

Personal Leadership Activity

TRADING CARDS

Overview

An icebreaker that calls for brief one-on-one conversations about individual traits and characteristics

Purpose

To prepare a group to discuss issues of identity and their implications

To spark a deeper conversation about how prejudices and perceptions can affect one's identity within a group (if the group members know each other well)

Time Required

15–40 minutes, dependent on group

Materials

Index cards or half sheets of paper, marker

Prepare

Prepare the “trading cards” in advance using index cards or half sheets of paper. On each card, write a personal “I” statement that reflects someone’s identity (e.g., “I like chocolate” or “I speak more than one language”). For groups that do not know one another well, it is probably best to make the cards very neutral and not based on appearances. With groups that know one another well, it’s possible to use cards that are more personal, although doing so can lead to deep and sometimes emotional discussions about personal issues that the group may not be ready for.

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 1: Setting the Context	2 min	Tell the group you will give each person 2 cards. Each card has a trait on it, such as <i>[read two or three of the cards out loud]</i> . They will have 5 minutes to find someone who has a card that matches theirs. Participants should try to trade both cards to attain two new cards that describe themselves and should be encouraged to trade with two different people.	Trading Cards
Step 2: Exchanging Cards	5 min	Allow the group time to exchange cards and to talk and share with one another. When everyone has two new cards, ask the group to come together to discuss what happened.	

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
<p>Step 3: Reflection</p>	<p>8–20 min</p>	<p>To spark discussion, use the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Share one or both of your cards with the group. Is there one that you feel best describes you? Which one? ★ Can anyone describe what happened as you shared your cards? ★ Were any cards difficult to exchange? ★ How did it feel to exchange your cards with others? ★ How did you choose the people with whom you exchanged your cards? How were you chosen? ★ How do you think this process would be different if we did not know one another? If we knew each other better? ★ Were any assumptions made as you tried to exchange cards? Were the assumptions fair? How did your assumptions about others affect the way you interacted with them? 	