

## The Salvation Army: April Article

### From Collaboration to Co-Creating

By Jim Van Yperen

#### Creating A Truly Great Team

Have you ever been part of a great team? Perhaps you played on a great athletic team in high school or college --soccer, basketball or hockey? Or, perhaps you were part of a great music band, vocal group or orchestra? What made that experience great? Our first inclination might be to say, "We won!" or to talk about our accomplishment. But is winning or accomplishment what you remember the most? Most people say, "No!" Rather, you remember what it felt like to work together, defer to one another; and the relationships that were formed through pain, practice and hardship.

In our work with more than 100 ministry staff and church boards during the past 25 years, we've constantly explored what separates the good from the great, the attributes of a team that is dysfunctional and the attributes of a team that is "co-creational." While every team is unique and teamwork is always complex, our research has found ten critical traits that repeatedly determine if a team is dysfunctional or creational.

Take a moment to take this quick survey below to see how your team measures up. Read the terms across each row, and choose a number that best fits how you would score each category: from 1 being very low, closest to the dysfunctional side; to 7 closest to the co-creational side. Assign a score that describes your team, then add up the points.

<b>Dysfunctional</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Co-creational</b>
Autonomy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Community
Competing Against	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Collaborating with
Fuzzy or Competing Vision	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Clear, Compelling Vision
Secrecy & Withholding Truth	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Transparent, Truth-telling in Love
Suspicion Mistrust	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Mutual Support & Trust
Hierarchy Control	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Interdependent Gifts
Fear-based, Risk-averse	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Faith-filled Risk-taking
Passive/Reactive	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Active/Proactive
Protecting Self	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Empowering Others
Stuck-in-rut	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Discovering and Learning
	Total score here	

If your total score is 50 or greater, you are likely working with a healthy team. If your score is below 50, you will need to carefully examine and address the lowest scores.

Co-creation means bringing the presence of the Creator into your team. Here is a brief look at what that might look like in each category:

*Autonomy versus Community:* We refer to autonomy as the "Sinatra-syndrome"—people who insist on, "I did it my way." Co-creation grows relationships, strengthens bonds for unity, fellowship and shared accomplishment.

*Competing Against versus Collaborating with:* If I see you as a threat, I am more likely to sabotage our effort than work with you. Co-creation means co-labor.

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*Fuzzy or Competing Vision versus Clear, Compelling vision:* Great leaders, like great teams, always clarify and agree on “why,” before dispatching “what” and “how.”

*Secrecy & Withholding Truth versus Transparent, Truth-telling in love:* Truth is power that can either be controlled and misused through secrecy and deception, or released through transparency and love.

*Suspicion & Mistrust versus Mutual Support and Trust:* Without trust, you cannot lead or become a team.

*Hierarchy & Control versus Interdependent Gifts:* The most frequent question we receive working with Salvation Army leaders is how to navigate hierarchy and control from above. Our answer is simple: “Cultivate a culture of co-creation where you are. Recognize, encourage and empower people around you whom God is raising up and gifting. And don’t forget this when you are promoted!”

*Fear-based, Risk-averse versus Faith-filled, Risk Taking:* The most frequent command in Scripture is, “Fear not.” Great leaders and teams do not avoid or ignore fear, they face and walk into fear through faith.

*Passive/Reactive versus Active/Proactive:* Co-creation is a generative process that anticipates and initiates change.

*Protecting Self versus Empowering Others:* Self-protection always leads to self-deception and self-justification. There is no surer or quicker way to dysfunction than a leader acting for his or her own interest.

*Stuck-in-rut versus Discovering and Learning:* Nothing inspires co-creation like discovery and learning. Stop saying and doing the same thing over and over. Encourage your team to think “outside the box.”

These ten attributes, rightly aligned with your purpose can develop truly great teams that will be more productive because they welcome the Creator into the process.

--Jim Van Yperen