



# HOW TO WORK WELL WITH ALL TEAM MEMBERS

Top principles to implement

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Imagine a team member starts an argument with you. Your first reaction is to become angry, but you choose the higher ground. You stay positive even though your heart is hurt and disappointed. The reality of human relationships is that conflict erupts, and this is primarily caused by differing points of view. A difficult task presents itself because as long as there are more than two human beings trying to collaborate together, we must continue to find ways to work well with all kinds of people, their personalities and (honestly) their weirdness. Conversely, the good thing is that conflict gives us the rite of passage to work together and enjoy a stronger relationship for overcoming the struggle.



## True North Principles

In order to work well with all team members, we should focus on principles that form our beliefs, values and convictions. I call these True North principles. True North principles are the natural laws of human conscience. These laws are timeless. Holding fast to our True North principles and living according to them—even when life gets crazy—is the surest way to find your personal center of balance. Let's look at some of the principles that will hold us steady over the long haul and how we can implement them in our lives to become a better team player:

### Integrity

We've all been there: standing at a fork in the road, facing a choice between right and wrong. It may be a critical moment in our lives when we're encountering a life-changing decision. The right path may be the rockier road—narrow and steep, riddled with potholes. Yet anxious to make a choice, we quickly glance to the wrong way.



We admire its level and wide path. We are tempted because it's a welcoming road. The wrong road looks easy, but something deep within us struggles for higher ground. That's integrity at work. It helps us be true to ourselves, even when we have to choose the toughest path. Our team deserves the very best of us. Don't compromise your values. Stand on the solid ground of who you really are. If excuses begin to fill your mind and you rationalize why a compromising choice makes sense, take a step back and put the excuses in the trash. Instead, look at your choices from the clear lens of a good conscience.

### Fairness

At some time or another over the course of working within teams (with its diversity of good and not so good members), most of us have felt that something was unfair. But how do we really know what's fair or unfair? The best way to analyze the principles of justice is to ask some basic questions: did a perceived injustice involve lying or taking advantage of others? Did it involve playing by the rules or was it more about playing favorites? It can be difficult to stay objective when our emotions are concerned. The key is not to blame others for our own mistakes or deficiencies. We all know that life isn't fair. Stuff hits the fan, spreading its toxins over everything and everybody. What's at the root of unfairness? Perhaps it has to do with our expectations. Have we set our sights too high for team members, who like us are struggling to shift through ideals of fairness? Is the workplace really unfair? If the boss seems to favor one employee over the rest of the team, we might decide that the boss likes that person best and everyone else then feels second rate. When we acknowledge our expectations, we're better prepared to be more realistic and avoid disappointments.

### Kindness

How do you feel when someone shows you kindness? Perhaps someone has given you a calming word during a heated exchange. A gentle voice can transform the direction of a conversation. If a team member is feeling defensive and expecting a conflict, a gentle word can help usher that person to a better frame of mind. A kind word or gesture can even soothe an angry heart. It allows the angry person to think twice and give their voice in a more collaborative manner. Make an unexpected disclosure of kindness to the person. It'll take them by surprise because their expectation is that you'll fuel the fire of conflict along with them. Put on integrity. Take the high road. Kindness works!

## In Summary

Integrity, fairness and kindness are gifts that become power tools to build collaboration, a partnership and community with your team. It may take swallowing pride and putting the stronghold of a vindictive ego in the trash. Ultimately, recognizing the ability to successfully get along with each member is the true heart of a united and cooperative spirit. ✪



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