

Title: Workskills: Teamwork (geese)

Objectives: In this lesson, the participants will:

1. Identify the elements of teamwork.
2. Discuss good teamwork skills.
3. Apply appropriate teamwork strategies.

Session Time: 60 minutes

Materials: meter stick, stopwatch or clock, marker board (chalkboard), overhead projector, screen, transparencies, 12 pieces of dry spaghetti noodles for each group (plus a few extras), 6 gumdrops for each group (plus a few extra for treats), miniature marshmallows.

Methods: Interactive participation, guided discussion

Procedure:

The ability to work in teams successfully is one of the transferable skills that employers look for. This activity helps to define teamwork and demonstrates the importance of teamwork.

- Ask students what they think teamwork is and write their responses on the board.

This fall when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in "V" formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way.

Have each of the following facts and the corresponding lesson on a separate transparency. Before beginning the discussion, pass out the fact transparencies to five students. Begin by putting the title "*Let us learn the Lessons of Teamwork from the Actions of Geese*" on the overhead projector. Have each student bring up their transparency (one at a time and in order) and read it to the class.

- After viewing all the transparencies talk about teamwork.

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier, because they are traveling on the lift from one another.

Teamwork makes the difference.

- Have the students discuss what they now think teamwork is. Compare their answers to what was written on the board prior to the activity. Did their answers change?



Fact 1

- As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the birds that follow.
- By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.



Lesson

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Fact 2

- When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone.
- It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

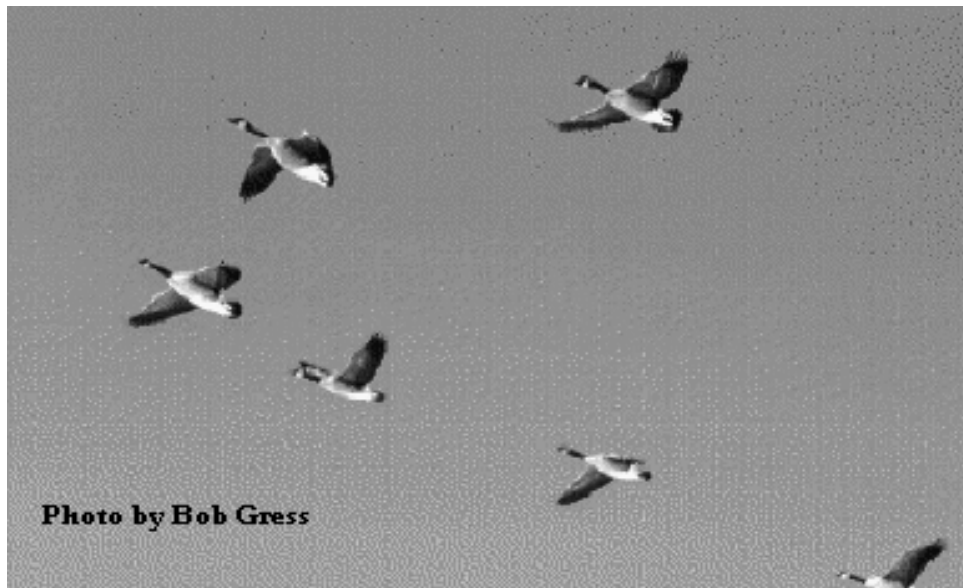


Lesson

If we have as much sense as a goose, we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

Fact 3

- When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.



Lesson

It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

Fact 4

- The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

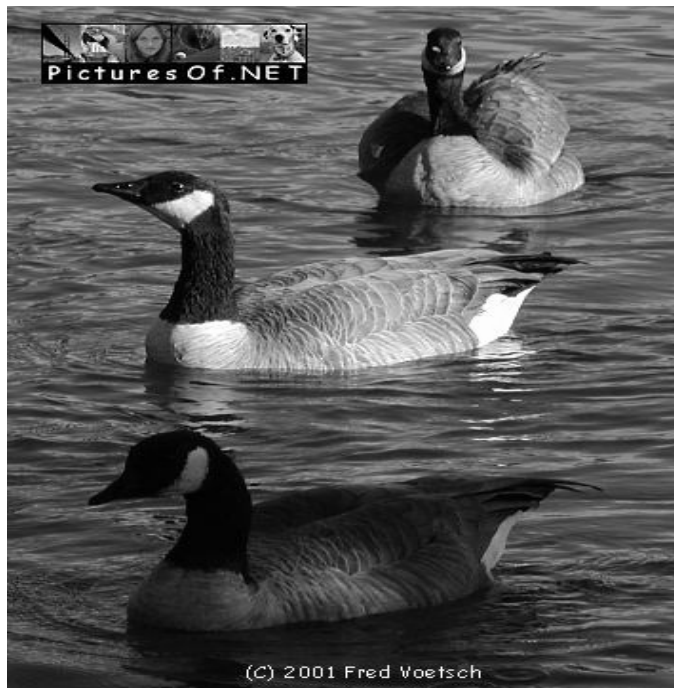


Lesson

We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek.

Fact 5

- When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.



Lesson

If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong. –Angeles Arrien

Teamwork Activity

Divide the class into teams. Explain that they will participate in a contest to work on their teamwork skills. At this time, place the spaghetti noodles and the gumdrops in the center of each group. Explain the rules to the class.

The rules are:

- Each group is going to build a tower as high as they can.
- Each member of the group has to participate or the group will be disqualified.
- Each group will build their tower out of dry spaghetti noodles, gumdrops and miniature marshmallows.
- Most importantly, you cannot talk to one another. If any team member talks, I will remove one gumdrop from the group. If someone on your team talks three times, the whole group will be disqualified.
- Your team will not get any new gumdrops or noodles, but you may use as many miniature marshmallows as you need.
- To insure that all of the students understand the rules, have a student explain the rules of the contest back to you and the class.
- Tell the teams “Your team has 10 minutes to build a tower and remember-
- **NO TALKING.**”

2. Tell the teams to begin. Start the stopwatch or note the time on the clock.

3. After ten minutes, tell the students to stop what they are doing. Have each group use a meter stick to measure the height of the tower and record the reading on the board. Once a winner has been identified, give them the extra gumdrops.

4. Have the winning team explain how they went about constructing their tower. Nudge them to discuss non-verbal communication and assignment of members to specific tasks.

5. Explain to the class the importance of teamwork and fulfilling one's responsibilities.

Note: This lesson is included in the workshop, *An Essential “Soft” Skill for the 21st Century--Teamwork* in the *SIPDC Catalog of Professional Development Opportunities*.