



Leadership

Teamwork (Revision date 1-12-2013)

Spinning more plates doesn't increase your talent. It increases your likelihood of dropping a plate. People have been known to achieve more as a result of working with others rather than against them. Your potential is only as good as the team you're willing to build and work with. Vince Lombardi said, "The achievements of an organization are the result of the combined effort of each individual. A great dream with a bad team is a nightmare. Many people make the mistake of focusing on their dream with too little attention to their team."

We can never accomplish the mission of the Tea Party values alone. *"Few of us will have the greatness to bend history itself. Yet, each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped."* Robert F. Kennedy

There is an event every year in the Midwest at a local county fair where they put work horses in a contest to see which horse can pull the most weight. One year, the winning horse pulled 4,500 pounds. The second place horse pulled 4,400 pounds. This year they decided to take the two top horses and put them together to see how much weight they could pull together as a team. Together, they pulled over 12,000 pounds. That is an improvement of over 30%.

Advantages of a team:

- Teams involve more people, thus affording more resources, ideas and energy than would an individual.
- Teams maximize a leader's potential and minimize his weaknesses. Strength and weakness are more exposed in individuals.
- Teams provide multiple perspectives on how to meet a need or reach a goal, thus devising several alternatives for each situation. Individual insight is seldom as broad and deep as a group when it takes on a problem.
- Teams share credit for victories and the blame for losses. This fosters genuine humility and authentic commonality. Individuals take credit and blame alone. Lack of teamwork fosters pride or a sense of failure.
- Teams keep leaders accountable for the goal. Individuals connect to no one and can change the goal without accountability.
- Teams can simply do more than an individual.

Teamwork can't be developed in microwave time. Teams grow strong in a crock-pot. The time and effort required to develop team members doesn't change the team overnight, but developing them always pays off.



Working With Other Tea Party Groups

A favorite fish of many hobbyists is the Japanese Carp, otherwise known as Koi. The fascinating thing about the Koi is that if you keep it in a small fish bowl, it will only grow to be two or three inches long. Place the Koi in a larger tank or small pond and it will reach six to ten inches. Put it in a large pond and it may get as long as a foot and a half. However, when put in a lake where they can really stretch out, they may grow to be three feet in length.

You've probably already figured out the simple point to this illustration. The size of the fish is in direct relation to the size of the pond that it is in.

A comparable analogy can be made concerning our group of Tea Party activists. Our growth is determined by the size of our world. Realizing that growth comes from moving outside of ourselves and our own little world, we come to the realization that unless we expand, we'll always have what we've got – nothing more.

When we started our group, we named it according to the town we lived in. After just two months, we were growing and wanting to expand and influence in areas way beyond our own little area. We realize that our name was rather short-sighted (we were living in a very small fish bowl) so we promptly changed our name to show more vision and less limitation. We changed it to reflect the movement. Prior to our name change, we had limited our outreach. With our new name, we had plenty area of influence.

We become more valuable as we grow and stretch. Zig Ziglar says, *“Go as far as you can see and when you get there, you will always be able to see farther.”* Growth is exciting! As we expand our comfort zone, additional opportunities appear. These new things expand us more and the growth process continues.

At times we may be tempted to stop or coast. Don't do it. The key is in an undying commitment to exceed ourselves.

To promote more growth and effectiveness will require that local groups combine their efforts in order to have a greater impact. We need a combined effort to get the audience that we desire. Unfortunately, we are not aided or enhanced in any way by the majority of media outlets but we have technology on our side with the internet, Facebook, and Twitter. It's easy to make contact with large numbers quickly and have that information spread like a virus. However, nothing excites people and motivates them more than personal contact and a large amount of people coming together for a common cause.

If you know of other groups within a reasonable distance from you, try to have a combined meeting at least once a quarter. Take turns being in charge of the topic and the location (which should be somewhere central). Plan some targeted rallies that all can participate in. Maybe plan a joint fund raising event where proceeds will be divided.



A word of caution: Whether you are combining three, four or more groups, there needs to be a leader or you will just have a large social event – a chaotic social event! The leaders of each group should come together for the planning. Each one will have a responsibility to rally their group. Decide on a topic and then implement it.

Leadership responsibilities should be divided into categories so that each leader knows what's expected. There should be one who is chosen to oversee the event to be sure that all loose ends are tied. You never want to hold a collective group meeting unless you're organized and clear about your reason for having it. It needs to run like a well-oiled machine.

Since Tea Party activists have the same passion, this isn't a difficult task. We all are fighting the same battle and want desperately to win.

Years ago, I was reading a book about those men who survived the horrible Hanoi Hilton prison camp in Viet Nam. That prison contained 772 servicemen, mostly pilots who were captured and imprisoned. These men suffered unspeakable torture, starvation and solitude.

They tried to communicate with each other at any cost as the North Vietnamese soldiers tried to break them physically, crush their spirits and keep them isolated. Their captors knew that if these men felt alone, they'd give up. Therefore, communication and connection with other prisoners became necessary for survival.

The prisoners devised an ingenious system to "talk" to each other. They developed a tapping code to spell out words and they secretly taught it to everyone. They would tap on walls, fences, while sweeping or using a shovel, using rhythmic movements to send messages. They shared information, supported one another, yet never saw each other until their release. They became a solid unit even in the most distressful time.

From February 12th – March 29th of 1973, 462 surviving prisoners were released. Their interaction fueled their ability to endure and hold together as a team until their release.

What a great lesson for us as we hold together in the Tea Party effort.

One last word of caution; we are human. With our humanity, there will be personality conflicts. Sometimes it can be worked through and other times it cannot. My policy as I try to unite groups in our region is this; I work with the "friendlies" who have set ego aside, minor differences are just that and not majored on and who are willing to work as a team towards a common goal.

You won't be liked by everyone. As a people pleaser, that was a very difficult lesson for me to learn, but learn it I have. We all have value – even those who don't want to work with us or who don't like you. Wish them the best in their individual effort to reach their goal and move forward to your goal.



Working With Other Conservative Groups Outside of the Tea Party

There will be times when combining efforts with other groups that are like minded with the Tea Party can be advantageous. If you saw the March on Washington Rally held on September 12, 2009, you saw a number of groups that came together for a common cause and produced a very effective rally.

Groups represented ranged from Tea Party groups, the Freedom Alliance, and Glenn Beck's 9.12 Project and others. All played an important role in bringing the numbers to our nations' capitol.

While working with groups other than the Tea Party groups, we need to be sure that those organizations are aligned with our mission. Other organizations may differ from us in their type of tax exempt status that allows them more freedom than ours. Others may be farther reaching than our three pronged mission. If these other areas don't conflict or compromise our mission, then it is appropriate to consider joining forces at times.

Some will accept funds from political parties and other groups do not. Some groups are set up so that cannot align with a political party. As long as funds are not comingled, you should be okay. So that is something that needs to be addressed

Even though there may be some obstacles to overcome, don't let what you can't do interfere with what you can do.

In summary, a story is told about a very wealthy man with seven sons who was now on his way to meet his Maker. While lying in his bed, he summoned his sons and handed them a bundle of seven sticks tied together. He told them that whoever could break those sticks would be given all of his fortune.

Each son tried in vain to break that bundle of seven sticks. After the final son gave up, he took the bundle back, untied it and broke each stick and threw them to the ground in a heap.

He told his sons that as long as they stood firm together, no one could break them but if they tried to go it alone, they would all be broken.

Recommended Reading:

"The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork" by John Maxwell

"See You At The Top" by Zig Ziglar