



## CHAPTER TEN

# Using the Whole Box

Generating Team Creativity & Creativeness

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## **Our Greatest Work Comes From Creating in Teams**

Your office, your department, your company, your organization is like a box of colorful, fun, and tremendously resourceful crayons. In most work situations the people are seen more like a box or bag of miscellaneous, unrelated, underutilized props, tools and things. Too often people are seen narrowly as only the jobs they do daily and their previous efforts not their potentials.

To be a truly effective leader you need to begin to see people as crayons with multiple talents and potentials. You need to see your staff or department as a box of wonderful crayons that has been barely used.

An image of an effective and dynamic team is a box of colorful crayons. Each color, cool, warm or hot, each can produce many results: shades and textures.

In order for a team to produce its best results the members each need to know each other. They need to know each other's strengths, skills, talents, abilities. By knowing these we can put together lists of the varied strengths, skills, talents, and abilities of the team.

**Mix. Blend. Combine. Isolate. Separate. Place next to each other.** These are all techniques for using crayons.

How are they similar to the maximizing of the creativeness of people on a team?

**Mix talents, skills, abilities, and experiences.** We can mix the talents of people based upon their backgrounds, educations (amount, type), years of experience, types of experiences, energy levels, commitments, availabilities. We can take people with technical backgrounds and mix them with people with design backgrounds. We can mix people with accounting or bookkeeping experience with people with counseling experience. Or we can mix people with drafting training with people with customer service training.

Each of these would combine uniquenesses that would naturally produce creative potential.

Ask yourself why?                      **How might such mixes produce creative potential?**

(complexity)

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(contrast)

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(variety)

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(combination of experiences, education, etc.)

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(collection of points of view or perspective)

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Think about 5 to 7 people that report to you now or that you work with daily or occasionally. Write down their diversities (not their differences) on the following chart.

Name	Education	Experience	Work Skills	Energy Level
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				

Now mix 3 separate teams of them consisting of 4 or 5 of them. For one team mix them by **education**. For a second mix them by **experience** (type and years). And for a third mix them by specific and unique **work or job skills**.

Name	<b>Education</b>	Experience	Work Skills	Energy Level
1.				
3.				
4.				
6.				

Name	Education	<b>Experience</b>	Work Skills	Energy Level
3.				
4.				
6.				
7.				

Name	Education	Experience	<b>Work Skills</b>	Energy Level
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- 1.
- 2.
- 4.
- 6.

Now think about what kinds of creative potential would occur because of these particular mixtures of people.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.

Still other creative potentials can be developed or tapped by Blending diversities of people (colors), Combining or Separating.

Combining diversities can simply be accomplished by mixing different age groups, sexes, departments, levels of management or authority. In each case everyone can and will gain from the experience.

Separating diversities relates to developing teams of people who are the same or have more in common than different: age, sex, department, or levels of management.

How do you create a team? That's what you just did through varied ways of putting together people based upon their diversities.

Creating teams is the easy part (usually). Developing a dynamic and productive team is often the hard part. There are at least 10 steps or phases required in taking a group of people (strangers, friends or fellow workers) and developing them into a strong team. I call this the "Teaming Process". These are the ten phases:

## **1. Entrance**

During the first phase participants simply enter the room or join the total group as individual members of what will become the total group. In most cases there is a sense of hesitation and some uneasiness.

## **2. Welcome**

During this phase participants are introduced to the general objectives of the experience they will be part of. The main purpose is to give them a brief overview and some structure as a foundation to ease some of the discomfort caused by the new environment and people.

## **3. Orientation**

During this phase participants are given basic details and the layout of the experience: physically and mentally will be presented. Expectations of the leaders are also shared.

## **4. Comfort Creation**

During this phase participants are put at ease through some simple hello-type exercises: handshaking, looking to the right and the left, reviewing any printed material; perhaps even some simple stretching and breathing exercises to release initial tension and/or stress.

## **5. Ice Breaking**

During this phase participants are asked to first meet one other person through some simple, non-threatening or safe self-exposure, information exercises, such as: home town, hobbies, a nickname, place like to travel to, etc. The first focus is to begin to help the individual participants to “break the ice” with one other person. The second focus is to team people up in teams of 4, 5 or 6 through commonalties of information or location in the room or simply randomly assigned by the facilitators.

## **6. Task Completion**

During this phase participants in teams of 4, 5 or 6 are assigned tasks to complete as teams. The primary purpose is to have the participants experience successful teamwork with their new “team” mates.

## **7. Relationship Bonding** (1-on-1, small groups, entire group)

During this phase participants in teams of 4, 5 or 6 are given assignments that will help them to develop comfortable, non-threatening relationships through name recall, safe self-disclosure exercises.

## **8. Trust Building** (1-on-1, small groups, entire group)

During this phase participants in teams of 4, 5 or 6 are given physical, mental and emotional exercises that will require the gradual continuous development of trust among and between members of the individual teams.

## **9. Boundary Breaking**

During this phase participants in teams of 4, 5 or 6 participate in physical, mental and emotional exercises that require breaking down boundaries among and between members of the individual teams based upon the team member’s individual diversities (age, race, sex, education, background, interests, etc., etc., etc.).

## 10. **Unity and Integration** (as a Total Group)

During this phase all participants as teams initially working with other teams will gradually begin to work together in pairs, triples, quads, etc. of teams until the entire group is required to work as a single total team on physical, mental, emotional exercises.

Having people take part in an overview or introductory team development program, such as the “Teaming Process” is almost essential. Such programs need to cover particular points:

- Definition and description of a team.
- Differences between teams and groups.
- Types and styles of teams.
- Benefits and detriments of teams.
- Potentials of team work.
- Understanding Conflict as a tool of productive teams.
- Everyone learning to lead a team.
- Experience of successful and unsuccessful team work off the job site.
- Personality and cultural factors in teams.

The more you encourage and develop your people into working in teams and helping them to learn more and more about how to work in teams the more their creativeness will expand and enrich.

One warning. Do not expect people to work in teams 100% of the time. Instead provide continual ways for them to learn more and more about how to work in teams and focus on letting the teams happen when they need to not as a regular, consistent thing. Regularity and consistency will lead a team into becoming a static group and generally squelch or diminish individual and joint creativity.

