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# Teamwork

Collaboration, Cooperation

Reviewed by Psychology Today Staff

Teamwork—working with other people to achieve a shared goal—is essential in just about every domain, whether on the job, at home, or on the playing field. Though there are some situations where it’s better to act alone, learning how to work together without conflict is a critical skill that can help almost anyone achieve greater success.

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## Contents

- [Why Teamwork Matters](#)
  - [Improving Teamwork](#)
  - [Communication and Teamwork](#)
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## Why Teamwork Matters

Humans are social animals. Civilization itself is the result of the pooled effort of innumerable people over thousands of



determine how to maximize teamwork going forward. Raising children or keeping a clean household, for example, requires cooperation and a fair division of the workload. The same applies in almost any workplace, where good teamwork is necessary for goals to be met and customers to be satisfied.

### Why do humans cooperate?

**Cooperation is thought to be a key component of human nature.** Working together allowed our early ancestors to survive; some experts posit that it even gave us an evolutionary advantage over other species of early humans who later died out. Cooperation allows humans to solve problems that individuals, acting alone, could not solve.

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### What are the benefits of good teamwork?

**Effective teamwork** increases efficiency because more people are sharing the load. It also boosts accountability and morale, and reduces the risk that a project will be derailed if one team member is absent or unable to contribute. It also allows team members to

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**Is teamwork always a good thing?**



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**Why is it sometimes difficult for people to work together?**



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**What makes a good team player?**



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## How to Improve Teamwork



for individuals to work with others. Some people, particularly those who prefer to work on their own, may feel out of place in a group or get frustrated by common teamwork pitfalls. To maximize teamwork, it's important that all teammates share the same goals and are committed to an overall vision. Often it takes just one person not pulling their weight—or defying the group's goals—to derail the efforts of everyone else on the team.

### Is it possible to teach teamwork skills?

Yes; some individuals are more inclined to teamwork than others, but those who don't naturally excel at it can become more adept. Teaching teamwork skills usually entails improving communication, **building emotional intelligence**, and imparting specific strategies for collaborating successfully.

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### What makes a team successful?

Research has found that certain qualities are consistent predictors of **a strong team**. These include good communication—including ensuring that every

each others' thoughts and feelings and respectfully engage in disagreements.

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**What are the most effective strategies for improving teamwork in an organization?**



**How does group trust affect teamwork?**



**How do I lead a productive team?**



**How do I manage someone who doesn't work well with others?**



**I prefer to work on my own. How can I learn to work on a team?**



## How Communication Affects Teamwork



Communication is essential to ensure that a team runs optimally. It can also, however, be one of the most challenging aspects of

can derail an entire project. Some skills that improve communication, like emotional intelligence, come more naturally to some than others; fortunately, most people can learn to become better communicators with practice.

On an ideal team, every member would be encouraged to share their ideas and updates on progress—even if the news is bad—and other members would do their best to listen, evaluate without judgment, and offer a thoughtful response. On the other hand, poor communication—a boss shooting down, or shouting down, ideas from subordinates, or one employee consistently speaking over others—disrupts general cohesion and can throw an otherwise productive team off their game.

### **How can teams communicate more effectively?**

**Team members should share relevant information when they know it**, rather than waiting for an ideal moment. Each member should be encouraged to ask clarifying questions when necessary. Appointing one team member as the “devil’s advocate” can help the group consider potential problems and reach a better solution.

## for teamwork?

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Nonverbal communication—including gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice—can help or hinder a team's productivity. An individual who rolls her eyes at others' ideas, for instance, can be problematic for the team's morale. Conversely, team members who excel at reading nonverbal cues can better navigate the group dynamic and help identify unspoken issues.

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Does emotional intelligence affect teamwork?

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What is emotional contagion, and how does it affect teams?



## Essential Reads



## Kindness and Happiness at Work

Unlocking our untapped cooperative potential.





## Teamwork

Bad collaboration experiences can turn us into lone wolves.



### How Social Fitness Helps You and Your Team Succeed

Simultaneous shipwrecks on opposing coasts of the same island provide an invaluable real-life lesson in social connection and teamwork.

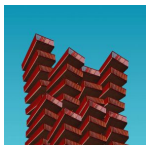


## How to Deal With People Who Won't Do Their Fair Share

It's frustrating to deal with people who constantly take, take, take. New research in social psychology suggests how to strengthen that weak link and make everyone feel better.

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### Thinking Inside the Box

Which work environment would you prefer? An open-plan office with serendipitous meetings or a cubicle to get focused work done?

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Organizations and teams need to identify and fix “weak links” for maximum performance.

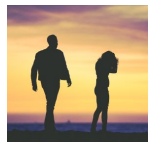
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## The Legal Profession’s Journey Toward Well-Being

Nearly 3,000 lawyers answered questions related to well-being and the relation to law firms’ culture and policies.

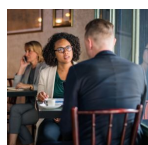
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## How to Stop an Argument

Truly winning an argument means making the argument constructive rather than destructive. When you see an argument headed down a destructive path, throw in a circuit breaker.

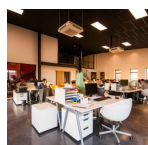
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## 4 Tips to Manage Relationships with Unequal Power

We are often uncomfortable with unequal relationships. New research suggests there might be good reason for those feelings—and how to manage such situations when they do arise.

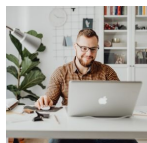
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provided.

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## Solving Quick Quitting With Remote and Hybrid Work

Discover the simple solution to quick quitting in the workplace. Offering remote and hybrid work options can boost productivity and retention.

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## The Leader Mindset: How Leaders Should Think About Followers

Here are five elements of a successful leader's mindset.

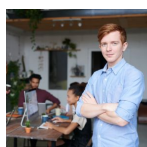
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## The Power of Remote Work in Advancing Women's Careers

Unlock women's potential with remote work, including flexibility, work-life balance, reduced bias, and increased productivity. Embrace inclusivity for a stronger workforce.

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## The Siren Call of the Traditional Office Model

Many CEOs want a return-to-office. Learn the pros and cons of remote work, the cognitive biases that affect how we perceive it, and how to build a hybrid culture.



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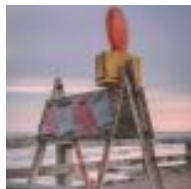
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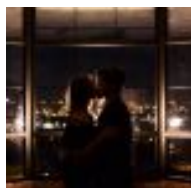
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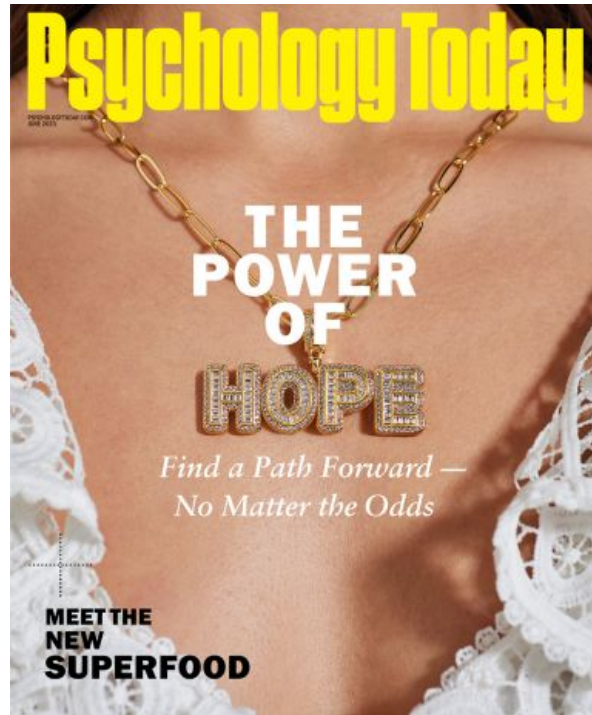
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