



## WHAT COMPRISES TEAMWORK?

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United we stand, divided we fall. Such is the concept of teamwork. The word itself does not contain an “I”, but it does have “me” and “we” both spelled backwards. Take away the word ‘team’, and all you have is work: dreary and tedious in its essence. Put back the word ‘team’ and it makes a great compound word that denotes cooperation, ease of burden, and a common goal on which the whole group focuses.

You and I have, in one way or another, belonged to several teams: professional organizations; online and offline networks; clubs in school; committees for an event; a board. No matter how they come, teams are always organized so whatever needs to be done is done swiftly, using every team member’s abilities, optimizing skills, and ultimately bringing out the best in everyone. In a team, differences are set aside while working towards a specific objective. An individual who finds it hard to work within a team because he feels it would unduly place him in the sidelines can never hope to find lasting friendships. After all, in the midst of shared joys and difficulties, we find kindred souls who we can turn to in hours of need. The team members we have strategized with, seen results with, and created inroads with turn out to elicit a bit of emotional sympathy from us.

Do you remember your elementary days when you belonged to a club, a scout patrol, or a committee? The ones I truly remember had effective team leaders who gave us assignments and target dates: who was doing what till when. Young as we were, those leaders inspired me to bring out the best I had in order to make the whole team proud. It was a joint-achievement matter, with no room for tremendous egos or finger-pointing. Whatever the outcome was, it was always considered a team-effort. Of course, ultimately, it was always the leader who did most of the work: organizing, collating, stuff like that. But the rating was shared by all as a group.

I had also experienced ineffective leaders who assigned all the work to all the other members except themselves. Throwing their weight around, such leaders often failed to elicit cooperation and wholehearted participation for a certain project, then would give the poor excuse that the others simply refused to help. Pathetic as it may seem, such situations could have easily been prevented had the leader laid down ground rules and agreed to oversee the entire process while getting himself deep into the task.

Teamwork entails the whole team working together, with all heads accounted for. No ifs and buts, just why nots.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is your concept of teamwork?
2. Do you think that receiving the same rating as another team member is justifiable? Why or why not?
3. If you had worked really hard on a team project but saw another team member having it easy, what would you do?
4. What do you think breaks a team apart?
5. What are the distinct advantages of working within a team? Are there any disadvantages that come to mind?