

TEAMS AND ROLES ACTIVITY

OVERVIEW

A short activity where one-on-one conversations form the basis of a conversation about roles in teams.

OBJECTIVES

- To define the characteristics of successful teams and team members
- To foster a feeling of team building among participants

TIME REQUIRED

Approximately 30 minutes

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 1: Set the Context	5–10 min.	Say to the group, “Teams take many forms, such as a group working together, organized sports, or friends. Visualize a time when you were a member of a successful team. What was it? What did you do?”	
Step 2: Discussion	10 min.	Say to the group, “Talk with a partner, asking him or her the questions on the flip chart.” Questions: 1. When were you a member of a successful team? What was it like to be on the team? 2. How would you describe your role and contribution to the team? 3. What did others do? 4. How did you know the team was successful? 5. What did you learn as a member of this team?	Flip chart with the questions at left written on it.
Step 3: Reflection	10 min.	Record answers to questions (2) and (3) Give people the handouts on the next pages to check against and look back on.	Copies of handouts 2K & 2L

ROLES—WHAT CAN YOU BRING TO YOUR TEAM?

As a member of any team, it is helpful to know what is expected of you. Ideally, what is expected of you will be something that matches your interests and skills. All teams should cover certain important roles. Below is a list and description of what some of those roles are. It is really just the beginning of a list—blank spaces are included for roles unique to your team.

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
<i>Future thinker(s)</i>	Thinks about the big picture and reminds people of what they could accomplish
<i>Gatherer(s)</i>	Makes sure that everyone knows about meetings and activities and reminds them to come
<i>Speaker(s)/performer(s)</i>	Enjoys speaking or being in front of large groups of people to make presentations or share information
<i>Money person (or people)</i>	Keeps track of current funds and makes plans for getting funds in the future
<i>Organizer(s)</i>	Keeps track of time and deadlines
<i>Networker(s)</i>	Makes partnerships with new people and groups
<i>Facilitator(s)</i>	Creates processes for the group's success and reflection
<i>Documentor(s)</i>	Helps the team think about where they've been and what they've accomplished

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It may take a while for people to decide what they are interested in and what they are good at. Roles change as people gain new interests and skills. Roles also overlap: People might play more than one role. Likewise, you might decide that you want to learn more about another aspect of leadership. Leadership—and all the things that go into being a leader—involves skills that you can learn and fit into your own personal style.

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF TEAMWORK

Geese can teach us some lessons about building a good team. Next fall when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in V formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way:

- As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird immediately following.
- By flying in V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.
- When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.
- When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing, and another goose flies the point.
- Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.
- Finally, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshots and falls out of formation, two other geese will fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection.
- They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies; only then do they launch out on their own or with another formation to catch up with their group.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quickly and easily because they are traveling on the momentum of one another. If we share work and leadership, we will be able to stay moving in the right direction for longer. It makes sense to take turns doing demanding jobs and to encourage people to keep up the good work.

Adapted from a speech given by Angeles Arrien at the 1991 organizational Development Network, based on the work of Milton Olson. It is circulated to Outward Bound staff throughout the United States.