

Group dynamics



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Group dynamics As a member of a “ small, autonomous (and) voluntary” peer group of a local performing music band, I interacted constantly with the other members of the group for a period of time and experienced “ affective ties” with all the members of the group (Moreland and Levine, 1982, p. 139). We, the members always had a “ common frame of reference” and we were totally “ behaviorally interdependent” (Moreland and Levine, 1982, p. 139). When I became the member of this group, I did a lot of evaluation by paying attention to assess to what extent, the group and the individuals within, showed “ rewardingness” towards me and to what extent the group and the members met my expectations. This was primarily about assessing how serious they were in their passion for music, whether the group and its members loved the kind of music that I loved, and whether they were at par with me in their knowledge and skills about music. I could see that there was some imbalance between the kinds of behavior I expected and the kinds I actually received. But I could rectify this imbalance considerably by my efforts to prove myself before the other members and also sometimes by demanding what I felt, I deserved. I could prove to them that I was seriously passionate about music and that I have serious knowledge and skill in the subject as well. All the same, I could feel that the group and its members were evaluating me as well in the same way. I could feel they concluded their evaluation with a positive note and thus I also became an accepted and trusted member of the band. It was out of this whole experience that I became closely emotionally attached to the group. I also felt that by remaining in this group, I could gain personally in future also. Thus I became totally committed to this group. I was the only keyboard player in this group and thus I could contribute to our dream to become a winner in the

prestigious national level competition. The other members always acknowledged my role in the successes that we made as a group and I also encouraged others in the same way. But all of this had to change some day. I started to feel that the other members were brewing up a conspiracy against me. Initially they started to criticize my improvisations in live performances. They accused that I was trying to perform above the group. But I felt I was not being allowed to develop my creativity to its full extent inside the group. I tried to convince the other members of the band that my improvisations were not destroying the charm of our performances and on the other hand were adding a new flavor to it. I was convinced about this from whatever feedback I got from the audiences. But they did not agree with me. I started to regret leaving the old music band with which I worked earlier. I could see that though it had not the popularity of this group, it allowed space for all kinds of creative experimentations. I also started to feel that there was not enough reward for my hard work in this group. Finally the moment of separation came. In a party that we threw in celebration of our latest success in the district level competition, a member of the music band and a previous close friend of mine started to make fun of me by mimicking the way I perform on stage, my mannerisms and all. Initially I took it as a harmless joke, but then suddenly I came to realize that they were vengefully hurting me. Without a word, I walked out of the party and also out of the music band. It was as if they stage managed by exit. It was a complete “role transition” for me (Moreland and Levine, 1982, p. 151). I had to start it all over again from the scratch. But soon I recovered from the shock of separation and became quite successful as a keyboardist with another very popular music band. Some of the members of the old band used to give me

friendly calls, which I reciprocated for a while, but of late, after I changed my mobile number, I lost track. But I have to acknowledge that it was being a part of this music band that made me a self-confident professional in music. And I can also proudly claim that it was my entry into this band that allowed it to develop a distinct style of its own. In this way, the group had a formative influence on me and I also changed the way the group performed.

References Moreland, R. L. and Levine, J. M. (1982) Socialization in small groups: temporal changes in individual-group relations, In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Volume 15, L. Berkowitz, Massachusetts: Academic Press.