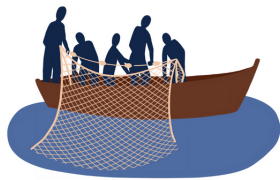


STEP BY STEP GUIDE

1. Lay a rope on the ground/floor which is long enough (5 to 10 metres) for all of the people in your group to stand opposite one another.
2. Separate your group into two, roughly-equal teams with each half standing opposite the other. That is, Team A stands on one side of the rope facing Team B on the other side of the rope.
3. Explain to your group that, in a few moments, you will state the goal of this exercise once and one time only. Furthermore, once you have stated this goal, no-one may ask any further questions. Tough, I know!
4. Ask each team to agree to respect the physical, emotional and mental well-being of the other team at all times during the exercise.
5. Explain to your group that the rope boundary which separates the two teams should be thought of as fixed, and hence, cannot be moved in any way.
6. Finally, clearly state the goal, as follows:
 - a. The goal for the team on the left side of the rope is to get as many people who are standing opposite them to stand on their side of the rope. And, the goal for the team on the right side of the rope is to get as many people who are standing opposite them onto their side of the rope.
 - b. Importantly, this mutual objective should be accomplished as quickly as possible.
 - c. OK, that's it. No questions are permitted beyond this point, so call "GO."
7. Generally, allow for 5 to 10 minutes for the two teams to work on solving the problem, sometimes longer. Critically, and for purposes of reflecting back on significant processes,
8. it is important to allow enough time for group members to act and react to the various behaviours each team exhibits to reach their goals. Groups will view this task as a competition, rather than a mutual, co-operative goal, you can expect it to take up a lot more time.
9. To squeeze the most value from this exercise, allow for plenty of time at the end of the activity to invite your group to reflect on their experience. See the Reflection below for many ideas



PRACTICAL LEADERSHIP TIPS

Naturally, if you don't have a long rope, simply use a sporting court boundary, or draw a chalk line on the ground, or scratch a line in the sand, etc. No matter, all you need is two, clearly identifiable sides to help people cross the line.

Note, reflecting the proclivity of the western world to view everything with a scarcity mindset, expect your group to infer that this exercise is a competition, a task in which one team must win at the expense of the other. But this exercise is a powerful demonstration that the task can only be fully accomplished if the teams approach the problem as a collaboration, where co-operative behaviours work best. Which brings me to...

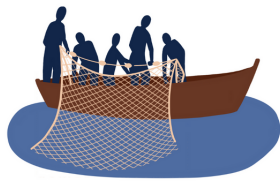
Spoiler Alert: The simple solution to this problem is for the members of each team to quickly change places with one another by stepping across the line, which may take five seconds at most. It is often quite humorous to invite people to share what they did and didn't do to achieve their objective, and what was done to them. As important, it is interesting to hear why they did what they did too.

Behaving from a competitive, win-lose mindset, beware the possibility of overtly physical manoeuvres, eg dragging people across the line. If necessary, review your Full Value Contract prior to getting started, especially the commitment to adhere to certain safety guidelines.

As your group engages with one another, observe the various behaviours that occur between teams and individuals as they struggle to get folks opposite them over to their side, but not allowing themselves to pass over to the other side. More often than not, you will observe a variety of futile, non-productive behaviours that personify lose-win and lose-lose behaviours, sprinkled with some interactions that are more positive.

If a satisfying result does not eventuate in the allotted time, ie the teams are fixated on competing, and not collaborating, ask a few leading questions to guide them to success:

- Please restate the goal of this exercise.
- How many people from the other team, must your team have on your side to win?
- What is the risk or penalty to your team when members of the other team swap to your side?
- Can anyone see an alternative solution that may involve collaborative, rather than competitive behaviours?



REFLECTION

Coupled with one or more reflection strategies, here are some sample questions you could use to process your group's experience after playing this simple, yet incredibly complex group initiative:

- What was your team's thinking process?
- Based on what you heard as the goal and rules for the activity, what, if any, were your preconceived notions?
- What assumptions did you make based on what you heard?
- What behaviours did you observe within your own team, and between the two teams?
- How many possible solutions did your team(s) explore? What were the reactions to some of these solutions?
- Did trust or a lack thereof influence your behaviour?
- Why do you think the more competitive behaviours surfaced so quickly?
- What might this exercise teach us about working together?

Usually, you will hear some interesting discussion about - winning at all costs - for someone to win, someone has to lose - I'm sticking with my team - I couldn't trust the ideas and suggestions of others in my group or from the other group. Interestingly, you rarely ever hear, at first, conversation that confirms or acknowledges an understanding that both teams were one large group which shared a mutual goal. As a clearly mutual goal, collaborative and cooperative behaviours would have served them much better.