

A MANUAL FOR AN EFFECTIVE LEADER

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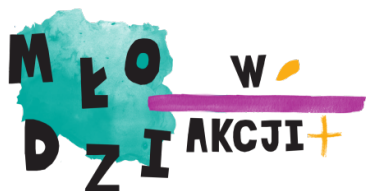
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Introduction

This manual is based on experience as well as psychological research on the actions of effective leaders. By analysing the knowledge that experienced managers have gained through their work in various organisations and by utilising the results of academic research conducted in major companies, you will learn how to apply the guidelines contained herein to your everyday activities.

The manual consists of four chapters. **The first** one explores the structure of values. You will analyse your own values to see how they influence your decisions and behaviours. This will also help you understand the value systems of other people and thus better comprehend their actions. **The second** chapter will allow you to use your knowledge of values to learn how to create a supportive and trusting team. **The third** part of this paper is devoted to discovering how to cooperate with people who have different views and lifestyles from your own and come from foreign cultures. To find out how to work in a multicultural environment, you will use your knowledge about values and ways of supporting other people. **The fourth** chapter will teach you how to invite others to cooperate, as well as how to complement and learn from each other.

Each chapter includes a “Test yourself” section, where you will be provided with exercises, questions to consider and conversation topics, which will allow you to further develop your skills.



A leader knows their own value system and understands the values of other people

The value system is a significant factor, determining people's behaviours and attitudes. Hence, it is worthwhile to clearly formulate your own values and strive to cooperate with the individuals with whom you share common views on what is most important, what motivates you and how to act properly. Experienced leaders refer to their interlocutors' value systems when discussing how to solve various problems and motivating others to work together. Therefore, you can become more effective only if you develop a clear understanding of your own value system and encourage others to act on their values. This way, you can get to know both yourself and other people better (Łuźniak-Piecha, Kaczkowska-Serafinska, 2017).

Terminal and instrumental values. A leader is able to analyse both their own value system and that of other people

One of the most popular notions concerning the study of personal and social values is **the concept of terminal and instrumental values, coined by M. Rokeach** (Braithwaite, Law, 1985). Knowledge of these terms will enable you to compare the value systems of people who, during conversations and throughout cooperation, express different views on political, economic, religious, cultural and intergenerational issues.

Before analysing your value system, as well as that of your colleagues and people around you, it is worth explaining what values actually are. According to the author of the concept (Rokeach, 1973), values can be understood as:

- constructs that transcend a given, specific situation,
- important to an individual beyond and above a given situational context,
- representing personal and social priorities.

This means that you are guided by your values throughout your life, regardless of the situation. For example, if an important value for you is true friendship, you will maintain such a relationship with people at all times, not only when it is convenient for you (a friendship beyond a specific situation) – when your friend asks for your help, you will offer it, no matter how tired you are, even if you do not really want to do it or if you and that person had just argued (above and beyond a given situational context). This also implies that you will strive to find true friends, who will be as loyal to you as you are to them (friendship as a personal and social priority). It is important to note that in Rokeach's view, your values are not only guidelines for your behaviours or patterns of what is right and what is wrong, but also your goals in life – a description of your ideals, the things you pursue.

Another important element of this concept is considering the structure of values in such a way that enables us to recognise their two groups. The first consists of **terminal values** – the most important goals in the life of every person, their most significant aspirations and main priorities. The level of fulfilment of terminal values determines how satisfied people are with, e.g., the past year or ten years, with how they spent their time at school and at work and finally – how content they are at the end of their life. The terminal values are a factor that ultimately determines whether a person believes that their life has been fulfilling. When searching for your terminal values, you need to answer the following question: "what have I strived for in my life and have I been successful in achieving it?". Examples of terminal values include love, wisdom and happiness. Several years from now, you will no longer have memory of who said what and to whom during an argument, but you will remember how much your parents loved you, how wise your decisions were, what wise advice someone gave you, as well as recall feeling either joyful or sad in particular moments of life. That is why such values are called terminal – they are what matters to us in the long term. Their list has been included below, within the "**Test yourself**" section.



The other group comprises **instrumental values**, which are your strategies and tools for pursuing your terminal values – the most effective ways of ensuring their achievement. In other words, when trying to determine your instrumental values, you have to answer the question: “how do I act to fulfil a given terminal value?”. Examples of instrumental values are politeness (being polite), courage (acting courageously) or ambition (being driven by ambition). Hence, if one of your terminal values is wisdom, you can pursue it by means of instrumental values such as ambition and courage. Therefore, in order to obtain true wisdom, you will take on ambitious tasks and bravely face difficult challenges. Also in this case, the list of instrumental values has been provided below, in the “**Test yourself**” segment.



However, it is important to observe that the value structure described herein indicates to us the source and cause of numerous misunderstandings between people. Let us assume that your terminal value is the pursuit of wisdom. Therefore, you believe that you should always boldly ask your teacher questions that appear in your mind and request him/her to provide you with more challenging tasks. As you wish to expand your knowledge, you use the instrumental values (instruments) of courage and ambition to gain the terminal one – wisdom. However, your teacher’s value structure may be slightly different – although his/her terminal value is probably also wisdom, he/she believes that other instruments should be used to acquire it at school, for example empathy (openness to others) and intellectual reasoning. Thus, your requests for more challenging tasks may be misunderstood – you may seem to interrupt lessons with constant questions and therefore appear as someone who lacks empathy and does not pay attention to others. For example, asking for other tasks may be seen as your lack of interest in intellectually participating in the discussion that is currently going on in the classroom.

We may conclude that our terminal values are very often identical (both you and your teacher consider wisdom a very important value) and the misunderstandings regard only the ways of pursuing them. Life would be much easier if everyone explained what their goals are, what they want to achieve and why they are doing something, instead of accusing each other of being “uninvolved” or “giving tasks that are not ambitious enough”. Your teacher, provided that one of his/her terminal values is also wisdom (and most teachers regard it as one), would probably understand your actions perfectly if you told him/her: “Professor, wisdom is a very important value for me and I believe that you can provide it to me. That is why I keep asking these questions and requesting new assignments”. However, then the teacher could answer you, for instance: “I will, of course, prepare separate assignments for you, but let’s agree, please, that you will ask questions only after I finish explaining the material to other students. Let’s allow everyone to share their opinions and participate in the discussion. Do you agree?”.



An effective leader is someone who knows how to hold such conversations. When someone behaves in a seemingly inappropriate way, a leader wonders if that person is not simply using instruments, strategies (instrumental values) other than the leader’s own values and then asks a question: “What are you aiming at, what do you mean when you say XXX and what do you wish to achieve by doing YYY?”. It may turn out that the misbehaving person is pursuing their own terminal value, similar to that of the leader, but simply tries to achieve it in a different way.



For example, it may happen that a seemingly self-righteous person simply wants to gain social recognition and respect of others (terminal value), but the only strategy (instrumental value) that he/she has is intellectualism, so he/she bothers other people with constant monologues on topics which are not interesting or comprehensible to anyone else.

In such a situation, a leader should be able to reflect on why such a person uses the tools associated with intellectualism so extensively and even to wisely utilise these exact tools to establish cooperation. Let us assume that the leader considers organising a series of activities to make the residents of a city care more about the environment. Wouldn't a person who wants to gain respect and, apparently, enjoys reading and discussing scientific materials be a perfect collaborator in this case? A leader would know how to encourage such an individual to, for example, write a very clever text about environmental protection and then present the analysis to a selected group of people who will treat it seriously. Certainly, the environmental action would gain the support of adults, e.g. the city authorities, if the ideas were presented by a person from high school who can talk about them very cleverly and in a scientific manner. At the same time, such a person would gain a sense of fulfilment of their own terminal values and could certainly discover their own talents – for instance, ones associated with science.

An effective leader is also able to motivate and encourage others by explaining what terminal values he/she is aiming for and why he/she has chosen specific behaviours or actions, i.e. instrumental values. For example, such a leader would say "family and security (terminal values) are very important to me, so I want to organise an action which will allow us to show that each of us is responsible for the cleanliness of our surroundings (instrumental values), as it enables us to live more safely and take care of our loved ones". However, in order to achieve it, the leader not only has to know their own value system, consciously analyse it and reflect on it, but also must be able to recognise the values of other people. Therefore, we encourage you to do the following exercise.

Terminal and instrumental values

TEST YOURSELF - PART A

Here is a list of terminal values. Please take a look at it and choose the ones that you currently consider important in your life – the achievement of which allows you to perceive your life as successful, meaningful and fulfilling. You can select as many values as you like, but try to make a truly deliberate choice.

TERMINAL VALUES

- national security (economic, social and political security),
- family security (taking care of loved ones),
- mature love (connection, intimacy, support, trust),
- a comfortable life (prosperity),
- wisdom (a mature understanding of life),
- a sense of accomplishment (making a lasting contribution),
- self-respect (self-esteem),
- a world at peace (free of war and conflict),
- true friendship (close companionship, loyalty),
- pleasure (pleasurable feelings, no excessive haste),
- inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict),
- equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all),
- happiness (joy, satisfaction),
- a world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts),
- social recognition (respect, admiration),
- freedom (independence, freedom of choice),
- salvation (redemption of the soul, eternal life),
- an exciting life (a stimulating, active life).

Below is a list of instrumental values. Please examine it and select the ones that you currently apply in your life to ensure that your terminal values are fulfilled.

INSTRUMENTAL VALUES

- ambition, desire to achieve better results,
- broad-mindedness, expansion of intellectual horizons,
- capability, discovering and developing one's own abilities,
- charisma, personal charm,
- cleanliness, ensuring tidiness and taking care of the environment,
- courage, boldness in facing challenges,
- forgiveness, compassion,
- helpfulness, protectiveness,
- honesty, openness,
- imagination, creativity,
- independence, being able to handle things on one's own,
- intellect, intellectual reasoning,
- logic, analysis and synthesis of facts,
- empathy, sensitivity,
- obedience, adhering to the rules,
- politeness, courtesy, good manners,
- responsibility, ability to be accountable,
- self-control, ability to discipline oneself.

TEST YOURSELF - PART B

Now that you know which values guide your life (terminal values) and which tools you use to pursue them (instrumental values), you can try a similar exercise with your parents or colleagues.

Find out which terminal values you have in common and how each of you fulfils them. What are the similarities and differences in your value systems? For example, can true friendship only be achieved in one way or can everyone pursue it a little differently, using various instrumental values? Can certain instrumental values, e.g. independence, only be applied in one way or do you think that there are different ways of using this tool?

Discuss this with the person with whom you are performing this exercise, whose value system you are comparing to your own. Together try to answer the above questions and think how these differences and similarities can be used for establishing an interesting cooperation and providing mutual help.

Hint: Do you remember the example with the colleague who likes to read a lot about environmental protection and talks about it in a clever way? How can you combine the intellectualism of that person with the creative imagination of another peer if they both care about the environment?

Similarities with ...

-
-
-
-
-

Differences with ...

-
-
-
-
-

Similarities with ...

-
-
-
-
-

Differences with ...

-
-
-
-
-

TEST YOURSELF - PART C

Think of other values that Professor Rokeach may not have mentioned in his concept. Is there any value missing from the lists provided above? Consider whether it is a terminal value (by answering the question "what do I strive for in life?") or an instrumental one (ask yourself: "how do I act to fulfil my terminal values?").

How does this value influence your actions? How does it help you?

TERMINAL VALUES

What do I strive for in life?

-
-
-
-

INSTRUMENTAL VALUES

How do I act to fulfil my terminal values?

-
-
-
-

A leader knows their own team and is able to support other people

Different types of cooperation, team building and assuming particular roles in these teams can be realised through mutual commitments, fulfilment of each other's expectations and joint support in achieving aspirations by individual member of a group. In psychology, the social exchange theory describes the process of forming such mutual commitments between people.

The social exchange. A leader plays fair and understands their own obligations

In the process of establishing cooperation, one person usually commits some of their capabilities and talents to the relationship, thus allowing their partner to achieve given benefits, which results in the formation of a commitment (Blau, 1964). For example, your colleague uses their skills to prepare a scientific paper on the necessity to care for the environment (remember the scenario from the previous chapter?). You, as the leader of the project, benefit because the school headmaster and the local authorities become interested in the initiative. Of course, your colleague also gains something by being noticed, but let us not forget that it is he/she who has done most of the work in your project and has considerably helped you, is it not? Thus, you have established some kind of relationship, commitment – your colleague has invested time, knowledge and resources and, although he/she does not expect you to immediately return the favour, a social expectation appears, known as **the norm of reciprocity**. It assumes that the other party in the relationship – in this scenario, that is you – should feel obliged to contribute to the success of your partner, in this case the author of the paper. It is a mechanism related to the belief that other people, acting honestly, in the long term will appreciate someone else's actions and involvement and return the favour. The existence of this mechanism is one of the factors underlying people's ability to enter into any collaboration, to work in groups and even to initiate relations with the outside world. You suggest cooperation to a colleague because you have faith in their honesty and thorough preparation, while they believe in your integrity and trust that when the project is noticed by the headmaster, you will not pretend that they did not help you.

When you are building a team, all your colleagues, peers and people who support you pay a lot of attention to the extent to which others “play fair”. Do you remember the efforts of other people? Do you know how to say thank you, how to appreciate your colleagues and how to repay them with support? Naturally, this does not mean that everyone in the team is obliged to write the same essay as the colleague who presented the paper to the school board, but perhaps that person may, at some point, need advice on public speaking and one of your team members knows how to do it well. Do you agree that in such a case, the help should be provided? Maybe you could ask your colleague who is a good public speaker and the whole team to listen to the presentation of the author of the paper and tell him/her what they liked the most and what requires improvement. Perhaps some tips or suggestions for exercises can be provided by the person efficient at public speaking? Obviously, you will need to make sure that the conversation is respectful and helpful, rather than solely critical.

Perceived organisational support. Loyalty and trust

In psychology, the support provided by the team to its individual members is called **perceived organisational support (POS)**. Some groups are very well-matched and comprised of friends who like each other very much or simply people who work together very well and support one another naturally, almost automatically, in accordance with a notion that “It is a known fact that everyone will help me whenever I ask”. However, this view is not always respected right from the beginning. If this happens, teams need to be assisted in building such support by experienced leaders – the people about whom this paper is about. POS describes the extent to which an individual believes that their team recognises and values their contributions to shared activities and is therefore willing to provide help whenever necessary. POS consists of many factors – some of which are very rational and measurable in nature, while others typically emotional. For example, the help provided by the team to the colleague in terms of public speaking is partly measurable, as in time he/she will probably get better marks in the subjects where this skill is required. At the same time, the degree of respect with which you carry out a conversation and give advice, or the level of consideration that you have ensured when the whole team was listening to the speech, is a strictly emotional matter. And no less important (Łuźniak-Piecha, 2009).



Being a mutually supportive team, which recognises the importance of the contribution made by each member and is willing to help each other, results in an increased sense of commitment of all individuals to any activity that is currently being undertaken together. At the same time, the tendency to leave a team, get offended or discontinue cooperation for trivial reasons significantly decreases. In other words, a high level of POS is the binding force that holds the team together, which may be very useful on the days when you experience your first problems, e.g. when something does not work out or when two team members have completely different ideas on a given subject, as this could lead to the waste of everyone's efforts and ruin the entire project.

As a leader committed to ensuring said high level of POS, you gain the benefit of the doubt in the eyes of your colleagues, who use the strong sense of mutual support to develop a belief that the team and the project as a whole deserve their trust. As a result, your team members have faith that you will continue to maintain an honest exchange of support in the future. And, since the principle of reciprocity applies, you can also count on their help and have confidence in them. This is how loyalty is formed.

However, it is crucial to bear in mind that POS is – as has already been mentioned – evaluated in a very subjective manner. It is essential to make sure that everyone feels treated fairly. Once you take credit for another person's achievements, judge someone unfairly or treat them disrespectfully, you lose the benefit of the doubt. Even though the person who has been treated poorly may remain on your team, their motivation will have completely changed – they will no longer work with you on the basis of a mutual support, but rather continue the cooperation only as long as they benefit from it, for example, by getting better marks for participating in your project. However, such a person will probably leave you at the first opportunity, whenever any problems arise, as they will remember that they were once treated unfairly or disrespectfully – they will not feel obliged to treat you differently.



Building perceived organisational support. The ingredients and recipe

Now, it is time to discuss what exactly should a leader do to ensure the high level of POS. Regularly ask all team members how they feel today? Certainly – expressing interest in other people facilitates building relationships, as long as it does not become a little artificial or awkward. So, what are the specific actions that ensure a high POS level?

There are two factors that have an impact on it:

- perceived commitments from the leaders and their teams,
- additional incentives provided by the leaders and their teams (Coyle-Shapiro, Conway, 2006).

This means that the subjectively evaluated POS depends on the extent to which you and your team have made – in the opinion of each individual member – a certain commitment to that person and the extent to which he/she benefits from this collaboration. In other words, what matters from the point of view of your team members is not only the amount of work they had to jointly put into the project, but also the degree to which each individual feels that their actions were central to the performance of the rest of the group and to which the others understand and appreciate the importance of such a contribution.



Therefore, it is important to note that appreciating and underlining the contribution of individual team members has another essential role from the leader's perspective – by consistently emphasising the significance of the work of various team members, you prevent the creation of a subjective feeling that “others do nothing, while I am constantly working”. By acknowledging the performance of individual employees, you appreciate their work, provide motivation and, at the same time, indicate that nobody in the team “works more than everyone else”. Instead, you accentuate that everyone makes an equal effort to support each other. Thus, you also ensure that your colleagues feel that their efforts are worthwhile and that they receive and offer support in the same proportion as the rest of the team.

Auxiliary incentives you can all use are:

- organising different kinds of activities that allow the team members to feel more appreciated, e.g. in front of the class, school or entire city (participation in civic activity competitions, performing at various events),
- recognising and appreciating additional talents and competencies of individual team members and creating opportunities to develop them.

Perhaps one of your team members is an excellent football player. You can recognise their talent by asking that person to lead a football training session within your project – even if it is an environmental initiative. For instance, you can offer a training session led by that team member as a reward for the children of the primary school that is most efficient at keeping its grounds clean. At the same time, the actions of the colleague who is skilled at football should be acknowledged by the headmaster of your high school. And, of course, your whole team should come to the training to cheer, right? Or maybe you could organise a small championship, with your peer as the referee?



Such activities on your part – going beyond the scope of project tasks – have a very positive impact on the growth of the POS.

Other important incentives include:

- participative decision-making (involvement of the whole team in the decision-making process),
- celebrating successes together (remember that it is not only about material rewards, e.g. diplomas or higher grades, but also about appreciating someone's work, thanking them for their actions),
- an opportunity for all team members to gain interesting experiences, to get to know different people and institutions, and to discover new places,
- promoting the activities of your team,
- acquiring knowledge by all team members on how to continue building teams that are united and bound together by a high POS level, so that one day all individual members can become leaders who know how to create a harmonious and well-functioning environment of collaboration.



Building POS

TEST YOURSELF

Take a look at the statements below and, using the provided scale, assign yourself the appropriate number of points to determine how well each sentence describes you as the leader of your team. Finally, add up all the points for each sentence (see: Łuzniak-Piecha, 2009).

Scale:

- 1 – this statement does not describe me at all, I do not act like that
- 2 – this statement describes me only to some extent, I act like that sometimes
- 3 – this statement describes me rather well, I act like that quite often
- 4 – this statement describes me very well, I act like that very often

1. I know what affects the well-being of the people with whom I work on projects.

1 2 3 4

2. I appreciate the concern of the people I work with for the project's success.

1 2 3 4

3. I value the opinion of the people with whom I work on projects.

1 2 3 4

4. I take into account the goals and value systems of the people with whom I work on projects.

1 2 3 4

5. I fulfil the requests of the people with whom I work on projects.

1 2 3 4

6. I emphasise the contributions of the people with whom I work on projects.

1 2 3 4

Your score:

Obtaining 18 or more points on the test indicates that you are a rather good leader, who works toward maintaining a high level of POS.

A leader in international teams – do not treat others as you would yourself

Mutual learning and cooperating with people from different cultures and with various value systems has probably already become a part of your everyday life. It does not only apply to those who attend international schools. Students participate in international exchanges, while modern media and technology offer opportunities to get in touch with colleagues from other countries. As a result, you have many opportunities to function in a diverse, multicultural and interesting environment. However, this situation can sometimes lead to certain difficulties. Even if both you and your interlocutor speak the same language and can hear each other very well, problems with communication may arise at times. Naturally, being able to communicate involves more than simply good knowledge of grammar. It also requires an understanding of what is expected from both sides, of what is normal and clear to you, but not to your colleagues from other cultures. In other words, both sides need to be ready to acquire knowledge and learn about the rules governing the relationship.

A leader is mature enough to cooperate. The maturity scale

During his research conducted over the last thirty years, Professor Milton Bennett has developed a **scale to determine the level of maturity of a given person in terms of intercultural sensitivity** (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity – DMIS). It is a six-point scale that allows us to look at the level of maturity of leaders and team members – to what extent are they able to understand a point of view that is different from their own, do they try to find a consensus or rather insist that only their opinion is what truly matters. In other words, it is a scale that indicates to us if we are mature enough to learn something new from a person whose views are different from our own (Bennett, 2004).

The three lowest levels on the DMIS scale are called **ethnocentric stages**. This means that people at these levels are convinced that only their own ideas, norms and beliefs are right, best and true – the more ethnocentric a person is, the more difficult it is for them to get along with people who have a different set of norms and beliefs. Simply put, such a person is always convinced that only they are right and that those who think or feel differently are “abnormal” and “strange”, it is very difficult to persuade an ethnocentric person to understand the position of another individual.

ETHNOCENTRISM

**DENIAL**

My views are the only right ones, I do not listen to anyone else.

DEFENCE

I listen to other people's views, but only in order to counter them.

**MINIMISATION**

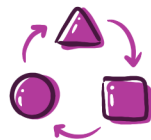
I listen to other people's views because they can sometimes be so strange and ridiculous that it is interesting for me to observe what such people occasionally come up with.

ACCEPTANCE

I understand that other people may think and live differently from me and I can respect that. They probably think of me as someone “different” as well.



ETHNORELATIVISM

**ADAPTATION**

I learn a lot through contact with people who live and think differently from me. I am able to apply this knowledge in practice.

INTEGRATION

I communicate very well with people who have lifestyles and views different from my own. I also have a lot of experience related to living and spending time in many various cultures.





ETHNOCENTRISM

The first, lowest stage of maturity is the **denial** of the existence of cultural differences. This is the deepest level of ethnocentrism, indicating the lowest amount of maturity and cultural sensitivity. People representing this stage tend to formulate opinions such as: “everyone speaks Polish fluently at our school and thanks to this there are no misunderstandings”. When such a person says “I never experience problems in contacts with people from foreign countries”, their interlocutors usually add (out loud or in thought): “of course, but everyone who comes into contact with you experiences such problems very strongly”. In addition, people at this level often tend to say, for example, “I am not interested in such problems, we do not have to worry about any strange things like that – here, everyone has the same views as me”. Imagine how surprised these people would be if they were to find out how many representatives of completely different views there are in their environment, how many descendants of immigrants from various parts of the world surround such individuals or how complicated are the life stories of other people. Yet, of course, persons at the denial stage will never get to know any of that because nobody wants to discuss it with them.



ETHNOCENTRISM

The second, also very low level is the **defence** against everything that is different. The existence of intercultural differences is already accepted by people representing this stage. Unfortunately, according to such a person, others can be judged, ridiculed or lectured that they speak and look the wrong way and are generally inferior. Individuals with such views often tend to simplify, use stereotypes and divide the world into the “normal us” and “abnormal others”. They think in a very simplistic manner – they believe that every representative of a different culture is the same, they do not differentiate between countries on a given continent or the traditions of their populations and know nothing about the customs or history of other people. The entire contact of persons at that level with someone else’s tradition is limited to plastic souvenirs brought back from holidays. These oversimplified views apply both to other people’s faults as well as their virtues: “(...) he is from Germany, so he is always tidy and probably only likes sausages (...)”, “The Japanese eat these raw fish instead of something normal and drink tea all the time, but they work very well – just as if they were robots (...)”. It is not difficult to imagine that when such an individual constantly repeats similar “truths” while working with people from other countries, everyone around is rather baffled, to say the least. And certainly no one will want to maintain a long-term relationship with such a “leader”.



ETHNOCENTRISM

Minimisation – the level of ethnocentrism, which is perhaps the least visible at first, but, precisely for this reason, is also very harmful. At the levels discussed earlier, simplified thinking is very easily noticeable – it is possible to immediately recognise what kind of person you are dealing with. In contrast, people at the minimisation level seem open and helpful. They often consciously participate in various international projects and tend to make ambiguous statements like, for instance, “we all need the same thing – warmth and a kind word”. Even though it is seemingly a wise observation, it often has another meaning: “since I need something, I think you want the same thing”. Such individuals seem to be extremely surprised when they organise an international project and invite colleagues from various cultural backgrounds, and these “ungrateful” people do not want to participate in joint activities in accordance with the rules imposed by such a leader. Ethnocentric minimisation is nothing else but an attempt to “enlighten” representatives of other cultures and “provide them with the opportunity to work in a civilised way”. People at this stage also tend to compliment others based on a kind of ethnocentric amazement: “Where did you learn to speak English so well? I did not know that English is taught in your country.” or “It is fantastic that you have received an education and found a job here instead of joining some gang in your country...”. Sometimes, such people compare their grades to those of students from other countries and say/think “I got a B in maths, while this boy, who is not from Poland, got an A, how is that possible?” – as if a non-Polish person couldn’t simply be good – and better than a Pole – at maths. In other words, the attitude of individuals at the minimisation level is associated with the idea that they are “more equal”, despite the expressed belief in the equality of all people. This entails frequent statements such as: “In our country it is done like this, which is a common, normal way of doing it”. Such persons do not seem to realise that it is common only in their country or environment. The abovementioned attitude may cause others to avoid contact or cooperation with such a “benefactor”, which in turn makes the person at the level of minimisation perpetually bewildered and disappointed, as, after all, “he/she is really trying...”.

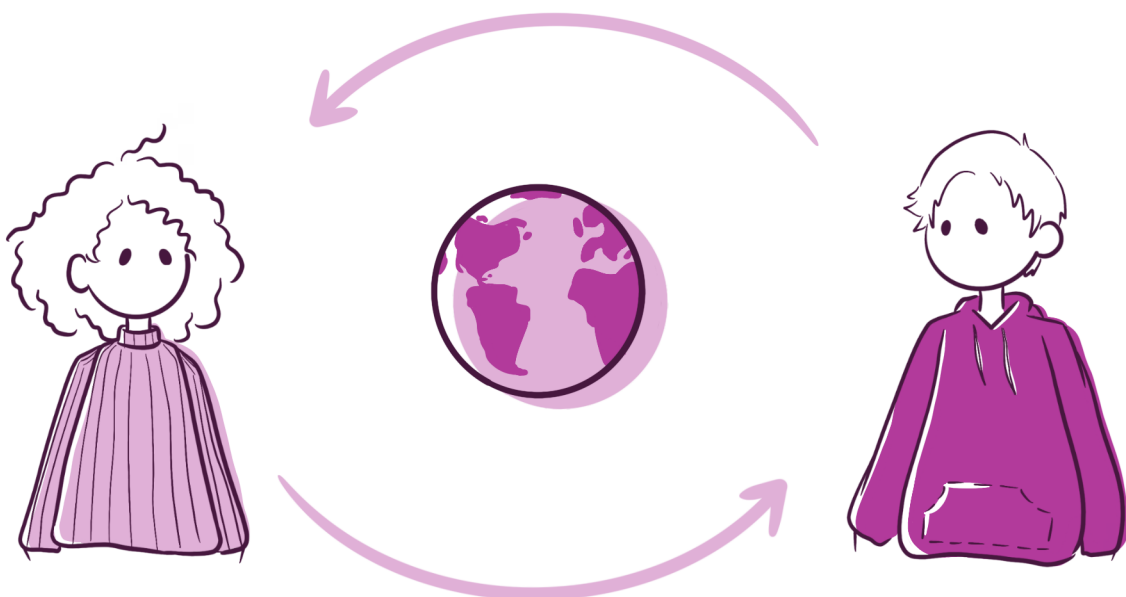
Naturally, the worst-case scenario occurs when both interlocutors represent one of the ethnocentric stages – they look at each other, thinking: “The other person does not know anything about it, he/she is wrong and weird”. And, depending on the level of their immaturity, they will start to either try to push each other out of the project (defence), leave the project themselves to avoid these “strange” people (denial) or try to “enlighten” one another and “correct the mistakes of the other – ignorant – person” (minimisation).

The process of becoming interculturally mature and acquiring the ability to work with people who have different definitions of what is normal or appropriate entails the transition from ethnocentrism to so-called **ethnorelativism** (a term coined by Bennett – it is not included in any dictionary). The development and maturation of a leader involves accepting that one's way of seeing things is only one of many options. Reaching this conclusion enables intercultural exchange and learning from each other.



ETHNORELATIVISM

Acceptance of differences is the first stage of ethnorelativism. This level involves respecting other people's views and trying to understand them, although not necessarily identifying with them: "so, for you the right thing to do would be X – can you explain to me how that works?". Even if someone else's views or customs seem extremely distant from your own, accepting and understanding differences facilitates the formation of principles for effective collaboration. People at this stage of intercultural maturity are also aware of their own cultural habits – related to communication, social norms, etc. Hence, you may hear from them statements such as: "in Poland, we would do XYZ, but I will ask what my Ukrainian colleague has to say about it...", "what I am going to say now may be typical for my culture..." or even "I do XYZ this way because I was taught so at home, but please show me how you do it".





ETHNORELATIVISM

Adaptation is the level of maturity at which your worldview expands to include the ability to approach a problem from the perspective of principles characteristic of another culture. Naturally, this is only possible if you choose to consciously acquire knowledge and experience regarding different customs. In other words, when you learn a language, read about the culture and history of a given region, country or ethnic group. You can also travel to such places and establish contacts and friendships with people from a given location. Leaders at this stage of intercultural sensitivity are able to adopt, at least to some extent, the perspectives of other people and to understand behaviours and motives specific to other cultures. It makes it easier for such leaders to effectively communicate and collaborate. This means that a leader at the level of adaptation knows how to behave, how to choose right arguments, what to say, as well as what to avoid in order not to offend anyone and how to respect people from a different cultural environment. It is important to remember that the ability to put oneself in the partner's position is the basis for establishing successful relations – not only international ones.

Of course, this does not mean that such a leader will not try to correct the behaviour of a person from a different culture whose actions are offensive to any other individual. Instead, the leader will act politely and respectfully – as they have once learned how to understand another person, they can now teach the same to others. Thus, a leader can correct someone's behaviour by saying, for example: "you know, now you should open the door and wait for your friend to pass first – this is how we do that here and if you remember that, you will impress the girls...".



ETHNORELATIVISM

Integration is the highest level of intercultural maturity and sensitivity – such a leader adopts a way of thinking and acting that involves shifting perspectives from one culture to another. It is, therefore, a level that is characteristic of people who are serious about a future international career, e.g. in diplomacy or business. This approach is used by good leaders responsible for large projects, high-profile diplomats as well as conscious travellers, international journalists and excellent negotiators. This is also the level of maturity that characterises good candidates for international studies. Naturally, to reach this stage, one must seek and acquire both knowledge and a specific sequence of experiences, which sometimes come from certain life circumstances – for instance, through benefiting from the education system in different countries, in an environment that respects other traditions and cultures.

Intercultural maturity

TEST YOURSELF

Take another look at the table depicting [the maturity scale](#).

Think of various examples from your own life – how do you behave when you meet people from a foreign country or of other religion, who have different customs, beliefs and value systems?

What do you learn about such people? What can you teach them?

When inviting such people to cooperate, do you ask them about their needs and expectations?

What statements about other people do you hear most often at home and at school? At what level of the maturity scale are these statements? What image do they convey of those who make them?



What if someone is less mature than you? Think about it

When considering the scale of intercultural maturity, it is important to remember that we do not necessarily all progress from denial (the lowest level) to integration (the most advanced stage).

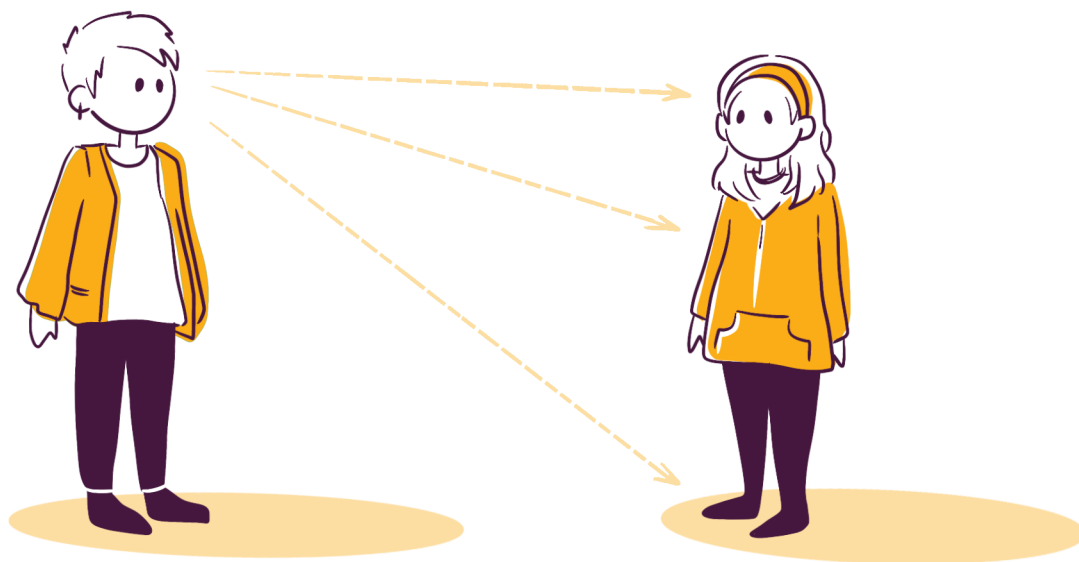
Firstly, some people are lucky enough to acquire the habits and values associated with, for example, acceptance (the first stage of ethnorelativism) already from early childhood, as such a value system has been instilled in them by their environment, e.g. at school or by their family at home.

Secondly, it is also important to be aware that those who represent one of the stages of ethnocentrism often find it most difficult to change their views and do not really want to move to higher levels. Why would they need to do that? After all, the “eccentricities” are to be condemned, depreciated and ridiculed, rather than consciously explored and, in addition, accepted. The world seen from the level of ethnocentrism may appear to be a comfortable, orderly place – it is clear who is right, whose knowledge, technology and procedures are superior and who should be taught about the principles of acting properly. However, this simple world order falls apart as soon as first problems arise due to a difference of opinion and the lack of possibility to impose one’s own views. The people at any of these stages experience great difficulties especially when confronted with the “ethnocentric ingrates” (their mirror images), who are unwilling to immediately accept the offered perspective.

Bennett concluded his research by saying:

“**Do not treat the people you meet as you would like to be treated. Treat them the way *THEY* would like to be treated.**

(Bennett 2004)



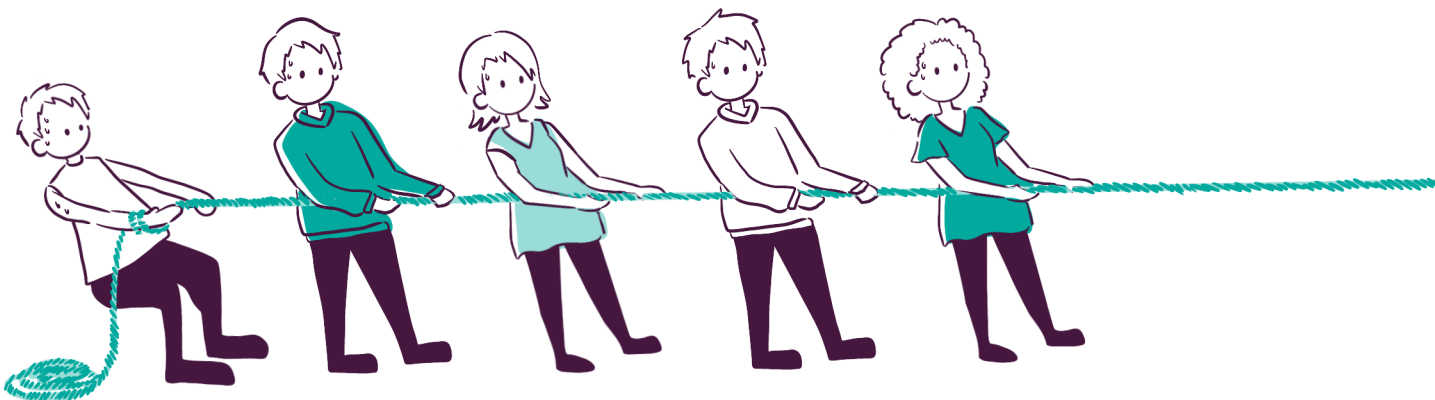
Principles of effective teamwork

A team led by Professor Salas of Florida State University has published research describing the "Big Five" of effective teamwork (Salas, 2005). It consists of:

- clear role and responsibilities of the leader,
- informing each other about the various activities of each team member,
- mutual support in activities,
- ability and willingness to adapt,
- taking the group's interest into account.

The "Big Five" of teamwork

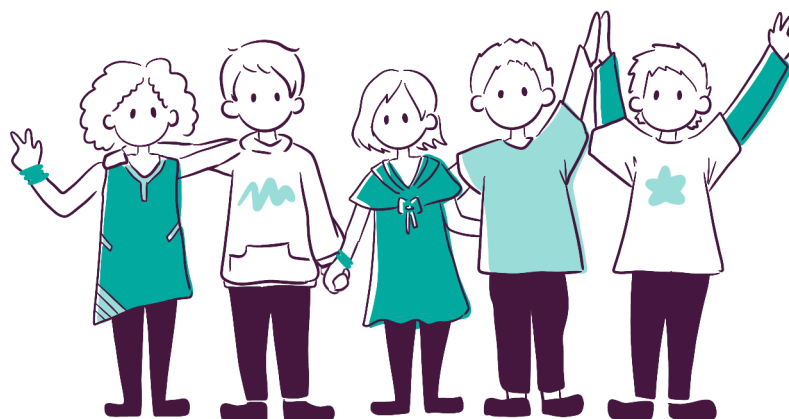
Clear responsibilities. In a well-integrated, effective team, everyone knows who is responsible for what at any given time, and that person is able to accept that responsibility and explain their actions to others. Thus, the syndrome of "nobody knows who came up with this and why" is avoided. However, this does not mean that one person always has to make all the decisions, but rather that when a person (or several team members) decide(s) to do something, everyone's responsibilities are understood and nobody asks the following question at the end of the task: "Well, who was supposed to do it and why has no one done it?".



Informing each other about each person's activities. Everyone's mutual knowledge, at least to some extent, of what each person does is a sign that you have built a good team. It is not about every team member learning a list of other people's duties by heart, but rather being able to answer the question "Who knows the most about the XYZ problem?" by saying "Jarek is the best at this", instead of "I am not sure, I do not know anything". If everyone involved is aware of each other's activities and responsibilities, they can use this knowledge to provide mutual help. In such teams, the question "Have you already finished the poster you were working on?" is perceived as a positive sign of interest and a willingness to help (if necessary) or an indication of the importance of that poster – asking about it will not provoke a defensive reaction such as "Why are you picking on me?".



Mutual support. If a team consists of people who take responsibility for their actions and operates on the principle of "we know who does what", everyone's activities are well-coordinated and helping each other is not difficult. Jacek knows why Ewa is waiting for his poster, so he can send her, for example, a photo of its draft or the dimensions of the unfinished version, which will allow her to start planning how to best hang that poster. Thus, Ewa will be able to work on her part of the project, while Jacek is still polishing the final version.



Ability and willingness to adapt. The easiest way to verify these qualities is to realise how you determine the time and place of meetings – do you use dedicated tools (e.g. Doodle, Rally, Meetin.gs) to make an arrangement that satisfies everyone or does only one given person (or a group of people) specify the time and location? Is the same approach used in regard to making any other decisions? A team that complies with the “let’s try to find the best solution for everyone” principle works more effectively, both from an organisational (team members can actually fulfil their tasks) and psychological (no one feels constantly forced to make concessions) point of view.



Protecting the group’s interests. As a natural consequence of the four elements described above, the last component of the “Big Five” is the concern for the well-being of the group, manifested through the actions of its individual members. In this case, problem solving involves trying to handle a given situation in a way that benefits the entire team, rather than engaging in private arguments and proving who is in charge. The simplest example that indicates the level of concern for the group’s interest is the approach to scheduling a meeting of the whole team. A leader should observe this process in the case of their own team and answer the following questions: “is the date tailored to the preferences of one person – the leader or another influential team member – and then imposed on the rest?”, “is it possible to change the date if anyone makes such a request or announces their absence in advance?” and “is there, for example, an online tool which is used to set a date in a way that suits everyone (e.g. agreeAdate.com)?”. Certainly, finding a solution that fully satisfies everyone is not easy. Nevertheless, an important team-building message here is that you want to take into account the interests of the entire group and not just the individual preferences of selected team members.



How to be a good team player?

The abovementioned scientific research was continued by a group of business consultants, led by P. Lencioni – the president of one of the largest organisations in Silicon Valley. The researchers studied how well-coordinated and effective teams are formed in practice. The group discovered that such teams consist of people with different beliefs, attitudes and methods of undertaking activities, who come from different cultures and backgrounds, and that their effective cooperation is facilitated by a specific combination of three professed values:

- humility,
- hunger for action,
- a rational approach to problems.

These three values are present in the everyday lives of all team members, who, by incorporating them into daily actions, are able to spread those qualities to other people.

In this case, humility should be understood as a moderate, non-oversized ego. In other words, this value does not involve false modesty and exaggerated attempts to impress someone (“I will not speak up – wiser people should do it, preferably the Professor”). Instead, it is about a genuine interest in other people (their talents, needs and ideas) and allowing them to express their opinions. Thanks to this, a person with a moderate ego is familiar with the views of others, which enables him/her to communicate, find compromises and solve disputes.

A hunger for action means looking for solutions to problems that arise, instead of sitting and complaining about them. It is also the desire to contribute to the success of others, rather than selfishly caring solely about one’s own achievements. People who are hungry for action are unable to refrain from reacting when they see someone else is failing or that something is not being done.

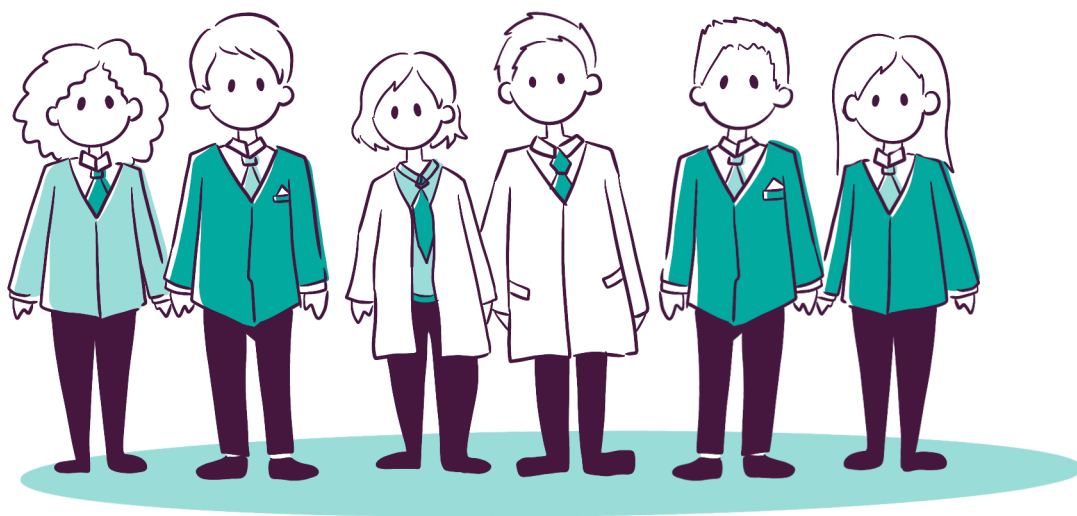
Rationality is a combination of common sense and a task-based approach to problems. Rational people focus on getting to the root of a given issue and then finding a solution, rather than expressing how terrible they feel about it. At the same time, they do not blame and slander others or waste time analysing who should have apologised more to whom and for what. This trait also entails being able to acknowledge one’s mistake, apologise and quickly return to working on more important things.

Team learning

It is essential to remember that a person can be an effective team player only if the three characteristics described in this chapter co-exist.

Someone who is humble, but is neither hungry for action nor rational, will be a good colleague, willing to listen to us and complain about a given situation together. However, not much can be achieved with the help of such a person. People with a strong hunger for action, but an oversized ego will be great solo players, rather than efficient team members. What is more, they may at times attempt to overshadow everyone else's good ideas. Meanwhile, an individual who is rational but not necessarily action-oriented will find it difficult to cooperate, as other team members may perceive such a person as someone who always spoils the fun and constantly criticises everything.

Fortunately, in every good team, individuals can mutually support and learn from each other. Nobody is perfect from the start (and if they think they are, they certainly lack humility and rationality), so teamwork is required to create a group where the action-oriented person infuses the rationalist with the hunger for action, while the humble team member implements skilful communication. Such cooperation can lead to the formation of a group composed of ideal team players.



A good team

TEST YOURSELF - PART A

Invite all your friends as well as team and family members to perform an exercise in which everyone uses a three-point scale to describe themselves in terms of the three qualities:

humility

(describes me to a small extent)



(describes me to a large extent)

hunger for action

(describes me to a small extent)



(describes me to a large extent)

rationality

(describes me to a small extent)



(describes me to a large extent)

Now compare the results and discuss which value is missing, who could infuse which trait into whom and how specific persons could learn to act in accordance with all three characteristics.

Team up to answer the following questions:

- Why might we need to incorporate these three qualities into our lives and actions?
- What can they be useful for?
- Which of our problems can be solved by implementing these characteristics?

TEST YOURSELF - PART B

It is also advisable to continue this exercise and invite the group to describe itself in relation to the “Big Five” of teamwork:

clear responsibility

(describes our team to a small extent)



(describes our team to a large extent)

knowledge of the activities of individual team members

(describes our team to a small extent)



(describes our team to a large extent)

mutual support between team members

(describes our team to a small extent)



(describes our team to a large extent)

willingness to accommodate the needs of all team members

(describes our team to a small extent)



(describes our team to a large extent)

taking into account the group's interest in the actions of its individual members

(describes our team to a small extent)



(describes our team to a large extent)

In your team, group or family, discuss which of the elements of the “Big Five” is the weakest in the opinion of everyone who participates in the exercise, what is missing and which qualities you adhere to the most.

It is very important to answer the following questions together:

- Why do we need the elements of the “Big Five” in our daily activities?
- Which of our tasks or ideas can be realised better if we collectively improve in terms of clear responsibility or the level of knowledge about the actions of other team members?

Conclusions

Congratulations. You have completed all the exercises and material of the entire manual.

Remember to share the knowledge and skills you have acquired, as it will allow you to become an even better leader. We wish you a lot of success!



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