

The Journey from Group to Team: Stages of Development and the Human Spectrum

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“Although a single twig will break, a bunch of twigs is strong.” -Tecumseh

Human beings are by nature social animals (Aronson, 2018). Their survival when dwelling on the African savannah depended on their collaborative efforts. They were slower and weaker than most of the other animals dwelling on the savannah—but they knew how to work together in a manner that enabled them to find their own distinctive strength. The ability of humans to talk with one another—based on their unique creation of language—made their capacity to coordinate efforts with one another that much more impressive. The biology of humans further enhances (and motivates) this desire to work with one another: a specific hormone called “oxytocin” (known as the “nurturing and bonding chemical”) saturates the neurochemical system of human beings more than is the case with most other animals. We are primed and positioned for work with other people in groups and in teams that seek to achieve a specific purpose (such as survival on the savannah or creative innovations).

Given this orientation of human beings, what seems to be the nature of the collaborative relationships that are being formed? Of course, there are the strong filial bonds that form among family members and, in some cultures, among relatives and even among all members of one’s tribe. In contemporary times there are also relationships established with other people who share one’s interests. These groups can be formed around a common commitment to a specific sports team or around membership in a fraternal organization. Parents share child-care duties with neighbors and teenagers join together with one another to form a “clique”. There are many kinds of groups that creative humans have invented over countless centuries.

The Nature and Function of Teams

There is a specific kind of group, however, that deserves special attention—for it plays a critical role in the functioning of contemporary institutions. This is a group that we can identify as a “Team”. It is this type of group that can effectively perform an assigned task and that can be a source of both task-related

and interpersonal gratification. It is the moments when groups become teams that many of us find the exhilaration that Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes as *Flow*.

What then is a team and what function is being served by a team (other than holding the potential of being quite gratifying for its members)? And when is it necessary for a group to become what we define as a team? These are big and important questions to ask. A group may connect its members through a common interest (e.g., a book club) or even a structural connection (reporting to the same supervisor). If it does *not* need to experience interdependence to get to its destination, nor the passionate drive towards a greater purpose, then members can remain more individually focused and still achieve both their own satisfaction and their own goals.

A team, on the other hand, is defined as a collection of people who share a specific greater purpose and are committed to working collectively toward the achievement of this purpose. A team is successful if it can sustain and operate effectively on behalf of this purpose. What then makes Teams necessary? It is this matter of purpose. A Team is defined by its purpose, not by its members. As Peter Hawkins (2020) notes: “It is the Purpose that creates the team – not the team. The need and the purpose are already out there in the world waiting for a team to respond.”

Real Teams will acknowledge that they:

1. Have a clear shared purpose and objectives that they can only achieve as a team
2. Commit to working together to achieve those objectives
3. Care for each other’s needs and success
4. Make a habit of meeting regularly to review progress and think of ways the team can improve

If it is important for a group to become a team galvanized by a purpose, then how do teams build their foundations? Many criteria have been proposed for teams to self-evaluate. Organizational theorist Dick Beckhard (1972), for example, developed the GRPI model— Goals, Roles, Processes, Interpersonal Relationships—to help diagnose the roots of team (dys)function.

We suggest that teams regularly review the quality and strength of their commitment to the following:

1. Sense of shared purpose
2. Energy and commitment to purpose

3. Interpersonal behavioral dynamics
4. Engagement with impacted stakeholders
5. Coordination of tasks, roles and responsibilities
6. The tone and language amongst and about the team
7. Agility in the face of change and setbacks

This snapshot of the Team—why it is formed and how it functions—is all well and good. However, the formation of an effectively functioning Team requires a movie not a snapshot. This formation usually is best defined as a journey, rather than being an instant arrival at the destination. It is our purpose in preparing this essay to provide some expectations and guidelines about how this journey can best be executed. It is also our purpose to say something about the cast of characters who have assembled as a group and aspire to become a Team. A key feature in the journey from group to Team concerns the diverse perspectives held by these characters. It is this diversity that creates both the potentials for and barriers to effective Team functioning. We begin our description of the journey, therefore, by introducing this cast of characters (the people we work with and ourselves).

The Human Spectrum

We frame the cast of characters who are engaged in the journey from group to Team by introducing a template of three predominant perspectives and practices that guide the way in which each of us engage our world—a template that we call the human spectrum. This spectrum contains the three primary colors: red, blue and yellow.

A Ruby Red perspective and practice is founded on the strong desire to act and produce results. By contrast, an Azure Blue perspective and practice is founded on the strong desire to inspire and nurture. Golden Yellow, which is the third perspective and practice, is founded on the strong desire to be thoughtful and realistic. Each of these perspectives relates to one of what I refer to as the three domains of life.

The Three Domains of Life

How is it that some people embrace Ruby Red, while others embrace Azure Blue, Golden Yellow or some blend of one or more of these three? The source of these three perspectives and practices are the three fundamental domains of life. The first domain is *Information*. We live in a world and operate in groups

and Teams that requires us to be realistic (at least some of the time) and that require us, in turn, to reach out for and interpret information about our world.

A second domain stands at the opposite end of life and the groups and Teams of which we are a member. This is the domain of *Intentions*. Where do we want to be traveling in our life? What is our purpose and the purpose of the groups and Teams which we have joined? We are likely to wander aimlessly in our world without some sense of desired outcome(s).

The third domain is *Ideas*. We must continuously engage in problem-solving and decision-making regarding how we get from where we are at the present time (the domain of information) to where we want to be in the near (or distant) future (the domain of intentions). We engage in these processes when plotting out our own individual life and when we collaborate with other people in a group or Team setting.

The gap between our current state (as informed by information) and our desired state (as identified by intentions) is reduced (or eliminated) through the production of ideas and the movement to action based on the review of these ideas. We propose that a group becomes a Team when it can effectively integrate all three of these domains.

We call these “domains” because they resemble the nature and dynamics of domains that existed in Europe during the Middle Ages. During this time period, there were not large political states in Europe; rather, there were many smaller fiefdoms run by kings and queens (living in the legendary castles of Europe). These royal leaders presided over a specific region that was called a “domain.” Each domain operated with its own set of rules, codes of conduct, history, legends and even variations on a language of the broader culture.

The same dynamics operate in the domains of information, intentions and ideas. Each of these domains has its own rules, codes of conduct, history, legends and language. As in the case of the domains of Europe, we must shift our perspectives and practices when moving in our life from one domain to another (from information to intentions, from intentions to ideas, and so forth). Furthermore, each of us is likely to feel most at home in one of these three domains. We want to dwell in a world of information and reality, or in a world of intentions and vision. Perhaps, instead, we prefer to reside in a world of ideas and action. These preferences reside at the heart of the human spectrum.

The Human Spectrum and Interpersonal Needs

The perspectives and practices of the three domains penetrate virtually all aspects of our life. These influence the way in which we lead organizations, approach the personal problems we face in our life, and even select the people in our world with whom we wish to work and share our life. Among other things, these three domains relate to the needs we wish to be met in the groups and Teams that we have joined (Schutz, 1994). Specifically, to refer to Schutz's terms, the domain of information to the need for Inclusion, the domain of ideas to the need for Control and the domain of intentions to the need for Openness.

At this point, we also wish to reintroduce the Human Spectrum template, for it relates directly to the preferences each of us may have for one of the three domains. In the fiefdoms of the Middle Ages, not only did every domain have its own norms, values and narratives, it also had a shield, crest or colors that provided this domain with a powerful, visual representation of its norms, values and narratives. While we are not in a place to design a shield for each domain, we can assign it an appropriate color. As already noted, we have chosen to assign each domain one of the three primary colors on the spectrum: red, blue and yellow (acknowledging that there is a competing model concerning the three primary colors).

We are assigning the color of red to the Domain of Ideas. In fact, it is a ruby red-- for this is the domain that is glowing with energy and vitality. The Domain of Intentions has been assigned the color of blue (and more intensely azure blue). This is a color that represents the sky and azure blue suggests a quite beautiful sky that inspires us to look upward and outward into the future. Finally, the Domain of Information is represented by yellow. A Golden Yellow represents the intense light emanating from the sun. We must be illuminated by light if we are to find our way forward.

Developmental Stages of the Journey

Given our introduction of the three domains, as well as the three interpersonal needs and the Human Spectrum, we turn to the ways in which the domains, needs and spectrum can and should be considered in helping a group become an effectively functioning Team. This involves the introduction of a four-stage model of development that describes how a group engages in the journey to being an effectively functioning Team.

The most widely used model for the developmental sequence of Teams, was identified by Bruce Tuckman (1965). It concerns two distinct areas of behavior. First, almost all Teams come together to get something done. Teams have agendas to cover, problems to solve, decisions to make. Behavior related to getting the job done

will be called *task behavior*. Second, Teams are made up of people. Whether they wish to or not, members of a Team will establish interpersonal relations with each other over the course of the Team's development.

Behavior related to the interpersonal dimension of the Team's life will be called *interpersonal behavior*. This is where the human spectrum enters and where our analysis of the interpersonal needs related to this spectrum informs the nature and purpose of this behavior—on their way, potentially, to becoming a Team. Tuckman proposes that groups follow a predictable pattern of development over time in the areas of both task behavior and relationship behavior. We suggest that the transformation of a group to that of a functioning Team involves the successful movement through each of Tuckman's four stages of development.

Stage One: Forming

When a group is first established, it will inevitably go through a period of organization and orientation. In the area of task behavior, this is a period of orientation to the task. In this stage the potential Team will be concerned with identifying the task at hand and in deciding what information and experience will be relevant to that task. In essence, the forming stage will be devoted to establishing the preliminary ground rules under which the work of the potential Team will be conducted. A more informed set of ground rules are established at a later stage of development (norming), but there must be some in place for the group to get started.

Domains and Needs

The domain of **Information** is of primary importance at this point in the early development of the group.

Golden Yellow pervades the Stage One landscape. Potential members of the group want to know more about what is going to happen in the group and why it has been formed before deciding whether or not to join. The interpersonal need for **Inclusion** tends to be dominant. "Do I want to become a member and if I do then how do I get included?" This doesn't mean that potential members can physically opt in or opt out of the group. They might be required to attend the group as part of their job description or formal assignment to a task group. Social pressure might also push them to remain in the group. However, they are examining the conditions under which they can be fully engaged in the group's activities, rather than showing up but contributing little to the actual work of the group.

How exactly does a potential member determine whether or not they wish to be included? Usually, during the forming stage, there is considerable testing and dependence. "Testing" refers to attempts by Team members to discover what kind of interpersonal behavior will be acceptable to other Team members and to the formal

leader of the Team. As we already mentioned, the testing done at this preliminary stage is likely to be only partially accurate. The “real” and enforced behavioral norms are established later. “Dependence” refers to the tendency of Team members during this early stage to rely on the formal or informal leaders of the Team to provide structures and guidelines for interpersonal behavior. Once again, this initial identification of leadership is subject to major changes when the group enters the second stage of development (storming).

In sum, it seems that during the early stage of group development, there are several major questions that must be addressed in order for a potential member to acquire sufficient **Information** to make a decision about their willingness and ability to be included. In the realm of task behavior, group members during the forming stage attempt to find a preliminary answer to the following question “What is the task of this Team, and how will I be able to contribute to that task?” In the realm of interpersonal behavior, Team members in the forming stage attempt to find a preliminary answer to the question “What kind of behavior is acceptable in this Team, and how am I to behave in this Team in order to belong?”

Opportunities and Challenges of Formation and Inclusion

If the interpersonal need for inclusion is important for many people when a group is being formed, then what are the conditions in a group (or more broadly an organization) that are conducive to or serve as a barrier to the meeting of this need?

First, the best working environment for the enhancement of inclusion is one in which there is a strong welcoming culture. In a previous essay, one of us (Bergquist, 2020b) referred to a pig roast that was held by a person (Sarah) who chose to include herself in my community (Harpwell, Maine). Most small and isolated communities in Maine (and many other New England towns) are hard to enter as a newcomer. The long-time residents are often reticent to actively welcome in newly arrived residents. At most, they are inclined to set up a community-based variant on the Welcome Wagon. Sarah reversed this process. As the newcomer, she did the welcoming! Furthermore, we can use her pig roast to identify some of the key components of a welcoming environment.

First, everyone who was invited to the pig roast brought a dish to the pig roast. It was not just a matter of getting but not giving. Similarly, during the early phases of a group’s formation, it is important to acknowledge and appreciate what each person is bringing to the group. A bit of time spent in the sharing of past experiences and achievement that are relevant to the current group’s purpose can be quite helpful. Even better is the identification of a member’s talents by other people in the group who know what this member has done in past groups. Many people are hesitant to “brag” about their own

past accomplishments—but are willing (even eager) to enter the group by talking about what their colleagues in the group have done.

A second feature of the pig roast was the encouragement of “wandering about” by those hosting the roast. Sarah and her husband modeled this behavior by wandering around from subgroup to subgroup inquiring into what was happening in the lives of these pig roast participants. Pretty soon, people were walking over to those who they didn’t know and did a fair amount of acquainting.

At one of the pig roasts, one of us in attendance [WB] personally heard from one of the descendants of the person who founded our community (during the 18th Century). The tales she told were absolutely entrancing and quite informative. When a group is being formed, storytelling can be quite valuable, both as a means of helping members feel included (as both the storytellers and listeners) and as a means of finding out more about the backgrounds and perspectives that each member is bringing to the group (valuable as the group moves to becoming a Team).

Finally, the pig roast has been a fun event and one that produces great food. Though the personal need for inclusion is not high for the one of us attending the roast [WB], this yearly event is eagerly anticipated. Hopefully, the early activities of a group that is convened to perform some important (and serious) task can also suggest that the group will be a source of fun, interpersonal enjoyment – and maybe even an occasional bit of delicious food (or at least some donuts and coffee).

There are also many challenges associated with meeting the need for inclusion among members of a group—especially if this group is to become a Team. We will specifically explore three barriers and frame them as group phenomena: (1) the burnout phenomenon, (2) the betrayal phenomenon and (3) the newcomer phenomenon. We first look at burnout.

The Burnout Phenomenon usually involves low proactive (expressed) and reactive (wanted) Inclusion scores (Schutz, 1994). We have found in our consulting and training that a drop in inclusion score can be precipitated by extensive amount of group work—especially when the group has been ineffective or rife with conflict. When an organization is structured around seasons (such as an academic year, sales year or entertainment cycle), it is often the case that inclusion scores drop off near the end of a yearly cycle.

Lower scores are also often found at the end of an exhaustive Team project (even if the Team has been successful). Many people are simply “sick and tired” of group meetings – and they need a respite from meetings (a meeting sabbatical). What happens in organizations that have no seasons or those

organizations that primary operate in the same way every day? There are no special projects. When does the fatigue and burnout set in or is it an ongoing phenomenon?

The Betrayal Phenomenon: low Inclusion Scores can be precipitated by the shattering of an important relationship (such as the enactment of a divorce) or, in a group, by the shattering of the established way in which the group operates. Everyone wants out of the group and there is little desire to be included in any form or at any time in the foreseeable future.

A new leader might be brought in who wants to do everything in a different way, or several members of the group share information with people outside the group that was supposed to remain confidential. This sense of betrayal is likely to be even more painful when the group has been in operation for a long time. Ironically, it is when there is a fair amount of trust in a group that the sense of betrayal often occurs. If there was never much trust established in the group, then members will expect that individual agendas are running the show and that everyone is on their own.

The Newcomer Phenomenon: while low inclusion scores are likely when there is burnout or betrayal, we find that high Inclusions scores can be precipitated by those people who are entering a new group, organization or community. Most people are not like Sarah. They don't take the risk of offering a pig roast, but instead sit back and wait to be invited to the dance. They often want to be included and may yearn for the days when they were solid members of a community (that they have recently left). With the high need for inclusion that is reactive in nature, the newcomers will often be highly sensitive to anything in their group, organization or community that they consider to be a slight, a bit of indifference, or even subtle hostility.

Under these conditions, the newcomer is unlikely to be a productive member of their group, organization or community – even though they may have a unique perspective to offer or hidden talents to contribute. Furthermore, as we shall note later regarding openness, the low level of trust on the part of the newcomer can often prevent the group, organization or community from achieving shared trust. As a result, the group, organization or community will never move to a sustainable level of collective productivity—let alone offer a setting of safety that can foster individual growth and development among its members. Without this trust, neither is there a way in which the group, organization or community can successfully address the challenges associated with matters of control and authority.

Inviting Safety

While the group during its forming stage might not yet be producing tangible results or establishing a climate of enduring trust, it can at least set the conditions for members of the group to feel safe. Ultimately, for many people, this initial decision regarding inclusion in the group is based on a fundamental concern about safety. Here is a checklist of initial group functions that enhance the prospects of members feeling safe:

- *Purpose*: why has this group been formed or what is the mission to which it has been assigned and to which its members should be committed? Why would someone want to join this group in order to embrace this mission and work toward accomplishment of related tasks?
- *Impact*: what difference would it make if we were successful (or unsuccessful) in achieving this purpose for our own group, for our stakeholders, for our organization? The group leader might want to pose this question to the group members for their own responses. It is important to move beyond the obvious (e.g. job security) or just short-term (e.g. increased quarterly revenues)
- *Introduction of Group Members*: each member should offer a little bit more than just name and position--such as offering something about their background that would surprise other group members or providing more task-related information about expertise and experience related to the group's purpose (though important not to set this up as a credentials competition)
- *Food (if in-person then at least offer a beverage)*: This offering can create an emotionally welcoming climate and potentially reduce initial anxiety

In addressing these questions and sharing initial perspective on the task at hand, the group creates a preliminary climate that is nurturing and supportive. There is greater clarity about what needs to be accomplished and how people in the group might relate to one another. Safety is established in a tentative manner and the group is ready to address the challenges of establishing authority and managing divergent perspectives and practices among group members.

Stage Two: Storming

The second stage of group development is characterized by some degree of emotional response. In the area of task behavior, the storming stage will be characterized by an emotional response to the demands of the mission. To at least some extent, Team members will experience some resistance to the demands the mission will apparently be placing on them. If the mission—related tasks are relatively easy and if the experience and expertise of the Team members seem adequate to the tasks, this resistance will be relatively minor and may

even go unnoticed. If, however, the tasks appear extremely difficult, or if the members of the Team are uncertain of their abilities to accomplish the tasks successfully, this resistance may be quite intense.

Domains and Needs

The domain of **Ideas** is of primary importance at this point in the development of the group. **Ruby Red** pervades the Stage Two landscape. Members of the group want to know who is in charge and how authority will be established and maintained in the group. This is particularly important, because there will be the preliminary sharing of ideas at this point and inevitable differences of opinion will emerge – hence the storming.

In the midst of this concern about authority, the interpersonal need for **Control** tends to be dominant. “Do I want there to be firm control in this group or would I like it to be a bit more relaxed?” “If I do want the control to be firmly established, then do I want to be assigned or acquire any of this control—or do I want someone else to take control?” “At the very least, do I want to be influential in this group or do I want to sit back and see where the group is moving and how it is addressing the conflicts that arise?”

In the area of interpersonal behavior, the second stage of Team development will be characterized by interpersonal conflict. Hostility may be directed by Team members toward one another or toward the formal leader of the Team, perhaps as a way of expressing individual differences or of resisting the continued imposition of structure on individual behavior. A sense of unity will not be present, and conflict may polarize around certain key issues.

Essentially, the Team will be experiencing a conflict between wishing to remain in the relative security of stage one or move into the unknown of perhaps closer interpersonal relations that may be established in the future. In the realm of task behavior, Team members in the storming stage attempt to answer the question, “Am I emotionally ready to deal with this task?” In the realm of interpersonal behavior, Team members in the storming stage attempt to answer the question, “Do I really want to work with these people!”

Opportunities and Challenges of Control

Given the struggles often associated with the need for control—struggles that can often leave “bruised egos” and alienated interpersonal relationships, it is important to identify conditions that lead to the most successful negotiation of control and authority issues. The simple answer is that the most efficient working environment is one in which strong formal authority is established.

This answer, however, tells us little about how this authority is established. Perhaps of even greater importance is the process by which this authority is maintained. Credibility is ultimately a matter of

successful performance by those in authority—along with a strong dose of fairness, emotional intelligence and some luck (the impact of outside forces).

Let's begin by turning to the establishment of control and authority. We know that authority in a group can come from at least six sources. First, the authority can be assigned by an external source that has credibility or position power (as the person to whom this group reports). While this is the most common source of authority, it is also important to mention the other sources.

Sometimes authority is based on expertise—we look to someone who “knows what they are doing.” While they might have been assigned formal authority, their words make a difference. They influence (and may ultimately control) by providing appropriate advice or insights about how to make something work, how to build something, how to provide the best possible services, or how to establish effective operational procedures.

There are other sources of authority that are somewhat less rationally based, but other more powerful than either positional or expert authority. There is relational authority. This member of our group is related to or a close friend of our “boss” – or this persona has the ear of someone at the top of the organization. In large, complex organizations, relationship authority can be very important.

This is how self-organizing processes often work: people relate to one another and influence one another through the formation of informal social networks—and at the hub of these networks is often someone who is also part of another social network that has considerable power in the organization. This is a variant on the “link-pin” model first introduced by Rensis Likert (1967). If one can serve as a link-pin between two levels of an organization, then they are likely to be granted informal, but powerful relational authority.

The other two major sources of authority are often hard to manage and can be quite destructive. First, there is authority that is based primarily in tradition. White males in America are readily assigned authority, as are older gentlemen in many Asian countries. For instance, as an older male with a white beard, one of us [WB] is assigned quite a bit of authority when working in Asia. Hopefully, there is some real expertise to be offered to the Asian clients—but it is clear that there is a boost in the assignment of traditional authority to the older American consultant with the white beard.

As we are all aware, major struggles are now going on in many contemporary societies regarding traditional authority. More positional and expert authority must be granted women, ethnic and racial minorities, those with disabilities, and those adopting nontraditional gender (and non-gender) identities

and practices. It is precisely because critical social justice and equity issues are front-and-center in many societies that the issue of control and authority in many groups is contentious and its resolution is critical though difficult. When a group has had a long history of hegemony, a gesture of greater equality might not be trusted.

Finally, there is the charismatic source of authority. Someone has assumed authority—or is at least influential—because they can “put on a good show.” It actually goes much deeper than this. Charismatic authority relates directly to the issue of projective identification—a fancy and somewhat elusive concept offered by those psychologists and organizational consultants who are oriented toward the work of Sigmund Freud and more recently the psychoanalytically-oriented object relations theorists and practitioners.

Stated all too briefly and simply, projective identification is a process by which we identify some part of ourselves that is in some way threatening to us (and our sense of self). As a result, we assign this part to another person (where this is accurate or non-accurate) and then come to admire this person for their real or unreal manifestation of this part. For instance, we might find that our own anger about the way our group is functioning is a bit frightening (since we don’t know what would happen to us if we expressed this anger in the group). We then identify someone else in the group that we believe is also angry (often without any good reason for making this assumption – other than they look like someone who should be angry).

If other members of the group also project their expression of anger onto this person, then they are likely to become a “fight leader” in this group (provided they actually have any inclination toward anger about the group process). With this projective identification on the newly appointed fight leader, those providing the projection can sit back and remain safe. They are watching the fight take place under the leadership of the recipient of their projection.

The “fight leader”, in turn, is a victim of something called “role suction.” They are trapped in being required to always lead the fight and the opposition in the group. They can play no other role. The reward for them is often charismatic authority. They become highly influential in the group (even if this influence is viewed by many as a form of obstruction or petty-mindedness). If the newly appointed fight leader can be viewed in some way as “the other” in the group (only woman, only racial minority, etc.) then the projection can be particularly powerful and hard to overturn.

There is one other important point to be made about projective identification. We have both found out, all too painfully, that if we have been successful in pointing out role suction and projective identification in a group with which we were consulting – and have liberated the recipient of the projection—it often requires that the group “audition” a new person to assume this constraining role. Within a few days (or even a few minutes) a new “fight leader” emerges—with or without their permission.

It is hard to break up this dynamic form of authority in a group. Charismatic authority comes at a major psychological price—which is the loss of freedom and the acquisition of power only by playing a specific role in the group. Ultimately, the group must “grow up” and no longer rely on charismatic authority. This can only occur if they identify the reason why they are relying on this form of authority and determine ways in which the issues being held by the charismatic leader can be addressed in an open manner, aided by legitimate forms of authority (expert and positional).

With these comments in place regarding the nature of authority in a group and its constructive as well as destructive properties, we will consider some of the more specific barriers associated with the dynamic phenomena of interpersonal need for control in a group. They are: (1) the anarchy phenomenon, (2) the competition phenomenon and (3) the indifference phenomenon.

The Anarchy Phenomenon: A high need for control among all members of a group can be precipitated by a complete absence of perceived control on the part of group. This anarchy can be found inside the group or in the environment where the group is operating. The object relations theorist and practitioners that we have already mentioned, propose that anxiety in a group or organization must be contained in some manner or it will spill out and “infect” everyone it touches.

The container might be a formal structure or a strong culture. It might also be a strong leader who takes in the anxiety, metabolizes (transforms) it and returns it as a less potent set of concerns and ways to address these concerns (Bergquist, 2020a). Members of a group long for this container, however it is provided. Under conditions of ongoing or threatened anarchy, a group is especially vulnerable to the manipulations of a charismatic leader. The group is likely to discount the authority offered by those members of the group who have been assigned a formal leadership role (“you can’t trust anyone in authority”) or are appropriate authorities because of their expertise (“I don’t believe anything they say”).

The Competition Phenomenon: A high need for control can be precipitated by high levels of perceived rivalry among group members or group factions. Something triggers our primitive desire to fight rather

than flee, freeze or collaborate. A zero-sum game is introduced into the group, with there being only a winner and a loser—even if this means that ultimately everyone loses (“I might be falling off the cliff, but you are going with me!”). The competition is often expressed in ways that are indirect and not easily acknowledged.

There might be a “turf” war, with members of the group vying for airtime, committee assignments – even a position at the table. Battles can ensue. They produce harm, as well as anxiety. We often hear group members describe leaving a “nasty” meeting having been cut many times by razor-sharp micro-aggressions: they didn’t necessarily notice these cuts while they were taking place during the meeting, but they now feel them and all of the associated pain and anger. Micro-aggressions are likely to take place when contributions made by some members being ignored (“plopped”) or rapidly dismissed (“killed”). The fight for control in a group can truly be wounding and serve as a barrier to any transformation of the group into a Team.

The Indifference Phenomenon: A low need for control can be precipitated by a pervasive sense among group members that nothing of importance is happening in the group. If there is any struggle for control, it is a struggle that has no content—a display of raw need for control. Frequently, the real issue is not control; rather, it is about inclusion. “Why should I even be a member of this group. It is doing nothing important.” No purpose has been assigned to this group nor has any purpose been identified by the group itself.

For some reason, the group is required to meet—or this becomes an easy way to fill time (since group members don’t really care much about the other things that they “should” be doing). An endless set of meetings take place that serve no important function. This state of indifference is not uncommon in many organizations—especially those that are large and filled with complacency. A low level of engagement is inevitable under these conditions. “We don’t have to worry about what is happening inside or outside this organization”.

There is one other point to be made regarding the indifference phenomenon. Group members are often indifferent about pointing out that indifference is reigning supreme in this group. Why risk being wrong: some members think there is important work being done by the group. Worse yet, why risk being hated by pointing out the obvious. The king (or group) really isn’t wearing any clothes (not doing anything important). Do we really want to acknowledge this? In some ways indifference and anarchy come from

the same source: a sense of alienation. And we know that alienation tends to be associated with an unwillingness to be open about anything—which is the third interpersonal need (to which we now turn).

Establishing Proper Control

This second stage of group development is ultimately concerned with the issue of trust. Members of the group must address three different dimensions of trust. First, there is the matter of trusting the competence of other members of the group. If expert authority is to play any role in the movement of a group to a Team, then group members must believe that relevant knowledge and skills are being respected and engaged by the group. Furthermore, if authority is based on the formal designation of leadership in the group, then group members must feel confident that this leader (or leadership Team) bring appropriate knowledge and skills regarding Team leadership to this group.

There is also the matter of trust in the intentions of those given (or acquiring) authority in the group. Is this person (or these people) aligned with the convening purpose of this group? Is this person (or these people) interested in the welfare of all group members—or only in their own welfare? How do we know what the intentions of those in authority really are? The “real” intentions of those in authority and those taking control may be hard to discern at this point in the development of the group—but there must be an initial assessment of these intentions. This requires a discernment not just of words that are spoken, but also initial actions that are taken.

The third domain of trust concerns the perspectives being held by group members. Can we trust that everyone is seeing the world in similar ways? If nothing else, can we feel confident that we all share a common understanding of the words that are being spoken and actions being taken? This third domain of trust is particularly important if the group is composed of people from different cultural, racial and/or socio-economic backgrounds. On the one hand, the diversity of perspectives in a group can be of great value (Page, 2011); on the other hand, this diversity can be a source of misunderstanding and (ultimately) conflict.

At a fundamental level, we boil it all down to several basic principles about trust, as offered by Patrick Lencioni (2002). Great Teams tend to build trust by debating well (managing conflict) and getting results (finding good reasons to trust in the competence, intentions and shared perspectives of group members and the overall group). Here is a useful list of factors to review at this second stage of development:

1. Is the group already beginning to deliver some preliminary results?
2. Has mutual accountability been established?

3. Is there clear evidence of commitment to the group's purpose by all group members?
4. Is constructive dialogue taking place (rather than combative discussion)?
5. Is the group able to surface and successfully resolve differences or conflicts?
6. Is there clear and compelling evidence of trust and respect in this group that will enable it to move on to the third stage.

Stage Three: Norming

The third stage of Team development is characterized in both areas by increased openness and communication, as the Team realizes that its prior conflicts point out the areas in which they need to establish some ground rules, agreements or “norms”. In the area of task behavior, the third stage will be characterized by the open exchange of relevant interpretations. Information, ideas, and opinions relevant to the task will begin to be negotiated by Team members as they settle down in earnest to getting the task done.

Domains and Needs

The domain of **Intentions** is of primary importance at this third stage in the development of the potential Team—as it begins to take on the form and dynamics of a Team. **Azure Blue** pervades the Stage Three landscape. Members of the group want to know how the potential Team is really going to be operating and what behaviors are really acceptable in this potential Team. The interpersonal need for **Openness** tends to be dominant.

“Do I want to share my own thoughts and feelings about being a member and my own observations about what is happening in the potential Team and what I hope will happen?” “What about other members of the potential Team: how open do I want them to be?” “Do I sit back and become an attentive listener to what other people have to say? Or am I going to be one of those members who moves the potential Team forward in monitoring and further refining its own operations?” Refinements inevitably are needed if the group is to become an effectively functioning Team.

In the area of interpersonal behavior, the third stage of development is characterized by the development of genuine Team cohesion. In this stage, Team members accept the Team and one another; and, consequently, develop an important sense of Team unity. Team harmony becomes important in this stage, and interpersonal conflict may be avoided to help ensure that harmony. In the realm of task behavior, Team members in the norming stage attempt to answer the question, “What relevant ideas and opinions do I have that will help us

accomplish this task?” In the realm of interpersonal behavior, Team members attempt to answer the question, “How can I help contribute to continued Team unity and harmony?”

Opportunities and Challenges of Openness

We shift our attention to conditions that would be ideal for our third interpersonal need to be successfully addressed and for movement of the potential Team to fourth stage performance as a Team. The first requirement is that issues of inclusion and control have been identified, resolved and managed effectively in an ongoing manner. Otherwise, a group ends up with faux openness. We suggest that “genuine” openness is often an elusive phenomenon. People may seem to be open, but it is often just an appearance of openness—what they show the world when they actually want “to keep their cards close to the vest.” They indicate that they value the contributions made by other members of the group—and may even heap effusive praise on other members. Yet, we know nothing about why the contribution has been valuable or about how the potential Team might learn from this moment of appreciation.

There might be some general statements about ways in which potential Team members have reacted to specific events that have previously occurred in other groups—but nothing about what is happening in the current group: “I remember a committee I served on several years ago, and we found it really hard to get our work done without a clear agenda and consistent direction from our division head.” This is a good start, but what about the current group?

Are group members saying something about the way in which this group is setting the agenda or something about what the person in charge of this committee is or is not doing to provide direction? Uncritical and unspecified praise (or criticism) about activities in the current group, or reflections back on a previous group (or even the current group at an earlier time in its existence) does little in helping the group move forward. All-too-frequently, a reference to how “we did it at my previous company/job/department can be received as indirect criticism of what is now happening in the group. The lack of specificity and commentary on current operations of a group often results from failure to adequately engage group related issues about control – or even inclusion.

Let’s assume that the potential Team has moved successfully past inclusion and control concerns. The best working environment would then be one in which there is a strong, supportive culture operating in the potential Team or (even better) the overall organization. As in the case of great working environments for inclusion and control needs to be met, this kind of culture is nice to have—but how is

it created? We suggest that this type of culture is created and sustained if it is founded on a process of Appreciation. One of us has written an entire book about the creation of an appreciative organization (Bergquist, 2004). However, in the current essay, we will summarize three basic appreciative strategies as they can help to bring about a strong culture of support. These strategies concern group and organizational structures, processes and attitudes (Watson and Johnson, 1972).

First, the structures of an organization (or at least the group on which we are focusing our attention) must be appreciative in nature. This means that systems of reward should be grounded on demonstrated success (especially success in the midst of major challenges) rather than on the basis of avoided failures. The appropriate motto is “catch them when they are doing it right.” This success might be attributed to the work done by individual group members or the overall group.

Strategies associated with group or organizational processes should also be appreciative. As we noted above, praise and appreciation should be attended by specificity regarding what was achieved and why it was achieved. If there is a nostalgic focus on past groups or past performance of the current group, then this “best practice” reflection should lead to a focus on the best practices being engaged by the current group at the present time. Once again, the potential Team should first attend to what it is doing that is effective, then consider ways and times when it has not emulated these practices.

Attitude in a potential Team (or organization) can be appreciative if it is embedded in a futures-oriented perspective. Narratives should be encouraged that speak not so much to the potential Team or organization’s past, but rather to its desired future. Put simply, the stories being told by group members can help to create (or re-create) the reality in which this group now operates or could operate in the future. At the heart of what is often identified as “appreciative inquiry” is this emphasis on the creation of an uplifting and guiding narrative of possibilities (that have arisen from the moments of specific and timely appreciation already identified and shared in the group).

Obviously, this appreciative perspective will often be met with cynicism – or at least skepticism. There certainly is good reason to be cautious about the repeated and often inappropriate engagement in appreciation. It can be used to disguise the difficult issues facing the group. “We are looking up at the sky (the future) when we should be looking down at the ground (the present).” Furthermore, there are some challenges associated with the interpersonal need for openness that can’t be fully addressed through the engagement in appreciation. As we have done regarding inclusion and control, we will

identify and briefly describe three of these barriers and frame them as phenomena: (1) the sanctuary phenomenon, (2) the human relations phenomenon and (3) the faux openness phenomenon (revisited).

The Sanctuary Phenomenon: High levels of openness can be precipitated by the wide-spread perception of the group or Team as a safe place in which to disclose previously closely held thoughts, feelings and observations. A group, for instance, might schedule a two-day retreat where everyone is expected to be candid. The group might even bring in a consultant to conduct interviews that are confidential (thereby enabling members of the group to be candid). The results are reported out with identities being withheld. While this report out provides an opportunity for openness among group members, it can also create conditions of threat and denial.

A sanctuary might be created for a short period of time—and might even be wonderfully appreciative in nature. However, it is never a substitute for sustainable establishment of appreciative structures, processes and attitudes. It should be the aspiration of every consultant and coach to “work themselves out of a job” by developing the Team’s capacity to create the safety needed to engage in open conversations and deliberations—without an external conductor.

Those of us providing human relations training during the 1960s and 1970s learned a painful lesson regarding sanctuary. People attending our sensitivity training and encounter group sessions went back home to find that their new-found openness was not always welcomed. Damage was done and we must be careful about the indiscriminate creation of sanctuaries that are unrelated to back home openness.

The Human-Relations Phenomenon: High levels of openness can be precipitated by the perception or assumption that this group has been formed to provide healing help and support. Those of us who provide human relations training and consultation are guilty not only of creating temporary sanctuaries that do not prepare people for their return to the real world. We are also guilty of sometimes forgetting that the group or organization with which we are consulting has work to do. It is not in the business of helping people heal their wounds, meet all their interpersonal needs, or find their bliss. These “softer” outcomes would certainly be a blessing for members of the group and can help the group become a Team. There must still be a return, always, to the task at hand.

For those of us who are conducting human relations training and engaging in organization development consultation it is important to remember that the ultimate goal concerns productivity. The “the bottom line” is the ground on which the welfare of those working in the organization can be based. There is no “welfare” (job security) without financial viability. There is a good reason for all practitioners in this field

to reflect on why they are working in this arena. The fields of human relations training and organization development have often been wrongly identified as “value-free.” They are, in fact, saturated with strong (even admirable) values associated with social justice and human development. These values, however, are not utmost in the minds and hearts of many clients who hire and pay these trainers and consultants for their work.

The Faux Openness Phenomenon (Redux): Low levels of sincere openness can be precipitated by recognition that what is occurring is not real openness. It is instead compliance with repressive norms or even a coercive shattering of defenses. With this statement we are moving beyond the analysis of faux openness that was mentioned above. We would suggest that false openness can result not only from failure to address inclusion and control issues, but also from a much more destructive process that was engaged in some human relations training and organization development work done during the 1970s and 1980s.

At their extreme, many human relations training strategies deployed during those two decades were intended to bypass the natural defensive barriers of those participating in these training sessions. These strategies included marathon sessions during which participants were given little opportunity to sleep. There were also exercises encouraging participants to disclose something about a time when they were hurt or embarrassed by another person. Group-based processes were engaged that required participants to first be very closed and then be open about what is happening in the group.

These strategies often were quite effective—yet they were being engaged without there being much understanding among the trainers regarding the important role played by defensive structures. We know from extensive psychological research and the acquired knowledge of those providing deep psychotherapeutic work that defenses protect us from our own “demons” until such time as we are ready to face them. Premature acknowledgement – and especially premature (and forced) disclosures to other people—can be quite harmful. Studies on human “brainwashing” are particularly telling in this regard.

What then is an appropriate way in which to encourage and bring about genuine, constructive openness in a group—so that it might become a Team? Several imperatives can be introduced at this point. First, we must be patient. There is a neurologically based paradox involved: We cannot connect until we feel safe; but we need connection to feel safe. Therefore iterative, tentative levels of openness make more

sense than some of the sudden and intensive approaches sometimes facilitated by consultants. Openness requires trust and trust is not easily won.

Second, this patience with one another must also be founded on recognition of the requirement we have often repeated that issues of inclusion and control must first be addressed. Third, we must respect the right of people to be closed (and must admire the willingness of people to be open about their closedness). One of us [WB] has often written about a faculty member at a Pacific Northwest University who disclosed during a faculty development workshop that he was very closed and did not readily say much about himself to other people. Ironically, this was probably the most “open” statement made by anyone during this workshop. Fourth, we must recognize that there are major differences regarding the nature of and level of openness that is considered acceptable in various cultures around the world. This fourth imperative is particularly important to keep in mind today—for an increasing number of groups are composed of members from different cultures.

Creating the Norms

While some level of trust (based on competence, intentions and shared perspectives) has been established during the second stage, a much deeper and abiding sense of trust must be established at this third stage. Trust at this level is reaffirmed and sustained by the consistent patterns of behavior that are to be found among potential Team members. The following behaviors are some of those that can tend to “bust” trust in a group:

1. Passing the “buck” (someone not taking responsibility when they should)
2. Triangulating (discussing matters with members other than the member concerned)
3. Over-promising or breaking promises
4. Taking credit (when someone else deserves it)
5. Resisting constructive feedback
6. Withholding information
7. Betraying confidences
8. Being complacent

On the other hand, the following behaviors are some of those that tend to build trust:

1. Being accountable
2. Communicating directly

3. Under promising and over delivering
4. Giving or sharing credit generously and appropriately
5. Asking for feedback and incorporating it in action
6. Sharing information
7. Keeping confidences
8. Consistently striving to improve one's own performance

During this third stage of group development, as it moves toward becoming a functioning Team, we often recommend that the group become explicit about the behavioral norms it wishes to engage and enforce. Here is a leadership team's example *Agreement for Trust and Safety*:

Commitment for Execution, Accountability, Trust and Openness

- 1. We will not make assumptions about each other's motives or perspectives*
- 2. We will listen completely with courtesy and respect*
- 3. We will take joint ownership for the Team's successes and failures*
- 4. We will each attempt to show up as our "best person"*
- 5. We will be generous towards each other*
- 6. We will give each other the space to speak and the space to reflect*
- 7. We will replace judgement with curiosity*

As a group becomes truly functional with trust and safety assured – or at least affirmed—it is ready to become a Team and move to Tuckman's fourth stage.

Stage Four: Performing

In the fourth stage, emphasis is placed on constructive action directed at the successful alignment with the Team's mission and completion of the accompanying tasks. The group has arrived at the point when it is a Team. In some sense, the distinction between task and interpersonal behavior fades here, for the energy that was previously invested in interpersonal issues now will be devoted to task fulfillment in service of the mission and greater purpose.

In the area of task behavior, the final stage of Team development may be identified as the emergence of solutions. It is at this stage that genuine attempts are made toward the successful completion of the task. In the

area of interpersonal behavior, the fourth stage can be described as functional. Because the subjective issues of interpersonal relationships have been dealt with in the first three stages, Team members can now function objectively as instruments of effective problem solving and creativity. In the realm of task behavior, Team members in the performing stage attempt to answer the question: “How can we successfully complete tasks that are aligned with our mission?” In the realm of interpersonal behavior, Team members attempt to answer the question: “What can each of us contribute to the successful completion of these tasks?”

If Teams develop through predictable stages over time, as Tuckman’s model suggests, then three consequences for Team leaders and members become apparent. First, a recurrent developmental sequence in Teams is in some sense inevitable. The stages will repeatedly cycle back--especially in the case of long-term workgroups. Changes in group membership will occur over time. Organizational or market changes will impact a Team’s circumstances. There will be a change in leadership at the Team or organizational level. Team members would be well advised to provide time for (renewed) Team development. A high level of task performance cannot be expected from Teams when they return to early stages in their development, or when they fail to work patiently through each of the stages prior to returning to effective Stage Four Team functioning.

Second, leaders can help Teams move smoothly from stage to stage. If a conscious effort is made to help Team members answer the appropriate questions at each stage of the Team's development, the transition to the performance of Stage Four can be made quickly and directly. Third, this four-stage model of Team development can help Team leaders and members diagnose current problems the Team may be having. These problems are often related to the particular stage of development in which the group finds itself. Rather than personalizing what may appear to be the behavior of specific group members as conflictive or disruptive, the group can step back. At this point, group members acknowledge that the group is actually facing a collective dynamic that may relate directly to specific developmental stage issues that have received insufficient attention.

Building, Growing and Maintaining Performance

It is often tempting to rest on our laurels when we have been able to transform our group into an effectively running Team. It is important, however, not to become complacent, for as we have repeatedly noted, groups and Teams are dynamic entities that never quite stay still.

We suggest first that the dynamics of leadership in a well-functioning Team must remain alive and continuously re-examined. It is precisely because the Team has been successful that the question of shifting and expanding Team leadership often comes to the fore. The following guidelines might be of value in assisting this process of shared learning and creation. Not surprisingly, it is the Team members

who must stay most alert and take on increasingly mature responsibility, in order to meet the key challenge: How can the leader and the team keep training each other to avoid a leader-centric climate?

THE LEADER

Shifts from focusing internally to a focus on outside matters and future purposes

Shifts from an emphasis on power and hierarchy to a focus on collaboration, development and ultimately succession

Shifts from unilateral communication with subsets of group to greater transparency and openness in sharing concerns and opportunities with all Team members

TEAM MEMBERS

Shift from competing for attention and resources to collaborating in the equitable (and often expanding) distribution of attention and resources

Shift from blaming one another to sharing responsibility and focusing on solving the problem

Shift from not discussing the elephant in the room (a critical but unacknowledged issue) to being bold and open about engaging with the elephant

Shift from a focus on immediate results to a broader and systemic perspective on value added results

Shift from relying on leaders and outside sources to do the measurement of Team performance to taking responsibility for this measurement and analysis of resulting metrics

Shift from being tough on existing Team members who are “different” to welcoming this diversity of perspectives and practices

Shift from attracting and welcoming new members who are like those already in the group to the welcoming of people with diverse perspectives and practices

Shift from tight control of workflows and interactions to agility within changing environments both inside and outside the organization

Shift from avoiding conversations and actions that reveal gaps in knowledge, vulnerabilities or needs to a willingness to take risks and learn from one’s mistakes

Shift from a focus on tasks (at the cost of relationships) to a perspective and set of practices that balance and integrate task and relationships.

THE LEADER AS COACH

Helps the team members become and remain honest about themselves and the team

Secures the container for continued team trust

Ensures the team reviews and redefines its purpose, priorities and processes when appropriate

Models mature management of conflict and requires team members to manage differences directly and productively

Models coach-based leadership practices and teaches the team to coach each other individually and collectively

We recommend a second strategy for the maintenance of effective Team performance. This relates to the shifting role of group members in the ongoing monitoring of their own operations. Team Self-Assessments are a way for Teams to stay honest, avoid blind spots and create the needed conversations. Here is a list of categories that might be the basis for this self-assessment. They are directly aligned with the themes introduced in this essay:

1. PURPOSE
2. GOALS
3. ROLES
4. PROCEDURES
5. RELATIONSHIPS

Beyond Performing

Lately, theorists about group development and practitioners of Team development often add a fifth stage, called “*Adjourning*”. This fifth stage signifies the formal ending of a Team, or at least of a specific project or mission. It can also be used, as can the former four phases, by long-term working Teams. They see the benefit of punctuating their work with celebrations and recognize that sometimes they must deal with the shifting of Team membership. From a task standpoint, loose ends must be tied up and legacy materials passed on. The question becomes: “What have we really accomplished?” At a personal level, there can be some grieving mixed in with the celebrating, and the question becomes: “How do I want to remember this journey and with whom will I remain in touch?”

Reflections on the Journey

Forming, storming, norming, performing: the four predictable stages of (cyclical, often repeated) Team development can provide powerful insights for the leader(s) as well as members of the group or Team (as well

as their coaches or consultants). These insights concern what is happening to members individually and collectively. They can also help the group (and its leaders) determine what to do about the developmental challenges they are now facing. Leaders and members can appreciate and thereby better cope with the stress and apprehension that accompany any shift in the functioning of the Team or leadership roles over time.

As mentioned above, this stage theory can also help leaders and members of their group or team determine which guidelines are most appropriate at particular times in the life of the group or team. Guidelines concerned with membership, acquaintance, and the availability of information are obviously more important at the forming stage, whereas guidelines concerned with agendas, decision-making operations and clarity about actions taken are more important at the performing stage. Nevertheless, some of these latter guidelines might be appropriate at early stages of development, not to enhance productivity but rather to provide some structure that helps to reduce anxiety and accelerate movement toward the performing stage of the Team.

Points to Keep in Mind

In exploring the interpersonal needs and sources of gratification for members of a group as it moves to the stage of higher performance as a Team, it is important to remember that the group was formed and aspires to become a Team on behalf of a greater convening purpose. The primary concern should always be with getting the work done and achieving specific goals.

It is also important to focus on the integration of diverse needs that are manifest among members of the group as it moves toward becoming a Team. A key question should be engaged by each member of the group or team and by the group or team as a whole: "How do I (we) get multiple needs met in this group or team in a way that advances (rather than blocks) achievement of specific goals?"

There is another key point to keep in mind. When a member of the group or the entire group is stuck at one level it is often because the group has not successfully met the interpersonal needs of its members. When openness is not readily achieved then the group might wish to revisit the way it has established authority and control. When control is being handled poorly and conflict is rampant and nonproductive, the group might wish to go back to its founding principles and processes so that group members might see how inclusion has been handled and to determine if members really want to be involved. Issues of control, after all, are often disguising more fundamental concerns about finding an appropriate way to join a group (or even to determine whether this is the right group to join).

It should also be noted by all members of group (especially its leaders) that the level of overall trust in a group or Team is no greater than that of the member with the least amount of trust. Until all members

of a Team feel free to express their feelings about (as well as share their observations of) group functioning, the movement to Team is unlikely to occur. It is always tempting to either blame reticent members of a group for not being trustful (thus further increasing their reluctance) or isolate and ignore these members (which usually leads to high levels of faux openness among those “more advanced” members).

Finally, members of a performing Team must keep in mind that their group is never static—there will always be movement back and forth among the four stages. For instances, when new people enter a group or team, its members must at least temporarily return to matters of inclusion and then control. When a new member enters the group or team, there must be a focus again on the purpose and dynamics of the group or Team. Clarity about and commitment to the founding purposes of the group or Team should never be taken for granted. The new member is deciding at some level whether they want to be an active member of this group or team. This includes determining if they truly “buy in” to the founding purpose of the group. And do they like the folks with whom they are about to work? And is this a group that is welcoming or is it exclusionary?

It is not just a matter of new members joining the group. It is also a matter of new task assignments being introduced in the group or Team. When a group or Team takes on a new project or is faced with new challenges, it must temporarily return to the forming stage. There are often renewed concerns about inclusion. “Do I still want to be a member of this group or Team given the new project/challenge?” In addition, there must often be a revisited review of how the group or Team will deal with conflict, establish norms, and identify best ways to perform. Never a dull moment!

Conclusions

We close by advocating for ongoing learning. Since groups are going through stages of development and this cycle of development is re-engaged with the introduction of new members or new project or challenge, members of the group should become *Appreciative Learners*. They should identify ways in which groups and teams of which they are a member tend to operate and move through stages of development. Members of a group (and particularly its leaders) should identify ways in which a successful group or team of which they are a member can operate and move through stages of development. They should also identify ways in which unsuccessful groups of which they have been a member have failed to move through stages of development.

There is much to be learned about how effective Teams are formed and maintained. We learn by examining and openly reflecting on past experiences and sharing current experiences – both good and bad. A *Learning-Based Group* can more readily become a Team than can a group that simply plunges forward without much reflection. In learning from the past, the effectively functioning Team establishes the precedence (and norm) of similarly learning from the present (the Team’s current functioning). Furthermore, in learning from the past and present, a successful Team will be learning into the future (preparing for the next challenge and task). This journey of collective learning among Team members becomes a wonderful traveling companion to the developmental journey taken by members of a group as they transform into an effectively functioning Team.

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