
| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Internal, own goals and standards</i> | ----Locus of Control----- | <i>External, others' goals and standards</i> |
| <i>Preference for being with other people</i> | -----Sociability----- | <i>Preference for being alone or with one person</i> |
| <i>Likes details and sensory data</i> | -----Perception----- | <i>Likes imagination and concepts</i> |
| <i>Tends to trust logic and standards</i> | -----Decisions----- | <i>Tends to trust values and feelings</i> |
| <i>Decisions, plans, and schedules</i> | ----Copes by Way of----- | <i>More information, options, flexibility</i> |
| <i>Style, flair, appearance</i> | -----What Counts----- | <i>Substance, content, value</i> |
| <i>Conflict is OK, let's argue</i> | -----Disagreement----- | <i>Be harmonious, don't fight</i> |
| <i>Reactive, responsive to others</i> | -----Source of Action----- | <i>Proactive initiatives and actions</i> |
| <i>Work, work, work</i> | ----Preferred Activity---- | <i>Take time to enjoy</i> |
| <i>Do it quickly</i> | -----About Work----- | <i>Do it well</i> |
| <i>Be calm and cool</i> | ----Showing Emotion----- | <i>Let it all hang out</i> |
| <i>Pessimistic, cautious</i> | -----World-view----- | <i>Optimistic, enthusiastic</i> |
| <i>People</i> | --Focus of Management-- | <i>Tasks</i> |
| <i>Directing</i> | -----Manages by----- | <i>Leading</i> |

**Figure 10.1. Ranges of Differences in People
Noted Frequently in Organizations and Groups**

(These are in no particular order, and there is no intended correlation between the left and right side of one aspect and the left and right side of another.)

Some personality types are normally distributed in the general population, while others are skewed to one side or the other. In some organizations, types tend to cluster because of the selection process and/or training and enculturation process in the group or organization.

Racial, Cultural, and Gender Differences

While significant progress has been made in understanding and bridging racial, cultural, and gender differences in North America (to varying degrees), much work remains to be done in almost all organizations.

Stereotyping is a natural human tendency, even helpful sometimes in that lumping groups of things, events, or situations together can simplify certain tasks. It would be terribly wasteful if we had to learn and relearn that rocks are hard, fire is hot, and so on.

Problems that arise from stereotyping include the following: (1) We often apply our skills at categorizing and lumping things together to people who are only superficially similar. (2) We accept what others have said about groups without using facts readily at our disposal. (3) When we do look at what is true about individuals, we consider them to be “exceptions to the rule.”

These last three items constitute the practice of prejudice, or prejudging (based on superficial or inaccurate data, assumptions, or hearsay). Rob Terry, author of *For Whites Only* (1994), notes that the power to act or influence others (to exclude people, to hire or not hire, to pay well or poorly, to promote or not) coupled with prejudice equals racism, sexism, and other types of discrimination, like so—

(POWER X PREJUDICE) = (RACISM, SEXISM, AGEISM, ETC.)

More on Stereotyping and Prejudice

Most of us are **not** aware of the hundreds of subtle myths, half-truths, beliefs, and nontruths we have inherited (unexamined) from the important people in our lives, including parents, grandparents, siblings, play- and schoolmates, and the media. Even our churches and schools have contributed (perhaps unwittingly) to these learned prejudices.

Gordon Allport's studies of prejudice development (*The Nature of Prejudice*, 1979) showed that 70% of the people studied attributed learning about prejudice primarily to parents or family. He found that such prejudice in children was learned considerably later in life than when children learn most other important life attitudes (from 0 to 6 years of age). He also observed that, once learned, we tend to keep our prejudices and stereotypes intact in the following ways:

- △ **Lack of data:** Whether through lack of experience with certain groups of people, our own internal filters, or both, we simply do not “see” that individuals are not like our stereotypes of them. The evidence goes unobserved or undigested.
- △ **Exceptionalizing:** We believe that specific individuals we know are “exceptions” to the “rule” (which we continue to believe is true).
- △ **Re-fencing:** When finally confronted with massive data about either individuals or a group that is contrary to our prejudice, we may fall back on some other aspect of our prejudices.

It is in this area that we are most likely to misuse our intellectual abilities to kid ourselves. We must be willing to “hear” feedback, both verbal and nonverbal, in order to gain the needed knowledge despite our biases.

Dealing Effectively with Differences

It's easy to be prescriptive about any differences in people, to believe that one aspect is right and another wrong, but this is not necessarily so. It seems to take all types to make the world work, no matter how uncomfortable these differences may feel to us.

Psychology, behavioral science, and management studies have given us some clues about how best to deal with these and other differences in people:

- △ **Recognize** that diversity in a group not only adds to the conflict potential but also adds to the group's potential for creativity and better solutions as well as to our own potential for learning and development.
- △ **Consider** the possibility that when another individual is making you uncomfortable (although not in any way threatening to you), it may be due to their challenging some belief, opinion, bias, or prejudice of yours. This may provide you with a new perspective or new information or perhaps remind you of something you've disliked in yourself.

- △ **“Hang in there”** in situations in which differences are difficult for you, particularly if you have a sense of progress. Consider asking for outside counseling or facilitation. Be open to feedback from the other parties.
- △ **Put yourself in their shoes.** Try to experience their side of the situation. How does it sound, look, feel now from **their** perspective?
- △ **Mentally move away** and try to become a neutral observer or third party (become your own consultant). How does it sound, look, and feel from **that** perspective?
- △ **Change their behavior** toward you by changing some of **your** behavior toward them. No one can directly change another person. However, individuals will certainly change in response to a change you make, if the change is positive and visible (to them) and it is held long enough to be noticed and “tested” for genuineness.

For example: Sally, vice president of marketing, was often confused and upset whenever CEO Ralph reviewed her plans or work critically. Sally made two changes. First, she now asks Bob (vice president of human resources) to critique her work before her meetings with Ralph. Second, she now notes on a pad each of Ralph’s points as he makes them.

As a result, Sally is less apprehensive (before meetings) or upset (during meetings) and Ralph is more respectful in his criticism (in response to Sally’s changes).

Helpful Resources

- △ *The Nature of Prejudice: A Comprehensive and Penetrating Study of the Organization and Nature of Prejudice*, unabridged 25th anniversary ed., by Gordon W. Allport, Perseus Publishing, Cambridge, MA, 1979; www.perseuspublishing.com.
- △ *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America*, by Shelby Steele, Harper Trade Publication, New York, 1991.
- △ *For Whites Only*, by Robert W. Terry, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994.

In Terms of “People Differences” ...

- Δ What types of situations are uncomfortable for me?

- Δ What groups or individuals tend to be uncomfortable for me?

- Δ What personalities or types of people make me uncomfortable?

- Δ How do I react or behave in this/these situations?

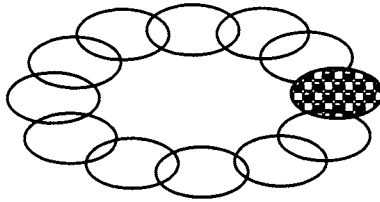
- Δ Are there any changes I might consider making in my ...
 - Δ Skills?

 - Δ Knowledge?

 - Δ Attitudes?

CHAPTER 11

RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBERS



Price Pritchett has written a useful, practical, and compact handbook for team members that addresses a great need in the teamwork literature. As he says in *Teamwork: The Team Member Handbook* (Dallas, TX: Pritchett Publishing Co., 1997), he believes that “the secret to teamwork lies in the team members.”

That’s true, he says, whether we’re talking about basketball, surgery, fire fighting, music, or drug busts. Here’s a list of suggestions for people who want to be seen as **effective team members**, based on his work and mine.

- ④ **Know your job**, and do your best at it.
- ④ **Continue to develop** your work skills.
- ④ Support and **use the diverse talents of the team**.
- ④ Work hard at **effective communication**.
- ④ **Keep the big picture in mind**, so you can ...
- ④ **Help others** who need an assist from a teammate.
- ④ **Bring real problems** to the team’s attention.
- ④ Build up your teammates; **give recognition**.
- ④ **Watch your ego**; there’s no “I” in teamwork.
- ④ **Be a good sport**; use humor in positive ways.
- ④ In public, **support team and leader decisions**.

Behaviors to Avoid

Some individual behaviors are a problem for the team and the leader and need to be avoided by each member. When they occur, and they will, they need to be brought to the offending member's attention.

There are probably thousands of **team-busting behaviors**, but here's a short list of frequent abuses to watch out for:

- ⊗ Being **stubborn** to a point of frustration
- ⊗ Being **sarcastic**, cynical, and generally negative
- ⊗ Covertly **badmouthing** others, creating rumors, etc.
- ⊗ Engaging in **horseplay**, nonchalance, wisecracks
- ⊗ Seeking personal **recognition**, self-promoting
- ⊗ Being **indifferent**, aloof, nonparticipative
- ⊗ Riding your **personal agenda** into the ground
- ⊗ **Manipulating** the group in various ways

Stretching Your Skills (Leadership)

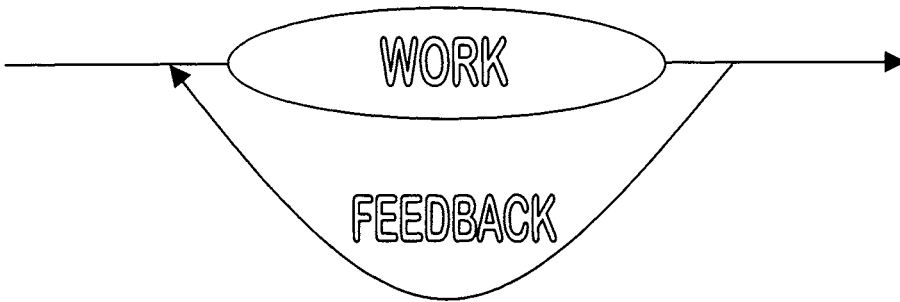
More than a job title, role, or position, **leadership**, it seems to me, **is a set of skills and facilitative activities.**

As such, all team members must contribute leadership to their group at various and appropriate times. Following are some leadership skills and abilities every member should work toward developing:

- ⊗ Take a broader view of your organization, including the needs and priorities of other parts of it.
- ⊗ Value openness and honesty and learn to use them with tact and gracefulness.
- ⊗ Polish your personal skills of listening, negotiating, managing conflict, and communicating clearly.
- ⊗ Learn the group skills of planning, team development (see Chapter 7), and problem solving (see Chapter 8).
- ⊗ Practice the skills of delegation, giving recognition and follow-up where warranted.
- ⊗ Don't pretend to know what you don't know, and don't pretend to understand what you don't understand; ask questions and learn.
- ⊗ Remember, many organizations are constrained in their growth by a lack of enough excellent leaders or potential leaders.

CHAPTER 12

TEAM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FEEDBACK



Groups and teams need to be effective in whatever they're doing; they need to achieve their mission or purpose. Just as important, every team or group needs to be seen as effective by its

- ↳ **clients** or customers
- ↳ **users** and beneficiaries
- ↳ **owners** or stakeholders
- ↳ **regulators** (if appropriate)
- ↳ **group/team** members
- ↳ **colleagues** in other groups

How a group is viewed or regarded by others is essential information if the group is to continue to be supported, provided with resources, and have good future work opportunities.

This is true even in the public sector (e.g., schools, agencies, hospitals, utilities)—eventually. It may take longer, but sooner or later public sector groups will be held accountable by those they supposedly serve.

What is Useful Feedback?

Private sector groups, for the most part, know a good deal about how well they are doing by means of almost “automatic feedback,” such as

- ↳ changes in sales, demand, backlog

- ↳ changes in complaints, returns, fixes
- ↳ changes in position relative to competitors
- ↳ changes in enrollments, transfers, etc.

Although this is useful and important information, often something more would be helpful in terms of

- ↳ **why** things are as they are
- ↳ **what**, specifically, would be more valued or valuable
- ↳ **new** features, services, or products that customers need
- ↳ **how** customers might feel about something they “don’t know they need”
- ↳ **comparisons** of your performance versus that of other providers

Market research findings often indicate that many private sector organizations get their best ideas for new features, services, and products from their clients and customers.

My experience strongly suggests that product and service providers could learn a great deal more from their customers than they take advantage of. So—a competitor beats them to it.

Getting Useful Feedback



Believe it or not, getting useful feedback is the easy part! **Why?** Because the group or team needs to develop and design the feedback process, then obtain and analyze the resulting feedback!

How feedback is obtained is incredibly important because—

- ↳ If the feedback is to be worthwhile, it must be used to improve!
- ↳ If the feedback is to be used by the group or team, members must be intimately involved!

This way the group develops “ownership” in the resulting feedback.

There are drawers full of great survey data, collected by very skilled and professional survey firms or individuals for their clients. Most of it becomes nothing but file-fillers. Such surveys and feedback seem to elicit little besides rationalizing and excuses because **the people who receive it don't "own" it.**



Feedback Processes

There are many ways for groups and teams to elicit and gather useful, **helpful feedback**. Here are some that are often used (and need to be fine-tuned by the group or team):

- ⌚ **Focus groups** of people from one client organization
- ⌚ Focus groups of people from several client organizations
- ⌚ **Reverse seminars**, given by clients, for you and your team
- ⌚ **Telephone surveys**, which get more and better data than written surveys (snail mail or email)
- ⌚ **Surveys** asking qualitative questions
- ⌚ Surveys asking evaluative questions
- ⌚ Surveys asking clients what they think is important

Some Good Questions

Over the years, many of our clients have asked their clients excellent questions to gather feedback on performance as well as ideas that may be useful for their future. Here are some of my favorites: