

# Group Dynamics

## *Howard Hendricks*

Introduction. I want to suggest some books on group dynamics.

- A. Hubert Bonner *Group Dynamics*.
- B. Malcolm Knowles *Introduction to Group Dynamics*.
- C. Donald Bell, *How to get along with People in the Church*.
- D. Margaret Koombs *You can't be Human alone*.
- E. Malcolm Knowles *How to Develop Better Leaders*.

I. What is a group?

- A. It is comprised of people with a purpose that is understood and embraced.
- B. People moving down an pathway of participation includes several things.

- 1. People involved.
- 2. The goal.
- 3. The pathway involving participation.

C. I want to look at principles and techniques.

1. Learning is most effective when the person is active and meaningfully involved in the process.

- a. He is a participator, not a spectator.
- b. He is not on the outside looking in but inside looking out.
- c. Too much education today is passive.
- d. A student lately told me not to touch him or he'd loose everything he knows.

1. Cramming is a poor way of learning.

2. We have forgotten that the process is as important as the product.

2. The major stages of learning are important.

- a. Telling facts.
- b. Showing what's involved in a personal way.

c. Doing, which must be broken down to two conditions.

1. A contrived experience, controlled and safe.

i. The joy of a teacher is what his pupil does.

ii. We need to get excited about what our disciples do.

2. A real life experience, where failure can be costly.

i. Here we have a reasonable expectation of success.

ii. In five courses on personal evangelism not one required me to share the Gospel with someone, just memory of Scriptures.

iii. I have never heard of a correspondence course on swimming.

iv. We learn personal evangelism by doing evangelism.

v. A mentor is invaluable in teaching evangelism.

vi. I had a student with counseling training that I sent to a teenager with 27 juvenile counts against him and he lost it.

vii. My son learned on his paper route by failing.

D. Techniques for getting people involved in a group.

1. A more extensive use of audio visual.

a. Record the conversation to later play it at home.

b. How you say what you're saying is important.

1. Stammering or monotone talking is deadly.

2. You don't want to put people to sleep.

c. The visual aspect of communicating is exciting.

1. Using a projector will encourage people to take notes.

2. I taught Ephesians giving an overview with a projector and a Bible.

3. We grew more and more each night.

2. Use buzz groups.

a. You may have 40 people in a group so break it down to eight groups of five.

- b. This stimulates more discussion.
- c. We use this technique effectively with new groups.

3. Neighbor nudging.

- a. Use this with a large audience.
- b. A room with moving chairs is helpful.

4. Brainstorming is a process that gets people to come up with ideas, especially for application, and no answer is wrong, some are just better than others.

a. Example: How so you communicate love to a child?

- 1. Wash and iron; probably not going to affect the kid.
- 2. Keep their clothes clean; probably not going to work.
- 3. Fix the kid's bike tire; probably will work.
  - a. My kids aren't impressed with my profession.
  - b. They're not impressed with religious things.
  - c. They are impressed when you spend time with them.

b. Example: Why are people happy?

- 1. We listed 20 things.
- 2. In Philippians chapter 1 Paul writes about joy and not one of our things was in his letter.

c. Example: How to determine the will of God for your life.

- 1. The value of brainstorming this type of question of for all involved.
- 2. A resource individual can also be helpful in this process.

5. Role playing.

- a. Example: A teenager comes home at 2:00 a.m. How do you respond?
- b. Your group will listen attentively.
- c. Don't use this technique in the early stages of your group.
- d. I learned much from being on debate teams where we didn't know whether we were positive or negative until the last minute.

6. Case studies.

- a. Harvard business school had me listen to a case study where a professional came to critique the group.
- b. We learned about how he actually accomplished the desired goal.

7. Listening teams.

- a. One problem in this approach is emotional involvement.
- b. A listening team does not get involved but just listens.
- c. Do you have a passion to communicate so that you are willing to use these techniques to get your message across?
- d. My professor said he's rather have his students drinking from a running stream than from a stagnant pool.

II Conclusion.

A. A basic principle of communication is that we cannot impart what we do not possess.

- 1. Technique and method is important but if we are not growing we cannot communicate.
- 2. I used to pray for God to change my children but nothing happened.
- 3. Then I prayed for God to change me and my kids responded.
- 4. I pray the same way for my students in seminary.
- 5. Then I became a change element in the life of my students.
- 6. Lord overhaul this ministry.
- 7. If we change we will be change elements for others.

B. I can only bring truth to you; the Spirit must change hearts.