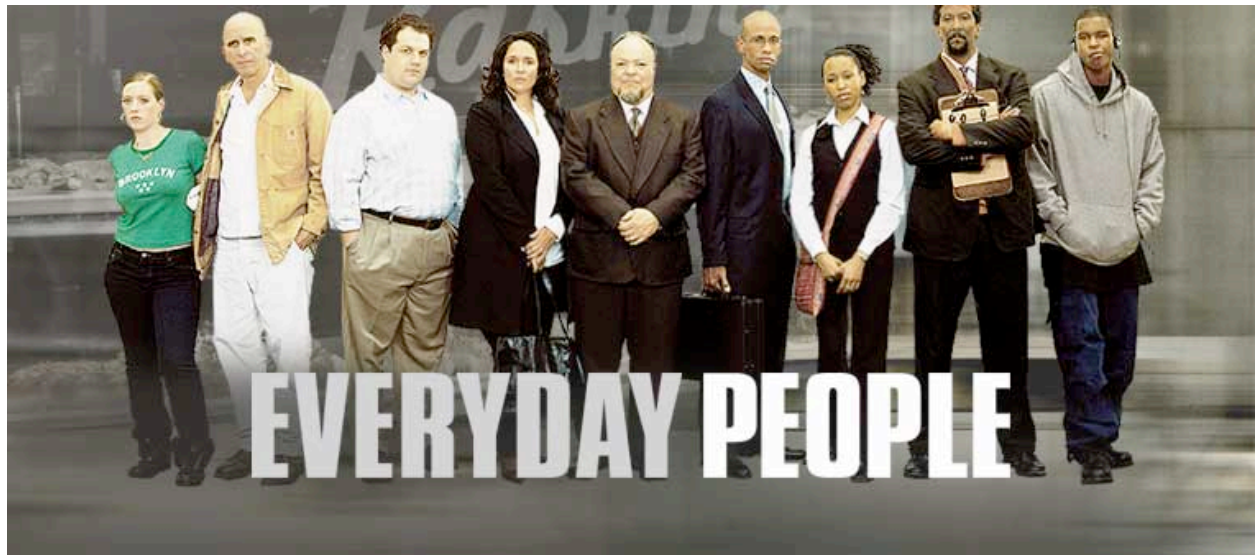


Team Is Not a Four-Letter Word



Working with Everyday People

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Everyday People

Are We on Purpose?

Any exploration of the people, personalities, and behaviors that affect your team is short-sighted without an examination of your team's culture. The interpersonal dynamics of collaboration is often influenced by the state of the collaborative culture. Reflect on the following questions:

What is your team's fundamental purpose? Why do you come together? Is there a "North Star" that guides your work?

The definition of *collaboration* is a group of people working **interdependently**, on a **common goal**, for which they are held **mutually accountable**.

- Is your team interdependent? What evidence do you have of being an interdependent team?
- What **common goal** brings your team together and drives the work you do?
- How is **mutual accountability** demonstrated on your team?

Reflect on the following questions regarding **collaborative culture**:

- Do you have frequent (weekly) collaborative time embedded in your professional day?
- Has your team identified team norms?
- Do you hold each other accountable to follow your norms?

To Thine Own Self Be True

It would be irresponsible to conduct a session in which we come together and simply identify the worst behaviors in *other people*. When we're honest with ourselves, the truth is, nobody is difficult all the time, and everybody is some of the time. Covey and Merrill remind us that we judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their behavior (2006, p. 13). So, one of the first things we do in exploring each character is to use our thumbs to point. I'm going to ask that we consider each character and reflect on our own behaviors. In the spirit of the word *character*, we sometimes find ourselves acting out some of these roles. The question to consider is *how often*?

For your own benefit and information, you'll be encouraged to identify how often you find yourself engaged in the discussed character role. The range of roles is as follows:

Role	Description	Symbol
Unemployed Actor	This role is not one that I ever find myself playing.	U
Extra	I find myself playing this role in a rare, uncharacteristic moment.	E
Supporting Actor	Occasionally, I find myself playing this role.	S
Actor in a Leading Role	I am conscious of the fact that I often play this role.	L

Character Charts

Character	Actor	How We Enable	How to Empower	Commit to Improve
The Tank				
The Slacker				
The Sniper				

Character	Actor	How We Enable	How to Empower	Commit to Improve
The Firehose				
The Hothead				
The Complainer				
The Town Crier				

Being Our Best Selves

We have a personal responsibility to be *our best selves* when trying to effect change in others. When we believe people truly are acting in our best interests, we tend to trust them. When we believe that they are not acting in our best interests, we do not trust them (Covey & Merrill, 2006, p. 83).

Trust is a function of two things: *character* and *competence*. Character includes your integrity, your motive, and your intent with people. Competence includes your capabilities, your skills, your results, and your track record. And both are vital. Let's take a look at five strategies that help us build trust, effect change, and be our best selves:

1. Give others a reputation to uphold.
2. Listen to learn.
3. Model what you expect.
4. Change what they do, not who they are.
5. Encourage the heart.

Change-Agent Ideal	Notes, Nuggets, and Opportunities
Give others a reputation to uphold.	
Listen to learn.	
Model what you expect.	
Change what they do, not who they are.	
Encourage the heart.	

Strategies and Solutions for Focusing on Behavior

1. **Make the most of the differences you have with others.**
Think of the differences you have with others as gifts instead of difficulties so that you can make the most of your relationships.
2. **Trust that the other person also seeks harmony.**
If you approach a difficult person with the belief that he/she is as eager as you to restore harmony, you can make the first move knowing that the result will be something you both want.
3. **Communicate assertively.**
Assertive communication means maintaining your rights while respecting the rights of others. Speaking assertively is accepting ownership of your feelings and requests.
4. **Learn from others and allow them to learn from you.**
Remain open to others' opinions. Margaret Wheatley (1992) reminds us to enter every interaction with the mindset: *Is there something here for me to learn?* When people feel your allegiance and support, they will be drawn to you naturally regardless of your differences.
5. **Don't ignore difficult behaviors.**
Address issues immediately to avoid future problems. Remember that subordinates are looking for direction from you on issues that impact the team or department.
6. **Focus on future behavior.**
People aren't the problem; it's the behavior that's the problem. A person can only change future behavior. A conversation filled with a history of mistakes generates defensiveness and shuts down communication.

(Adapted from Employee Development Systems, Inc., 2007)

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