

Collaboration Power: Excelling in a Multi-Generation Workplace



Dr. Allen Goben
President
Tarrant County College
Northeast Campus

Why Collaborate When it Takes Time & Energy?

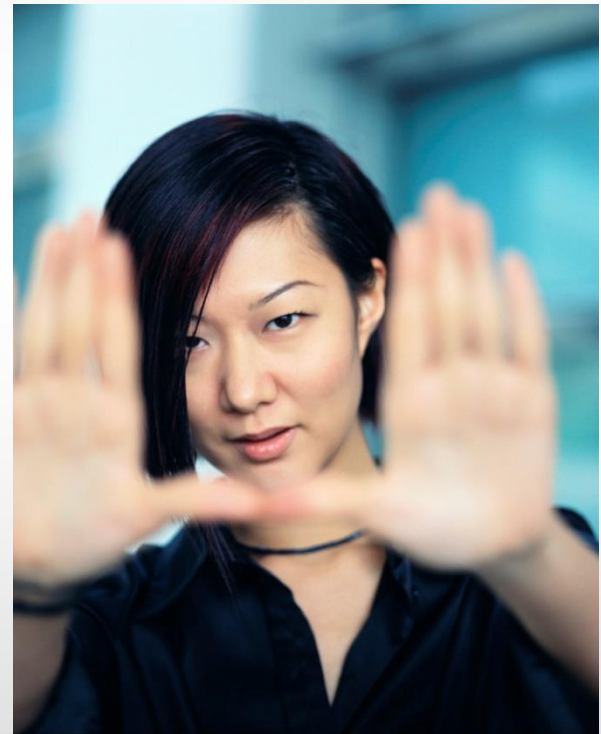
- Because, what we're competing against is not the next person, city, county, or even country. **Our common competitor is the colossal waste of time, money, and energy that characterizes our society today.** We will meet this challenge by collaborating effectively.

Forced collaboration versus voluntary collaboration...



Getting Outside Our Own Experience

- Basketball video
- What the heck is a sang-bo?



Survival Power



Ability to meet basic needs is key

Knowledge needs are basic,
activity is constant

Conservative planning for tough
times prevails and is based on
logistical needs

Motivated by FEAR of not
surviving

Production Power

Reliability and basic knowledge are keys to success

Depth of knowledge, craftsmanship, and action are vital

Planning centers around input/output... productivity

Motivated by FEAR of not keeping up or of being fired



Contribution Power

Creativity becomes a more common key to success

Ability to find answers becomes more important than having the answer

Planning centers around motivating people and encouraging contribution

Motivation comes through LOVE
of a challenge and recognition for contributions that make a positive difference



Collaboration Power

Cooperation and diversity fuel success



Time management
across multiple
people/groups is key

Planning focuses on
matching the right
people, at the right time,
with the right abilities

Motivation comes by LOVE of supporting each other and building on each other's ideas

What Inhibits Collaboration?

- Fear
- Ego
- FEAR
- EGO
- FEAR and EGO
- FEAR wrapped up in and driven by EGO



Ego Prevents Effective Listening

“No one is really listening... we’re all just waiting for our turn to speak...”

From early childhood, we are taught how to speak, read, and write... and we are TOLD to listen.

People in different generational groups tend to **listen as well as speak** in the context of their own generation’s experiences... caught in the ego of their own generation.

People Sometimes Aim Low and Reject Collaboration Because...

FEAR controls them, as weakness of ego entraps them in a comfort zone of mediocrity, where expectations are low and easily achieved.

They want to limit others' success... like **"Crabs in a Bucket"** so they will not appear weaker or "less than" by comparison.



Conquering Our Fears

“Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.”

Albert Einstein

Overcome Fear and Mediocrity



Tune-in to other people's needs

Listen, listen, listen

Meet needs, support goals, and
remove barriers

Create learning by continually
learning... We "don't know what
we don't know."

“Listen to others as intently as you would listen to a toddler’s first words... Strive to become a good communicator and you’ll be astonished at how easy it is to make a good impression, project confidence, and build trusting relationships.”

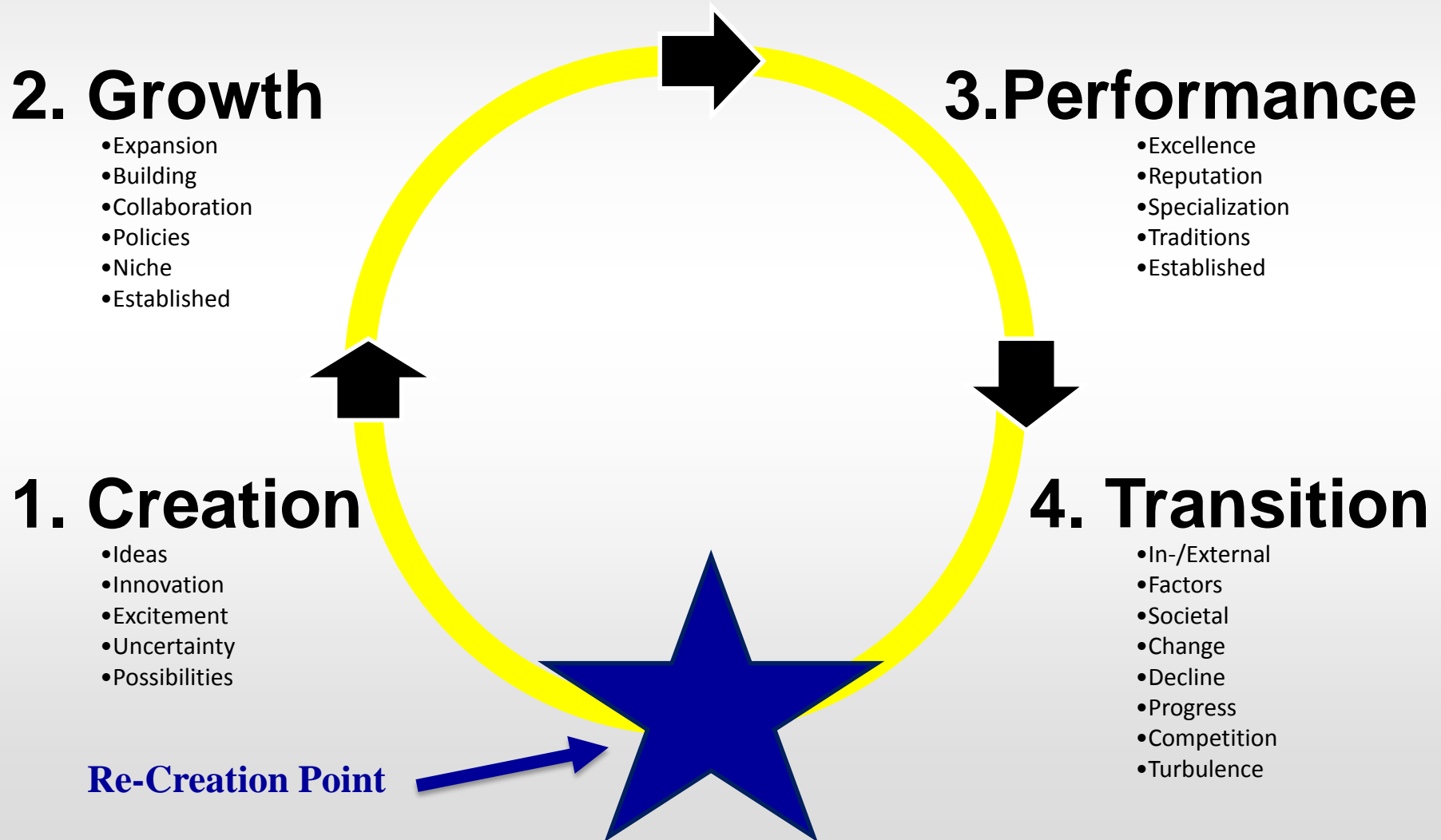
Tony Zeiss

Overcoming Fear with Humor



If you can't laugh at
yourself, someone else
will do it for you!

Organizational Life Cycle





Traditionalists

(born mid 1920's to 1945)

Typical Communication Strengths

- Knowledge-based communications
- Politically savvy
- Reliable in both communications and follow-through



Traditionalists

(born mid 1920's to 1945)

Typical Communication Challenges

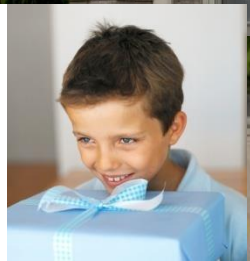
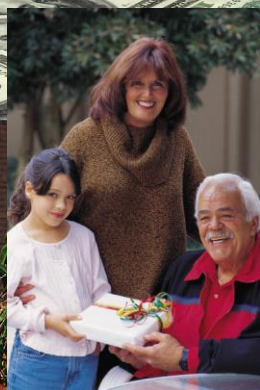
- “That’s the way we’ve always done things...”
- Technology often seems almost magical
- Focus on accomplishing processes instead of on improving— slow down communications by filibustering

Teenager In Love: “Each time we have a quarrel...”

Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)

Typical Communication Strengths

- Focus on achievement, both individually and collectively
- Rally to a cause and seek to motivate others
- Experience and interpersonal savvy/polish



Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)

Typical Communication Challenges

- Lengthy, text-based communications
- Process-focused instead of outcome-focused
- Often misunderstand imagery-based communications
- Typically just use technology rather than leverage it for improved communications and workflow

Proud Mary: “Left a good job in the city...”

Generation Xers (born 1965 to 1979)

Typical Communication Strengths

- Pragmatic, outcome-focused communicators
- Technologically savvy
- Direct communicators with fewer hidden agendas



Generation Xers (born 1965 to 1979)

Typical Communication Challenges

- Can be abrupt and lack polish
- When unhappy will often shut down and go off on their own tangent rather than work through things
- Focused on improvement - tend to ignore experienced colleagues' input about tried & true lessons

Every Rose Has Its Thorn: “We both lie silently still...”



05 Sweet Child O' Mine.mp3

Millennials

(born 1980 to 2000)

Typical Communication Strengths

- Technologically savvy, savvy, savvy... truly leverage technology for improved communication and workflow
- Don't take things too personally— focus on results
- Are consummate learners... always on the lookout for new ideas and knowledge sharing

**“It’s not MY fault
you can
only do one
thing at a time!”**

U of MN Class of 2011



GÉNÉRATION



Millennials (born 1980 to 2000)

Typical Communication Challenges

- So results-focused that they can immerse in a project and wait too long to discuss progress or ideas
- Have a totally different frame of reference than elder generations
- Get impatient with others' lack of techno-savvy/comfort and can be engaged with technology to the point of being constantly distracted by it
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHPfgsTVTjA>

Higher: “When dreamin’, I’m guided to another world...”

Gen Z

(born after 2000)

Typical Communication Strengths

- Transition quickly and seamlessly from one communication platform to another
- Combine imagery concepts and text-based concepts
- Sift through volumes of information quickly to find personal meaning



APPS

WIDGETS



Mirror



Movie Studio



Navigation



News & Weather



Phone



Places



Search



Settings



Boot

screenshot



Toolkit



Superuser



Talk



Titanium Backup

Gen Z

(born after 2000)

Typical Communication Challenges

- Continually distracted by a variety of communications
- Similarly, almost continually distracted within communications resulting in a lack of focus
- Often ignore phone calls and Email when these more traditional technologies are needed for effective communication

Song

Generational Perspective

Riding inside the “car” of each generation

- Traditionalists - mid 1920's to 1945
- Baby Boomers - 1946 to 1964
- Xers - 1965 to 1979
- Millennials - 1980 to 2000
- Gen Z - 2001 to 2016



Handling Change & Creating Solutions

Change at arms-length... versus:

“As natural as breathing...”

Continually maintained solutions defined by survival and production power, versus:



Self-sustaining solutions
defined by contribution and
collaboration power

**“People don’t fail because they
aim high and miss...
They fail because they aim low
and hit.”**

Les Brown



Love vs. Fear



Leveraging Intergenerational Diversity to Improve Collaboration

Grow beyond ego-based FEAR

Continually strive to improve listening

Listen for what people mean, not for what you want them to say



Leveraging Intergenerational Diversity to Improve Collaboration

Acknowledge each person as a worthy contributor

- All people are valued and all ideas are valid (at least for exploration!)

Tune in to others' needs, goals, and barriers

- Meet needs, support goals, and remove barriers

Take the time for reciprocal mentoring

“If all hold to the dream, the magic
will be strong— be strong to call
back what we loved the most, and
of the new keep what is good,
weave old and new in harmony.”

From The Ghost Dance by Alice McLerran

Dr. Allen Goben

Contact information available at:

www.goben12.net