

To: SNCC Staff

From: William Porter

GROUP RELATIONSHIPS

In this paper I hope to deal with only a small aspect of group relationship, that is, the analysis of group relation and leadership.

Seeing the relation between leader and the group or the relationship between different groups, often I have found out that groups compete against each other, therefore it is very worthwhile considering, because it has often been said that competition is the very basic of the American way of life. Groups that compete against each other sometimes find that it is good for the group it helps the group to understand whether it is doing what others are doing and what it also depends on the type of group and what it is engaged and trying to do.

Competition can be dangerous it depends on what is going on and who is doing it. Competition between leaders and the groups also can be fruitful and it can be dangerous, if the leader is competing against the group to inspire or for fame. I have found that many times the leader has no interest in the group and is there because he can gain fame and get something out of the group.

At this point I should like to ask several basic questions such as is it better for the people to be told what to do by an all powerful leader who can reward or punish as he sees fit, or should the group determine its own goals and standards? And within what limits is it desirable for a group to set its own goals?

These questions can only be answered by us who have for the last three or four years had to work somewhat freely and now are being told that we have to work either in a framework or under leadership. It seems to be that it has been very well shown that with adequate intercommunications, groups can solve many problems and achieve many goals than can solitary individuals. In group effort, communication patterns influence both general efficiency and individual morale. It was because of the lack of communication the reason the staff did not know what was going on in Alabama. If we had more inter-staff communication we would have known what was going on and who was in Ala. and who were needed.

It is very well understood why status is significant in determining group efficiency and intergroup harmony. Hence there is evidence that conformity is higher among members of some groups than others.

I think that I need to explain what I mean by group dynamics. Group dynamics can be defined as the study for tapping behavior potentials of group members in order to make the behavior and/or structure of the group most effective. That means that group dynamics deals with the major and minor points of behavior and may be called the back bone of any group.

When our group was small there were group dynamics, but since we have grown in size and in learning and there are many different types of people with many different backgrounds we up to this

point have not been able to maintain that group dynamics; but if we as a group is to function in the future we have to have some type of group dynamics and we are not willing to do that then I think it is better to ship out so that other may have this.

I have find that in group dynamic the effectiveness can be improved by establishing the following.

- 1) an informal atmosphere
- 2) distributive leadership
- 3) a sense of purpose through goal formation
- 4) flexibility in plans
- 5) process awareness
- 6) continual evaluation

I can not close this paper without talking about the idea leader. I have leanned in the past four years that the effective leader performs several basic function. He must set form (strucuture) to the situation the group faces., providing a unique frame of reference; he must help to control the behavior of the group; he must be informed on what the group is doing the best, but he can speak for the group; and he must serve as a completer or integrating agent for the group, to see that all its needs are being satisfactorily met. The leader's chief goal or perspective is to help the group achieve its potential. He must also remain in a place where the rest of the group can get a hold of him. It has been shown that democratic method usually achieve better results than authoritarian methods.

Leaders must be selweted, and they must be trained. In most situations a leader has three major characteristics: awareness of group attitudes, ability in abstract thinking, and emotional stability. While leadership and personal populatrity often go together, they are not necessarily related. A high degree of self-estimate must come close to the group opinion of them if they are to lead effectively.

I am going to draw my conclusions by saying the effect of competition on performance depends on the individual or on the task. No matter how we attemt to face competition the fact remains that our relationship often depend on our ability to adjust to competitive situations. I hope that other staff people will write something on group dynamics and leadership, so that I can get your ideas and opinions of this letter.

William Porter