

## 13. The Good, the Bad, and the Reasonable

**JUST THE FACTS:** Teamwork can be tough. Dealing with different personalities and compromise is not necessarily easy. So, what do you do when you are part of a team and there are barriers to the team's success? This could be a sports team, a team at work, or a group working on a school or community project. The purpose of this activity is to engage participants in a discussion of some of the barriers to effective teamwork and the strategies they may be able to put in place to create positive outcomes.



### Time

25 minutes



### Materials

- Flip chart and markers
- Dry spaghetti and marshmallows
- Optional: Timer



### Directions

Ask participants if teamwork is ALWAYS easy. (Most likely you will receive “no” answers). Delve deeper and ask about some of the reasons why teams sometimes don't work or what makes teamwork so difficult at times. Write these answers on the flip chart. Answers may include: inconsistent team players, time issues, compatibility, differences in communication styles (both giving and receiving), lack of trust, no clear goal, etc.

Next, divide participants into groups of four or more. Ask each group to elect a team leader for this activity. Give each group a supply of spaghetti and marshmallows. Tell the group they will have 15 minutes to work together to create the tallest freestanding structure possible. Before you say, “go,” tell the teams that their team leaders may only supervise and offer instructions. He or she may not physically participate in this activity.



### Conclusion

After 15 minutes, evaluate the structures. Usually the highest structure has a solid and wide foundation. Discuss with participants what it means to have a solid foundation - and why laying a solid foundation is important (and the core of an effective team).

Use the following questions for additional discussion:

1. How did your team work together? What specifically worked well? What difficulties did you experience?
2. Besides the team leader, what role did each person play in the group? How was each person helpful to the end goal?
3. Was it a plus or a minus that the team leader was not able to physically participate in the activity? How did the team leader feel about his or her level of participation?
4. What would you do differently if given a second chance at this activity?



### Journaling Activity

You are the leader of a team at work. What type of leader would you like to be - one that gets involved and works with the team or one that tells the team what to do? Explain your choice.



### Extension Activity

Have participants interview no fewer than 20 of their peers and ask two simple questions:

1. What is the best part of working on a team?
2. What is the most difficult part of working on a team?

Participants should be instructed to bring their results back to the larger group. The larger group should then examine the most common difficulties described and come up with solutions to turn these difficulties into successes.