

TEAMWORK: HALLUCINATIONS, NIGHTMARES OR HARMONY?



PRINCIPLES FOR LEADERSHIP

By Kayte Connelly, Best Principled Solutions LLC

Assembling your team to accomplish your dream has never been more difficult.

It has long been purported that teamwork is dream work. But, with the wrong players, goals can oftentimes run astray. So exactly how does a great leader, put together their team who will be working cohesively to accomplish a particular project?

I shutter when I hear stories of the new kids on the block being placed in the project manager position. Freshly minted, newly out of school with their master's degree and a PM certificate, they are positioned at the helm for a significant goal. Their teams have been predetermined by others, before they were even conceived.

There's an end in sight; a timeline; a budget and the well-intended begin to assign tasks without having the benefit of assessing strengths, abilities, or even the courage for folks to expand themselves in any way for the greater good of the whole.

It's an unhealthy situation for the best of companies, and one that is gradually being abandoned by those who are becoming more forward thinking.

BAD TEAMS PERFORMING WISELY

In studies conducted by the *Harvard Business Review* in 2009, it was demonstrated that symphonies that were dysfunctional, or grumpy, most often performed better

than those whose members were regularly harmonious in their practices.

Think about the Miami Heat in 2011 with LeBron James, Dwayne Wade and Chris Bosh, and their performances. Individually, they had formerly been stellar; yet, off to a bad start in the season because of the lack of synergy, they were eventually able to pull it together despite their egos. Experts attribute that to recognition of complementary styles, rather than competing against each other instead of the other team.

We've probably all had the experience at one time or another, to work with an outstanding team because goals were articulated, people were placed appropriately in their positions of responsibility, and expectations were clearly communicated.

THE DEMONS

So, who is responsible for teams running amuck? How many of these types of characters show up regularly at the meetings you organize to accomplish the tasks at hand? If you've got more than one, depending on the size of the team and the objective in sight, you could be doomed even before you start.

(See "Principles for Leadership" on page 18)

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Devil's Advocate: Yes, you absolutely need someone to shoot holes in your projections. You want to completely understand what all of the risks are, the "Murphy's Law" prospective of what can go wrong will go wrong and other concerns. But the devil's advocate also bears the responsibility to discuss steps necessary to avoid these risks and to simply recommend procedures that would alleviate any such notions that the task at hand is not able to be accomplished. Great leaders demand more of their team members requiring solutions to be included with every objection.

The Blabbermouth: Some folks believe that they are going to be rewarded by the number of words they spew forth at any meeting. Even better, are the pontificators that baffle us with their brilliance because they know "big" words that no one else understands. I delight in watching English historical documentaries or shows where words are executed exuberantly. Great leaders recognize the uncanny manners of those who want to rise above the others, by nipping it in the bud with direct questions and perhaps, even outlining rules at the beginning for acceptable conversation.

The Narcissist: It's all about me. "Why I remember back, one time when..." *ad nauseum* with no reference to the problem at hand, to anything relatable to the project, but simply speaking to hear themselves bolster up their own self-image. While congratulations may be due them for something accomplished long ago, what does it have to do with the problem at hand or the search for practical solutions?

Nervous Nelly: Really doesn't have a clue as to what the conversation at hand is all about but is willing to interrupt regularly and take folks off task. Again, someone else who has the need to speak for whatever reason, but doesn't actually have a clue as to what the desired outcome is, or how to get there. "I think that if we go this way, we'll surely be in a better place than where we are today. Let's make sure... something innocuous, like buying hoagies for lunch."

THE HEROES

There are also those individuals who can provide great support to your team's ability to overcome the challenges that are before them.

(See "Principles for Leadership" on page 20)

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Some may be extroverts; some introverts. It is the great leaders objective to recognize their strengths and call upon them for maximum collaboration.

The Sage: A welcomed member to any team. This person has the experience, the skills and the knowledge to guide others towards their goal. These rare gems speak softly, with measured words, and can provide the path to success when they muster up the courage to divulge their deepest secrets. In 50 words or less, they will astutely give guidance that is invaluable.

The Tightrope Walker: Ah — someone with a vision to see a clear path. However, they can easily identify the risks, lay out a variety of solutions and will encourage the group to roll the dice in the best direction. The size of the net is projected and strategies outlined. “If we do this, we might expect this. If we do that, we could expect this...”

The Brave Ones: Those individuals who have the courage to rise above the others, specifically draw out the best of

their team members, and quickly and cleanly identify all aspects of the project. Sometimes, too quick for introverts or analysts, they drive others through inspiration and motivation. These folks may be called charismatic by others.

GREAT TEAMS NEED TO BE NURTURED

No matter what the occasion for teams to be gathered, there needs to be an assessment by the leader, of the skill sets that are desired. Only, when that harmony occurs, and then, through ongoing accountability and motivation, can great work be accomplished. 🗑️

Kayte Connelly CCT, PBL-MP, CPC, ELI-MP, Best Principled Solutions LLC, is a transformational leadership coach and human talent consultant and member of the John Maxwell Team. For customized MasterMind programs, lunch and learns, or other customized conversations, call 484.769.2327 for more information on how your company could become a more collaborative work environment where your employees are engaged and/or to discover your leadership “edge.” [@leadercoachKT](http://www.facebook.com/BestPrincipledSolutions)

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