

COMMUNITY

Family Counseling Service: Are You Truly a Team Player?

BY LARRY DEAVERS

We often hear “teamwork” applied to our work environments. But being an effective part of a team is important in your marriage, family, church, and civic groups, as well as your work. Each role you have in life makes you part of a different team. Having a team approach to others is essential to developing supportive relationships so that you can experience success no matter what aspect of your life is involved.

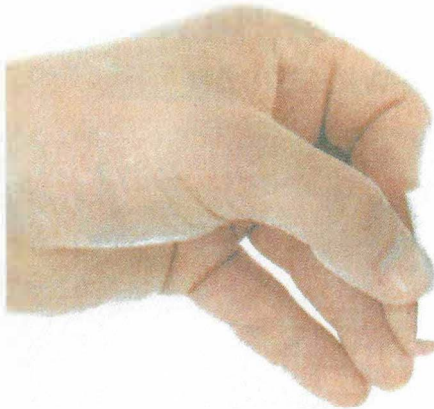
So, what are the elements that indicate whether you are an effective team player?

1. You communicate openly and respectfully. When a problem arises, you address it and deal with it, rather than allowing it to fester.

2. You are trustworthy. You follow through on your commitments and you keep confidences of others. You never use personal information to undermine your teammates. You are not deceptive, and your motives are always clear and transparent. You do not ask certain team members to keep secrets from other team members. You avoid gossip – whether it is true or not.

3. You don't compete for attention but are confident of your own value to the team because you put the team first. When you give up keeping score over who did what and who received recognition, you are free to be openly supportive and work towards a goal greater than your own ego.

4. “It's not my job” is not in your vocabulary. You see beyond your own tasks and see everything in terms of the goals of the team. When you see a task that needs to be done, your first response is, “I can take care of that.”



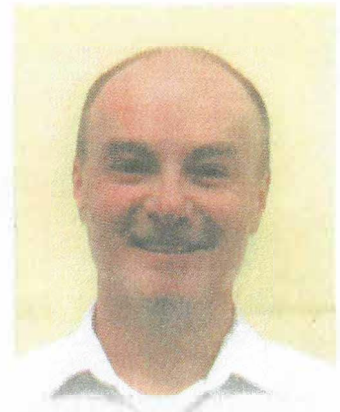
5. You forgive past offenses. We all make mistakes. No matter what happens, as quickly as you can manage it, extend grace to others on your team so that past mistakes don't negatively impact your relationships and ability to achieve your goals.

6. You participate in discussions. You're actively engaged with the rest of the team, rather than withdrawing and going it alone. You share your ideas without bulldozing your opinions over others. You can calmly and respectfully discuss disagreements. You do not allow differing opinions to damage relationships and you recognize the freedom of others to disagree with you.

7. You lend other team members understanding and support and go out of your way to help them when they are struggling.

gling. We all have different strengths, and on any given day we can be more or less successful depending on what's going on in our lives at the time. Being alert to indications that other team members need our help and responding with support builds trust and makes the team as a whole more effective, and satisfying, in accomplishing its goals.

8. You share information openly to help the team succeed. It's not just an “I've got mine” attitude that is content to see others sink or swim on their own. Once you have done the work of figuring out some new process, you don't sit back and watch the rest of the team go through the same struggle. You become a resource for the team and openly share what you've learned.



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