



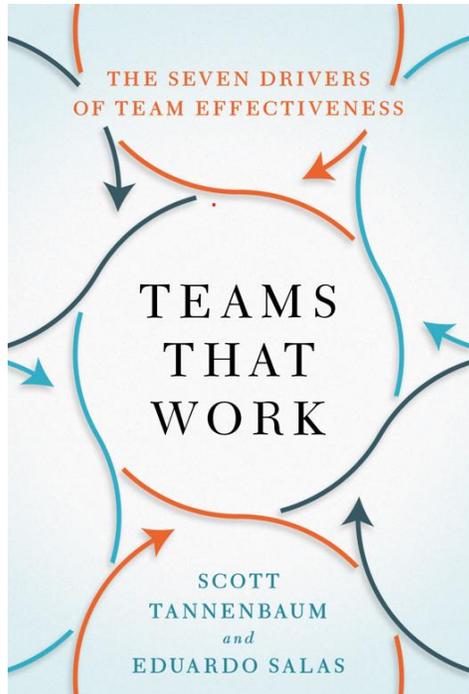
the group for organizational effectiveness

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The Science of Teamwork:

What really matters?

Scott Tannenbaum, Ph.D.



Considerations for the New World of Work

Presented at ATD SCC Chapter Sept 2020

In our time together – I hope to...

- A. Share 2 quick **observations** about teams
- B. Dispel 4 common **myths** about teams
- C. Describe the **seven drivers of teamwork** -- the 7C's
 - Share a few select research findings
- D. Recommend a simple, proven way to **boost** effectiveness
- E. Engage in **Q & A**

I'll also leave you
with a handout

The Science of Teamwork: What Really Matters

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A Few Observations about Teams

- Almost all organizations need some degree of collaboration to succeed – and **collaboration requirements are increasing**. At some point we are all asked to collaborate and work in teams.
- Organizations use teams extensively, but unfortunately, **many are ineffective**. Being on an ineffective team not only hinders performance, it drains employee engagement and discourages people from collaborating in the future.
- Teamwork is not easy, but teams that demonstrate better teamwork behaviors are 20 to 25% more likely to succeed – so it is worth the effort.
- The best teams are rarely great on day one. They become great by making adjustments.
- Behind many apparently solo accomplishments are **invisible acts of teamwork** that helped.
- Teamwork isn't the same as "liking" one another or it isn't simply maintaining harmony. The right type of friction can be constructive.
- You can be both a great team player and display individual excellence.
- We need to crack the code for good teamwork. Fortunately, there is a strong, growing body of research to help guide us.

Team effectiveness = Sustainable performance over time (results, vitality, resilience)

Focus attention on the **Seven Drivers of Teamwork**. Research shows that these are what really matter!

Driver	Key Question
1. Capability	Right people with the right mix of skills?
2. Cooperation	Right attitudes about teamwork & the team?
3. Coordination	Demonstrate necessary teamwork behaviors?
4. Communication	Exchange info effectively with each other and outside?
5. Cognition	Possess a shared understanding (e.g., priorities, roles, vision)?
6. Coaching	Leader and/or team members demonstrate leadership behaviors?
7. Conditions	Have favorable conditions (e.g., resources, culture)?

Two Quick Observations

“No individual can win a game by himself.”

- Pele

Observation #1



Like it or not, the future of work involves teams!

Organizations are using teams more than ever and collaboration ex

- All types of virtual

Interestingly, less than 50% of companies report they have a dedicated L&D curriculum for developing teams (Brandon Hall, 2020)

located,

(L6) of 7000+ towards more designs

Time spent in collaboration activities has ballooned more (Cross et al, 20

In 70% of companies, over half of work is done in teams (Brandon Hall, 2020)

Observation #2



Unfortunately, many teams perform sub-optimally

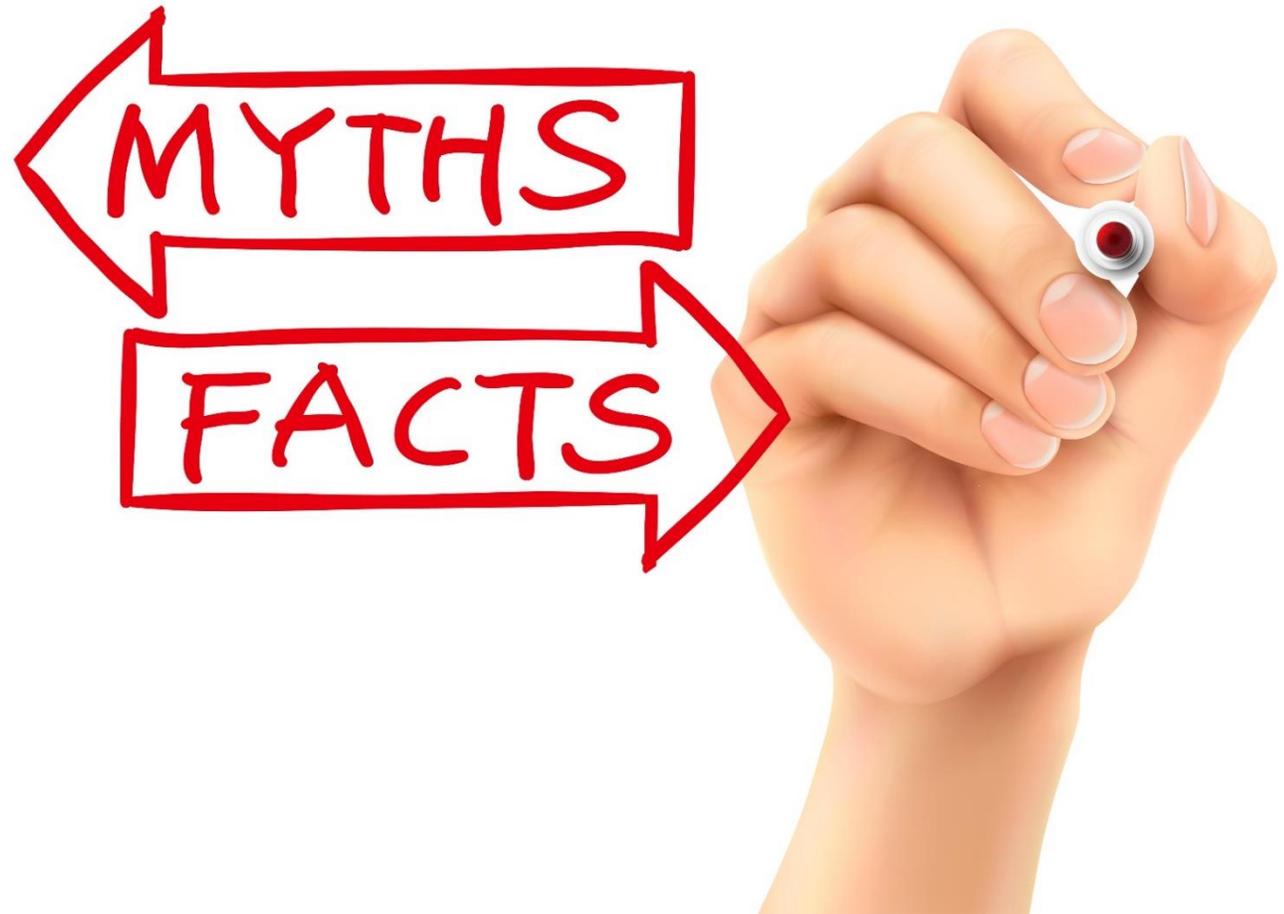
Organizational View	Personal View
Ineffective teams hurt our results	Being on an ineffective team drains my energy – I don't want to be on another team

92% view teams as critical, but only 23% view own team as effective (Davie, 2013)



The intensity of shared experiences, good and bad, is amplified (Boothby et al., 2014)

Four Myths About Teamwork



Four Common Myths

- Focusing on teamwork is a distraction 
- If team members like each other and maintain harmony, the team will be successful 
- Being a team player means suppressing individual excellence 
- Teams are always the answer 

What Really Drives Team Effectiveness?



Based on your experience with teams, what is it that makes a highly effective team so **effective** while other teams may struggle?

We need to “crack the code” for team effectiveness...



Fortunately, there is a strong, growing body of team research to help us!

The Science of Teamwork

Almost 50 meta-analyses published



“Teamwork makes the dream work in space flight.”

- CMDR Scott Kelly

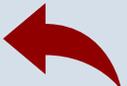
Choose a Team to Think About

It could be a team that you lead or are (or were) a member of...

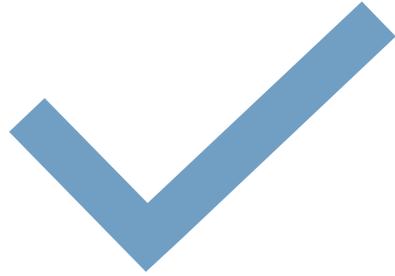


How does that team compare to what Scott is telling us?

The Seven “C’s” of Teamwork (Drivers)

Driver	Key Question
1. Capability 	Right people with the right mix of KSA’s?
2. Cooperation 	Constructive attitudes about this team?
3. Coordination	Demonstrate necessary teamwork behaviors ?
4. Communication 	Exchange info effectively with each other and outside?
5. Cognition 	Possess a shared understanding (e.g., priorities, roles, vision)?
6. Coaching	Leader and/or team members demo leadership behaviors ?
7. Conditions	Have favorable conditions (e.g., resources, culture)?

Based on my work with Professor Eduardo Salas from Rice University



Capability

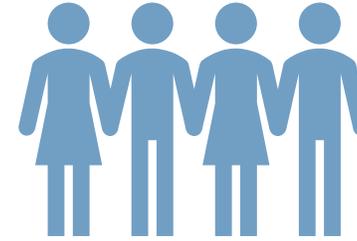
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Knowledge, skills, and
attributes (including
personality)

Findings Related to **Competence**

- **Individual competence** matters – hard to overcome big talent gaps
 - Smart (Stewart, 2006), talented (Aguinis & O’Boyle, 2014), and capable helps
- But, adding **stars** won’t always boost performance (Swaab et al., 2014)
 - In interdependent teams (and chicken coops), too many stars can hurt performance



Cooperation

=

Attitudes and beliefs
about our team

“Cooperative” attitudes such as collective efficacy, trust, respect, psychological safety, and cohesion

Findings re: **Collective Efficacy**

- **Collective Efficacy** is the belief that **our team** will be successful
- Collective Efficacy **predicts** team performance
 - Meta-analysis of 67 prior studies (Gully et al., 2002)
 - When **interdependence** low then self-efficacy is more important (Katz-Navon & Erez, 2005)

Tip: Pay extra attention to this when new tasks, team members, challenges

Tip: Allocate time to discuss and celebrate wins

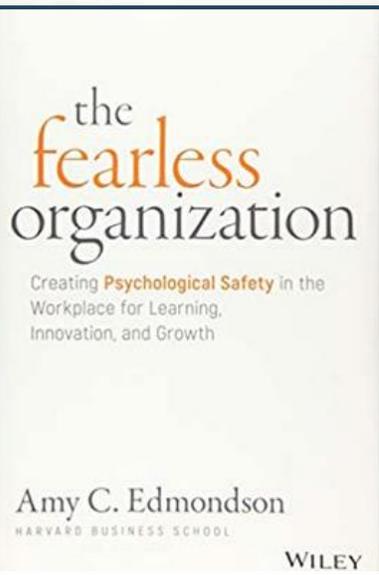


Psychological Safety

“A sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject, or punish someone for speaking up” (Edmonson, 1999)

Or for seeking feedback, asking questions, requesting help

No one wants to appear ignorant, incompetent, negative or intrusive



Interesting Findings About Psychological Safety



Meta analysis – 136 samples, over 5000 groups (Frazier et al., 2016)

- Google in-house research
- Costa Concordia

TIPS

Four Tips for Creating Psychological Safety

- ✓ Admit a **mistake** or a way you can improve
- ✓ **Thank** someone for a dissenting view
- ✓ **Don't tolerate a teammate saying disparaging things** about another teammate
- ✓ Be careful about your **facial expressions** when teammates are talking

No “stink eye” or lemon faces!

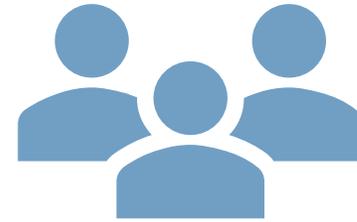


Communication = Information exchange

Interesting Findings re: **Communication**

- **Info sharing** a key to team success
- Meta analysis of 150 studies – quality more important than quantity (Marlow, et al 2018)
- Meta analysis of 72 studies (Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009)
 - Keys: Sharing of *unique* info (not just talking) and *closed loop* communications (to ensure understanding)
- Be aware...
 - People naturally **assume** others “know” stuff

Tip: Get in the habit of asking, “who else should know about that?”



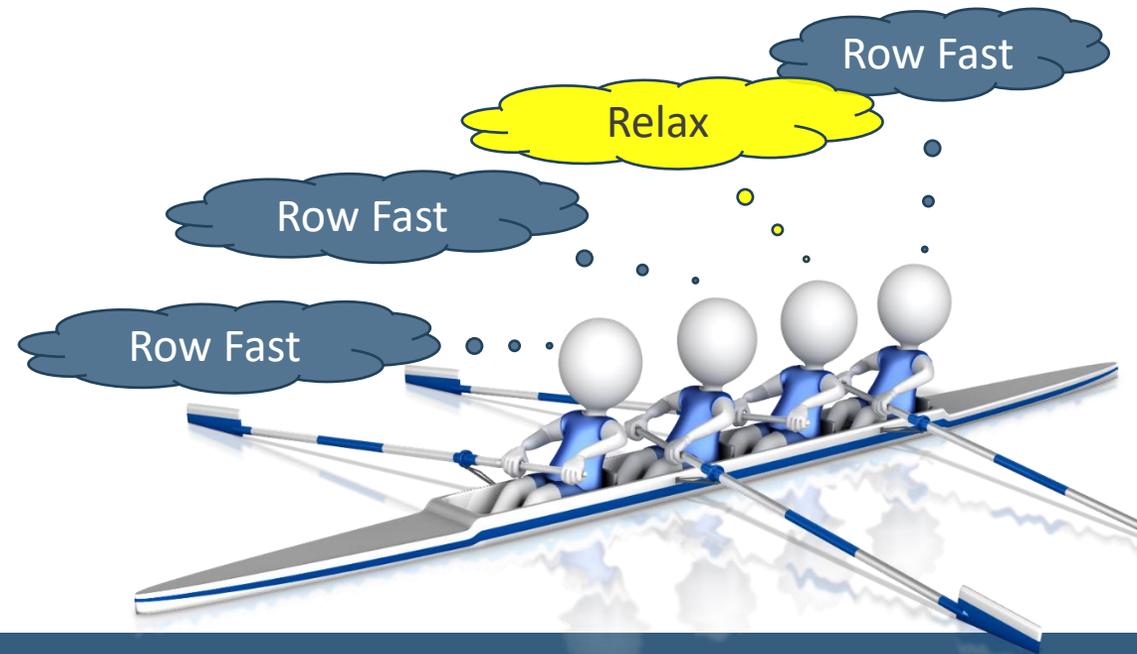
Cognitions

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Shared understanding

Interesting Findings re: **Shared MMs**

- Teams that possess a **Shared Mental Model** (SMM) perform better, particularly when coordination is required
 - Meta-analysis - 23 studies (DeChurch & Mesmer-Magnus, 2010)
- SMMs allow for “implicit coordination”
 - Quiet kitchen
 - Blind pass in basketball
 - Scalpel ready before request



Eight Things You Need SMMs About...

Eight Types of Shared Mental Models

Question Answered	Related to...
Where are we headed?	Vision, Purpose, Goals
What's important?	Priorities
Who should?	Roles
How to?	Tasks, Norms, Interdependencies
Why to?	Rationale
Who knows?	Expertise
What if?	Contingencies, If-then
What's up?	Situation, Cues

Chat

Which SMM could be stronger on your team?

Tip: Can't answer one of these Qs? Ask.

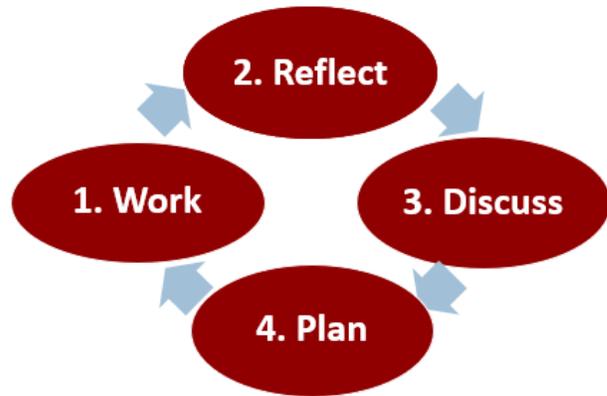


*One Simple
but Powerful
Tool...*

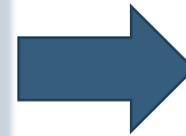


The best teams are rarely great on day one. They become great by learning and adjusting.

Debriefs: Enable Adjustments, Build Teamwork, Drive Performance



Constructive
team discussions



Driver
1. Capability
2. Cooperation
3. Coordination
4. Communication
5. Cognition
6. Coaching
7. Conditions

When done right, **debriefing works**

- Meta analysis – **on average 20 to 25% better!** (Tannenbaum & Cerasoli, 2013; Keiser & Arthur, 2020)
- Military study (Smith-Jentsch, Cannon-Bowers, Tannenbaum, & Salas, 2008)

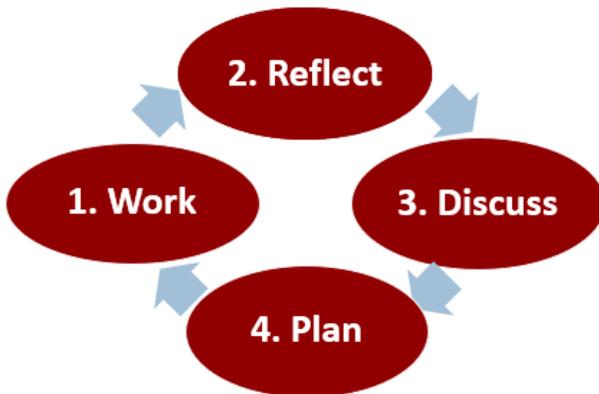
See handout for tips

A Few Debriefing Tips...

TIP: Conduct periodic debriefs...not just after bad experiences

TIP: Discuss teamwork and not just taskwork

TIP: Leaders...ask questions before telling



Breakout Session

- Share a **troubling teamwork challenge** your organization faced and how you overcame it
- Identify a **question** or two to post in the chat window for Scott

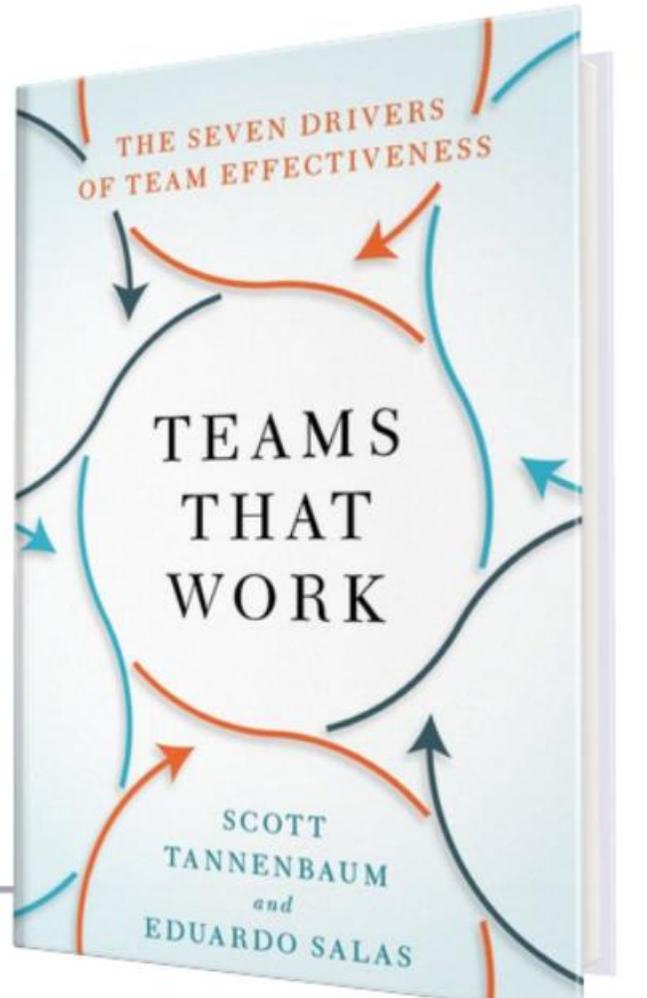
I'll answer as many questions as possible in the time we have



TEAMS THAT WORK

The Seven Drivers of Team Effectiveness

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