

# 10 things you did today that undermined teamwork

Posted by Liane Davey on Friday, April 5, 2013



Even if you're the most conscientious, friendly, and collaborative person around, you probably did something today that detracted from the effectiveness of your team. Find at least one of these that you can work on to make tomorrow a better day than today.

## **1. You slogged away doing something you weren't good at.**

Tomorrow, put up your hand, ask for help, and show vulnerability. Great team players use the team to make them better.

## **2. You let a chance to give a teammate feedback slip away.**

Tomorrow, grab a cup of coffee and share an idea you had about how your teammate could be even better. Chances to give concrete examples are precious. Don't let them pass you by.

## **3. You waited for your boss to provide clarity.**

Tomorrow, call out an issue that might affect your business and suggest how it might impact the team.

## **4. You said yes to something you don't have time to do well.**

Tomorrow, question the work and, if necessary, get direction on what drops down the priority list.

## **5. You smiled and nodded in a team meeting.**

Tomorrow, add value. If an idea is great, say why. If you're concerned, share what's worrying you. Don't waste your seat by staying quiet.

## **6. You let your biases about your teammates cloud your judgment about what they said.**

Tomorrow, evaluate critically and fairly the ideas from everyone. Be more discerning about ideas from those you like and more open to ideas from those you don't.

## **7. You watched as someone shut down a teammate who thinks differently.**

Tomorrow, make a point of calling out a comment that is unique or uncomfortable. Encourage your teammates to wrestle with it.

## **8. You wrote off the teammate who is different from you as frustrating, disrespectful, or wrong.**

Tomorrow, talk about the teammate who is different as complementary to you. Find an issue you can work on together and explore how you see the world differently.

## **9. You complained to your boss before trying to address the issue directly with your teammate.**

Tomorrow, go to the source and try to resolve the issue as two mature adults. (See next page)

## **10. You had lunch with the same people you have lunch with every day.**

Tomorrow, sit with someone else. Break your patterns and make an effort to get to know your teammates better.

See <http://changeyourteam.com>

## 4 Things You Can Say Instead of Throwing a Teammate Under the Bus

Posted by Liane Davey on Thursday, April 4, 2013



Imagine this scenario. You gave a presentation at your team meeting today. It was a progress report on your big project. Around the table, heads nodded. Then this afternoon, you were walking down the hallway when you overheard a conversation between two teammates. One was complaining loudly about what a “crock” your presentation was and how he couldn’t believe the boss was wasting time and money letting you pursue it.

What would you do? (Not what *should* you do, or what would your courageous super-hero *alter-ego* would do, but really, what would you do?)

Would you talk to your boss about the inappropriate behavior? Would you commiserate with a colleague? If your answer doesn’t involve a direct conversation with your skeptical teammate, then you need to take a share of the blame for the dysfunctional state of your team. I know from experience that team members who allow themselves to be the victims are as much of a problem on teams as the supposed aggressors.

When I am interviewing team members, I hear all sorts of wild stories about the behavior of misguided team members. The person talking pleads their case to me, looking for sympathy and perhaps some validation of just how hard they’ve got it. Instead, I ask one simple question: what did you do?

Almost no one can tell me that they did their best to address the concern with their teammate. Most have short-circuited that conversation and reported the behavior directly to their boss. Starting today, you can’t be one of those people. I know it’s difficult. If you struggle with addressing issues directly, here are the actual words you can say. Pick one that fits with the situation and your own style. Do you like to follow process and stick to concrete, business-focused issues? Then you want...

### **By the book feedback (Just-the-Facts version)...**

*When I heard you say that my project was a waste of time and resources, I was really surprised because you didn’t say anything in the meeting today. I count on you to share your concerns with me so that I can address them. How will you share your concerns with me directly next time?*

If you like process, but aren’t afraid to let the emotions enter the picture, you want...

### **By the book feedback (Victim Impact statement)**

*When I passed you and Jennifer talking privately about my presentation, and you were raising issues you hadn’t raised in the meeting, it made me feel foolish and, worse, it made me feel I can’t trust you.*

*How can you address issues directly with me?* If you are direct and comfortable challenging your teammate head on, try...

### **Straight-to-the-point . . .**

*It’s not ok with me that you’re talking about this offline. Do you have a few minutes to share your concerns with me?*

If you’re really intimidated and you’re just getting started with confrontation, you can use the safest route...

### **It’s not you, it’s me...**

*What could I do differently so that you will raise these issues while we’re in a meeting?*

Anything less than addressing the issue with your teammate is setting your team up for some ugly stuff in the future. By confronting the issues you:

- 1) create a forum to talk about the current issue; and
- 2) set the tone that concerns need to be shared with you directly in the future.

Pick the right words that fit your style, practice in the mirror, phone a friend, whatever you need to do, get your point across.

See <http://changeyourteam.com>