that constitute the team's culture have to be inferred by observing the artifacts of the culture,[23] including how members act.[24] Artifacts are products of the culture, including the policies, procedures, and structures that members create.

Culture affects everything a team does and gets reinforced through policies and behavior, but it generally operates outside team members' awareness, which makes it difficult to identify and change.

Mutual learning teams understand the power of culture. They understand that how the team thinks is how it leads. So they talk about the culture that they want to create and how it may differ from their current team culture. They identify the values and assumptions that are currently operating in the team and openly discuss whether they are helping or hindering the team. They are always asking themselves, "How does the decision or action we're about to take align with the values and assumptions we say we stand for?" This often involves discussing undiscussable issues. After they have identified gaps between their present culture and their desired culture, they jointly design ways to close this gap.

Team Norms, Including Mutual Learning Behaviors

Norms are expectations that team members share about how they should behave with each other. Norms are ways of putting the culture into action. Teams can have norms about anything, including who gets copied on e-mails, how to manage time, and who talks first in meetings.

One easily observed norm involves time. (Throughout the world, time is treated differently in different cultures.) For example, some leadership teams I work with place a high value on the precision of time and assume that honoring time commitments conveys respect. As a result, they have a norm that meetings start exactly at the designated starting time, regardless of who is absent. Other teams I work with have different values and assumptions about time. They have developed a norm that leads them to start meetings after everyone arrives, which could be 15 minutes later than planned.

Unfortunately, team norms often develop implicitly, just like the values and assumptions that give rise to them. When that happens, a team finds itself

operating with a set of expectations that has mysteriously evolved over time and may not serve the team's needs.

One of the norms in many teams is that the formal leader, because of his authority, gets to play by a different set of rules than the rest of the team members. He may control or dominate the meeting, interrupt others, or switch the conversation when he thinks someone is off track. Other team members may find this behavior ineffective, but they don't raise this issue. But mutual learning teams operate from the assumption that all team members, including the formal leader, play by the same ground rules. That means that behavior that is considered ineffective for a team member is also ineffective for the team leader. This doesn't change the formal leader's authority to make decisions; it simply requires that person to use effective communication behavior in doing so.

The eight mutual learning behaviors—when adopted by a team—become team norms for putting the mutual learning core values and assumptions into action. Because mutual learning teams are transparent about their norms and make an informed choice to adopt them, they're able to hold each other accountable when they see others acting inconsistent with a team expectation. In fact, in mutual learning teams, it's a norm that *all* team members give feedback when they think others are acting inconsistently with a team expectation. In this way, team members share accountability for supporting each other in creating the behaviors they have agreed will lead to better results.

Reasonable Workload

Although technology has increased the speed at which we can perform many tasks, it hasn't increased the speed at which we think or can effectively discuss things with each other—two central tasks for leaders and teams. Effective teams have the ability to estimate when the demands on their time will become so great that the quality of their work will begin to suffer. More important, teams that are able to raise undiscussable issues explicitly address this when they see it coming.

TEAM PROCESS

Team process refers to *how* things are done rather than *what* is done. To be effective, teams must manage these processes: (1) problem solving, (2) decision making, (3) conflict management, (4) communication, and (5) boundary management. The two primary team processes are problem solving and decision making.

Effective Problem Solving

Many teams spend much of their time solving problems. A *problem* is simply a gap between a desired outcome and the current situation. Problem solving is the systematic approach a team uses to close the gap.

Teams have many systematic processes for solving problems, such as Lean, Six Sigma, and other continuous improvement methods. All of these methods can be very powerful, but only if team members are willing to be transparent, curious, accountable, and compassionate with each other. If team members withhold information or assume that they are right and others are wrong, these problem-solving processes become battlegrounds for unilateral control mindsets. Teams that use some formal type of problem-solving process are typically more skilled at the technical side than at raising and discussing challenging issues. As a result, they end up trying to solve problems without all the relevant information.

Appropriate Decision Making

When people first learn about mutual learning, they often assume that they'll need to make decisions by consensus. It isn't so. **The difference between a team that uses mutual learning and one that uses unilateral control isn't with the kind of decision-making rules they use—it's their mindset.**

Mutual learning and unilateral control have the same general decision-making rules: (1) The team decides either by consensus or another rule, including delegating it to a part of the team to decide; (2) the leader decides after discussion with the team; (3) the leader decides after discussion with individual team members; (4) the leader decides without discussion with team members; or (5) the leader delegates the decision to the team or certain members. Now let's explore how leaders using unilateral control and mutual learning might apply the same decision-marking rule but create different outcomes.

If leaders use unilateral control to approach a consensus decision, they're thinking, *How do I get my team members to buy in to the solution that I have already developed?* If they're using mutual learning, they're thinking, *How do I ensure that we get a decision that is based on valid information that ideally meets all stakeholders' needs?* The solution may be one that they thought of before the meeting, one that another team member suggested, or one that the team jointly crafted in the meeting.

If leaders are operating from unilateral control, they assume that they understand the situation and are right. When others offer views or solutions that disagree with their views, they privately question others' motives and discount others' views. But if leaders are operating from mutual learning, they assume that others may see things that they don't. They openly question others and try to learn from their various views.

Many times leaders need to make decisions without consulting others; this is not necessarily operating from unilateral control. They're operating from unilateral control if they consider their own needs only and assume they have most or all of the information needed to make a sound decision or if they don't tell their direct reports about these decisions, let alone how they arrived at them. In the same situation, leaders are operating from mutual learning if they act as a steward, thinking about all stakeholders' interests; make the decision recognizing that they have less than full information; and have a sense of accountability to their direct reports. They tell their direct reports the decisions they made and the reasoning underlying them. They ask if their decision may create any problems, recognizing that, in some situations, they may not be able to change the decision.

If mutual learning leaders have already made a decision, they tell people so. They don't go through the charade of getting input if they've made up their mind. They understand that going through the motions of getting input and then implementing the decision they had already made creates team member cynicism, not engagement. They understand that seeking input without genuine curiosity or openness to change is manipulative and reduces trust and commitment.

Team members don't expect to be involved in every decision; nor do they want to be. But they do expect the formal leader to be transparent with them about whether she's made up her mind about something or how open she is to being influenced. And team members expect that the formal leader won't waste the team's time by getting input on issues that have already been decided.

How a team makes decisions also reflects how it is accountable to others inside and outside the team. In one organization, a leadership team was voting whether to select a particular internal candidate for an HR position. One team member expressed some concerns about the candidate but recused himself from the vote because he didn't have any specific data to back up his concerns. A second team member said he had had concerns for over a year about some actions the candidate had taken. The president asked the second team member whether he had shared his concerns with the candidate. When the member said, "no," the president replied, "Then your vote doesn't count, either." That team member learned a lesson about accountability: he couldn't withhold feedback from an employee and then use that same information to vote against the employee's promotion.

Productive Conflict Management

Effective teams appreciate that conflict is a natural part of teamwork and organizations. They understand that conflict is sometimes simply what occurs

when people advocate for different solutions that can't all be implemented. The mutual learning mindset makes it easier for a team to engage conflict productively. Because members assume that differences are opportunities for learning, they don't dig in to positions and try to win the conflict. Nor do they try to avoid the conflict or simply accommodate others' positions.[25]

Instead, they get curious, engage others, discover the source of their different views, and work to bridge the differences. Bridging the differences isn't the same as compromising. When you compromise, you can still operate from positions, seeking to maximize your own gain. When you bridge the differences instead of splitting them, you understand where your assumptions differ from others and where your interests are aligned, even when your positions are in conflict. This enables the team to generate solutions that aren't possible through compromise. Because team members assume that no one has all the pieces of the puzzle and that people can disagree without having questionable motives, they can address high-stakes conflicts without having them negatively affect working relationships.[26] In fact, mutual learning teams often report that after resolving a high-stakes conflict, they often have a better working relationship with the other parties. Teams that have higher task interdependence also require greater skill for managing conflicts.

Balanced Communication

Teams need to communicate so that members get the information they need when they need it and so that the team develops a common understanding of the issues it discusses. Without common understanding, team members can go off in different directions and can create conflicts even if they are acting with the best of intentions.

The mutual learning approach provides basic principles and specific guidance for balanced and effective communication. By balanced I mean that members communicate directly with the people from whom they need information and with whom they need to solve problems. In many teams, team communication operates from the assumption that members are accountable to the leader. As a result, when challenging situations arise, the leader often serves as the hub of communication, with each member sharing relevant information with the leader. But in mutual learning teams, communication operates from the assumption that each team member is accountable to the full team. As a result, members are accountable for sharing their own information directly with the relevant team members. The team leader doesn't serve as an intermediary for team members who are having conflicts with each other.

Teams that use a mutual learning mindset communicate about a wider range of issues. They're able to discuss issues that other teams don't know how to or aren't willing to discuss. As a result, they're able to address barriers to team

effectiveness that other team members can't. Finally, because they understand that both thoughts and emotions are important for making good decisions, they talk about their feelings as part of problem solving and managing conflict, leading members to have a deeper understanding of each other.

The degree of interdependence also affects how a team communicates. Research shows that members of groups with high interdependence share more information with each other than do members of groups with low interdependence.[27] In addition, when group members have very different pieces of relevant information, it has a much greater effect on team performance when interdependence is high compared with when interdependence is low.[28]

Clear Boundary Management

Every team has to figure out how to work with the larger organization it is part of as well as individuals and groups outside of the organization.[29] This is managing a team's boundaries. When a team is working with other teams, it has to figure out (1) what information to share with other teams and what information it needs from other teams; (2) where its responsibility for a task ends and the other team's responsibility begins; and (3) which team gets to make which decisions. If a team doesn't manage these boundaries well, it can end up without enough information to accomplish the task or taking on tasks that are beyond its expertise, responsibility, or resources; alternatively, it could end up with another team performing its work. Finally, it could end up without appropriate control over its own area of responsibility.

When team members seek agreement on these issues with other teams, they're often doing so as peers; neither team has the authority to unilaterally decide these issues. In mutual learning, if the teams can't collaboratively reach agreement on these issues, they don't unilaterally escalate the issue to a higher level. They jointly escalate it to the two formal team leaders. Fortunately, mutual learning teams are less likely to have to jointly escalate these kinds of boundary conflicts with other teams, even when the other teams don't know about mutual learning.

TEAM CONTEXT

Every organizational team is influenced by the larger organization—even the most senior leadership team. Teams are more effective when their larger organizational context includes: (1) A clear *organizational* mission and shared vision, (2) a supportive culture, (3) rewards consistent with team objectives, (4) information including feedback, (5) material resources, (6) training and consultation, and (7) a physical environment that supports the work.

A team's ability to influence or even control its context varies with its level in the organization. In any case, mutual learning teams take an active approach to the larger organizational environment that influences their work. This means changing policies when a team has the authority to do so, influencing policy when it doesn't have the authority, and finding creative ways to minimize the unintended negative effects of the organization on the team when it can do neither.

Clear Organizational Mission and a Shared Vision

An organization has a mission and a vision that serves as the umbrella for all of its teams. Clearly, a team's mission and vision should be congruent with those of the larger organization. Still, a team may find times when others outside its team are acting in ways that seem at odds with the organization's espoused mission and vision. Mutual learning teams are willing to engage others with curiosity and compassion when this occurs.

As an organization undergoes significant changes in its mission, expect that teams will face challenges. A health care provider that began moving to an accountable-care organization model found that the shift in mission and vision led to key structural changes that required its clinical leadership team to redefine the team's roles and reporting relationships with other key leaders in the organization.

A Supportive Organizational Culture

Just as each team has a culture, so does the larger organization. Teams that work in an organization with a supportive culture have a greater chance of being effective because team members share the basic values and assumptions that guide organizational behavior in general. When a team has a culture at odds with the larger organizational culture, even simple work with other teams can be challenging.

Many organizations espouse values and assumptions similar to mutual learning, but few organizations, including those that espouse this kind of culture, act in ways that consistently demonstrate it. In practice, most organizations' cultures resemble unilateral control to a greater or lesser degree. One organization development manager told me that his organization had a great culture on paper but that leaders and teams didn't know how to live the culture every day. He saw mutual learning as a way to translate the company's compelling but abstract culture into everyday behavior. The teams you're helping may be in a similar situation.

Then again, the organizations you're helping may *espouse* a culture of unilateral control. If so, the challenge isn't simply developing new behaviors to put the culture into action; it also means changing the values and

assumptions that are embedded in the organization. As difficult as it is to change a team's culture, it's exponentially more difficult to change the larger organization's culture, if only because of its size. If the team you're working with is senior enough, it may decide that the mutual learning core values and assumptions reflect the kind of organization culture that it wants the organization to embody. If so, modeling the values and assumptions in that team is a good start for others to learn what is possible.

But even if the team isn't in a position to formally influence the culture of the larger organization, when it works with people outside the team, it can influence how those people think and act. I've worked with many leaders who, after a particularly challenging but effective meeting, were approached by another leader who said something like, "How did you do that? I've been trying for months to get an agreement with that group, and you did it in a few hours." By modeling successful mutual learning and having people see the results, they are more likely to become curious about how to create similar results. These are opportunities for team members to explain what they were doing and the mindset that made it possible.

Rewards Consistent with Objectives

Designing rewards to obtain better team performance isn't straightforward—the best approach depends on the type of interdependence. If the team task doesn't involve interdependence, it doesn't matter whether the rewards are individual or team-based.[30] If the task involves high interdependence, team-based rewards are essential for obtaining strong performance. Teams that receive group incentives for an interdependent task outperform teams receiving individual rewards.[31] But if the team task is hybrid—that is, some tasks involve interdependence and some don't—rewards don't elicit better performance, even when they are congruent with how the team task is performed.[32] In general, it's difficult for hybrid teams to be effective.

One graphic design team in a financial company illustrates how a change in team rewards affects performance. This design team had an excellent reputation, having won a number of industry awards. Members were highly interdependent on projects; they worked closely together, not concerned about who got credit. The team leader rewarded the team as a whole for their work—a reward design consistent with the research above. But HR changed the reward system so that each team member had to be rated and ranked individually and given a merit bonus based on individual effort. The team found itself paying attention to who was doing what; henceforth, work that had flowed naturally among them now was in contention. To their credit, they recognized that the new reward system undermined their effectiveness, and they approached HR to describe their concerns and see if their interests could be met. Unfortunately,

HR maintained that the team could not have a team-based reward system. They had to divide the performance pay among the team, and they couldn't divide it equally among all of the members. Eventually, most of the team members left to start their own firm.

Rewards need to be congruent with the values that the organization espouses. When I introduced mutual learning to leaders in a global oil company, I first showed them the unilateral control approach. I asked, "Does anyone recognize this approach?" One leader said, "Yeah, that's basically what we use here." Another leader added, "Use it? We've been rewarded for it—I've been rewarded for it—for years!" The organization was concerned about the results that its leadership practices were generating but hadn't realized that it had designed the reward system so that it reinforced the unilateral control results.

Often organizations hope to create a certain culture even as they reward behaviors that are inconsistent with it.[33] Employees are exhorted to be transparent and accountable at the same time HR policy prohibits them from talking about their salaries with others. Leaders receive survey results evaluating their leadership in which the evaluations are anonymous so the leader can't know who has said what about him and those who said it don't have to be accountable to him for the accuracy of their statements. Ultimately, this leads to cynicism as people see the gap between what the organization says is important and what it rewards and prohibits. And cynicism is a first step toward apathy or exit.

Mutual learning teams identify how organizational systems are rewarding ineffective team behavior, and they try to change these systems. Even if a team is unable to change or influence them, it can discuss the negative consequences of the systems and explore ways to minimize their effects.

Information, Including Feedback

Every team needs information from the larger organization to accomplish its objectives and improve the way it works. Information is the lifeblood of informed choice.

Systems Information. As organizations use more sophisticated integrated planning systems, leadership teams increasingly have real-time information about finance and accounting, supply chains, manufacturing, sales and service, customer relations, and human resources. These integrated systems can enable a team to work effectively with others within the organization and with customers and vendors. Of course, a team's ability to use the information depends on its access to the information, the quality of the information, and the extent to which it captures data that a team needs.

Information from Other Teams. Much of the information a team needs isn't embedded in information systems; it's in the minds of the others that a team

works with. Whether a team is working with another function, with suppliers, or with customers, its success depends on the ability to get all of the information on the table to make good decisions. Many leaders I've worked with complain that these other teams aren't forthcoming with information they need. They infer that others are withholding information. But this often changes when a team becomes more transparent with its information, more curious about what the other team's interests are, and more compassionate about the other team's situation. When others understand that you intend to use their information for them rather than *on* them, they become more willing to share what you need.

Feedback from Colleagues. One of the most pervasive ways that organizations fail their teams is by withholding feedback from team members or creating feedback mechanisms that aren't transparent or accountable. I gave an example of this problem earlier in the chapter when I described how managers did not give feedback to their peers' direct reports. In mutual learning, the simple principle is this: **If you work with people directly and have concerns about their work, you are accountable for sharing your concerns with them directly, whether they have more, less, or the same amount of authority as you**. You cannot abdicate or delegate this task. Everyone carries their own water.

Survey Feedback. One area in which almost all organizations fail to demonstrate transparency and accountability is in 360-degree feedback. In 360-degree feedback, a leader or a team learns how he or the team is doing from those who complete a survey. If the feedback is for an individual leader, that person receives the anonymous aggregated scores of some of the person's peers, some of the person's direct reports, and perhaps some of the person's customers—internal or external. The team leader's responses are identified because people usually have only one manager, and she is formally responsible for managing performance. If the feedback is for a team, the team receives the anonymous scores of peers on other teams, the team's direct reports, and perhaps the team's customers—internal or external. Again, the team leader's feedback is identified. But even the team members don't know how their fellow team members evaluated the team in the survey items.

All of this makes it difficult if not impossible for a team to improve how it performs and works together. If each team member doesn't know what the other members think about the team, it's difficult to talk about exactly what can be done differently to improve it. And it's difficult to be curious because, if members ask people specifically how they rated the team on a particular item, they're violating the agreement that individual responses will be anonymous. The anonymity that leads to the lack of transparency, curiosity, informed choice, and compassion stems from the assumptions that granting people

anonymity will yield the truth and that it will save face both for those giving the feedback and receiving it. However, there isn't any research indicating that granting anonymity gets the truth; people can still distort their responses because they aren't accountable.[34] And researchers note that 360-degree feedback doesn't necessarily lead to behavior change.

When a team uses mutual learning with 360-degree feedback, all team members complete the survey and ask some direct reports, peers, customers, and the team leader's manager to complete the survey also. When the survey results come back to the team, each team member's responses are identified by name. Those outside the team are also asked to include their name on their surveys, so team members can follow up if they have questions. This makes the responses transparent and accountable. It facilitates curiosity and asking team members what led them to respond as they did and what needs to happen for the team to become more effective in that area. This is the level of conversation that's needed for teams to improve. Can it feel uncomfortable? Yes, at first, but **the goal is not to be comfortable; it's to be effective, even if you feel uncomfortable**.

Only when those giving feedback identify themselves can a team get to the level of behaviors that are specific enough to create change. **If team members don't trust each other enough to give transparent and accountable feedback, then you've probably identified the most significant problem the team faces; solve that problem, and every other team problem becomes much easier to solve.** If team members believe that they must first have trust before they can start moving to mutual learning, then they are confusing cause and effect, and will likely never build or rebuild trust. Trust develops when team members take risks by making themselves vulnerable—for example, by being transparent—and see that others do not use the vulnerability against them.

If the technology doesn't permit it, taking the initiative to identify oneself can take some effort. Tom, a director of a large metropolitan library system, found that when he was asked to complete 360-degree evaluations of his peers, the survey required that his responses be anonymous, even though he wanted his name associated with his feedback. To be transparent and take accountability, in the space provided to add comments, Tom wrote his evaluation of the peer and began each comment with "Tom thinks . . ."

Resources

Apart from information, a team needs other resources, including technology and material resources. For virtual teams, this includes the technology to work together across time and space. While using mutual learning may not increase a

team's ability to obtain additional resources, it can increase the chance that it better understands the reasoning of those providing the resources.

Training and Consultation

Teams need training and consultation to periodically develop their skills and get help solving problems. But the training or consultation a team receives may be at odds with the mutual learning culture it's trying to create. Many leadership teams have told me the different unilateral control techniques they have learned at some point in their careers—either from internal or external consultants. They often mention the sandwich approach to negative feedback, talking last so they learn what their team members really believe and asking rhetorical questions to get people to figure out what you mean.

Often internal HR and learning and development units espouse mutual learning but provide tools and techniques that are unilateral. One organization described its performance management process as a conversation with the employee, but at no time did it teach leaders how to be curious about the inferences leaders made about the direct report or the direct report's reactions to the leader's plan for the direct report.

The approach that mutual learning teams use with training and consultation is the same one used by teams that focus rigorously on their team strategy. They assess every decision they make by asking if it's congruent with the strategy. If it's not, they make a different choice. Regarding training and consultation, mutual learning teams assess the training product or service and ask whether it's congruent with their core values and assumptions. They know that it will create problems for the team if they use training or consultation methods that aren't.

Physical Environment

Winston Churchill said, "We shape our buildings and then our buildings shape us." The physical environment that a team works in has subtle but powerful effects. One consumer products organization designed its new facility based on its desire to increase collaboration. It designed enclosed and open office spaces to meet the different leaders' needs; informal café-like places with tables and comfortable chairs located near stairs so that people could easily start or continue a conversation; a very prominent open staircase to encourage people to walk and therefore meet each other more frequently than on an elevator; conference rooms that people could reserve; and other conference rooms that could only be used spontaneously. All of these environmental decisions stemmed from the organization's specific values and assumptions about encouraging collaboration and spontaneous conversation within teams and across teams.

Contrast that example with a professional development organization that moved into a new building and assigned most of the conference rooms to key leaders so that others could no longer meet spontaneously. Or, worse, an agricultural equipment manufacturer that found out it had redesigned its building to include almost no spaces for people to meet.

How a team's space is configured reflects the values and assumptions of those who design the space. If a team has control over its space, it can ensure that it reflects how the team wants to work together. If it doesn't have control, it can try to influence those decisions or make ad hoc changes so the physical environment facilitates rather than hinders the team's ability to work together.

INTERORGANIZATIONAL TEAMS AND GROUPS

To simplify the discussion about what makes a team effective, I have assumed that all team or group members work for the same organization. Clearly, this is not always the case. You may be helping a team that comprises members from different organizations with a common interest in an issue, such as an industry association team, a task force of community organizations, or a team that is addressing environmental issues and includes representatives from business, labor, and environmental entities and government agencies.

An interorganizational team has structural and process elements that are similar to those of other teams. However, the interorganizational team is subject to the organizational cultural influences of each organization that is represented in the team. In short, an interorganizational team operates in a complex organizational context, which makes working with these teams more challenging.

HELPING DESIGN OR REDESIGN A TEAM OR GROUP

With an understanding of the TEM and how the degree of interdependence that a team or group needs influences how it should be designed, you can help the team or group. The process differs somewhat depending on whether you're working with a newly formed team or a team that has existed for a while.

Helping Design a New Team or Group

Here are the steps for designing a newly formed team or group:

1. **Agree on the team mission, vision of the team, mindset, and culture.** These four elements form the foundation that the team will use

to design the rest of the team elements. The team designs each of the other elements so they advance the mission and are congruent with the team vision, mindset, and desired culture.

2. **Agree on the main tasks that must be accomplished to achieve its mission.** This includes tasks that can be accomplished by individual team members or a subgroup of the team and that must include all team members.
3. **Agree on which of these tasks team members need in order to be interdependent.** Because a given team—especially leadership teams—can often be designed with more or less interdependence, if members don't agree about where and how they are interdependent with each other, this disagreement will spill over into most elements of the team's design. In one leadership team I worked with, the leader believed that the team task had a high degree of task interdependence, but most of his team believed there was a relatively low level of interdependence. Capturing their different views, at one point in the meeting the leader declared, "We need to agree: Are we a gymnastics team, or are we a hockey team?"

   The tasks around which teams are interdependent vary greatly depending on the level of the team in the organization. Work teams are interdependent around producing the organization's products and services or the functions that support them. But leadership teams don't make a product or deliver a service—they make decisions that define the products and services and how the organization functions to produce and deliver them. Senior leadership teams are often interdependent around the following tasks: setting the organization's mission and vision; defining organizational level strategy; approving major capital expenditures; shaping organization-wide change; ensuring organizational leadership; and serving as stewards of the organization's culture.
4. **Design the appropriate level of interdependence into the task.** Using the mission, vision, mindset, and team culture as a foundation, design how the task is performed so it has the appropriate level of interdependence. There are four ways to design a team task so it increases or decreases interdependence:[35]
   - **Design the physical technology of the task.** The team can increase interdependence by designing the physical technology so members must work simultaneously on the task or interact with each other. Alternatively, the team can design the task so it reduces or prevents simultaneous action, such as an assembly line.

- **Assign responsibility for completing the task.** To maximally increase interdependence, all team members can be collectively responsible for completing the full task. To reduce interdependence, individual members can be assigned responsibility for completing specific tasks.
- **Establish rules and processes.** To increase interdependence, rules and processes can be established that expect members to share information, communicate with each other, and solve problems and make decisions together. To reduce interdependence, the opposite kinds of rules and procedures can be established.
- **Distribute the resources necessary to complete the task.** To increase interdependence, the resources can be distributed among team members so they need to share these resources to complete the task. To decrease interdependence, resources can be allocated to individuals responsible for those individual tasks.

5. **Design the rest of the team structure and process elements.** With the four foundational elements and the task designed, the rest of the elements can be designed to be congruent. The design of the other elements will already have taken place in the previous step. For example, allocating responsibilities for tasks will naturally lead to designing team roles. Establishing rules and processes will naturally lead to designing better avenues of communication, conflict resolution, and problem solving.

Helping Redesign an Existing Team or Group

When you are redesigning an existing team or group, the process begins with identifying the gaps between the current and desired state. Here are the steps:

1. **Using the TEM, agree on the elements of results, then design, and finally mindset, where there is a gap between the desired state and current state.** Circle each of the elements where there is a significant gap. When you are considering team norms, remember to include the eight mutual learning behaviors.
2. **Starting with the elements of the results and working backward toward design and mindset, conduct a root causes analysis.** Agree on how the elements of structure, design, and context that the team circled in step 1 contribute to reducing each of the results elements that the team circled. Draw arrows to show these relationships. Next, agree on how the elements of mindset that the team circled in step 1 contribute to

each of the circled elements of structure, design, and context. Draw arrows to show these relationships.

3. **Identify and redesign the root cause elements.** In the design column, root causes often include unclear mission and goals, team task, roles, and decision-making authority. Any mindset elements that are circled are by definition root causes. When you are identifying root causes, look for incongruences between the degree of interdependence required and the way the team task is designed. **Keep in mind that interdependence is not an element in the model; rather, it is a characteristic that is embedded in elements throughout the model**. Also, remember that redesigning mindset elements is changing the team's culture; agreeing that team members want to shift their mindset is necessary but not sufficient for changing the culture.
4. **Identify and redesign the nonroot cause elements.** Even if team members change to a mutual learning mindset, there may still be elements of team structure, process, and context that need redesigning. Identify these needed changes so that the combination of the changes in mindset and team structure, process, and context significantly reduce or eliminate the gaps identified in step 1.

If you want to also focus on the team's strengths, create a second part for steps 1 through 3, in which the team identifies elements in which there are not significant gaps between the desired and current state.

In my experience, this process takes about three days, depending on the size of the team, whether the team is new or trying to improve its effectiveness, and the extent to which team members' views are similar or different. This is time well spent. A team can perform no better than its design makes possible.

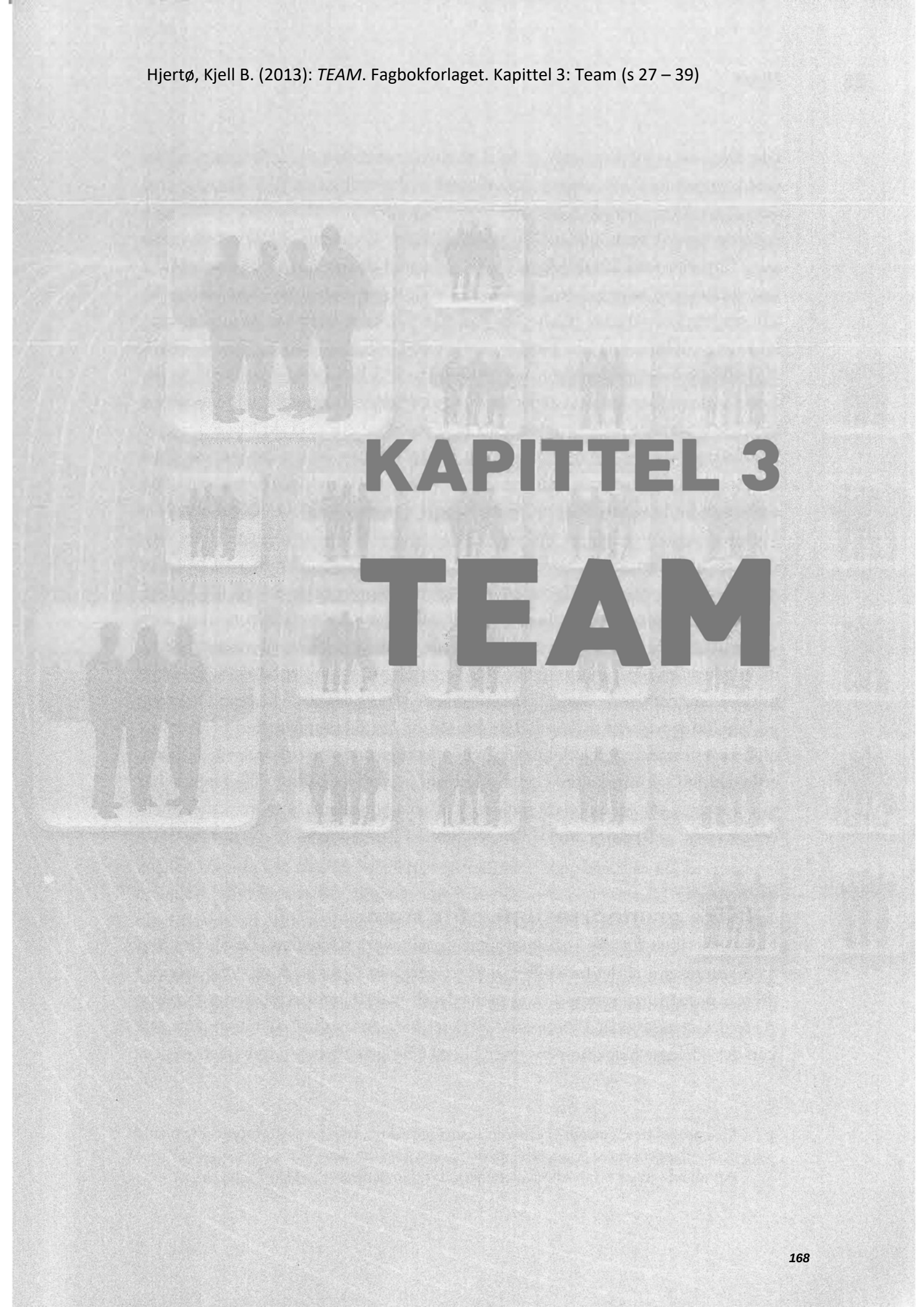
SUMMARY

In this chapter, I described how you can use the TEM to help new and existing teams and groups get better results. I began by describing how a good team effectiveness model helps you design effective teams, and diagnose and intervene in teams. Next, I described the difference between teams and groups, the main difference being that teams have a team task, and team members must interact and coordinate with each other to accomplish it. Team interdependence is so important because poorly managed interdependence is a root cause of many team and group problems. Despite the popular emphasis on teams, teams are not better than groups; what matters is the fit between the task and team or group design.

I described the TEM, which shows how a team's mindset and design (structures, processes, and team context) lead to the three team results. The TEM incorporates the mindset, results, and behaviors of the mutual learning approach. Finally, I described a process you can use to help new teams or groups design themselves for strong results and a process for existing teams or groups to design their team elements to improve results.

In the next chapter, we begin the section on diagnosing and intervening with groups. The chapter provides an overview on how to figure out what is happening in a group and how to intervene.

Hjertø, Kjell B. (2013): *TEAM*. Fagbokforlaget. Kapittel 3: Team (s 27 – 39)



KAPITTEL 3

TEAM

I det følgende vi vil presentere en forskningsbasert fremstilling av hva man mener med begrepet *team* i en organisasjonskontekst. Fremstillingen vil i betydelig grad dekke en rekke generelle teamformer, som *autonome team* (Langfred, 2000), *selvregulerte team* (Cummings, 1978), *selvstyrte team* (Wageman, 2001) og *selvledede team* (Stewart mfl., 2011). Vi vil også i stor grad dekke organisasjonsspesifikke teamformer som *arbeidsteam* (Hackman, 1987), *tverrgående team* (også kalt parallellteam) og *prosjektteam*[1] (Cohen og Bailey, 1997), samt *lederteam* på ulike nivåer, inkludert *topplederteam* (*top management teams*, *TMT*, Hambrick og Mason, 1984).

I all hovedsak er team team, uansett hvilke spesielle kjennetegn eller typer det dreier seg om. Kjenner man de faglige hovedmomentene for team, vil man kunne forholde seg til alle slags teamformer. De to teamformene som skiller seg mest ut, er lederløse team og topplederteam. Det å ikke ha noen lederroller i teamet i det hele tatt kan innebære en rekke spesielle problemer (fremdrift, frustrasjon), men også noen fordeler (involvering, motivasjon). Den såkalte TMT-litteraturen (*Top Management Literature*) har levd litt på siden av lederteamforskningen (Raes mfl., 2011) og har vært preget av amerikanske ledertradisjoner, hvor fokuset på toppsjefen som den ensomme ulv var bortimot totalt dominerende helt til 1980-tallet.

Likevel bygger alle teamformene på et felles gruppedynamisk perspektiv som i bunn og grunn dreier seg om to eller flere sammenkoblede relasjoner mellom mennesker i en organisasjon (eller i et eksperiment). I sammenfattende generelle artikler om team er da også alle teamformene sett under ett. Vår egen forskning på konflikter har vist at konfliktstrukturen og konflikthyppigheten på tvers av ulike teamformer er forbløffende lik, enten det dreier seg om et konsernlederteam, et lærerteam i grunnskolen eller et salgsteam i en privat bedrift. Tilsvarende har vi observert i vår egen praksis som leder og som konsulent. Som man sier: «Folk er folk.»

3.1 Tre grunnprinsipper for team

Utgangspunktet for alle sosiale grupper er *relasjoner* (Coleman, 1988). Det kan være interessant at det for eksempel er tre personer i gruppe A og syv personer i gruppe B, men like interessant at mens det er maksimum tre relasjoner i gruppe A, er det 21 relasjoner i gruppe B.[2] Skjærer bare én av disse 21 relasjonene seg, kan det ødelegge hele gruppens mulighet til å fungere. Selv om individenes egen-

1 Med prosjektteam mener vi primært team i prosjekter, ikke prosjektgrupper som mener at de arbeider som et team, selv om dette også forekommer.

2 Antall relasjoner = (antall medlemmer) · (antall medlemmer – 1) / 2.

skaper selvfølgelig er svært viktige i en gruppe, hevdes det at det er like viktig at relasjonene mellom individene utvikles, i form av gode prosesser, systemer og verdier. For eksempel skriver Christensen og Overdorf (2000, s. 71) at «i bedrifter som McKinsey og Company har prosessene og verdiene blitt så kraftfulle at det nesten ikke spiller noen rolle hvilke mennesker det er som blir knyttet til et prosjektteam».[3] Utgangspunktet vil da være at grupper må studeres og analyseres som en *egen enhet* og individene i gruppen som en *annen enhet*. Vi har hevdet at grupper i mange sammenhenger kan være noe annet enn summen av individene i gruppen, noe som innebærer at arbeidsgrupper, som team, kan prestere både dårligere og bedre enn det summen av individene i gruppen skulle tilsi. Derfor har vi valgt å formulere følgende *første grunnprinsipp* for denne boken: *Et team er i mange sammenhenger noe annet enn summen av individene i teamet, noen ganger til det bedre, andre ganger til det verre.*

Tenk deg at dine nærmeste kollegaer er inkompetente, umotiverte og egoistiske. De mangler alle nødvendige kunnskaper, ferdigheter og holdninger for å kunne gjøre en god jobb. Tenk deg så det motsatte, at dine kollegaer er kompetente, motiverende og hjelpsomme. Kan du så svare på følgende spørsmål: Ville disse to situasjonene hatt noen betydning for hvordan du utfører ditt *individuelle* arbeid? Svarer du ja på dette spørsmålet, er du ikke alene. Vi har stilt dette spørsmålet til et tusentals studenter og ansatte i organisasjoner over mange år, og praktisk talt samtlige har svart ja på det. Erfaringsmessig bør vi derfor kunne betrakte en viss grad av gjensidig oppgaveavhengighet som en minimumsregel for grupper og tette nettverk i arbeidslivet, selv om unntak fra regelen sikkert fins.

Fra en forskningsmessig synsvinkel er ikke dette overraskende. En organisasjon kan sies å bygge på to dimensjoner, nemlig *spesialisering* og *koordinering*, noe som forutsetter *gjensidig avhengighet* (Mintzberg, 1979). Komplekse organisasjoners leveranse er et resultat av mange spesialiserte oppgaver som må koordineres og ledes. I den forstand er alle avhengige av alle i en organisasjon. Går man fra organisasjon til en avdeling, vil avhengigheten mellom de ansatte normalt øke, ettersom de ansatte i avdelinger rent arbeidsmessig normalt vil være noe tettere knyttet til hverandre enn til de andre i organisasjonen. Og går man fra avdeling til en mindre gruppe i avdelingen, øker den gjensidige avhengigheten ytterligere. Vi konkluderer derfor med vårt *andre grunnprinsipp* for denne boken: *I et team vil det alltid være gjensidig avhengighet mellom gruppemedlemmene* (Cohen og Bailey, 1997).

3 Nå står vel ikke dette firmaet akkurat bakerst i køen når det skal rekruttere flinke folk, så variasjonsbredden er kanskje ikke så stor.

Det engelske uttrykket *shared responsibility* oversettes vanligvis med *felles ansvar*.[4] Betegnelsen *shared* kan imidlertid forstås på to måter. Den mest vanlige forståelsen i teamforskningen har vært at *shared responsibility* er noe som teamet *har felles* (*having in common*, Mohammed mfl., 2010). Men det kan også forstås som *delt ansvar*, i betydningen *fordelt* eller *oppdelt* (*dividing up*). I et team med spesialister vil man kunne ha en slik ansvarsfordeling, det vil si at teammedlemmene har et oppdelt individuelt ansvar for hver sine spesialområder. Det fins en del teamlitteratur som drøfter felles ansvar i betydningen delt opp i porsjoner, spesielt i forhold til *fordelt ledelse* (Pearce mfl., 2009). Men når vi i denne boken bruker begrepet felles ansvar, tenker vi på *shared* som *felles*, og ikke som oppdelt eller fordelt, med mindre dette er spesifisert. En mer generelt brukt betegnelse er *kollektivt ansvar*, som vi betrakter som synonymt med felles ansvar.

Tankegangen bak felles ansvar kan illustreres ved at vi forestiller oss en gruppe mennesker i en liten båt. Den interne ansvarsfordelingen i båten er individuell, for eksempel at én i gruppen har ansvaret for øsekaret, i tilfelle båten tar inn for mye vann. Begynner båten å lekke kraftig, vil den ansvarlige få mye å gjøre. Men er båten i ferd med å synke, vil alle få mye å gjøre. Flere må trå til for å få vannet ut av båten, selv om de egentlig ikke hadde det som sitt individuelle ansvarsområde. I dette eksempelet er det åpenbart for alle at man ikke kan bli stående passiv og tenke at «dette er heldigvis ikke mitt ansvar». Man vil heller tenke: «Hvordan kan jeg hjelpe til på best mulig måte?» – ut fra erkjennelsen av at om går båten ned, blir resultatet for gruppen at alle kan drukne, også en selv (De Dreu, 2007). Uttrykket *vi er alle i samme båt* beskriver en spesiell relasjon i vårt sosiale liv som vi kjenner godt. Et emosjonelt uttrykk for den samme relasjonen er uttrykket *felles skjebne, felles trøst*. De to uttrykkene beskriver henholdsvis et handlingsmessig og et emosjonelt aspekt ved en relasjon mellom gruppemedlemmene som vi betegner som *felles ansvar*. Vi formulerer dette som vårt *tredje grunnprinsipp* for denne boken: *I et team vil det alltid være felles ansvar for gruppens resultater.*

3.2 Definisjon av team

Siden team er en form for *sosial gruppe* (for utdypende informasjon, se Kaufmann og Kaufmann, 2009), vil alle kriteriene som definerer sosiale grupper, også gjelde for team. Den mest grunnleggende definisjonen av en sosial gruppe er at individene har en *bevissthet* om at de utgjør en gruppe (Turner mfl., 1987). Vi forutsetter videre at en sosial gruppe består av tre personer eller flere. Nå vi utelater to perso-

4 *Økonomisk engelsk–norsk ordbok* (ordnett.no).

ner (en dyade) som en sosial gruppe, er det fordi atferden i grupper på tre personer eller flere skiller seg betydelig fra dyaden på flere områder (Moreland, 2010). Blant annet kan en dyade aldri ha et tredje individ som observerer og blir observert ved samhandlingen mellom de andre i gruppen.

En *arbeidsgruppe* er en spesiell type sosial gruppe som fungerer innenfor en organisasjon.[5] En organisasjon er nærmest per definisjon konstruert for å nå *mål* (Scott, 1992, se imidlertid Weick, 1969). Tilsvarende er arbeidsgrupper karakterisert ved at de har et *formål* og ett eller flere *mål* for sitt arbeid (Guzzo og Dickson, 1996). Dermed vil individene innenfor arbeidsgrupper som samhandler over en viss tid, alltid ha en form for gjensidig avhengighet (Dickinson og McIntyre, 1997; Salas mfl., 1992).

Det som karakteriserer arbeidsgruppeformen team, er en kombinasjon av flere faktorer som henger sammen, i første rekke *høy grad* av gjensidig avhengighet og *betydelig grad* av felles, kollektivt gruppeansvar (Cohen og Bailey, 1997; Hackman, 1986; Sundstrom mfl., 1990). Enkelte går så langt som å definere et team til simpelthen å være «arbeidsgrupper av gjensidig avhengige individer som deler ansvar for resultatet for deres organisasjon» (Sundstrom mfl., 1990, s. 120). Cohen og Bailey (1997, s. 241) forklarer kontrasten mellom team og ikke team slik: «En avdeling med elektronikkingeniører som arbeider på ulike prosjekter, er ikke et team. Ingeniørene arbeider uavhengig av hverandre, *deler ikke ansvaret for resultatene*, og er *ikke gjensidig avhengige av hverandre*» (kursiv tilføyd). Når felles ansvar omtales, bruker man vanligvis formuleringer som at «gruppen 'eier' oppgavene og er ansvarlig for arbeidsresultatene» (Hackman, 1987, s. 324), eller at «teamet blir gitt ansvar for en utvalgt gruppe av prosjekter» (Devine, 2002, s. 294). Men dessverre er litteraturen ofte uklar på om man her tenker seg et faktisk kollektivt gruppeansvar, eller om ansvaret, når det kommer til stykket, er lagt til den formelle lederen av teamet. Kombinasjonen gjensidig avhengighet og felles ansvar innebærer at teamet normalt også vil ha *høy grad av autonomi* (selvstendighet) i forhold til gruppeeksterne ledere (Devaro, 2008; Langfred, 2000).

Når gjensidig avhengighet og felles ansvar er to grunnleggende egenskaper ved team, vil teamets suksess eller fiasko likevel *også* få direkte konsekvenser for de enkelte teammedlemmenes egen suksess eller fiasko (Hollenbeck mfl., 1997). Teamarbeid innebærer at man ikke bare må passe på sine egne delegerte arbeidsområder i teamet, man har også et felles ansvar for hva alle *de andre* i teamet måtte foreta seg. Dette innebærer at *relasjonene* mellom teammedlemmene er ekstra vik-

5 Et grensetilfelle er når organisasjonen er så liten at arbeidsgruppen og organisasjonen utgjør de samme individene.

tige i team, av noen definert som en grunnleggende bestanddel i teamet (Coleman, 1988; se også McGrath mfl., 1995). Dermed har vi presentert et grunnlag for en teoretisk definisjon av begrepet team: *Et team er en relativt autonom arbeidsgruppe på minst tre personer som i høy grad arbeider gjensidig avhengig av hverandre over tid, som i stor grad er felles ansvarlige for å innfri gruppens resultatmål, og hvor teammedlemmenes relasjoner er gruppens grunnleggende bestanddel.*

En arbeidsgruppe har vanligvis også differensierte roller og oppgaver som skal utføres for å innfri gruppens mål (Hackman, 1990; Humphrey mfl., 2009). Men arbeidsgrupper *må* ikke ha differensierte roller og oppgaver, og disse funksjonene er følgelig heller ikke inkludert i vår teamdefinisjon. Det eksisterer ikke noen maksimal størrelse i antall deltakere for det man kan betegne som et team. For arbeidsgrupper generelt bruker Horwitz og Horwitz (2007) uttrykket «liten gruppe» for 5 eller færre medlemmer, «mellomstor gruppe» for 6–10 medlemmer og «stor gruppe» for over 10 medlemmer. I team, hvor det er sterk tilknytning til gjensidig avhengighet og felles ansvar, vil grupper på over 10 medlemmer få betydelige problemer med å fungere, med sine 45 relasjoner å holde styr på. Teammedlemmer tenderer derfor selv til å mene at teamet er for stort allerede ved 6–7 medlemmer (Hackman, 2002). Et team vil følgelig hovedsakelig dreie seg om grupper på fra 3 til 10 medlemmer, hvor 5 medlemmer helt generelt kan oppfattes som en optimal størrelse (Hare, 1994), og hvor 7 medlemmer kan oppfattes som en øvre grense for at teamet skal ha de beste muligheter til å kunne fungere godt (Hackman, 2002).

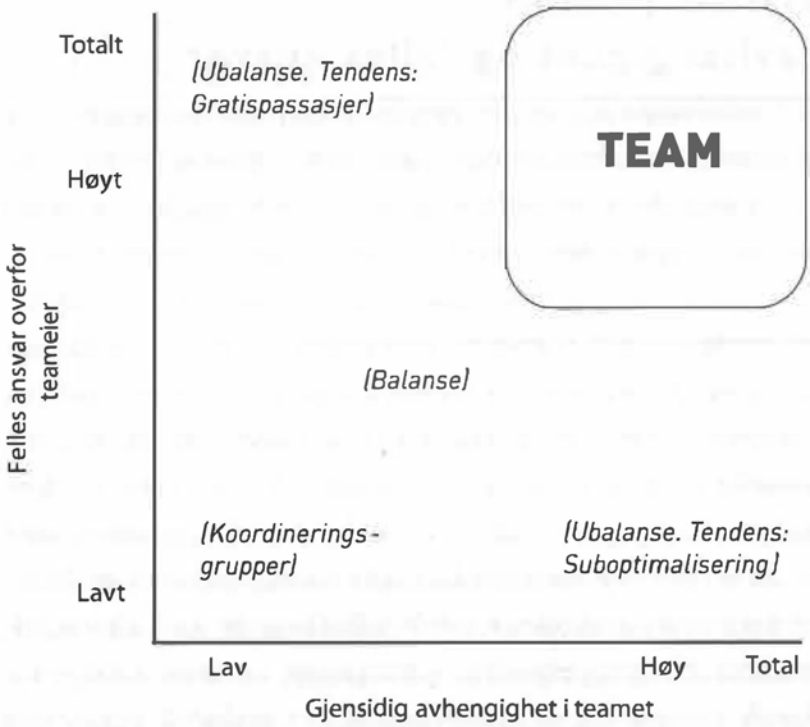
I vår teamdefinisjon har vi karakterisert teammedlemmenes *relasjoner* som teamets grunnleggende bestanddel. Popularisert kan vi si at vi her berører det som er teamets *sjel*. Er så én av de definisjonsmessige egenskapene ved team viktigere enn de andre? I strengt faglig forstand vil dette være problematisk. Men etter åpningsseremonien for de olympiske sommerlekene i London i 2012 ble en av de frivillige funksjonærene spurt av BBC om hva hun syntes var den sterkeste opplevelsen hun satt igjen med etter at det hele var over. Hun svarte: «Opplevelsen av at det ikke var én av de 20 000 som deltok, som ikke ville trå til for en annen hvis vedkommende trengte hjelp. Vi var et team.» Om vi viser litt overbærenhet med «teamets» størrelse i denne sammenhengen, illustrerer denne uttalelsen teamets potensielle sprengkraft. Selv om et team har høy selvstendighet, og medlemmene arbeider gjensidig avhengig av hverandre, vil vi hevde at det er *erkjennelsen og følelsen av det kollektive ansvaret for sluttresultatet som er den drivende kraften i teamet*. De skulle vise verden en fantastisk åpningsseremoni som gjorde dem stolte som briter. Og de stilte opp for hverandre, uansett når og hvordan. I vår sammenheng: Organisasjoner som skaper team med denne kvaliteten, har fanget teamets sjel.

3.3 Team i balanse mellom gjensidig avhengighet og felles ansvar

Som det går frem av teamdefinisjonen, er det rimelig å betrakte arbeidsgrupper som i stor utstrekning innfrir teamdefinisjonen, som team i praksis (Seers mfl., 1995). Vi har illustrert sammenhengen mellom gjensidig avhengighet og felles ansvar på figur 3.1. *Felles ansvar* innebærer alltid at man har ansvar *overfor* noen. I team er normalformen felles ansvar overfor den som har opprettet teamet, og som dermed «eier» det, vanligvis kalt *teameier*. Ansvarsforhold er et omfattende tema knyttet til ledelse og vil bli utdypet i et senere kapittel, så vi nøyer oss her med noen forenklede resonnementer. Hvis man nå tenker seg at en gruppe må ha totalt *felles ansvar* overfor teameieren for å være et team, vil det i praksis ikke være mange team å studere i Norge, spesielt hvis vi kobler det felles ansvaret med ansvarets *konsekvenser*, det vil si at ansvarsforholdet ikke bare er ord uten innhold. Av de få teamformene hvor man praktiserer totalt felles ansvar, kan eksempelvis nevnes studentteam som får gruppebaserte vurderinger, og noen former for salgsteam som utelukkende baserer seg på gruppebonus. I et realistisk perspektiv betraktet vi det derfor som rimelig å definere en arbeidsgruppe som har høy grad av felles ansvar overfor teameieren, som et team, forutsatt at de andre kriteriene for team også er oppfylt.

En arbeidsgruppe kan i praksis ha en nærmest total gjensidig avhengighet, for eksempel ved operasjonsbordet, hvor bestemte spesialistfunksjoner i teamet er helt avgjørende for utfallet av operasjonen. Men heller ikke her ville det eksistere mange team i arbeidslivet hvis man skulle kreve total gjensidig avhengighet for å kunne karakterisere gruppen som et team. Ut fra en realistisk tilnærming til teambegrepet vil det derfor være rimelig å oppfatte også gjensidig avhengighet som et gradsbegrep, det vil si at den gjensidige avhengigheten varierer fra svært lav til svært høy. Vi har derfor definert en arbeidsgruppe som har *høy grad av gjensidig avhengighet teammedlemmene seg imellom, som et team*, forutsatt at de andre kriteriene for teamformen også er til stede (Barrick mfl., 2007).

Et eksempel på arbeidsgrupper som både har lav gjensidig avhengighet og lavt felles ansvar, er rene koordineringsgrupper (se figur 3.1). Øker den gjensidige avhengigheten i gruppen, vil det være funksjonelt å øke det felles ansvaret tilsvarende, det vil si opprettholde et *balansert* forhold mellom gjensidig avhengighet og felles ansvar. Hvis det oppstår ubalanse mellom ansvar og gjensidig avhengighet i en arbeidsgruppe, vil gruppen stå i fare for å bli utsatt for dysfunksjonelle effekter. Faren for *gratispassasjeratferd* eller *sosial loffing* er høyere når individene har høyt felles ansvar (se Earley, 1989). Vi mener imidlertid at gratispassasjertendenser lettest vil oppstå når *høyt* felles ansvar kombineres med *lav* gjensidig avhengighet (se



Figur 3.1 Felles ansvar og gjensidig avhengighet i team.

figuren). Når teammedlemmene arbeider uavhengig av hverandre, vil det oppleves som urimelig å stå felles ansvarlig for teamets resultater. Enkelte kan bli fristet til å ta lettere på sin del av jobben og satse på at de andre i gruppen står på, for «vi får jo bare en fellesvurdering uansett». Den eksterne lederen som skal vurdere det samlede resultatet ut fra prinsippet om høyt felles ansvar, vil i all hovedsak forholde seg til fellesresultatet, ikke til de individuelle bidragene. Dermed slipper gratispassasjeren billig unna, for de andre kan gjøre sine jobber uavhengig av gratispassasjeren, og sluttresultatet blir bare svekket av denne ene personens manglende bidrag.

Er gruppens arbeid av en slik karakter at gruppen både har høyt felles ansvar og gruppemedlemmene er sterkt gjensidig avhengige av hverandre, er vi inne i teamsonen (se figur 3.1). Om én av teammedlemmene da ikke gjør sin del av jobben, vil de andre ikke kunne fullføre sine jobber, og arbeidet vil bryte sammen. Skal teamet kunne fullføre oppgaven, må gratispassasjeren enten bli tvunget til å bidra mer eller bli kastet ut av teamet. Den sosiale kontrollen som teammedlemmer utøver overfor hverandre, kan bli meget sterk. Max Weber (2005) var bekymret for det han kalte *byråkratiets jernbur* (*iron cage* i engelsk oversettelse), men den sosiale kontrollen i *gruppers sosiale jernbur*, kan være enda tøffere å bli utsatt for (Barker, 1993). Det vil derfor ikke være lett å være gratispassasjer i team.

Tilsvarende vil en kombinasjon av *lavt* felles ansvar (høyt individuelt ansvar) og *høy* gjensidig avhengighet kunne bringe teamet inn i en dysfunksjonell situasjon. Den høye gjensidige avhengigheten krever at man oppgir noe av sine individuelle interesser til fordel for et optimalt felles resultat. Men det lave felles ansvaret påvirker teammedlemmene til å tenke primært på deres egne individuelle resultater, det vil si at de *suboptimaliserer* sin egen innsats. Gjennom det lave felles ansvaret stimuleres gruppemedlemmene til å tenke bare på seg selv og nedprioritere samarbeidet med de andre i gruppen, et samarbeid som er helt nødvendig i en gruppe med høy gjensidig avhengighet. Innslag av suboptimalitet er typisk for ledergrupper. Gundersen (2010) beskriver fenomenet på følgende måte:

> Mange deltar i ledergruppene med utgangspunkt i territorial tenkning og beskyttelse av egne interesser og er nærmest på besøk i helheten man er en del av. (...) Det krever en spisset og klar felles agenda for hver ledergruppe, der helhet og strategi er førende for prioriteringer om man skal unngå suboptimalisering.

I en ledergruppe preget av suboptimalitet føler topplederen seg ofte alene i sine forsøk på å få ledergruppen til å *ta* felles ansvar. Problemet er imidlertid at medlemmene i ledergruppen ofte ikke *har* høyt felles ansvar. Toppledere vil gjerne tro at de kan få både i pose og sekk. De vil skjerpe innsatsen ved å måle hver leders individuelle innsats, samtidig som de insisterer på at disse lederne «egentlig» har et felles ansvar. Men lederne vet så godt at det er resultatene i deres egne enheter isolert sett de i overveldende grad blir evaluert på, ikke deres bidrag til helheten, og dermed har topplederne lagt en snare som de faller i selv.

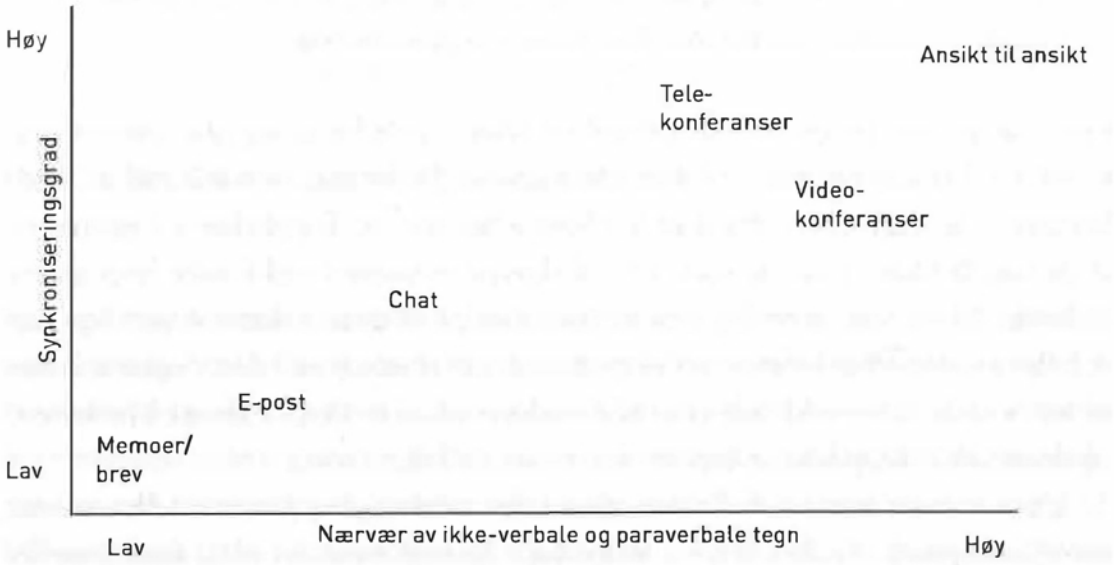
Oppsummert kan vi si: Er den gjensidige avhengighet høy, vil felles ansvar være funksjonelt. Er den lav, vil individuelt ansvar være det mest funksjonelle. I begge tilfeller dreier det seg om et balansert forhold mellom graden av gjensidig avhengighet og graden av felles ansvar.

3.4 Virtuelle team

Vår definisjon av team gjelder også for virtuelle team, som da må oppfattes som en teamform med spesielle egenskaper. Begrepet *virtuelt team* kan dermed defineres som et team *hvor medlemmene bruker teknologi i varierende grad i arbeid over steds-, tids- og relasjonsmessige grenser for å gjennomføre en oppgave* (Martins mfl., 2004, s. 808). Sett fra en annen synsvinkel vil virtuelle team utføre *gjensidig avhengig gruppearbeid på et prosjekt på tvers av tid og sted basert på informasjons- og kommunikasjonsteknologier* (Lin mfl., 2008, s. 1032). Likhetene og nyanseforskjellene i de

to definisjonene skulle gi et godt bilde av hva begrepet virtuelle team inneholder. Av virtuelle medier kan nevnes: videokonferanser, e-post, telefon, websider, direktemelding/lynmelding, fil- og applikasjonsdeling, felles kalender- og planleggingssystemer og diskusjonsfora på Internett. Dette er bare et utvalg av medieformer, og nye kommer til i tråd med teknologiutviklingen.

De beskrivelsene av virtuelle team som vi har valgt, avviker fra tidligere tiders tendens til å se på virtuelle team som *ikke* ansikt-til-ansikt-team (Guzzo og Dickson, 1996). Vår beskrivelse åpner blant annet for å se på graden av virtualitet for alle team (Martins mfl., 2004). Videre var man tidligere mest opptatt av å vurdere de ulike mediene ut fra rikhet på informasjon, mens man i dag gjerne vurderer dem ut fra både *rikhet* og *simultanitet* (synkronitet), og dermed kan man få frem et todimensjonalt bilde av forskjellene mellom mediene. Baltes og kollegaer (2002) gjorde en slik analyse og resultatet er gjengitt i figur 3.2.



Figur 3.2 Rikhet og synkronitet i ulike medier.

Kilde: Baltes mfl., 2002, s. 159.

Av figuren ser vi at ansikt-til-ansikt-kommunikasjon er de virtuelle mediene overlegen både på både rikhet og simultanitet i kommunikasjonen. I en annen studie fant man også at graden av konstruktiv interaksjon og gruppesamhold var høyere i ansikt-til-ansikt-situasjoner enn videokonferanser og chatteteam (Hambley mfl., 2007).

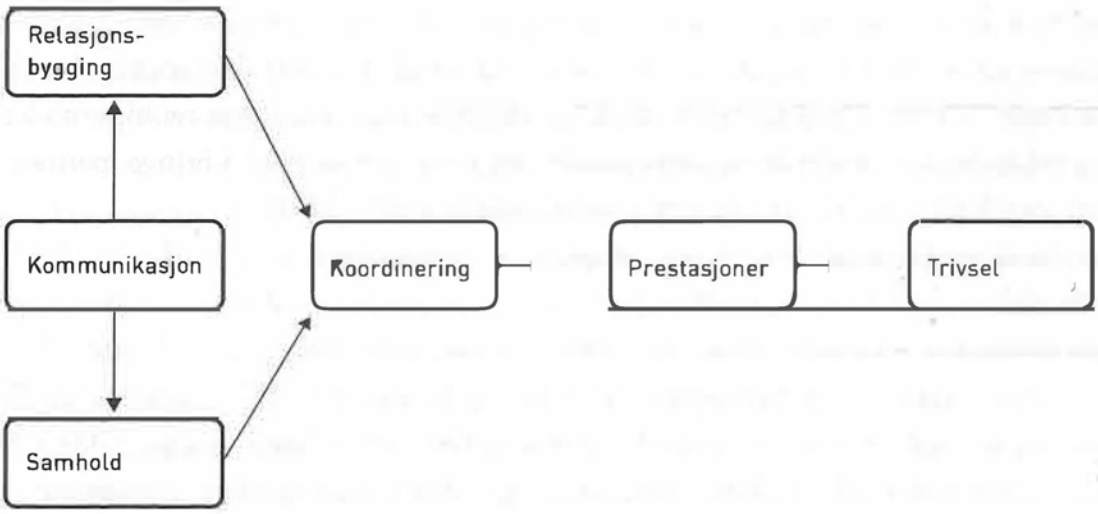
Men virtuelle team har også en rekke fordeler som ansikt-til-ansikt-kommunikasjonen ikke har. Ved bruk av virtuell kommunikasjon har man større muligheter til å velge de mest kompetente medlemmene i teamet, uavhengig av fysiske og organisasjonsmessige lokaliteter, noe som gir økte muligheter til å forbedre kvali-

teten av beslutningene. Organisasjoner bruker også stadig oftere virtuelle teamrelaterte teknologier for å gjøre arbeidsplassen så fleksibel og attraktiv som mulig for de beste folkene. Og ikke minst, bruk av virtuelle team reduserer reisekostnader og tidsforbruk og letter koordineringsarbeidet i forbindelse med å bringe mennesker spredt på ulike steder sammen i team (Martins mfl., 2004).

Med tanke på den nærmest eksplosive fremveksten av virtuelle medier i arbeidslivet har forskere vært opptatt av å sammenligne effektene av kommunikasjonen i virtuelle team med den tradisjonelle ansikt-til-ansikt-metoden. I oversiktsanalysen (*metaanalysen*) til Baltes óg kollegaer (2002) analyserte de 27 studier og fant at bruk av virtuelle metoder førte til redusert *gruppeeffektivitet*, økt *tidsforbruk* med å fullføre oppgavene og *redusert jobbtilfredshet* i gruppene, i motsetning til ansikt-til-ansikt-kommunikasjon. Virtuelle team ser også ut til å være dårlig egnet for *innovasjonsarbeid* (Gibson og Gibbs, 2006). På den annen side fant man i en senere enkeltstudie at team som brukte rikere kommunikasjonsmedier (ansikt-til-ansikt), *ikke* hadde høyere teamprestasjoner enn team som anvendte kommunikasjonsmessig fattigere medier (virtuelle team) (Hambley mfl., 2007). I en enkeltstudie fant Roch og Ayman (2005) at virtuelle team var positivt relatert til teamets *beslutningsdyktighet*, mens ansikt-til-ansikt-team ikke var det. Resultatene i studiene er med andre ord uklare når det gjelder teameffektiviteten i virtuelle team generelt og i ansikt-til-ansikt-team spesielt.

Nå vil sannsynligvis diskusjonen om hva som er best av virtuelle team og ansikt-til-ansikt-team, alltid være vanskelig å avgjøre, for av de resultatene vi har sett på til nå, kan vi forenklet si at ansikt-til-ansikt-team byr på bedre kommunikasjon, mens virtuelle team byr på billigere og mer fleksibel kommunikasjon. Dermed må man bestemme seg for hvor viktig god kommunikasjon og fleksibel kommunikasjon er for et bestemt team, for å kunne vurdere teamets effektivitet eller produktivitet i forhold til kostnadene. En mer konstruktiv tilnærming vil sannsynligvis være å betrakte de to teamformene som kompletterende og som noe som utvider organisasjonenes verktøykasse når man skal velge den optimale teamformen i en bestemt situasjon.

Hva skal så til for at virtuelle team skal bli best mulig for teameffektiviteten? I en grundig studie fra 2008 gjennomførte Lin og kollegaer både en oversiktsanalyse av tidligere studier, en feltstudie og en spørreskjemaundersøkelse for å komme nærmere en avklaring på dette spørsmålet. De kom frem til en statistisk sett bekreftet modell som viste at virtuelle team bør legge stor vekt på relasjonsbygging og samhold i starten av teamarbeidet, se figur 3.3. Dette arbeidet viste seg å være positivt relatert til teamenes koordinering av arbeidet, noe som igjen førte til økt effektivitet, og som en følge av det også økt jobbtilfredshet.



Figur 3.3 En integrert modell for økt effektivitet i virtuelle team.

Kilde: Lin mfl., 2008, s. 1038.

Modellen til Lin og kollegaer er interessant ut fra flere synsvinkler. Ut fra de resultatene vi har presentert til nå, er det vel ikke relasjonsbygging og samhold man sterkest forbinder med virtuelt teamarbeid, for vi har jo allerede presentert studier som indikerer at virtuelle team er svakere på konstruktiv interaksjon og gruppesamhold enn ansikt-til-ansikt-team (Hambley mfl., 2007). Men dermed kan man kanskje anta at det er nettopp derfor at virtuelle team bør legge ekstra stor vekt på relasjonsbygging og samhold. Det er også interessant at disse «myke» verdiene faktisk muliggjør at det «harde» koordineringsarbeidet blir vellykket. Eller som Frederick Smith, toppsjefen i Federal Express, skal ha uttrykt det: «The hard stuff is easy – it's the soft stuff that's so hard to change.»

Det ville ha passet godt om studier av hvordan virtuelle team skal *ledes*, også bekreftet viktigheten av å starte teamarbeidet med å legge vekt på relasjonsbygging og samhold. Men så vel er det ikke. En oversiktsartikkel konkluderer nemlig med at lederatferd som fokuserer på prestasjoner og sterk oppfølging av arbeidet, er spesielt viktig for virtuelle teams suksess (Mathieu mfl., 2008). Faktisk fremheves det at sterkt *saksrelaterte* oppgaver er viktigere enn *relasjonsrelaterte* oppgaver (motivasjon osv.).

Hva skal man da legge vekt på i virtuelle team: relasjonsbygging og samhold eller saksorientering og koordinering? En tilnærming som gir en viss fornuft, er at en saksorientert lederstil med vekt på koordinering riktig nok vil være gunstig for arbeidets gang i virtuelle team, men at oversiktsstudien til Mathieu og kollegaer ikke fanget opp studier som hadde undersøkt den viktige *oppstartsfasen* i teamarbeidet. I denne fasen er det nemlig relasjonsbygging og samhold som gjelder:

«Resultatene av studien indikerer at sosiale dimensjonsfaktorer må tas hensyn til tidlig i det virtuelle teamets designprosess, og er kritisk for effektiviteten i teamet» (Lin mfl., 2008, s. 1031). Dermed blir teamlederens prioriteringer over tid slik: først en innledende relasjonell lederstil med vekt på sosiale forhold i teamet, og dernest en sakorientert lederstil med spesiell vekt på god koordinering av teamarbeidet. I dette perspektivet vil vi i det minste ha presentert et syn på teamledelse i virtuelle team som henger sammen, og som virker intuitivt fornuftig, i påvente av nærmere avklaringer. For som Mathieu og kollegaer (2008, s. 446). konstaterer: «Fortsatt er [ledelse av virtuelle team] en arena som ikke er særlig godt forstått.» Vi føyer til at man heller ikke ut fra det vi vet, har funnet noen *generell lederstil* som er spesielt gunstig for virtuelle team i forhold til ansikt-til-ansikt-team. For eksempel fant ikke Hambley og kollegaer (2007) noen sammenheng mellom henholdsvis *transformasjonsledelse* og *transaksjonsledelse* og de to teamformene.