



Who Do You Trust?

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Museum of Tolerance





Disclaimer

The material in this presentation is of a very disturbing nature. It might be interpreted as of a negative cast, but rest assured that the presenter remains optimistic, perhaps because she is an amateur in the field and doesn't know that much!



The Robbers' Cave Experiment

Muzafer Sherif et al, U of OK, 1954

22 12-year-old boys, in two balanced groups

**Similar backgrounds: same year in school,
settled, lower-middle-class, Protestant, well-
adjusted psychologically, normal physical
development**

**Two groups transported separately by bus to
200-acre Boy Scout camp in Robbers Cave
State Park in SE OK**



Phase I

Each group lived in its own cabin without knowledge of the other group

Each group had its own: swimming hole, hideouts, group activities - pitching tents, hiking, cooking

Each group evolved rules, leadership, flag identity - “Rattlers” & “Eagles”



The next phase

Toward the end (after about a week) of Phase I, each group was gradually “led” to awareness of the other group

Strong territorial reactions - “They better not be in OUR swimming hole”

Immediate division between “us” and “them” – even though the other group had never been seen

Racial slurs and profanity applied to “them”



Phase II

Staff scheduled competitions: baseball, tug-of war, staff-judged events such as cabin inspections

Scoring manipulated to fuel competition

Groups began eating in a common mess hall, where prizes were displayed.



War broke out

After a loss, Eagles burned Rattlers' flag.

Eagles' flag was burned in retaliation the next day. Fighting erupted. Staff intervened.

After their loss, Rattlers launched a raid on

Eagles' cabin at night. Next morning,

Eagles took revenge on the Rattlers' cabin.

Eagles began to store rocks against possible reprisal. Once again, staff intervened.



Phase III

Staff experimented with approaches to resolve conflict. Let's have fun together!

Non-competitive activities scheduled, e.g. watching movies while eating together in the mess hall.

These efforts failed.

Groups remained apart, yelled at each other, had food fights.



How quickly we categorize others!

In just one week, Rattlers & Eagles emerged.

We might expect this in religious groups or political parties.

We see it in development teams and the most trivial of settings.

We are all too ready to regard “others” as the enemy.

Yet we believe we are unbiased, rational, and realistic.



A word from the Evolutionary Psychologists

**Our hunter-gatherer ancestors had to
answer a lot of classification questions
quickly to survive**

Can we eat these berries?

Is that a stick or a snake?

Who is friend or foe?



Blue-eyes vs. Brown

**Blue-eyed study showed even quicker
results – just a few hours!**

Iowa 3rd grade teacher, Jane Elliott

1968 – the day after the MLK assassination

pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/divided/etc/view.html



What Keeps Us Busy

We continually sort others into in-groups and out-groups, by their appearance and actions. We subconsciously (and sometimes consciously) label other people.

Research shows managers sort employees into ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ as early as 3 weeks after starting to work with them.

No wonder developers and business people struggle!



We forgive our behavior but not others'

**We judge others by their appearance
and behavior—and it is considered
absolute.**

**We judge ourselves by our intentions—
and it is context-sensitive.**

THEY are bad.

WE didn't get enough sleep.



And, this can be a bad thing

It's easy to see why stereotyping is bad.

People are complex.

**Labels mean we lose all other
dimensions of their talents.**

**What's really bad - we do this to
ourselves!**



Framing the stereotype

University math students were given a difficult math test. When reminded of their gender, men outperformed women.

When students told beforehand that gender differences had never been found for this test, women performed as well as men.

When playing a female avatar, regardless of gender, players gave up sooner and performed poorly playing against a male.

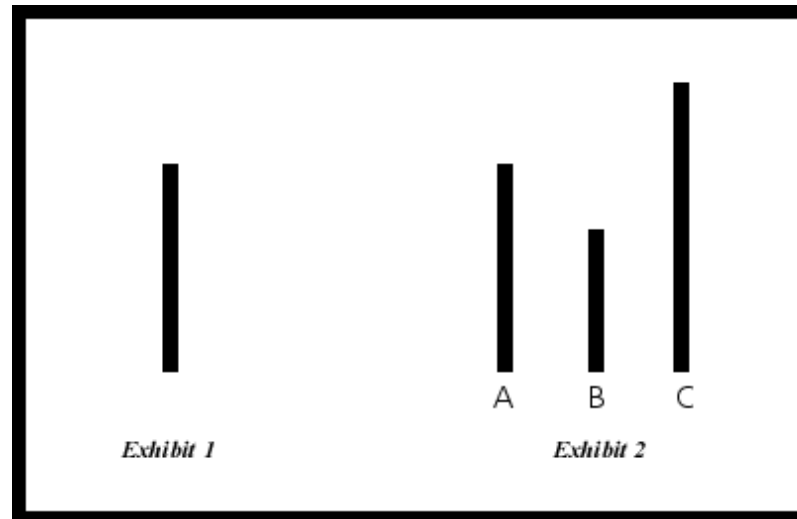


Data do not convince us

All information is filtered.

**We make up explanations or rationalize to
reaffirm our beliefs.**

Solomon Asch Experiment





Stereotypes are prophetic

Stereotypes change our behavior. Our behavior has an effect on other's behavior and without anyone understanding any of it, you have a self-fulfilling prophecy.

**Michael Hill – Rule #1 for good management:
Catch them doing something right.**

Norm Kerth's Prime Directive.



How to Bring Peace to the Camp?

Staff next devised a series of urgent projects that could only be solved by the groups working together.

The camp's water was cut off. Staff announced a possible leak in the supply pipe. All the boys had to help inspect the mile-long pipe and discovered a clogged valve at the tank. They celebrated together when the problem was fixed.



More projects

Joint use of a tug-of-war rope on a partly cut-through dangerous tree.

A truck carrying food for both groups had gotten stuck and required all the boys to pull it out.

**Success on the last night – choice of a movie
- vote of the entire camp - funds raised
from all the boys.**



Going Home

Both groups agreed to go home on the same bus. Boys did not sit within groups and sang both songs.

At a refreshment stop, the Rattlers agreed to use their prize money to buy milkshakes for everyone.



Follow-up experiments

1963 11-year-old boys in Beirut

8 Christians & 10 Muslims.

Historic tensions between these religious communities in Lebanon

In Phase II, serious fighting broke out between the groups—Blue Ghosts & Red Genies

3 Genies threatened a Ghost with knives stolen from the camp kitchen—researchers decided to stop the experiment without reaching reconciliation (no Phase III)



Why this experiment was interesting

Groups not defined by religion

**Blue Ghosts & Red Genies = 5 Muslims + 4
Christians**

3 Genies with knives were Christians

So was their Ghost victim



Groups trumped religion

14 of 18 campers had come from fiercely religious schools

In the camp, separated from the outside world, when they could easily have chosen to see themselves as Christian or Muslim, they chose instead to be Ghost or Genie.



This is good news

Historians, anthropologists, and political scientists now support the idea that human “categories” depend on context.

Yes, we are hardwired to classify us vs. them but we are also hardwired to work in teams.

A team defines a new context.



Cooperation on Shared Goals

Cooperation in work toward shared goals is required to resolving conflict.

This cooperation must be nourished at all levels in the system, building a sense of interdependence that lies at the heart of a culture of peace.

Is this what makes a culture “agile” ?



How the Practices Help

Face-to-face communication increases cooperation.

No other variable has as consistent and strong an effect.

Daily stand-up

Pairing

Short timeboxed iterations

Retrospectives

...



What collaboration is not

**Friendship and liking are not required and
may not result from collaboration**



What collaboration is

Everyone is linked with others so that one cannot succeed unless others do (and vice versa) and/or that one must coordinate one's efforts with the efforts of others to complete a task.

What is produced is respect for others' abilities and contributions.

We like being trusted and respected.



Social interdepndence

Team members share common goals.

Each person's outcomes are affected by the actions of the others.

Individuals see they can reach their goals if and only if the others in the group also reach their goals.

Thus, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to all those with whom they are cooperatively linked.



Positive impact of social interdependence

**Increased effort to achieve – in individuals
and the group**

**More positive relationships – give and receive
social support**

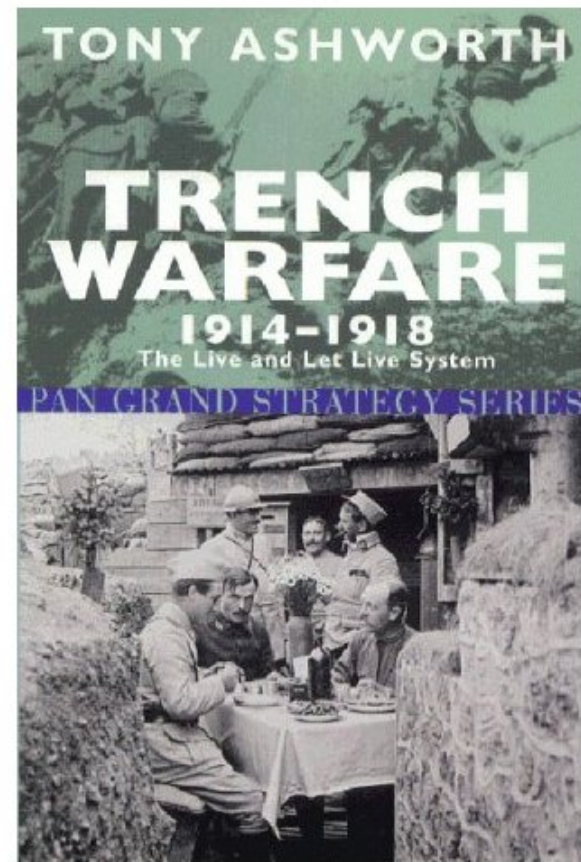
**Improved psychological health – increased
self-esteem, decreased anxiety and
depression**

Is this why agile teams are better?

A Closing, Encouraging Story

At certain points along the line, peace broke out.

The close proximity of the trenches meant that the two groups could see each other, learn others' habits and begin to cooperate.





And the Primates?

Rhesus macaques (quarrelsome, violent) housed with stumptails (tolerant, easy-going).

All became friends. Juveniles played together, groomed together, slept in large, mixed huddles.

Rhesus developed peacemaking skills.

When separated, rhesus still showed reconciliation and grooming behaviors.

Reason for hope

