

Journal questions for *The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team*

Answer these questions as preparation for your next Five Behaviors session or to continue to reflect on what you're discovering about your team and yourself.



The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team™ Model

Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships.

- Stephen Covey

TRUST

These questions are meant to get you thinking about how much you trust your teammates and how you can reinforce your own trustworthiness. Remember that we are talking about vulnerability-based trust: having one's back, giving others the benefit of the doubt, sharing experiences, displaying integrity, being unguarded and transparent in your actions and goals.

1. How much do you know about your team members? How would you introduce each of them at a social event? To other colleagues?
2. How is each team member similar to you? What do you share? (characteristics, interests, experiences, etc.)
3. What do you think motivates each of your team members? What are their short- and long-term goals for themselves on this team?
4. What tasks would you feel most comfortable delegating to each team member?
5. Remember a past project your team has completed. How much do you know about what each member contributed? What would you be able to recognize them for? How did each person enrich the experience of working on that project?

6. What skill could you learn that would add to the value of your team?
7. Is there anything you should apologize to your team for?
8. How comfortable are you with vulnerability? With whom can you be vulnerable? Why do you trust that person(s)?
9. Are there issues around trust that you need to discuss with your team?
10. When have you felt susceptible to the corruption of power? How did you deal with this temptation?
University of Cologne psychologist Joris Lammers randomly assigned people to be a “boss” or a “follower” in an office simulation. She found that most people temporarily elevated to more-senior roles displayed a higher degree of hypocritical behavior – they were quick to condemn others for unethical, self-interested behavior, but judged their own similar actions to be acceptable.¹

¹Who Can You Trust, Harvard Business Review, March 2014
<https://hbr.org/2014/03/who-can-you-trust/ar/1>

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“... one must realize the paradox that surrounds conflict. The team needs to embrace conflict as a means of generating and evaluating ideas. While at the same time, it must shy away from it to prevent anger, frustration, or alienation.”

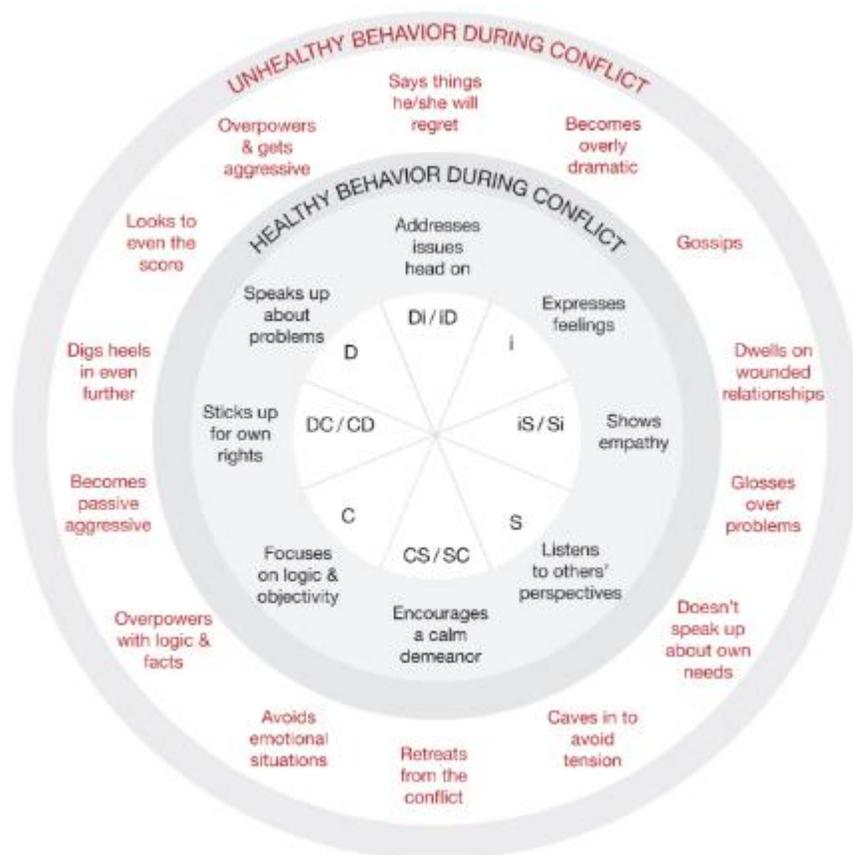
– Erich Brockmann, “Removing the paradox of conflict from group decisions,” *Academy of Management Executive*

CONFLICT

Many of us try to avoid conflict, even when we know it can lead to valuable insights and discoveries. We choose to be polite rather than objective. These questions are meant to get you thinking about how you respond to conflict and how comfortable you are with it on your team(s).

1. When was the last time you were nice rather than honest with your team? Maybe you offered compliance, but felt resentment? How did you feel? What did you lose? What, if anything, did the team lose because of your politeness?
2. Remember a conflict that was aggressive, hostile, or disrespectful. How could that conflict played out differently? How could you have contributed to making it more productive?
3. What incentives might exist to encourage your team members to be more competitive than collaborative?
4. What rewards exist for collaborative behavior on your team?
5. Where does final authority lie on your team? Does it shift depending on task? Is there genuine agreement on the team about this?
6. Is there a conversation you're putting off? Will delaying improve the situation for you or the other person(s)? What's the critical statement you need to make?

7. Is conflict built into your relationship? For example, someone responsible for risk management might naturally be in conflict with a trader, or someone in sales might have different priorities than someone in marketing. In other words, no matter who the people in each role might be, they would always come into conflict. How can you address any competing goals on your team?
8. We naturally judge others by their behavior and ourselves by our intentions. How can you better communicate your intentions to reduce misunderstanding or conflict? Do you need to ask others about their intentions before judging?
9. Many of us - leaders in particular - don't receive feedback unless we actively seek it out. How comfortable are you with getting feedback? What restrains you from asking for it? How to you show your willingness to hear honest feedback?
10. How do you normally express anger at work?
11. Working through conflict is hard. How much effort are you willing to invest on this team to work through old conflicts? How much are you willing to invest in working through upcoming disagreements?



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“I am a member of a team, and I rely on the team, I defer to it and sacrifice for it, because the team, not the individual, is the ultimate champion.”

- Mia Hamm, former soccer superstar

“Commitment is an act, not a word.”

- Jean-Paul Sartre, philosopher

COMMITMENT

We're making commitments all the time. They can range from agreeing to meet after work for happy hour, to paying our insurance deductible, to saying our marriage vows. Commitment is a serious promise we make and keep to dedicate ourselves to a task, purpose, or vision. Commitments require personal investment of our attention, energy and actions. It doesn't end when things get tough.

1. Do you know what your team's purpose is? Do you understand its mission? Do you need more clarity? Write down your understanding of your team's mission. How committed are you to this mission?
2. What are you absolutely committed to at work as an individual? It might be a commitment to serving your clients/customers/patients, your career advancement, achieving more status, leaving a legacy, or coming in under budget. Where do you feel compelled, not reluctant or just compliant? Where do you have the hardest time compromising?
3. Why are you on this team? How do those reasons influence your level of commitment?
4. Consider the other people on your team. Are you committed to them as individuals? To their success on your team? Why or why not?
5. Consider your team as a unit. How committed to it are you? Would you root for it and wear its uniform if it was a sports team? Are you physically, mentally, and emotionally committed? Would you raise funds for it? Or would you just go to a game or two if a friend invited you?

6. How do you limit the quantity or size of commitments to people on the team and elsewhere so you can avoid over-commitment? Do smaller commitments get in the way of fulfilling your commitment to the overall team and its goals?
7. How are you tracking your success in meeting your commitments to the team? Do you need new, additional, or fewer check-ins or status reports?
8. How do you feel when you meet a commitment to your team? How does the team respond?
9. How do you feel when you break a commitment to your team? How does the team respond?
10. How does your team discuss member commitments? Do meetings end with clear instructions for everyone? Does someone need to be confronted about dropping the ball? What are the results of not meeting a commitment?
11. How does your team discuss commitments to the organization or other teams? How do you make sure everyone agrees on timelines, deliverables, etc.?
12. A lack of clarity makes commitment difficult. You need to know what you're committing to. How can you make your needs and vision for your team clearer? Is there a need to request more clarity or enthusiasm from your leadership? Do you need to confront mixed messages received or spoken by the team? Do you need a rallying cry?

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- In the weakest teams, there is no accountability
 - In mediocre teams, bosses are the source of accountability
 - In high performance teams, peers manage the vast majority of performance problems with one another
- Joseph Grenny, author, speaker and social scientist
[The Best Teams Hold Themselves Accountable](#), *Harvard Business Review*

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is both a personal and team function. You're accountable for your own responsibilities and the team is responsible for more. Your team's culture, its meetings, communication and individual personalities can all influence how well you hold yourselves accountable.

1. What's your team responsible for?
2. What do you believe you're accountable for on this team?
3. What do you think others on the team and those who interact with the team believe you are accountable for?
4. To whom are you accountable? Is it to your boss, your teammates, clients, shareholders, others? How does each hold you accountable? Are there conflicts? Consider this quote: "Personal accountability for ethical behavior can be overwhelmed when mutual accountability is only concerned with revenue and profitability." Source: [The Accountability Equation](#), *Strategy-Business*
5. What does your team measure and monitor? How do you know if a task is not being done or a deadline is about to be missed? Do you know what team success will look like? How do you celebrate meeting milestones?
6. How would you like to be held accountable or get feedback? If you fall down, how do you want to be helped up? If you misbehave, how do you want to be reminded of your team's mores and values?
7. Think about your last team meeting. How did you show your own willingness to be accountable for team performance? (Did you arrive prepared, on time, and ready to work?) How was the meeting structured

to encourage accountability? (Was there an agenda? Was everyone encouraged to speak? Did you leave the meeting knowing what your next course of action was?)

8. What have you learned from your family or boss about holding crucial conversations? Does it ever feel unsafe? What have you learned about using sarcasm, caustic humor, guilt trips, verbal barbs, or silence? What have you learned about expressing yourself immediately, directly, respectfully, constructively and firmly? What skills do you need to practice?
9. "In high performance teams, peers manage the vast majority of performance problems with one another."
Source: [The Best Teams Hold Themselves Accountable](#), *Harvard Business Review*
If this is to be true of your team, what needs to be said and confronted? Can you take the responsibility to begin? Can you begin with a conversation and suspend judgment?
10. How can you embrace accountability as part of your team's culture? Consider how the military conducts an "after action review" after completing a project or mission. They compare what was supposed to happen with what did happen, and they explore areas of interest or concern without emphasizing individual blame or credit. They look for best practices and mistakes. (These need to be shared in order to be available for the next step, RESULTS.)

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"The future depends on what you do today."

-Gandhi

"Every high-performing team believes it exists for a compelling reason and that the world will be better for what it does. Its purpose is not the task or work it does but the benefit it delivers."

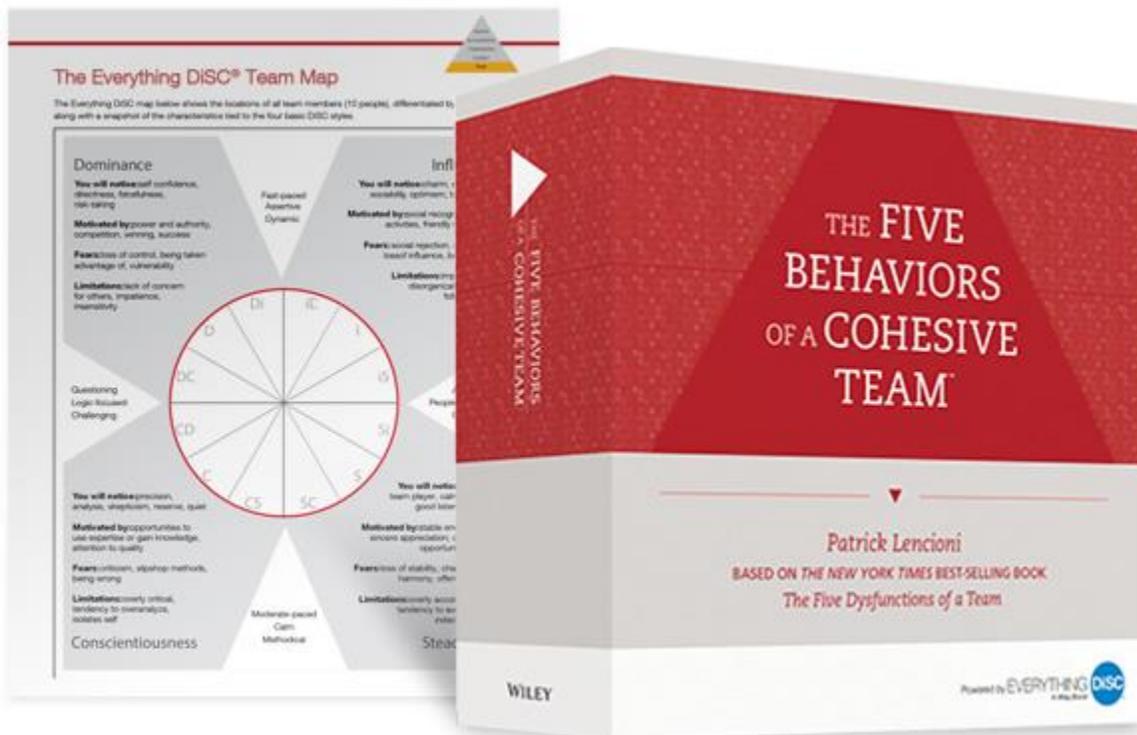
- Linda Hill and Kent Lineback

RESULTS

Teams exist to achieve results. So why don't we get the results we want or expect? The Five Behaviors model looks at how self-interest and self-preservation can interfere with achieving group goals.

1. What are your goals on this team? How do your personal goals contribute to or distract from team goals? You might want this team to succeed because you believe in its mission or you might be on the team because you want to build relationships with the people on it. You might have personal goals or professional ones. You might have both. How have your goals shifted since you've joined the team?
2. Has your team made a commitment to achieving any results? What are they (or should they be)? What actions can *you* take to make these results more achievable?
3. If your team achieves results, accomplishes its mission, reaches its objectives, what will that feel like? Do you anticipate feeling joy, relief, anxiety, loss, or something else? What does this tell you about your team, your role on it, or your commitment to it?
4. If your team fails to achieve results, what will that feel like? What will be the consequences?
5. Teams sometimes fail because they don't plan for difficulties. If your team runs into a roadblock in the future, what is that roadblock likely to look like? How will you respond to it?
6. How are you rewarded for being on this team and contributing to positive results? Is it possible that there are rewards for not completing a project or task? If so, how does that complicate team rewards? How would you like to be rewarded?
7. How do *you* recognize the smaller results and contributions of team members? Do you reward behaviors like gossip or weak excuses? Do you reward putting aside personal interests for the good of the team?

8. What behaviors of yours and others might distract from team productivity? Have you asked others to help you identify and remediate your own unproductive habits? Does your team trust each other sufficiently for you to bring up problem behaviors and address them in a constructive and candid manner?
9. How does your leader affect your team's ability to achieve? Do you need to get more clarity around expectations, more resources, decisions made, policy changes, or anything else from the leader that he/she might not be aware of?
10. How does your team make decisions? How do you connect smaller decisions to your larger goals? How do you review processes and outcomes? Do you keep your eyes on the results you want to achieve?
11. Consider a pre-mortum for your team. What happened? (A pre-mortum is a technique where a team imagines that a project or organization has failed, and then works backward to determine what potentially could lead to the failure of the project or organization.)
12. If your team disbanded and had an obituary, what would it say?



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