

ISMAPNG Staff Formation Bytes

Module 2: The power of teamwork

Resource Sheet

Introduction to the Module

Our focus for Module 2 is the power of teamwork, including the values and behaviours which help us to achieve our vision and mission. The LandFill Harmonic project in Paraguay provides a context for the exploration of teamwork and its transformative power for people in seemingly powerless situations. A reflection on the power of 'mercy' as a mode of relationship is also offered, before we conclude with an invitation to incorporate what we have learned about the power of teamwork into our practice.

Resources used in this Module include a clipart template of a jigsaw puzzle, two brief video clips, extracts from the writings of Brené Brown (psychologist), James Kouzes and Barry Posner (leadership researchers), a longer video which tells the story of the Landfill Harmonic and Recycled Orchestra of Cateura in Paraguay and a reflection by Patricia Smith RSM.

Putting the elements of teamwork together can be like doing a jigsaw puzzle! Click on the link below if you would like to download a jigsaw puzzle template for recording your responses to the activities suggested within the Module:

<http://clipart-library.com/clipart/zTX5ygEyc.htm#>

Byte 1: Some musings on feeling engaged through our work and the power of teamwork

Each of us has probably experienced the 'highs and the lows' of being part of a team. The context might be involvement with family, work, school, sport or recreation, community service, study, a musical group, volunteering – the list goes on!



Recall a time when you have felt empowered and energized by your team involvement and a time when you felt disempowered, as if the energy were draining away.

What made the difference? Was it the approach of the designated leader or your approach? Perhaps it was a combination of behaviours and attitudes on the part of both?



On your jigsaw puzzle template jot down any key words or ideas which come to mind. (You may prefer to sketch your own 'mind map' of teamwork and add to it as the Module progresses).

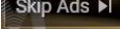
As you view the following brief video clips, you might like to add to your jigsaw puzzle template or your mind map some other key words or ideas about teamwork.

Clip 1 (3 mins 23 secs): can you relate your experience to any of the snapshots of good teamwork shown in this humorous animation?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ftPOy4yUGMQ>

Clip 2 (3 mins 34 secs): in addition to what is highlighted in this clip, you probably have your own ideas about what good teamwork takes on the part of the team leader and each team member.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MhOT2pkKZ4>

Unfortunately, advertisements are unavoidable, so you may like to  when the icon appears in the bottom right of the window to go straight to the video.

There are many ways in which the power of teamwork can be explored. Kouzes and Posner (2016) acknowledge that our Leaders can certainly help us feel engaged in our work by:

- ✚ **Modelling the way**, by aligning behaviour with shared values;
- ✚ **Inspiring a shared vision** by imagining new possibilities and building on shared hopes;
- ✚ **Challenging the ways** things have always been done by encouraging initiatives and learning from experience;
- ✚ **Enabling others** to collaborate by increasing trust, nurturing positive relationships and enhancing skills and expertise;
- ✚ **Encouraging the heart** by showing appreciation for achievements and celebrating the values and affirming behaviours which build a sense of community.

We are all capable of exercising leadership. To the extent that we each engage in these behaviours, we are exercising our shared leadership, our power and agency as part of our team, as part of ISMAPNG.

Byte 2: nurturing a sense of empowerment through teamwork and values-informed behaviours

Brené Brown (2018, pp. 96 - 97) reflects on three ways we can nurture a sense of ‘empowerment’ through the recognition of our own sources of power and our engagement in behaviours which flow from this recognition. These three ways of exercising power contrast sharply with behaviours which leave us feeling that others have ‘**power over**’ us.

- ✚ **Power with** “has to do with finding common ground among different interests in order to build collective strength. Based on mutual support, solidarity, collaboration, and recognition and respect for differences, *power with* multiplies individual talents, knowledge and resources to make a larger impact.”
- ✚ **Power to** “translates to giving everyone on your team agency and acknowledging their unique potential. It is ‘based on the belief that each individual has the power to make a difference, which can be multiplied by new skills, knowledge, awareness and confidence.’”
- ✚ **Power within** “is defined by an ability to recognize differences and respect others, grounded in a strong foundation of self-worth and self-knowledge. When we operate from a place of *power within*, we feel comfortable challenging assumptions and long held beliefs, pushing against the status quo, and asking if there aren’t other ways to achieve the highest common good.”

Finding common ground, recognizing the dignity and potential of each person and working towards the common good have their basis in shared values, acceptance of shared responsibility, and the consistent behaviours which bring the shared values to life, again and again.

The context statement which is part of any advertisement for positions within ISMAPNG notes that *“the Institute is served by a dedicated team of people who deliver a broad range of professional and administrative services from a number of locations throughout Australia and Papua New Guinea. These employees work closely with their colleagues, the Executive Director ISMAPNG, the Leadership and the Institute’s communities.*

There is an expectation that all employees will consistently respect and uphold the workplace values of the Institute which are

- *Integrity*
- *Hospitality*
- *Unity of purpose*
- *Diligence*
- *Respect for all”*



With two of these workplace values in mind, contrast your experience of working ‘on site’ with that of working ‘remotely’ over these past weeks/months. Do you think your ability to reflect these two values in your work has been lessened or enhanced or has remained the same, given your workplace situation has changed over these past two months? Why might that be the case?

Byte 3: Looking at landfill through the eyes of possibility

In 2017, the Landfill Harmonic and Recycled Orchestra of Cateura in Paraguay was awarded one of the World Citizen Artists Awards. So many different people contributed to the achievements by changing mindsets and offering alternatives; providing opportunities; sharing, learning and remaining disciplined; developing persistence and consistency; creating energy, power and beauty.

You are invited to view the video clip (25 mins and 9 secs. Note: there are sub-titles used in some parts of the clip). As the story unfolds before you, ponder the power of teamwork from the perspective of the 2500 local families, the rubbish sorters, the instrument makers, the young musicians in the orchestra, the conductor, others who supported the project.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdVmq7sLTsQ>



In light of the story, there may be some other key words about the power of teamwork, the positive energy generated by shared values and pursuit of a vision for a better world which you would like to add to your jigsaw puzzle or mind map.

Byte 4: Teamwork empowered by mercy, values and vision coming together in our orbit of care

For those of us who follow in the tradition of Catherine McAuley, we can think of mercy as the core value that is the focal point to our approach to teamwork.

Patricia Smith RSM writes of 'Mercy' as a value, acknowledging that

"sometimes it has suffered from disempowering interpretations: 'mercy' can refer to 'being nice', enabling unhealthy behaviours or keeping the peace. But mercy is something quite different ...

In the Hebrew Scriptures, mercy comes from the word for 'womb'. The roots of human mercy are in the divine womb. That is to say, love from the inside out, with all the potential for birth that comes with real pain, at real cost. In the Bible, mercy is one of the synonyms for God. God's love is steadfast. God's caring presence, no matter what, is assured. According to the 'womb' imagery, mercy is a kindness of the mind that mirrors the spaciousness of the heart.

One of the clearest and most compelling recent definitions of 'mercy' comes from Wendy Farley, a theologian at Emory University in Atlanta. She writes that compassion (mercy) is:

*A mode of relationship
And a power
That is wounded by the suffering of others
And propelled to action on their behalf
Now."*

Smith goes on to say that *"Mercy is a mode of relationship, not a momentary sporadic feeling. It is, rather, a habit of mind and heart, a way of organizing and interpreting the world. It is an enduring approach to the world. And, like any relationship, it is a two-way street.*

And a power. This is the exciting, challenging part. Mercy is only what it is when it is effective – when it survives against great odds and when it empowers all who come within its orbit of care ..."
(Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy, pp. 932-33)

Within ISMAPNG as a whole, as well as within our particular teams, we can create an 'orbit of care' for those whom we serve through our involvement in and support for works of mercy. The power of teamwork to help us achieve our mission, the quality of our relationships and our preparedness to empower others are worthy focus areas for our ongoing consideration.



Revisit your jigsaw puzzle or mind map. As you reflect on the resources and activities included within this Module, what has touched your heart? What learnings will enhance your approach to teamwork or inspire your practice as a team member from now on?

Byte 5: Zoom conversation

We invite you to join our Zoom conversation to explore the content of this Module further, and to share your thoughts and/or insights with other participants.

Zoom link: Details are posted in the weekly Living Mercy newsletter Date/time: 2 pm (AEST)
Monday, 25 May 2020

References

Brown, B. (2018) *Dare to Lead: brave work, tough conversations, whole hearts* London: Penguin Random House UK

Kouzes, J. and Posner, B. (2016) *Learning Leadership: the Five Fundamentals of Becoming an Exemplary Leader* San Francisco: Wiley

Smith, P. (1994) 'Mercy Values Today: Ever Ancient, Ever New' *MAST* 4, no 3, Summer, p. 10. [Also reprinted in Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas (1998) *Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy*, pp. 931-933]

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