Coaching Key...Roles in a Group and the Key Team Building Roles*

1. **SUPPORTING is the Maintenance Function: Supporter & Praiser.** This is more than reinforcing someone’s point of view when you agree. *It is most important to the team process to support someone’s point of view when you are NOT in agreement.*

2. **SUMMARIZING is a Task Function that includes elaborating, summarizing ideas, and clarifying.** At times the entire group can get lost in a difference or becomes unfocused like a rudderless ship. This is when summarizing the major points of the discussion gives the group a chance to breathe, think, refocus, and restore confidence in itself. Summarizing forces the team to examine how it is functioning.

3. **GATEKEEPING combines the Maintenance Functions of Communication Facilitator and Encourager of Participation.** In almost every team, a few people are assertive while other members are quiet. The result is that a few ideas and opinions are pushed forward too fast and forcefully. For an effective team, a gatekeeper must emerge to make sure the more quiet members’ opinions are heard and a full discussion by the group occurs. This may include interrupting the talkative group members and suggesting we give some “air time to the other members of the group.”

4. **CONFRONTING combines the Maintenance Function of Process Observer and Communication Facilitator with the communication skill of Feedback used to assist the group in achieving the group goals.** Part of being mutually accountable is being able to confront a person’s behavior, NOT PERSONALITY OR PRESUMED MOTIVES, when the person’s behavior is detrimental to the success of the team. Constructive confrontation (or feedback) is confined to the person’s behavior and is not a rejection of the person. When confrontation is focused on the person’s personality or assumed intentions, the outcome is usually one of disruption and resentment.

5. **MEDIATING is the Maintenance Function of Interpersonal Problem Solver.** Every group experiences differences and conflict that must be resolved if the team is to continue to function. There is no way to avoid the differences but when members become polarized a mediator is needed. As the member mediates it is recommended that:
   a. A member asks permission to interpret each position for each side.
   b. The mediating member asks whether that version reflects the disputant’s argument.
   c. Then the mediator invites the group to brainstorm ways of resolving the difference.

6. **HARMONIZING combines the Task Functions of Summarizing and Consensus Checker with the Maintenance Function of Encouraging Participation.** Many times the disagreement is not so far apart and harmonizing helps the disputants see where they actually agree and invites the other teammates to join in on the discussion and add their opinions.

7. **Group Stages:** All groups go through forming, storming, and norming stages and these roles are critical to the success of transitioning each stage and not getting stuck in a stage and/or avoiding a stage.

*Adapted from David Dee’s and the editors of TEAMWORK’s first book in the High Performance Team Series: First Team: Everything You Need to Know to Start a Team . . . Lead a Team . . . And Be A Team. 1995.*
Roles in a Group

A. Effective Group Roles

A. Task Functions:
1. **Initiator, Direction Giver, Orientor**: Helps define the group goals and keeps the group focused on the goals and tasks. Defines the problem, focus, or task and makes sure members stay on task.
2. **Summarizer, Clarifier, Elaborator**: Pulls together related ideas, asks what and how questions to make ideas clearer.
3. **Comprehension and Consensus Checker**: Summarizes or asks others to summarize the discussion to check for understanding and asks where the group is to check if a conclusion has been reached.
4. **Fact-Seeker**: Person who wants more data on which to base decisions - keeps group focused on debating an issue on its merits, not emotions of issue.
5. **Fact-Giver**: Imparts data for discussion of issues.
6. **Recorder**: Secretarial
7. **Expeditor, Procedural Technician, Recorder**: Sees to comfort of members and details for meetings. Distributes items, sees that the room is set up, takes notes etc.
8. **Energizer**: Attempts to stimulate the group to greater activity.

B. Maintenance Functions:
1. **Communication Facilitator**: Keeps discussion going - group towards goal and task accomplishment
2. **Encourager of Participation**: Shakes head Yes! - positive non-verbals, invites people to participate and contribute their ideas, is responsive by accepting and valuing other contributions.
3. **Process Observer**: Shares observations about HOW the group is performing its task, checks if the group is satisfied with its procedures and process and makes suggestions for improvement.
4. **Interpersonal Problem Solver**: Summarizes and clarifies the differences and then mediates was of resolving the difference.
5. **Tension Reliever**: Tells timely jokes to relieve stress and create a fun environment.
6. **Supporter and Praiser**: Expresses acceptance and includes all members of the group.

C. Dysfunctional Group Roles
1. **Blocker**: Disagrees with opposing ideas without considerations and attempts to maintain or re-open an issue after the group has resolved it.
2. **Aggressor**: Controls and tries to get own way by ridicule of others, questioning unduly, blaming, attacking status of others in group and shows hostility toward the group.
3. **Recognition Seeker**: Excessive calling attention to one’s self – interfering with the group’s goals.
4. **Dominator & Monopolizer**: Tries to assert authority over the group member, takes over the discussion and interrupts contributions of others.
5. **Special Interest Pledger**: Introducing or supporting ideas related to one’s own pet concerns.
6. **Know It All**: Should be done this way. Very self-righteous, snob. “He may be right, buy you want to vote otherwise!”
7. **Irrelevant or Clown**: Doesn’t or can’t pay attention to issue being discussed and intrudes with irrelevant remarks, writes notes or jokes to neighbor.
8. **The Whisperer**: Like playboy - whispers to neighbor to the distraction of group.
9. **Zipper-Mouth**: Sits and listens - doesn’t voice what are their concerns, questions, opinions.