

Embodied Learning Module

Power Sticks

Aims

1. Provide a lived experience of Leadership as a Function.
2. Demonstrate the interdependence required to accomplish a task.
3. Demonstrate the habitual pattern of making assumptions when given limited instructions.
4. Demonstrate the importance of attending to relationships, creativity and joy when accomplishing a task.

Environment

Open space with room for all participants to move around freely.

Materials

1. Wooden dowels 1.25" diameter by 8" – 12" long (one dowel for each two participants).
2. (Optional) source of music such as an IPOD, computer or CD player and an upbeat song. Hip-hop works well.

Preparation

Prepare the dowels for handing out. Set up the music player at the beginning of the desired song if you plan to use music in Round 4 (see below).

Activity Description

1. Invite your participants to stand in a circle in the activity space while you introduce the activity. Hand a dowel to every other person in the circle. For an odd number of participants, either ask one person to participate as an observer each round, ask an assistant to participate, or participate yourself.
2. Ask each person with a dowel to find a partner who does NOT have a dowel and pair up facing each other. Give the basic instructions for the form and task, which remain constant through all rounds. Each round has one or more different conditions.
 - a. Form: Each pair holds their dowel between them, each person placing the index and middle fingers of one hand against one end of the dowel and applying pressure toward the center of the dowel (demonstrate this).
 - b. Task: Keep the dowel moving for approximately 45 – 60 seconds without letting it touch the floor.
3. Round 1: Designated leader
 - a. Condition: The person who brought the dowel to the pairing is the leader.
 - b. Ring a bell or say "start" and let the participants do the activity for about 45 – 60 seconds.

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- c. Ring a bell or say “stop” and use inquiry to harvest the learning of this round, in particular the experience of being a leader or follower. Also check if anyone made assumptions about talking during the activity.
 - d. Ask the person who had the dowel at the beginning of this round to give it to the partner.
4. Round 2: Designated leader (switch).
 - a. Ask each person with a dowel to find a new partner who does not have one.
 - b. Condition: The person who brings the dowel to this pairing is the leader.
 - c. Repeat the activity and use inquiry to harvest the learning of this round, in particular the experience of being a leader or follower. Also ask what was different from Round 1.
 - d. Ask the person who had the dowel at the beginning of this round to place the dowel on the floor. Invite the participants to pick up a dowel if they feel so moved or pass them back out randomly.
5. Round 3: No designated leader, in silence with eyes closed.
 - a. Ask each person with a dowel to find a new partner without one.
 - b. Condition: Perform the task in silence with eyes closed. *VARIATION: explicitly state that there is no designated leader.*
 - c. Repeat the activity and use inquiry to harvest the learning of this round, in particular what was different from the previous rounds. Check if anyone made assumptions about leadership roles, if you did not explicitly state there was no designated leader.
6. Round 4: Attend to joy
 - a. Invite the participants to self-organize into pairs with one dowel, or any other configuration they want to try (e.g. one person with two dowels, interacting with two other people).
 - b. Condition: Attend to that which brings joy.
 - c. Repeat the activity, this time for one to two minutes. If you use music, start the song when you start the round.
 - d. Use inquiry to harvest the learning of this round, in particular what is different when the main objective is to enjoy the experience.

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Inquiry Framework

While standing in the activity space, or after moving back into seating, use inquiry to harvest the experience of the participants. Use the main points listed below as a reference point for framing the responses to these questions.

1. What was the most impactful part of this activity for you?
2. What did you learn about how you engage in power and leadership?
3. Did this activity impact your beliefs about leadership and task accomplishment?
4. What insights do you take away from this activity?

Main Points

1. Viewing leadership as a function provides a fluidity and flow that can be stifled by defined roles on leadership. Defined roles may also provide a structure to lean into, satisfying needs for order and predictability.
2. Even with defined roles, leading and following are interdependent.
3. Relationship and task are inseparable, and the quality of relationship impacts the ability to accomplish the task.
4. Attending to joy in relationships and tasks impacts both the relationship and accomplishment of the task.