

Pi Lambda Phi Fraternity



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Team Building Activities Guide

Team Building Activities

Listed here are a variety of Team Building activities that can be used for New Members and/or for the brotherhood. Each activity lists the purpose, the materials needed, the instructions, and questions you can ask to make the activity most effective.

These team builders were taken from the following sources:

- “Quick Team-Building Activities for Busy Managers” by Brian Cole Miller
- “More Quick Team-Building Activities for Busy Managers” by Brian Cole Miller
- “The Best of Brotherhood Building” by the North-American Interfraternity Conference

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Card Triangles

This is:

A negotiation activity in where teams trade pieces of playing cards to find complete cards.

The Purpose is:

Participants learn to see others' perspectives before they can influence and persuade.

Materials:

- A deck of playing cards.
- Cut each card in half diagonally, then in half diagonally again, so each card is now in four triangle quarters.
- Mix pieces well, and place an equal number of pieces in the same number of envelopes as teams.

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of three or four.
- Give each team an envelope containing playing card triangles
- The teams have 3 minutes to examine and sort their pieces and plan their strategy for bartering.
- Open the bartering. Everyone participates by bartering for the pieces their team needs. (They may barter individually or as a team.)
- Allow 8 minutes for bartering.
- Count the teams' completed cards, and announce the winning team.

Ask these Questions:

- How willing were others to trade with you?
- What negotiation tactics were most successful for you?
- How did your strategy change during play? Why?
- What other skills did you have to draw on to be successful?
- In what fraternity situations do we find ourselves negotiating for time, information, or resources?

Tips for Success:

- You must have at least three teams for this activity to work well. If necessary, have the teams consist of two participants.
- They can barter individually or as teams.
- Give a 2 minute warning before play is to end.
- Observe whether two or more teams combine might. Comment during the debrief.

Variations:

- For smaller groups, give each participant an envelope, and have them all barter individually.
- After 4 minutes of play, give teams 2 minutes to form a coalition. Any two teams that want to merge may before resuming play. Must be an even number of teams to do so.
 - If a merger occurs, ask “What influenced your team’s decision to merge?”

Listen Up

This is:

A Speaking Activity in which participants listen as others share their views on a controversial topic.

The Purpose is:

Participants practice listening skills, even when they are anxious to agree emphatically or strongly challenged.

Materials:

- An identical set of 10 to 15 index cards for each team. On each card in the set, you will have written a different controversial topic.

How To:

- Have the participants pair up.
- Give each pair a set of prepared index cards.
- One partner draws a card and speaks for 3 minutes nonstop about her views on the topic.
- The other partner may not say anything, just listen.
- After 3 minutes, the other partner has 1 minute to recap what he heard. This is not time to rebut, debate or agree – just summarize.
- Reverse roles and repeat with a new topic.

For Example:

Controversial topics can include gay marriage, abortion, prayer in schools, euthanasia, election finance reform, capital punishment, income tax reform, needle exchange for drug users, unions, social security reform, non- English-speaking communities in the USA, the space program, AIDS, nuclear arms, and so forth.

Ask these Questions:

- How did the speakers' tone and body language contribute to the message?
- How did you feel listening without being able to speak your mind? (Frustrated, anxious, made me listen better, etc.)
- How did you feel speaking without your listener saying anything? (Like I was being heard; Frustrated that I did not know where he was on the issue; etc.)
- How was the listener's summary?
- When is it especially important for us to listen this attentively at work?
- What implication does this have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Participants can reject up to two topics if they are uncomfortable discussing them.
- You can use one large set of index cards for the whole group. Duplicate cards are fine. Have enough cards for each participant (and a few extras). Distribute one card to each team. After one person has talked, distribute another card to the other participant. Do not

give both cards at once. The second participant will be tempted to focus on what he may say when he should be listening to his partner!

- Give a 30-second warning before play is to end.

Variations:

- Choose controversial topics so that they are all related to your organization.
- After the first participant speaks on a topic for 3 minutes, allow the second participant to speak on the same topic for 3 minutes. Discuss how two monologues are different from one discussion.
- Allow the listener to speak, but only to ask questions to understand better the other person's position.

Me, Myself, & I

This is:

A story-telling activity that forces participants to communicate about anything except themselves.

The Purpose is:

Participants see how often their communication is centered on themselves.

Materials:

- No Materials are necessary for this activity.

How To:

- Have the participants pair up.
- One partner begins by speaking for 3 minutes.
- He may speak about any topic or several topics.
- He may never use the word “I”.
- The listening partner may not speak at all, not even to ask questions or say “uh-huh.”
- After 3 minutes, reverse roles and repeat.

Ask these Questions:

- Which role was easier for you, the speaker or the listener? Why?
- How did you feel listening without being able to ask questions, or contribute your own thoughts? (Left out, less connected, more focused on the speaker, etc.)
- How did you feel speaking without being able to check in with your listener? (Worried that he was not understanding or did not care, uncomfortable with the attention on me, enjoying the attention and focus, etc.)
- How difficult or easy was it to keep talking non-stop? Why?
- What creative ways did you find to talk about yourself without using “I”?
- How can we phrase our communications to focus better on the other person?
- What implications does this have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Be prepared to demonstrate a portion of a 2-minute monologue without using “I” if the group demands it. Have the group try to catch you using the word “I”.
- Give a 30-second warning before the play ends.

Variations:

- Add a get-to-know you element by having the group determine who is the first speaker and listener by who is the oldest, who lives the furthest from your location, who has the next birthday, the cutest pet, is most physically fit, and so forth.
- Extend the speaking time to 5 minutes to make it more difficult.
- Add competitiveness by allowing the listeners to gain two points for each time the speaker says “I” and one point when they pause more than 5 seconds. Be prepared with small prizes for the winner (s). During the Debrief, ask how the competitiveness impacted the activity.

Shared Values

This is:

A sharing activity in which participants come to an agreement on the most important shared values to the group.

The Purpose is:

Participants come to agreement on the most important values they share.

Materials:

- Paper and a Pen for each participant.
- One piece of flipchart paper for each team.
- Colored markers.

How To:

- Have each participant take 2 minutes to write down what he or she feels are the three most important values to your organization
- Divide the group into teams of four to six participants.
- Have each participant share his three values within his team.
- From all the values shared, the team must agree on the top three most important values for the organization.
- Give each team a piece of flipchart paper and some colored markers.
- Each team creates a poster with words, symbols, and/or pictures that reflect those three values.
- After 10 minutes, have each team present their poster to the group.

Ask these Questions:

- What values seem to be common across the teams?
- How did you handle disagreements in the teams?
- If someone new to your chapter saw this list of values, how do you think they would expect people to behave?
- Do we behave like that?
- What can cause us to lose sight of our values? (Pressing deadlines, others acting differently, changes at work, school, etc.) What can we do when that happens?
- How would living these values help us meet our goals?
- What implication does this have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Encourage the teams to be creative in their representation of the values.
- If your organization already has stated values, have the teams still try to identify the three most important ones as it relates to their chapter.
- If a team does not finish, ask what prevented them from doing so. Others will learn from their difficulties. Then ask how those barriers could have been avoided or dealt with effectively.
- In the coming days, periodically ask which values are being demonstrated on the job.

Variations:

- If your organization/chapter does not have a mission statement, have the teams make a poster to present what your mission statement should be. Remember, a mission statement explains why the organization exists, not its goals.
- If your organization/chapter does not have a vision statement, have the teams make a poster to present what your vision should be. Remember, the vision statement tells where you hope to be in the future.

Washing Machines

This is:

A creative selling activity in which participants think of different ways to market a load of 10,000 used washing machines.

The Purpose is:

Participants practice thinking of creative solutions and looking at things from others' perspectives.

Materials:

- No materials are necessary for this activity unless you give a small prize for the winning team.

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of three to six participants.
- Announce that each team has come upon a free load of 10,000 used old washing machines.
- They are to think of a way to market these machines and prepare a sales pitch (a 30-second commercial) for the rest of the group.
- Allow them 8 minutes to work in teams.
- Each team presents its commercial to the rest of the group.
- Have the group vote on which marketing design would most likely succeed in bringing in sales.

Examples of use

- Some uses for the old machines may be as retro decorative planters; filled with ice and beer for parties; as a container for mixing dye for fabric; as a huge whimsical jack-in-the-box; as basketball hops with a twist; as fishbowls for dark-loving fish' as a toy box and so forth.

Ask these Questions:

- How did your team arrive at the marketing design you chose?
- How creative do you think you were? Why?
- What assumptions did you operate under? (That is had to do with laundry, that we must sell to consumers and not other businesses, that we could paint or otherwise alter the machines from their original state, etc.) How did those assumptions limit or expand your creativity?
- How did you identify features and benefits of your product? (Point out that this is where you have to focus on others' needs.)
- What implication does this have for us back at our chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Let each team determine if the washing machines are still operable or not.
- For a highly competitive group, rule that participants may not vote for their own design.

- Have one or two offbeat ideas yourself before the activity begins. If a team is really stuck, offer those ideas to help get their creative juices flowing.
- Emphasize that the commercial can be only 30 seconds long and that you will time it.

Variations:

- Rather than a 30-second commercial, each team creates a full-page magazine ad for their product on a piece of flipchart paper. Explain to the group which magazine this would appear in and why.
- Rather than a 30-second commercial, each team creates a website for their product on a piece of flipchart paper. Explain to the group how the website works and so forth.
- Rather than old washing machines, try other unlikely items, such as old nonfunctioning computer monitors; beat up, old orange barrels from highway construction sites; the 1983 yellow pages from Key West, FL and so forth.

Human Billboards

This is:

A self disclosure activity in which participants create a poster about themselves.

The Purpose is:

Participants learn more about each other and connect on a personal level.

Materials:

- One flipchart paper for each participant.
- Colored markers.
- Scissors.

How To:

- Give each participant a piece of flipchart paper and some colored markers.
- They have 6 minutes to use words, pictures, or symbols to describe themselves on the “billboard”.
- Cut a slit or an “X” near the top of the paper so the participant can fit his or her head through it.
- Participants put their billboard on so it drapes in front of them.
- Encourage them to mingle for 6 minutes.
- While mingling, they can only ask questions about another’s billboard or respond to questions asked of them.

Ask these Questions:

- Why is it important for us to know each other outside of a purely chapter-related context?
- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others?
- How can we learn more about each other back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Reassure those who are reluctant and those who do not know what to write that they only need to share what they are comfortable disclosing now.
- Have them print their names on their billboards and post them around the meeting room so the others can refer to them and continue to reach out to others.
- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or get a meeting started without asking the Debrief questions afterward.
- You can use this activity more than once with the same group.

Variations:

- Direct what will go on the billboard. It can be centered on one theme, for example, only fraternity related, only non-fraternity related, only favorites – color, food, books, movies, U.S. Presidents, and so forth, only personal goals and aspirations.
- Instead of a billboard, have participants create a screen saver, t-shirt, bumper sticker, personal flag, license plate, tattoo and so forth.

- You may use regular 8 ½ x 11 inch paper instead of flipchart paper and have participants tape it to their chests.
- You may use tape and string to make a neck holder for the bill board rather than cutting it.

My Name

This is:

An activity in which participants introduce themselves for presenting their first names as an acronym.

The Purpose is:

Everyone knows everyone else's name and some interesting things about each other. That information may prompt some small talk later.

Materials:

- No materials are necessary for this activity.

How To:

- Give the group 5 minutes to think of interesting facts about themselves that correspond to the letters of their first name.
- Have each participant share his or her acronym.

Example:

- Logan – L is for Led Zeppelin – favorite band, O is for Ohio where I live, G is for Germany where I visit each summer, A is for Abercrombie and Fitch, my favorite store in the mall, and N is for Neighborhood Watch Member.

Ask these Questions:

- Why is it important for us to know each other beyond a purely chapter-related context?
- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others?
- How can we learn more about each other back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- If participants get stuck, tell them they do not have to follow the rules strictly. For example, "L" can be for Love to Snowboard or Love to Scuba and so forth.
- Be prepared to share your own acronym as an example for the group.
- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or get a meeting started without asking the Debrief questions afterwards.

Variations:

- Instead of creating an acronym about themselves, have the participant make an acronym from their first name to correspond to their major, a current project or a problem they collectively face. (you may be surprised at a few creative ideas for resolution!).

Penny for Your Thoughts

This is:

A light introduction activity that reveals a quick, personal fact about each participant.

The Purpose is:

Everyone knows everyone's name and one interesting fact about each other. That information may prompt some small talk later.

Materials:

One penny for each participant. The best pennies are shiny, easy to read and are less than 20 years old.

How To:

- Give a penny to each participant. (As you are doing this, jokingly ask if they realize that they were going to receive a "cash bonus" for attending today!)
- Ask them first to introduce themselves with their full name, and any other information you want shared with the group.
- Ask them to share something significant/interesting about themselves from the year on the penny.
- As facilitator, you go first to set the example. Example: Hi, I am Jonathan and I have been a brother of Pi Lambda Phi for 1.5 years. My penny says 2004 and that is the year, I made the Varsity Football team at High School.

Ask these Questions:

- Why is it important to know more about each other?
- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others?
- How can we learn more about each other back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Give them a moment to think of something to say before beginning.
- When you want them to share more than two pieces of information besides their name, list what you want on a chart or board.
- If someone says he can't remember anything significant from that year, encourage him to describe what was going on in his life at that time (where he was living, sports, school, etc.)
- This activity can be used with the same group more than once (since participants are unlikely to get the same year a second time).
- If you do not have pennies, participants can just pull coins out of their own pockets.
- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or get a meeting started without Debrief questions.

Variations:

- Have participants explain what would be different if they could relive that year OR how their lives would be different if that year never happened.

- Have participants share their favorite song, movie, TV show, etc from that year.
- Do not use pennies, just have the participants tell what the best year of their life was and why.
- Let the group ask follow-up questions after each participant shares his information.

Rather Than

This is:

A light introductory activity that reveals personal preference about each participant.

The Purpose is:

Everyone learns one personal preference about each other. That information may then prompt some small talk later.

Materials:

- No Materials are necessary for this activity.

How To:

- Sit in a circle so everyone can see each other if possible.
- Start by declaring something you like to do.
- The participant next to you restates what you said and then says something that he would rather do than that.
- The next participant restates what was just said and then says something that he would rather do than that.
- Continue around the room.

Ask these Questions:

- Why is it important for us to know each other beyond purely a chapter-related context?
- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others?
- How can we learn more about each other back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Play can go around the room indefinitely.
- Allow the group to react briefly to comments but not dwell on anyone's statement (and certainly not criticize) – however bizarre or unpopular!
- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or get a meeting started without asking the Debrief questions afterwards.

Variations:

- Specify a category (as related only to your chapter, the overall Fraternity, sports).
- Make this an ice breaker/introductory activity by merely asking the participants to preface their "Rather Than" comment with their name. For example, "My name is Aaron and rather than eat ice cream I would rather.....".
- Play Worse Than. Declare something you do not like. The next participant declares that worse than that, would be something that would be worse for him. For example, "Worse than going to the dentist would be getting lost in a new city."

Similarities & Differences

This is:

An introductory activity in which participants are challenged to find how they are similar and different from each other.

The Purpose is:

Participants learn new and interesting things about each other and connect with each other on a personal level.

Materials:

- An index card or sheet of paper and a pen for each participant.

How To:

- Give each participant an index card and a pen.
- Have them divide their cards into three columns headed by “Name, Similar and Different”
- Have them mingle and try to fill their card with as many names as possible.
- For each name, they find something that they have in common with the other person and one way they are different.

Ask these Questions:

- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others?
- What surprises did you have finding similarities and differences?
- How can we learn more about each other back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Encourage the participants to not duplicate any answers. If you find a second person with whom you share a love of football, try to find something else you also have in common with that person.
- Encourage them to have their Similarities and Differences be unrelated. For example, if the Similarity is “we both love music,” rather than “he likes rap and I do not” as the Difference, try for something unrelated to music altogether.
- You may use this activity to just get acquainted or get a meeting started without asking the Debrief questions afterwards.

Variations:

- Limit similarities and differences to only Fraternity related items or only personal items.

Sweet Stories

This is:

An activity in which participants share a story about themselves based on the color of the candy they have in their hands.

The Purpose is:

Participants learn more about each other and learn to trust each other a little more

Materials:

- A large bag of M&M's, Skittles, or other colored candy pieces.

How To:

- Have each participant take one candy.
- Tell them not to eat it yet!
- Take turns sharing with the group a story based on the following code:
Blue Candy – A time during their brotherhood when they felt very proud.
Green Candy – Tell about a professor or boss you respect and why.
Yellow Candy – A reason you are proud to belong to this organization.
Brown Candy – An embarrassing moment during your time at school.
Orange Candy – A time at school or in your personal life when you have failed.
Purple Candy – A funny thing that happened to you at the chapter.
Red Candy – A time at school or in your personal life when you were scared.

Ask these Questions:

- Why is it important for us to learn about each other at the chapter?
- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others.
- How can we learn more about each other back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Other categories can be used that related more closely to the Fraternity.
- The Stories do not have to be “the most” anything – the most embarrassing, the most funny and so forth. Take that pressure away. Allow participants to share the kind of story they are comfortable sharing with the group.
- If you use a candy other than M&M's be sure to adjust the color coding to match the colors of the candy you use.
- This activity can be repeated. Just ask for different stories. Or start every meeting with one person telling a story, and over time you will hear from everyone.
- Limit the length of each story so no one monopolizes the time.
- Post the story color code so participants can easily match their candy to the story they need to tell.

Variations:

- Divide larger groups (more than 12 participants) into smaller teams to share their stories with each other.
- Remove the Fraternity focus for each color story so to get to know each other better personally.
- Divide the group into small groups of three to five participants. Give them several minutes to share their stories from one color. Select the best story from the team and share with the larger group.
- Use only two categories. Toss a coin to determine which story to tell.
- For the group that knows each other very well, have them tell the stories about each other rather than about themselves.
- Get to know each other on a personal level along the lines such as: one thing you learned from your parents, why you like your favorite movie, tell about your kitchen at home, pet you have/had and so forth.

Catch

This is:

A fast-paced ball-tossing game where participants are encouraged to improve the time it takes to pass the ball around the group.

The Purpose is:

The group sees that improvements can always be made on a process and that it takes the whole team to make process improvement work.

Materials:

- A Koosh Ball, beanbag or similar item that is safe to toss.
- A stopwatch, watch or clock with a second hand.

How To:

- Arrange the group in a large circle with everyone standing.
- Give the ball to anyone.
- Ask him to throw the ball to anyone in the circle.
- The catcher now throws the ball to someone else in the circle.
- This continues as each participant always throws the ball to someone who has not had it yet.
- The last one throws the ball back to the participant who had it first. The group has established their Pattern.
- Have them repeat the same Pattern throwing the ball to the same person, in the same order as they did before. Time them.
- If anyone drops the ball, it goes back to the first participant to start again. Time keeps ticking.
- Announce the time and ask them how much faster they think they can get.
- Repeat the Pattern and time them again.
- Give them 3 minutes to create a strategy to vastly improve their time again.
- Repeat the Pattern and time them again.

Ask these Questions:

- How did you feel the first time I timed you? On subsequent timings? (Nervous, energized, competitive, pressured, etc.)
- What strategies did you employ to improve your speed? How successful were these strategies?
- What assumptions or limits did you impose on yourselves? (We had to say in the same circle order we were in. We had to catch with our hands (not laps if sitting), etc.)
- How did you feel when participant X dropped the ball? (Frustrated, angry, depressed, hopeless, empathetic, etc.)
- What was the key to your success?
- What implications does this have for us back at our chapters?

Tips for Success:

- Help them be successful. If they forget who gets the ball next, remind them. Just be careful not to take over leadership for the group.
- Be supportive of whoever drops the ball if the group is not.
- Do not offer suggestion on how to improve, let them struggle with it. One of the best ways is for them to rearrange their positions in the circle!
- Watch and listen to their comments during the activity. Bring up relevant ones during the Debrief.
- Post the rules of the game so participants can refer to them while they play.

Variations:

- Establish two different Patterns in the group with two different colored balls. Time them accomplishing both Patterns at the same time.
- Form two groups (each with one ball) and them simultaneously. See if the groups compete more against themselves or against the other group. As how the competitive pressure helps or hinders their efforts.
- Make this more about dealing with change by asking them to reverse the flow of the ball after a round or two while still maintaining the same or better speed.
- For smaller groups, have them also say their name, a color, or their chapter name as they toss the ball.

Puzzled

This is:

An activity in which participants learn, as they assemble a puzzle that other teams have some pieces they need.

The Purpose is:

Participants see that cooperation across real or perceived team boundaries can be beneficial and sometimes even crucial for success.

Materials:

- One 20-25 piece children's puzzle for each small group.
- A bag, box or envelope for each puzzle's pieces.
- Assemble the puzzle bags in advance without the group's knowledge that this has been done.
 - A. Place all the puzzle pieces for each puzzle in a separate bag.
 - B. Line up the filled bags in front of you.
 - C. Remove two to three pieces from each bag.
 - D. Place those pieces in other bags, each piece in a different bag.

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of three to six participants. There must be the same number of teams as you have puzzles.
- Give each team a bag of puzzle pieces.
- Do not disclose that the bags have been tampered with.
- Tell the participants that their objective is to put the puzzles together in less than 5 minutes.
- Have them begin. If they ask for help, decline. Encourage them to use whatever resources are available to accomplish their objective. Tell them that all the pieces necessary to accomplish their objective are out. If they ask permission to work with other groups, be noncommittal. Remind them of their objective and tell them to do what is necessary to achieve it.

Ask these Questions:

- What assumptions did you make at the beginning of the activity? (We had all the pieces for our puzzle in this bag.....We were in a race.....We did not need any outside help, etc.)
- Why did you feel this was a competition? (Conditioned, my natural style, etc.)
- How did you react when you realized that you did not have all the pieces you needed? (Frustrated, angry, lost, etc.) How did you deal with these emotions?
- How did you feel when other groups came offering puzzle pieces, or asking for some of your puzzle pieces? (Imposed upon, go away, rushed, confused, etc.)
- How is this similar to our life on campus and at the chapter? (We ask you for help when we could solve something ourselves; We see everything as a competition; etc.)
- What implications does this have for you back at school and the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Be sure that not two puzzles are exactly the same; otherwise the value of swapping pieces may be lost.
- When the first team discovers they are missing a puzzle piece, they may look to you for an explanation. Calmly remind them of their objective (complete the puzzle) and announce that all the puzzle pieces are out.
- Do not make the types of encouraging comments that may lead them to believe they are in competition. (Oh, this team is going to win. You guys better hurry up. etc.)

Variations:

- Replace the puzzles with Lego building sets and their instruction sheets. Try to use the building sets with less than 80 pieces.
- Make the puzzles yourself out of thick paper. This is especially good if you want the completed puzzles to say something- quotes or messages that will help you segue into the meeting's main topic of focus.

Tied

This is:

A simple activity in which the participants try to cross the finish line at exactly the same time.

The Purpose is:

Participants see how an activity that looks simple, when it involves coordinating with others rarely is.

Materials:

- A long rope or tape to represent a start line and a finish line. (Optional – a highly visible line in the carpet or flooring may work fine.)

How To:

- Line the group up behind the starting line.
- On your signal, they are to proceed to the finish line.
- They must all cross the finish line at exactly the same time.
- If they are not all together, they need to go back to the starting line and try again.
- They need to keep trying until they succeed.

Ask these Questions:

- How easy did this sound at first? (simple, piece of cake, etc.)
- How easy was it? (harder to coordinate than we thought, etc.)
- When have we thought something was easy at first and then discovered it was harder to coordinate (especially when it involved the efforts of others?)
- What implications does this have for us at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Once the activity begins, no participant can stop motion (this eliminates the clever ruse of having everyone get up to the finish line and stop to wait for everyone to take one step together).
- This is harder than it seems. Depending on the size of the group, it will generally take 5 to 10 attempts to succeed.

Variations:

- Make it more difficult by allowing the participants to look only straight ahead or at the ceiling.
- Have them do the activity while walking backwards.

United Hearts

This is:

This fast-paced card game in which teams feel a need to compete for points when, actually, they could all win through cooperation.

The Purpose is:

Participants see that competitiveness among them can be detrimental, and flexibility is critical for success.

Materials:

- One deck of playing cards for every 15 participants.

How To:

- Divide the group into three teams of two to five participants. Equal sized teams are not critical.
- Keep the hearts, and give each team an entire suite of cards. They may look at their cards during play.
- Each team's objective is to earn 30 points. As the Dealer, you are not playing for points.
- Each team must designate one member to be their Leader.
- Explain the rules below and give them 3 minutes to plan their strategy.
- There will be 13 rounds (one for each card in everyone's hand). For each round, you will play any heart card face up on the table. Then each team Leader selects a card and places it face down on the table.
- Once the Leaders have all played, flip the cards over. The card with the highest value (excluding your heart) wins the heart points for that team. For example, if the highest card played is the 8 of clubs, the heart is a 10, the clubs team gets 10 points.
- Numbered cards are worth face value, jacks are worth 11, queens 12, kings 13 and aces 1 point.
- If the high card is a tie, the heart points are lost that round.
- As cards are played, they are out of play for the rest of the game.
- Once play begins, no one may speak.
- After five rounds, and again after the ninth round, allow the teams 2 minutes to regroup and discuss their progress.
- Determine which teams earned 30 points.

Ask these Questions:

- What happened?
- How did you select your Leader?
- What strategy did you have? How did you select it?
- If no one has said this yet, how many points were possible altogether? (91 Points) So, all three teams could have been successful with a win-win-win solution, right? (Expect surprised looks and smiles as they realize they competed when they did not have to.)
- Why did you compete with each other? (we assumed it was a competition, we did not want to trust them, we are conditioned to compete, etc.)
- What implications does this have for our chapter?

Tips for Success:

- If there are more than 15 participants, extra participants can act as Observers, or two (or more) separate games can be play simultaneously. Designate a Dealer at each table who will follow your lead. Remind the Dealers that they are not playing for points.
- If the teams ask about collaborating together, allow it! Even if they figure this out, it will take cooperation and trust to make it happen.
- The rule states that they cannot talk, There is no rule against pointing, grunting, facial expressions, writing or otherwise communication with each other.
- Be careful not to suggest that the first team to get to 30 points is better off than the others.
- Be careful not to suggest that points beyond 30 are of any value.
- Post the rules so participants can refer to them during play.

Variations:

- Play a second round and see if the teams can cooperate enough so they each get 30 points.
- Make it a bit easier by allowing them to talk throughout the game.

Change Timeline

This is:

An activity in which participants learn from major changes they have worked through.

The Purpose is:

Participants see that even when changes seem to create problems, they can find ways to overcome and be successful. They will also get to know each other a little better.

Materials:

- Paper and pens for each participant.

How To:

- Give a pen and paper to each participant.
- Have them each remember five major changes they have experienced in their lifetime.
- Participants draw time lines of their lives. Mark when each of the major changes occurred with an "X".
- Have the participants pair up.
- Ask them to share with their partner one of the major changes.
- Post these questions for them to answer as they share:
 - A. What made the change difficult?
 - B. What was the key to your success in dealing with the change?
 - C. How did you feel before, during and after the change?
 - D. How were the other changes going on around that time (refer to the time line) affecting your ability to deal with this one?

Ask these Questions:

- How did you feel sharing these experiences with each other? (I felt a sense of closeness...I realized we have more in common.....empathy, etc.)
- What did you learn from how your partner dealt with their major change?
- What did you learn about the compounding effect of changes that are close to each other? (Alone change is manageable, but together, the combined effect is overwhelming....The way to deal with one adversely affected the next one...etc.)
- What implications does this have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Tell the participants that they will be asked to share only one of the major life changes they remember, not all of them. Tell them to share only what is comfortable.

Variations:

- After the participants share their experiences in teams of three to six, This takes longer, but it will allow them to hear and learn from more experiences than just one or two.
- You may eliminate the time line and just have the participants select a major change to dialogue with their partner.

Guess and Switch

This is:

A guessing game in which participants switch teams often.

The Purpose is:

Participants get comfortable with constantly changing teams and allegiances and will see how ineffective yes/no questions are.

Materials:

- No materials are necessary for this activity.

How To:

- Divide the group in half. The teams gather at opposite corners of the room.
- One participant from each team leaves the room. Together, their task is to pick quickly any object in the world.
- They return to the team opposite the one they left.
- Each team then asks the participant questions to determine what the object is. They may ask only questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no”.
- When a team guesses the object, they clap their hands to win the round.
- The two participants who first left the room now join the winning team.
- Each team selects a new participant to leave the room for another round.
- Play continues until one team captures all members or until a predetermined time limit is reached.

Ask these Questions:

- How did you feel when your team started dwindling? (Nervous, threatened, more competitive, frustrated, etc.)
- How did you feel as your team started to grow? (Excited, energized, superior confident, glad to be part of a winning team, etc.)
- How did you feel when you had to join a different team? (Reluctant, not welcomed, excited to be on a winning team, etc.)
- What kinds of questions could we have asked to guess the object quicker? (How is the object used? What is the object’s size and shape? And other open-ended questions.)
- What implication does this activity have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Do not let the teams spend much time in selecting the participant who goes out of the room. Keep the game moving, make it quick.
- Questions must be answered quietly or the other team will overhear and get clues.

Variations:

- Make the guessing go faster by limiting the object to selected categories such as movie titles, gardening supplies, Fraternity facts or famous people.
- If the group is large, (more than 24 people) divide them into three or four teams in various corners of the room. After participates from each group come back into the room, have them return to a different team from the one they left.
- Instead of asking questions to guest the object, have the participants act it out as a game of charades or draw it like the game Pictionary.

Index Towers

This is:

A building activity in which participants use index cards to create a tower.

The Purpose is:

The group can find creative ways to overcome adversity and be successful even when changes seem to create problems.

Materials:

- A yardstick or tape measure.
- 50 index cards for each team.
- A roll of tape for each team.
- A small prize for the winning team – optional.

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of three to five participants.
- Give each team 25 index cards and a roll of tape. Each team had 5 minutes to build the largest freestanding structure as possible using only the materials provided.
- The structure must stand long enough that it can be measured.
- After each structure is measured, have the teams destroy them.
- Announce that you have found that the tape violates health laws and must be forfeited.
- Now give each team 25 more index cards.
- Each team has 5 minutes to build the tallest free-standing structure using only the materials provided...the additional 25 index cards.
- Measure the structures and determine the tallest.

Ask these Questions:

- How did you decide on the structure to build each time?
- How did you feel when I removed the tape? (Despair, challenged, frustrated, etc.)
- What ways did you find to be successful in the second round? (Cooperated more, found better ways to stack the cards, etc.)
- What implications does this activity have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Most teams will find a way to build an even taller structure without the tape. If they do not, ask if they think that eventually they could do so (given more time to practice and strategize).
- Colored index cards invite the team to aim for aesthetics as well as function.
- Be very careful approaching the structures to measure. You do not want to create a slight draft and topple any of the structures.

Variations:

- Start with staplers instead of tape.
- When you take the tape away, replace it with staplers for round 2. Sometimes it is not so obvious whether change is good or bad.
- Have a third round in which you increase the number of index cards. Include some larger index cards. Some change is actually good.
- Make the activity go faster by reducing the number of index cards you distribute and also reduce the time you give them to work.

Puzzled Thumbs

This is:

A puzzle activity in which the rules for puzzle assembly change halfway through the exercise.

The Purpose is:

Participants will experience the value that information has when dealing with change. They will also see that their own reactions to change are normal and manageable.

Materials:

- One children's puzzle for each small group. The best puzzles have a solid frame and border with 15-25 pieces.
- A stopwatch, watch or clock with a second hand.

How To:

- Divide the group into smaller teams of two to four participants.
- Give each team a puzzle. Have them separate all the pieces and place them face up on the table. No puzzle pieces may be touching at the beginning of this activity.
- Time the teams as they assemble their puzzles.
- Repeat the puzzle assembly two more times; the teams should try to improve their assembly time.
- Now tell them to assemble the puzzle without using their thumbs. Also, inform them that each time their thumb does touch a puzzle piece, 1 minute will be added to their assembly time.
- Time the team's assembly speed.
- Repeat the puzzle assembly (without thumbs) two more times. Each team should try to improve their overall speed.
- After six rounds, compare times and discuss.

Ask these Questions:

- How did you feel about the first three rounds? (Energized, excited, competitive, foolish, etc.)
- How did you feel about the last three rounds? (Less excited, angry, discouraged, frustrated, etc.)
- How did you react when I told you that you could not use your thumbs? (excited about the challenge, de-motivated, discouraged, etc.)
- What if I had explained that you could not use your thumbs because we discovered a carcinogen on the puzzle pieces that affect humans ONLY when it touched their thumbs? (I would be less angry, happy you are watching over us, angry that we had already been exposed?)
- How does having additional information about changes help you at your chapter?
- What could have been done to make the last three rounds more productive?
- What implications does that have for back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- As you watch the clock, call out times as each team finishes. Have them record their results. Or have each team time themselves.
- After announcing the thumb rule, listen to their reactions. Teams will often say things such as, “What a stupid rule.” “This is going to slow us down.” Etc. These remarks make for great discussion at the end of the activity.

Variations:

- Tell half the groups the reason for the Thumbs Rule and not the other half. Compare the differences in attitudes and times between the groups.
- For competitive groups, post the running record of best times on the board or flipchart.
- The task can be something other than a puzzle. Groups can use plastic building blocks, build a house from playing cards, create lines from dominos.
- Make it more team-focused by recording only the time of the slowest team. The teams will learn to share best practices with each other to better everyone’s overall time.
- Switch puzzles after the first three rounds.
- After six rounds, remove the puzzle frame for another three rounds while still not allowing the participants to use their thumbs or even consider blindfolding whomever is working on the puzzle. These more difficult changes will stimulate the feeling of constant change that we feel at school or at the chapter. What can be done to minimize the negative impact of constant change?
- Blindfold only one person on each team, but allow only that person to use their thumbs. How did each team work around the blindness and leverage this advantage?

Wrong-Handed Picture

This is:

A drawing activity where participants use the hand they normally do not use for writing.

The Purpose is:

Participants get a sense of how they react to change and learn that their own reactions to change are typical and normal.

Materials:

- Paper and pens for each participant.

How To:

- Give a pen and paper to each participant.
- Give everyone six minutes to draw a picture of something in their dorm/chapter room.
- Inform them they must draw the object with the hand they normally DO NOT use for writing.
- Have the participants exchange their picture with someone else.
- The other participant will then label the picture as to what they think it is then give it back to the artist.

Ask these Questions:

- How many objects were guessed correctly?
- How did it feel to use your other hand? (awkward, confusing, not too bad, etc.)
- How did those feelings affect your picture? (made it more shaky; put less detail into it, decided on drawing a simpler object, etc.)
- How do those feelings compare with the feelings we have regarding the changes we experience?
- What implications does this have for us back at our chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Post the pictures around the room so participants can refer to them and be reminded of what they learned from this activity.
- Take the emphasis off the actual artistic value of the drawing so participants do not shy away from the task.
- For participants who are adamant about not drawing, have them write a sentence or two describing an object. The crooked handwriting will be just as much a catalyst for learning as the drawing would have been.
- Give a 1-minute warning before time is up.

Variations:

- Use colored markers or colored pencils to add an element of creativity to the activity.
- Rather than draw an object, have participants write a sentence or two describing it.

- Have participants pair up and take turns describing an object to each other. See if the other partner can draw it with his other hand. This variation will focus more on communication skills as well as dealing with change.

One-Worded Stories

This is:

A story telling activity in which participants construct a story together by contributing one word at a time.

The Purpose is:

Participants practice cooperation and make each other look good.

Materials:

- No Materials are necessary for this activity.

How To:

- Explain that as a group, they will create a story together one word at a time.
- Each word used must be as interesting as possible and contribute well to the overall story.
- Select one participant to demonstrate by alternating the phrase, “Once upon a time.....”
- After the story is complete, try another one or two.

Ask these Questions:

- How many felt the person after you said the “wrong” word because it was not where you felt the story would lead? (angry, frustrated, hurt, etc.)
- How would you compare the collective story of the group with what you may have come up with on your own? (Story was more creative/imaginative, story made less sense, it was more fun, etc.)
- Ask to see who did not like where the story went and determine why? What could you have done had this been a chapter-related situation?
- What implication does this have for us back at our chapters to help us understand when someone does not understand what was originally intended.

Tips for Success:

- Keep the pace moving along quickly or the flow of the story will be lost.
- End the story when it feels like it has run its course or the energy/enthusiasm has waned.
- Encourage participants to speak loudly and clearly.

Variations:

- To keep the story moving, allow participants the option of pointing to the next person if they need to skip their turn. After ask how the group felt about the participants who passed. Did anyone pass more than the rest of the group? How does the group interpret that behavior? Are there members of your chapter who “pass” more often than others?
- To encourage teamwork, allow other participants to offer to take someone’s turn if they hesitate. After, ask how the group felt about those who offered help? Did anyone hesitate more than others? Did anyone jump to the rescue more than others?
- Use paper. Have each participant start a poem with one line. Pass the poem to the left. Add a line that rhymes. Pass to the poem to the left four more times. Read the poem out loud.

- Don't take turns at all. Let whoever wants to add a word to do so. Did someone dominate? Did anyone not participate?

Blame Game

This is:

This is a quick standstill activity where participants try to determine who moved first and then assign blame.

The Purpose is:

Participants see that everyone is responsible for group behavior.

Materials:

- No materials are necessary for this activity.

How To:

- Arrange the group in a large circle with everyone standing.
- Find your Idol:
 - a. You begin by pointing to someone in the circle. Keep pointing.
 - b. That participant now points to someone else and keeps pointing.
 - c. Continue until everyone is pointing at someone. The last participant will be pointing at you.
 - d. Stop pointing (drop your hands) and fix your eyes on the participant you were pointing at. That participant becomes your Idol.
- Explain that the objective is to watch your Idol closely and copy his every action.
- Ask the group to stand perfectly still. No one may move unless his Idol does. If his Idol moves (twitches, coughs, blinks, etc.) then he must mimic the exact movement then go back to being still.
- Begin the game and play for several minutes.

Ask these Questions:

- We were supposed to stand still, what happened? Expect some participants to immediately start to blame their Idol for moving.)
- Who knows who started the movement? (Allow for some accusations, inevitably it will be difficult or impossible to pinpoint who really started each movement.)
- How much does it matter who started it once it got started?
- How much energy do we spend looking for scapegoats?
- How are we to blame for perpetuating certain behaviors that eventually become chapter norms? What examples of this can we think of back at each chapter?
- What implications does this have for us back at our chapters?

Tips for Success:

- Small movements are bound to happen. When they do, the movement will be duplicated around the group endlessly and usually be exaggerated.
- If the movement gets out of control, just stop the game, refocus the group and start again.

Variations:

- Designate one participant as “the buck stops here”. When movement starts and moves around the group, that participant will NOT repeat it. This variation is effective after a few rounds of regular activity. Ask how much influence one person can have in affecting chapter behavior.

First Impressions

This is:

An activity where participants determine their first impressions of people picked at random from magazines.

The Purpose is:

Participants see how strong and important other people's first impressions of them can be.

Materials:

Each group receives an envelope containing four or five pictures of people from magazines. Avoid famous or recognizable people. Avoid settings and backgrounds that are not neutral.

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of four to six participants.
- Give each group an envelope containing pictures of various people.
- Each group has six minutes to discuss their first impressions of the people based solely on what they see in the picture.
- Have each group report discuss their strongest first impression with the entire group.

Ask these Questions:

- How easy was it to agree on your first impression of these people?
- What were some of the reasons for disagreement? (Different upbringing, different history with a certain kind of look, etc.)
- What judgments are others making about us and the way we present ourselves?
- What implications does this have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Keep the Debrief away from discussing whether first impressions are fair or not. Accept that they happen and focus on how you can leverage this for your chapter.
- Collect the pictures from various magazines. Try for as random a mix as possible for each envelope.
- Be sensitive to racial or gender biases in each group and with the pictures.
- Give a 1-minute warning before discussions are to end.

Variations:

- You can focus the first impressions specifically on facial expressions, clothing, body language, or whatever else you want to emphasize.
- You could refocus the Debrief to make this discussion more about diversity – accepting others for who and what they are. After giving out the envelopes of pictures, ask the teams to decide which ones they would most want to have join their chapter and which one they would least like to have join their chapter. Why?
- Have the teams “fix” each picture by identifying how they would improve the look of each one to make them ready to join their chapter. Focus the Debrief on what they learned from each other concerning how they felt the group should present themselves.

Rainbow of Diversity

This is:

An Activity in which participants use crayons as a metaphor for their own diversity.

The Purpose is:

Participants appreciate the similarities and differences among themselves.

Materials:

- A different colored crayon for each participant. It is recommended to purchase a box of 64 crayons.

How To:

- Give a crayon to each participant.
- Have them pair up again, this time with someone whose crayon color is very different from their own color.
- They now have 2 minutes to discover all the ways that they, as individuals are different from each other.
- Have the participants get in a circle and stand next to someone holding a color most like their own. This will make a sort of a round rainbow. Conduct the Debrief while they are in this circle.

Ask these Questions:

- What did you learn about the participant with a color similar to yours?
- What did you learn about the participant with a color different from yours?
- What does this circle say about our group? (Even though I am standing next to someone with a similar colored crayon, I am ultimately connected to the very different person opposite me in the circle. We are one big whole....etc.)
- What implications does this have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Do not let participants get too worried about the “correct” closest color or opposite color. Yes, green is opposite red on the color wheel, but it is also quite different from black, silver, orange, pink and many other colors.

Variations:

- Have the group make a colorful creation on a flipchart page. Make sure each participant contributes his or her color. How is each color critical to the success of the whole? Does each color have to be used equally for the creation to be beautiful.
- When the participants pair up with a color close to theirs, have them point out what strengths they have in common that contribute to the success of the group. When they pair up with a different color, have them identify what each other’s strengths are and how they can learn from or appreciate those different skills and abilities.

ZYX

This is:

A verbal activity in which the participants learn to say the alphabet backwards as quickly as they can say it forward.

The Purpose is:

Participants realize they have different learning styles and they should take advantage of their preferred style when they learn new skills. This activity also builds confidence.

Materials:

- No materials are necessary for this activity.

How To:

- Ask the group to recite the alphabet with you. Do this at a decent speed but do not rush through it.
- Tell them that the objective is to be able to recite (no reading) the alphabet backwards as quickly as they just did it forwards.
- Participants may use any resources available in the room (paper, each other, you, etc) to get ready.
- They have 12 minutes to prepare and practice.
- Lead the group in reciting the alphabet backwards at the same speed as you did forwards.

Ask these Questions:

- How did you feel when you first heard the objective? (This is impossible. This is silly. I can't do it. etc.)
- What strategy helped you prepare the most? (Look for indications of different learning styles.) Did you find you had to break the task into smaller pieces?
- Did you offer or seek help from others trying to learn the same skill? Why or why not?
- What other creative ways could we have used to help us learn together more effectively?
- What implications does this have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- People have different ways of learning: some are visual, some are auditory, and others are kinesthetic learners. Visual learners will do best to write the alphabet backwards and look at it over and over. Auditory learners will do best by trying to say, sing or just read the alphabet over and over. Kinesthetic learners will do best by pacing, doodling, or otherwise moving while they rehearse. Watch for indications of which style is adopted successfully by the participants.
- If you elect to have participants recite individually, be open to creative solutions. For example, when it is Tom's turn to recite, he may have a partner whisper the alphabet backwards as he repeats it out loud!

Variations:

- For more competitive groups, have them individually recite the alphabet backwards. You may even want to time them. If the group is larger than six to eight people, divide them into smaller groups for the final, individual reciting.
- Use the Pledge of Allegiance instead of the alphabet or the Creed.

Chopsticks

This is:

A relay race in which teams move an ice cube in and out of a cup using only a pair of chopsticks.

The Purpose is:

For participants to learn teamwork and supportive behaviors.

Materials:

- A cup for each team.
- At least one ice cube for each team.
- A pair of chopsticks for each team.

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of 3-7 members each.
- Give each team a cup with an ice cube in it and a pair of chopsticks.
- The first person on the team must remove the ice cube from the cup and place it on the table using only the chopsticks.
- The next person must put the ice cube back into the cup using only the chopsticks.
- Keep alternating until every team member has moved the ice cube in or out of the cup.
- The first team to finish the moves wins.

Ask these Questions:

- How did you move the ice cube quickly? (Pressing the ice cube against the cup, Clamping Down at the same spot wore a groove into the ice cube, etc.)
- What kept you from being even faster? (Everyone yelling at me to hurry made me drop it several times in a row, Knowing I was the last one added to my pressure, I never used chopsticks before, etc.)
- How did your teammates affect your success when you had the chopsticks? (They encouraged me even after I dropped the ice cube on the floor. They gave me types on what worked for them, etc.)
- How did they impact your sense of pressure? (He kept rushing everyone, He calmed us all down, He encouraged us even if we dropped the ice cube, etc.)
- How do your teammates affect your performance? How can they help you better?
- How can you better influence your brothers back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Inexpensive, disposable wooden chopsticks make the task slightly easier than the lacquered Japanese sticks.
- Use cups that are 8oz or larger or even small bowls.
- Decide how to handle ice cubes dropped on the floor. Can participants pick them up by hand or only use the chopsticks? Announce this rule before play begins.
- If the teams do not have the same number of participants, decide up front how many times the ice cube must go in and out of the cup. This makes the game fair for all teams.

- For highly competitive groups, you may have to state up front that moving or tipping the cup at all is not allowed.

Variations:

- Make it even more difficult by requiring participants to use their nondominant hand.
- Make it even more difficult by requiring that two people must work together – each one holding only one chopstick.
- Have a second cup for each team located several feet away from the first one. Rather than just take the ice cube out, the participant must then transfer it to the other cup.

Tablecloth

This is:

An activity in which participants collectively try to turn a tablecloth over using only their feet.

The Purpose is:

For participants to learn to work together for a solution they all must implement as a group.

Materials:

- One flannel-backed round or square tablecloth per team.

How To:

- If the group has more than 10-12 people, divide them into teams of 6-12 participants each.
- Have the teams lie on their backs in a circle with their feet in the center.
- Once they are situated, have them raise their feet.
- Drape the tablecloth over their feet so that the flannel side is facing down.
- Challenge them to turn the tablecloth over completely so that the flannel side is facing up by only the use of their feet.
- Give them 5 minutes to do this.
- If the tablecloth falls off their feet, place it back on their feet exactly as it you did to start them off (no matter how close they were to completing the task before they dropped the tablecloth.)

Ask these Questions:

- What strategies worked for you to get the tablecloth flipped over? (Talking through our plan before starting helped, Starting on one side helped, Everyone kicked hard at the same time, etc.)
- What other strategies did you try but did not work? (Tried kicking it up and flip it in mid air, Depended on participants with the longer legs, we tried to roll it over starting at one corner, etc.)
- How did you feel when I first told you what the task was? (I thought it was impossible, I thought you were kidding, I was energized and anxious to try.)
- How often do you feel that way when jobs/work tasks are assigned to you?
- What can we take from our experience here that will help us back at our chapters?

Tips for Success:

- Make sure they realize that their hands and arms may not touch the tablecloth.
- Don't give them ideas on how to accomplish the task, but do encourage them as they try different options.
- Once they understand the challenge and see the size of the tablecloth, allow them to shift their body positions if they choose. They may want to tighten or loosen the circle.

Variations:

- Have the participants sit in a circle, backs facing the center. Raise their hands overhead and make fists. Have them turn the tablecloth over without opening their fists. You may want to have them wear socks on their hands so their thumbs are neutralized.
- Use a rectangular tablecloth and see how the oblong shape affects the dynamics of who feels their effort is more or less difficult.
- Blindfold one or more participant to make the task more difficult.
- Make the task easier by placing a mark at one point on the tablecloth. Instead of turning it over, the team must move that point around in a circle until it gets back to the place it started.

Unshuffle

This is:

A game in which participants try to organize a deck of cards, but one of them is out to sabotage their efforts.

The Purpose is:

For participants to learn how destructive lack of trust can be to a team.

Materials:

- A well shuffled deck of cards for each team.
- A blank index card for each participant which is folded in half and half again.
- An extravagant prize which will be shown, but now awarded.

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of 5-7 members.
- Explain that you will distribute an index card to each participant. Announce that one of the cards for each team will have a star on it and the rest will be blank.
- The job of the person who gets the star is to sabotage the team's efforts without getting caught. If the saboteurs succeed, they will get a prize. (hold up the elaborate prize)
- Distribute all the index cards none of which has the star.
- Give the teams 8 minutes to plan how they will put their shuffled deck of cards back in order as fast as possible.
- Give each team a deck of shuffled cards and have them begin.
- Record their times.
- Have each team try to determine who the saboteur was.
- After some accusations and discussion, reveal that on one was a saboteur.

Ask these Questions:

- How did you feel working together knowing that someone was trying to sabotage you? (I was on my guard, I was watching for clues to see who it would be, I was less engaged, etc.)
- How did you decide who was the saboteur? (I was watching for someone to disagree a lot, He kept asking questions to stall us, He dropped cards more than once, etc.)
- How did you feel when someone accused you of being the saboteur? (It hurt my feelings, It made me angry, I trust that person less now, etc.)
- How often do you believe other when they tell you there is a saboteur?
- How does distrusting teammates affect your success?
- What implications does this activity have for us back at the chapter.

Tips for Success:

- Do not put a star on any of the cards, just leave them all blank. The point is to show how damaging paranoia and mistrust can be when there is clearly no one trying to do you in.
- As you distribute the index cards, make a show of being careful that the cards are not mixed up so that each group thinks that one of the cards really does have a star.
- Be explicit on how the finished deck of cards must look. Ace through King for each suit, but which suit should come first, second, third and last? It may help to post the exact order for everyone to see.
- Do not hand out the shuffled decks until after the 8-minutes planning period. Paranoia usually manifest most during this period.
- Show the prize for the saboteur and talk it up so that people are especially keen on catching the culprit.

Variations:

- Give index cards to some but not all of the teams. Compare the times of those who knew they did not have a saboteur with the times of those who thought they did (but still didn't).
- Actually put a star on card. Compare the times of those teams with saboteurs versus those without. Which had a greater impact on the team's performance, having a saboteur or merely believing one was there? If you do this, do not put out a huge prize unless you are willing to part with it.
- Repeat the activity without any threat of sabotage. Note the difference in times.

House

This is:

An activity in which small teams draw a picture of a house two lines at a time without speaking to each other.

The Purpose is:

For participants to learn to bend and adjust to other's direction, focus or influence.

Materials:

- A pen or marker for each team.
- A piece of paper for each team (letter size or larger).

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of 2-3 participants.
- Give each team one piece of paper and one pen or marker.
- Have each team draw a detailed picture of a house – two lines at a time.
- Each participant will draw two lines then pass the pen or marker to the next participant to draw another two lines.
- Repeat this order until the drawing of the house is completed. The pen may go around the team several times until everyone agrees the drawing is finished.
- Participants may not talk to anyone while planning or drawing the house.

Ask these Questions:

- How much did you lead or follow? Why? (He seemed determined to have it drawn her way, Even though he did not talk, he was directing us, I wanted to be sure it looked good and the others did not seem to care, etc.).
- To what degree did you go with the flow or how much did you resist? (I went with the flow because he was pretty determined, I did not resist because after all it was just a picture of a house and really did not matter.)
- What did you find most frustrating about the process? (That we could not talk – I did not know what they were doing when they made some pretty bizarre lines – He seemed perturbed every time I drew my lines).
- How did you deal with your frustration? (I clammed up – I shot angry glances – I just let it go – I sighed loudly – I just gave up.)
- What do you wish your partner(s) had or had not done? (He should have engaged more than just drawing random lines that meant nothing.)
- What planning, if any, happened before the first line was drawn?
- What implication does this have for us back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Monitor and help them keep the silence rule (as much fun as they are having, it will be difficult for them to remember not to comment even in a positive, reinforcing way .)
- Determine before the activity how strict you want to be. For example, is a line only straight? What if someone draws a very long line with curves and corner so basically drawing half the house with one line? Neither way is good or bad, just be clear on the rules. You may even leave such questions to the teams to decide. If so, during their decisions impacted results, and so forth.
- As they work, observe what they do that is effective and bring that out during the Debrief.
- Remember: Everyone on the team must continue to add two lines until everyone agrees the picture is finished.

Variations:

- Limit the number of lines drawn each time to one not two.
- Draw something other than a house.
- Use toothpicks or pieces of thread or string to “draw” the house.
- Use pipe cleaners to build a house than draw it.

Puzzled Vision

This is:

A competitive activity in which participants put together a puzzle, sometimes while seeing what the final picture should look like and sometimes not.

The Purpose is:

For participants to understand the value of sharing a common vision and working toward it.

Materials:

- A puzzle for each team.
- The puzzle boxes or picture of what the completed puzzles should look like.
- A prize for the winning team, optional.

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of 2-6 participants.
- Give each team all the pieces of one puzzle.
- Have team members place their pieces face up on the table and in no particular order or pattern.
- Before the teams begin moving the pieces around ask them to guess what their completed puzzle will look like.
- If they get a general idea, ask for details about the picture.
- Do not confirm or deny their guesses, just note what they guessed.
- Give half the teams a picture of their puzzle. The other half of the teams should not see the pictures or puzzles.
- Ask all the teams to build their puzzles as quickly as possible.
- Award a prize to the winning team, optional.

Ask these Questions:

- Which teams finished first? Why is that?
- How did having the picture help? (It was easier to divide the work when we had a master plan. It help us stay focused. It guided us when we were stuck.)
- What trouble did you have without the picture? (We did not know what we were doing. We got distracted and frustrated.)
- How is having the picture for the puzzle construction similar to having a shared vision for our organization? (A vision helps us stay focused. We all bring a little piece to the grand vision. The vision can't happen by the efforts of just one or two.)
- What if someone had puzzle pieces that did not belong to the puzzle? (Perhaps he doesn't fit with time vision and should go somewhere else where the vision speaks to his personal goals. Maybe he just needs help understanding the vision so he can bring the right things to the table.)
- What is OUR shared vision?
- How can we use this vision to help us be more successful?

Tips for Success:

- Puzzles should be identical or at least have the same number of pieces and the same degree of difficulty.
- Make sure the puzzles have enough pieces that the final picture is not easily determined by a few pieces held together or the activity will lose its effectiveness. If the teams have between 3-5 members, use puzzles that have 23-30 pieces. Larger teams are best with 100-piece puzzles.

Variations:

- For groups so small that only one team of 2-6 exists, run the activity twice. Time the results for comparison. First run it without letting the participants see the puzzle box. The second time, use a different but similar-sized puzzle and let participants see the box.
- Try using children's puzzles that include a frame. What does the frame represent, legal parameters, limits to an otherwise broader vision?

Failure Strategies

This is:

A creative brain-storming activity in which participants think negatively to get a positive outcome.

The Purpose is:

For participants to find new solutions to old problems by thinking differently about them.

Materials:

- No materials are necessary for this activity

How To:

- Divide the group into teams of 3-6 members.
- Present all the teams with the same organizational goal or project plan.
- Give the teams 5-minutes to come up with the three to five best ways to ensure that the goal or project fails.
- Have the teams report on their sure-fire failure strategies.

Ask these Questions:

- How easy or hard was it to come up with failure strategies? (It was easy, just be pessimistic. It was harder than we thought.)
- How did you come up with your strategies? (We looked for weak links in the logic. We looked for places we thought were iffy. We each identified one problem, we saw it and then prioritized. We put ourselves in the place of your customers.)
- What value do these failure strategies have for us now? (They help us see some holes in our planning. We can anticipate where we really need to be careful. We Can plan for problems before they take us by surprise.)
- How should we use our failure strategies to strengthen our plans or goals?

Tips for Success:

- Do not help the teams. If they struggle for a minute or two, let them. If you help them, they will follow your lead instead of taking on their own initiative.
- Be careful to not let the session turn into a gripe session or hand-wringing worry session in which the group starts to convince itself all is lost.
- Point out that this is one of the ways team members who tend to play “devil’s advocate” actually do contribute to a team’s success. Help them learn to leverage these contributions positively rather than to write the members off as “nay sayers”.

Variations:

- Give each team a different part of the project plan to find a failure strategy for.
- Add a second round. Have the teams swap their lists of failure strategies. Then have each team make these failures even stronger before discussing resolutions.

- Rather than strategies for ensuring failure, have the groups determine the best reasons to allow the project to fail. This will lead to discussions about motivation and energy toward the success of a particular effort.

Fist

This is:

A paired exercise in which one participant is challenged with opening the fist of his partner.

The Purpose is:

For participants to learn that not every interaction needs to be confrontational and not every confrontation needs to be a battle.

Materials:

- No materials are necessary for this activity.

How To:

- Have the participants pair up
- Each pair designates who is A and who is B.
- Participant A makes a fist and presents it to Participant B.
- Participant B has exactly 30-seconds to open their partner's fist.

Ask these Questions:

- How many tried to physically force the first open? (Show of hands)
- How many tried to bribe your partner? (Show of hands)
- How many tried to tickle your partner? (Show of hands)
- How many tried to manipulate your partner? (Show of hands)
- How many merely asked your partner to open their hand? (Show of hands)
- Why did some of you make this more difficult than it had to be? (I thought it was a contest. It could not be as easy as I sounded on the surface. I knew he would not cooperate if I just asked.)
- Why did you resort to force? (When you said "open their fist" I thought that meant I had to be the one to open it so I used force. I assumed you set it up so that he was supposed to try to resist my efforts. The fist looked threatening.)
- Was your reaction here similar to how you approach challenges back at the chapter?
- What did we learn here today that we can apply to problem solving back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- Do not spend a lot of time setting the parameters of this game. Do not give them time to strategize. Set it up quickly and then start the time ticking immediately. This is not a lesson in planning, you want them to react as they typically would.
- Do not allow more than 60-seconds for the activity. The shorter time frame encourages participants to react without much thinking

Variations:

- Make the setup look even more like a contest by blindfolding one of the partners.
- Instead of making a fist, have Participant A hold a penny. Participant B has 30-seconds to get the penny away from Participant A. How many used force? How many merely asked?

Secret Agenda

This is:

An activity in which participants tell a story together using bizarre words that no one else knows about.

The Purpose is:

For participants to learn to be creative in their thinking.

Materials:

- A pen and an index card for each participant.

How To:

- Give each participant a pen and an index card.
- Have participants think of a random bizarre word or phrase and write it on the card. Do not let them tell each other what they wrote.
- Have them keep the cards hidden so that no one can see them.
- Say “Once upon a time.....” and hand the story over to the first participant
- The participant adds one or two sentences to the story during which time the participant must use the word(s) he wrote on the index card.
- The story moves around the team until the last person ends it.

Ask these Questions:

- How many of you felt the person before you did not set you up very well? (Show of Hands)
- How did that make you feel? (Frustrated, Annoyed, Challenged)
- How difficult or easy was it to work your word in when it was time? (It was hard because the story had nothing to do with the word I chose and could not figure out how to incorporate it into the story. It was tough because I felt my word would change the course of the story and it was going well up to now.)
- How jarring was it when a word was used that did not fit the story? (It felt forced. It stopped the flow of everything. It felt self-serving and did not help the story at all.)
- How often do we find ourselves or others pushing a secret agenda, forcing something in that does not fit?
- What implication does this have for us back on the job when we encountered secret agendas?

Tips for Success:

- When you ask them to write bizarre words or phrases on their cards, do not tell them what will happen or how the words will be used.
- Encourage the story to move quickly. Do not labor over a great story line or it gets tedious and people will lose interest.
- Encourage participants to speak loudly and clearly.

Variations:

- Have participants swap cards before they start the story. Now they are forcing words into the story that someone else gave them. It may be even more difficult. The writer of the card will get an extra charge when he or she hears his or her bizarre word(s) used by someone else.
- Make it even more challenging. After each participant adds his or her lines, have the group guess which of the word(s) used was on the index card. This will force the speaker to add even more bizarre words to the story to cover up the one he has chosen.
- Limit the words and phrases on the cards to things related to your organization.
- Make the story go around the circle twice. Only once must the card be used during their next turn, the participant can say anything. Can participants guess which times the cards were or were not used.

Statue Maker

This is:

An activity in which participants use their creativity to create a statue using themselves as the medium.

The Purpose is:

For participants to learn how originality and creativity can be enhanced but that they can also be stifled by too much input.

Materials:

- No materials are necessary for this activity.

How To:

- Take everyone out of the room and line them up.
- The first three people in line come into the room.
- Tell them to pose and become a human statue of three people playing football.
- When they are in position, invite the next three people in line to enter the room.
- Explain that these participants are in the post of three people playing football but you think the statue could be improved.
- The three newcomers have 30-seconds to make two adjustments to each of the participants' poses to make them look more like football players in action. They do this by directing the statues to move their body parts (i.e., raise an arm, tilt the head, position a knee on the floor).
- When finished, have the three newcomers replace the original statues, adopting the new poses identically.
- Invite three more people into the room and repeat Steps 5-7 until everyone has had input into the statue.

Ask these Questions:

- How did you feel when asked to improve the statue? (I was glad because I could not tell what they were supposed to be doing until you told us. I did not want to be critical of what they had done. I could not think of any way to improve it.)
- When you had to improve the statue, did you work together? (No, we all fixed a different person. Yes, we quickly saw that all three statues needed to look more excited. No, I pretty much told the other two how to fix things.)
- If we put the original three participants in their original pose next to the finished statue, how different would they look?
- What were some of the most original changes made? (Moving "Statues" around from their original position. The "Statue" originally passing a ball is now receiving it or has been turned into a referee.)
- How often do we feel that having input means we must change something even if it is already good as is?
- How can we use what we learned about creativity back at the chapter?

Tips for Success:

- For smaller groups, make the statue with just two people at a time. For larger groups, make the statue with four or more people at a time. It is best to have at least four iterations of the statue before the Debrief. The more iterations, the richer the discussion afterwards.
- Do not give any hints or help to the participants as they improve the statue. Let them figure it out for themselves.
- As more participants work on the statue, make sure those already in the room stay quiet. Remind them that there will be plenty of time to discuss things after everyone has had a change. (Have them stifle their snickers as some “improvements” make the statue look like it did just a few iterations ago!)

Variations:

- The subject of the statue can be anything such as: Performing an opera, Taking a small child to the zoo, Re-creating a scene from the Wizard of Oz, Riding an amusement park ride, Walking on an icy sidewalk, Enjoying a day at the beach.
- For groups comfortable with touching, have them actually move the statues’ body parts rather than just a verbal direction.

The Swamp

This is:

An activity in which teams are challenged with moving themselves across a room on top of flip chart paper to avoid stepping in “the swamp”.

The Purpose is:

For participants to learn creative problem solving as well as work together as a team.

Materials:

- A pad of flip chart paper

How To:

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Have the teams go to opposite corners of the room.
- Give each team half as many pieces of flip chart paper as there are team members, plus one.
- Have the teams place their papers on the floor so that the entire team is standing on the paper.
- No one may touch the floor again, it is a swamp. The goal is for each team to get all of its members across the room to the opposite corner (the teams will be switching places) without any team member ever touching “the swamp”.
- Give the teams 10-12 minutes to accomplish the task.

Ask these Questions:

- How did you get across the room? (We had everyone stay back while he took two sheets of paper and moved one person across at a time. We moved everyone en masse as we shifted the paper underneath us.)
- Did you cooperate with the other team? Why or why not? (No, you did not say we had to. Yes, we realized that they had a similar goal and we could leverage all the paper better if we cooperated. No, we wanted to win.)
- What about my instructions made you think this was a contest to be won? (I guess we just assumed. You told us what the goal was and we thought that meant we had to do it faster than the other team.)
- What kinds of assumptions are we making at our chapters that get in the way of truly creative solutions?
- How can we avoid such assumptions and be more creative?

Tips for Success:

- Plain flip chart paper works better than the kind with the sticky strip on the back.
- Do not help the teams find solutions. Let them wrestle with the problem and come up with their own solutions.
- Be sure not to call this a “race” or anything else that encourages them to compete with each other.
- Watch for the teams to compete or cooperate with each other. If you set it up properly, most teams will assume it is a contest when it in fact is not.
- What for self-imposed limitations as well as creative solutions. For example: “Who said you could not rip the paper up?” One of the best solutions is to rip it into small pieces that fit under everyone’s shoes. Then each team member can “skate” across the swamp quickly and easily to the other side.

Variations:

- Make it a competition between the two teams, explicitly.
- Divide the group into four teams, one in each corner of the room. Make them cross to the opposite corner. The confusion in the middle will offer great material to discuss during the Debrief.
- Make one or more of the team members blindfolded.
- Give fewer flip chart papers (half the number in the group – minus one).

Garbage

This is:

An activity in which participants write down a problem they are struggling with and then get help from others on how to approach it.

The Purpose is:

For participants to help each other think outside the box to find solutions.

Materials:

- A piece of paper for each participant.
- A pen or pencil for each participant.
- A clean wastebasket or similar sized receptacle.

How To:

- On a piece of paper, participants describe a problem, concern or issue they want help with.
- Participants then crumple up their papers and throw them into a clean wastebasket or other receptacle.
- Ask someone to pick one crumpled paper from the wastebasket and toss it to someone else.
- The recipient of the crumpled paper forms a problem solving team by selecting two others with whom he would like to work. The team is formed before he or she reads the paper.
- Repeat these steps until everyone is in a problem solving team.
- Each three-person team now has 3-minutes to come up with a solutions, ideas or suggestions for what is on the paper.
- After 3-minutes, each team takes 1 minute to report on its issue and suggested solution.

Ask these Questions:

- How many of you got one or more ideas that will truly help you with the problem you wrote on your paper? (Show of hands)
- Why did you choose who you did for your team? (I knew whatever the issue, he would have good ideas.)
- How did you feel having to give advice on a problem that was not yours? (Who am I to help this person? I do not feel confident with my lack of understanding? I felt ready to pitch in and help as best I could.)
- Why don't we ask each other for help more often? (I do not want to impose on others. I figure they do not know my work well enough to help. I am supposed to find solutions.)
- How can we encourage each other to seek help more often back at our chapters?
- What should we do about the crumpled papers we did not get to today?

Tips for Success:

- Prevent participants from being on a team to address the paper they wrote.
- Encourage people to write clearly so that the comments can remain anonymous.
- Offer a few examples of what may be appropriate to write on the papers if the participants need help getting started.
- Steer the conversations away from becoming “gripe sessions” by encouraging a focus on solutions.
- You may want to use more creative or more random ways to have the teams form.
- Encourage the problem-solving teams to force themselves to come up with ideas or suggestions even if they do not have enough information. This is not about solving the problem perfectly. It is about prompting creative thinking for the problem’s owner.
- Discourage the problem owner from criticizing any help they get from the problem-solving teams. Their responses should be limited to “thank you”.

Variations:

- Further drive the activity by suggestion limits on what to write on the paper.
- Do not solve the problems at all. Use the wastebasket as a “holding tank” for the problems and encourage participants to let the problems sit there during the meeting or training session so the participants can focus on the topic at hand.
- For major problems or major help, have the teams take the papers with them and send a report back to the facilitator at a later date.

Positive Envelopes

This is:

An activity in which participants give each other positive feedback in writing.

The Purpose is:

For participants to give and receive recognition and appreciate to and from each other.

Materials:

- One envelope for each participant
- A pen or pencil for each participant
- Index Cards.

How To:

- Have the group sit in a large circle.
- Give each participant as many index cards as there are total participants in the room.
- Have participants write their own name in large letters on the front of their envelope. Then have them pass their envelope to the person on their right.
- Each participant thinks of something positive to say about the person whose envelope they are now holding. They write it down and put the index card in the envelope.
- After 1 minute, participants again pass envelopes to the right.
- Repeat these steps until the envelope has made its way around the room and back to its owner.
- Give the participants a few moments to read through their comment cards.

Ask these Questions:

- How difficult or easy was it to give each other recognition? Was it easier to write it than to say it?
- Did the fact that it was written make it more or less difficult? (It was easier because I did not have to see their reaction. I could just write. It was harder to come up with just the right words because it was written and may be kept for a while.)
- How does the recognition you get from your peers?
- What if we spoke this kind of feedback to each other more often?

Tips for Success:

- Encourage participants to write the first thing that comes to mind. Usually it is the most appropriate.
- Discourage participants from helping each other think of something to write.

Variations:

- Be more specific about what the comments should reference – teamwork, leadership qualities, contributions to the fraternity, etc.
- Have the participants try to guess who wrote which comments.
- Have the participants post their cards on a larger piece of paper so that everyone can see and appreciate.

Rearrange the Classroom

This is:

A change in format to what participants are used to.

The Purpose is:

To help participants realize that effective leading has to be a collaborative effort and not just one leader pushing the others in the same direction.

Materials:

Chairs

How To:

Prior to class, set the chairs up in the old “traditional” classroom row style. Except, that you should set your stage (podium, flip chart, etc.) in the back of the class. Start your presentation (you will be behind them, facing their backs).

Ask these Questions:

- How can we rearrange the room so that real learning, communication, and teamwork can take place?

Tips for Success:

Explain to them that this is how a lot of change is implemented in organizations. The leaders get behind their employees and attempt to “push” them into change, and the attempt to change is about as successful as trying to conduct a class this way.

Also, point out that this is how a lot of traditional organizations are set up, in nice even rows (departments/committees), where it is hard to communicate and learn from each other. But, real teams develop when we break out of our boxes and design organizations that have cross functional teams working with each other. Depending upon your learners, you might have to give them a few pointers to get started, but then get out of the way.

Variations:

N/A

Origami

This is:

An activity in which participants follow instructions to fold a sheet of paper while keeping their eyes closed.

The Purpose is:

Participants see how instructions can be interpreted differently, and thus how clear our communications need to be.

Materials:

Blank 8 ½-by-11-inch sheets of paper for each participant.

How To:

Tell the participants the following: “We are going to play a game that will show us some important things about communication. Pick up your sheet of paper and hold it in front of you. Now, close your eyes and follow the directions I will give you—and no peeking! Participants cannot ask questions.

Rules:

Give the following directions, carrying out the directions with your own sheet of paper and pause after each instruction to give the group time to comply:

- The first thing to advise is to fold your sheet of paper in half.
- Now tear off the upper right-hand corner.
- Fold it in half again and tear off the upper left hand corner of the sheet.
- Fold it in half again. Now tear off the lower right-hand corner of the sheet.
- After the tearing is complete, say something like “Now open your eyes, and let’s see what you have.

Ask these Questions:

- Did everyone come up with the same end result?
 - Why or why not?
- How would the results have been different if your eyes were left open?
- How did you feel as I was giving the instructions?
- How could my instructions have been improved?
- What implication does this have for us when relating to the fraternity?

Tips for Success:

- Give the instructions slowly and deliberately. You are not trying to lose them or trick them. Repeat as necessary/
- Do not correct anyone as he is folding. There is no right answer. The instructions are ambiguous on purpose.
- Watch to see if anyone opens his eyes.
- Then, lead into a discussion on the need for two-way communication in the brotherhood and workplace.

Variations:

- Invite participants to give directions to the group. See if they can accomplish more consistent results after your debrief.
- Allow the participants to keep their eyes open, but make the folding more complex. Use origami paper, and give the instructions for folding it into an origami shape.

\$10 Dollar Auction

This is:

An activity in which participants can become excited and motivated by competition.

The Purpose is:

To help participants realize that competing is not always the best option.

Materials:

\$10 Bill, Gavel

How To:

To highlight the pros and cons of internal competition by auctioning off a \$10 bill.

Rules:

The bidding begins at \$5, and yes, you really will be giving out the money, no matter how low the highest bid. The game continues until you've called out "Going, going, gone" and slammed down your gavel.

Ask these Questions:

- What made this game exciting?
- Why were the high-bidders willing to go over and beyond the actually monetary value of the money?
- How effective is competition at raising energy and morale?
- What are the possible downsides to excessive competition?

Tips for Success:

Competition is an almost sure-fire method for releasing adrenaline and getting people's blood rushing – particularly in America's highly competitive culture and society. But competition has a price. In our effort to beat out our rivals, we can easily fall into behavior that disregards cost and time efficiency. Ten dollars has a clear monetary value of exactly \$10 in an even-tempered, thoughtful business environment. Once competition is added to the mix, however, the atmosphere becomes more charged and the opportunity increases for hasty and imprudent decision-making. A \$10 bill, in this short-sighted, antagonistic environment, now gets purchased at \$15, or \$20, or even \$30! People lose sight of what a \$10 bill really is; namely, a \$10 bill! This fun little exercise is quite effective for demonstrating the benefits of internal competition (i.e. brotherhood enthusiasm, energy, adrenaline) and the possible downsides of an adversarial environment (i.e. fiscal irresponsibility and short-sidedness).

Variations:

In almost all cases, the bidding will continue beyond the \$10 threshold, with much excitement and high spirits. To ensure this result and to ratchet up the energy even higher, conduct the auction again, this time announcing that the two highest bidders (the winner AND the runner-up) must BOTH pay out their bids, regardless of the winner.

Marooned

This is:

An activity in which participants learn about each other's values and they observe each other's problem solving styles.

The Purpose is:

To help participants learn to work together for the greater good of the group while also expressing their own individual feelings and perspectives.

Materials:

None

How To:

You are marooned on an island. Your objective is to choose five (you can use a different number, such as seven, depending upon the size of each group) items you would bring with you if you knew there was a chance that you might be stranded.

Rules:

Note that each team is only allowed five items per team, not per person.
Each team must discuss and defend their choices with the whole group.

Ask these Questions:

- Was the object(s) you wanted selected by the group?
 - For those of you whose objects weren't selected, how did it make you feel?
- How did you all determine what objects should and should not be brought?
- What might this activity symbolize within our own fraternal experiences?

Tips for Success: This activity helps members learn about other's values and problem solving styles, and promotes teamwork. The value of the items selected to bring should be discussed and compared.

Variations:

N/A

“All IN”

This is:

An activity in which participants learn to work together by creatively solving a problem.

The Purpose is:

To have participants start thinking outside of the box on how to solve a problem that seems impossible at first.

Materials:

A full size bed or dining room table sheet

How To:

Take the large sheet and spread it on the floor. Have all the New Members stand on the sheet together. Once they have done this fold the sheet to make it smaller. Again, have all the New Members get on the sheet. Continue this process. Eventually, the sheet will be so small that the New Members will need to use a great deal of cooperation, teamwork, and ingenuity to get the whole class on the sheet without anyone falling out/off the sheet.

Rules: If anyone steps off of the sheet, the entire group must start over from the last phase (fold) they were on.

Ask these Questions:

- What was challenging about this task?
- What did you think as each time the sheet had to be folded again?
- How many times did you think the sheet could be folded before you all started?
- Were you surprised by how many times the sheet could be folded?
- What creative strategies did you use to help you achieve the task?
- What might this activity symbolize within our own fraternal experiences?

Tips for Success: The group should identify the strengths and weaknesses of working together as a large team. Focus, communication, dependability, and teamwork should all be talked about. In addition the facilitator may mention that the in small and tight situations, its important that the team gets close together to strategize the best way to handle the situation.

Variations:

You can add limitations to certain participants (can't see, can't use a certain body part, can't talk, etc) so that others have to step up and lead.

Minefield

This is:

An activity in which participants learn to hone their listening and communicating skills while also building trust within each other.

The Purpose is:

To help participants understand precise instructions and clear communication is essential for progress.

Materials:

Blindfolds, A bunch or random stuff (trash, chairs, balls, etc) to serve as “mines”.

How To:

Have the Brotherhood and New Members discuss things that are detrimental to functioning as a group. For each characteristic/action, throw an object into the playing space, the “minefield.” Have Big and Little Brothers pair up. One brother is blindfolded at one end of the field. The non-blindfolded brothers stand at the opposite end of the field and try to talk their partners through the minefield without running into any of the obstacles.

Rules:

If any member touches any of the obstacles they must re-start!

Ask these Questions:

- For those who were blindfolded, how did you feel when you first began the activity?
- For those who were directing, how easy or hard was it to explain your instructions to your partner?
- What made this activity challenging?
- What might this activity symbolize within our own fraternal experience?

Tips for Success: All individuals have certain strengths and weaknesses such as the ability to see the full picture, communicate effectively, and work towards specific goals. This exercise can be related to life, because many times in life many obstacles and challenges are thrown your way and through hard work and focus you must maneuver your way around them.

Variations:

N/A

Family Tree Games

This is:

An activity in which participants learn family trees within the fraternity while also having a fun time bonding with each other.

The Purpose is:

To have New Members learn which brothers belong to certain families while building a sense of camaraderie with their own family.

Materials:

None

How To:

The New Member class updates the chapter family tree and splits the family tree into teams. The New Member class chooses an event (sports, darts, pool, paintball, etc) that the “family tree branches” will compete in.

Ask these Questions:

- What did you learn from this activity?
- What can you take away from this experience?

Tips for Success: This educates the New Members on the structure of the family tree, shows how they fit into the history of the chapter, and has them compete on a team WITH Brothers not AGAINST Brothers.

Variations:

Between brothers, could have them form teams by the New Member class and compete in “Class Games” in a similar fashion.

Hole in One

This is:

An activity in which participants learn to work together and stay accountable to the process they set.

The Purpose is:

Have the team of participants transport a golf ball from one point to another with segmented pieces of PVC pipe.

Materials:

Baseball size PVC pipe, 2 golf balls

How To:

Have a bunch of 18 inch long 2 inch wide strips of PVC pipe cut in half. After doing this you can have brothers and New Member's team up to get a golf ball to a certain location/hole in the least amount of time. With a team of about 10 individuals they will work as a team to lead the golf ball down the PVC pipe alleyway.

Rules:

If the golf ball falls out of the pipe the team must start over. Teams are not allowed to interfere with each other.

Ask these Questions:

- What can you take away from this experience pertaining to keeping pace and building and maintaining momentum?
- What made this activity challenging?
- What might this activity symbolize within our own fraternal experiences?

Tips for Success: This is a very fun interactive way to have brothers and new members challenge themselves both physically and mentally. After the exercise have the team compare all of the skills that were used in the activity to life and social skills. Things such as time management, communication, teamwork, determination, focus, goals, and delegation are all topics that can be compared to this activity.

Variations:

N/A

Magic Carpet

This is:

An activity in which participants have to creatively solve a problem and then jointly execute the solution.

The Purpose is:

Get participants to analyze their situation and then come up with a plan of action that can help all team members succeed in completing the task.

Materials:

4' x 5' piece of tarp or plastic cloth per 8-12 people.

How To: Have multiple sizes of carpet (tarp/cloth) available. Select a large piece and have all group members stand on the carpet. Their goal is to turn the carpet over without touching the ground surrounding the carpet.

Rules: All participants must maintain contact with the tarp/cloth at all times. This eliminates the option of carrying participants on shoulders and other balance related concerns. If anyone of the group members steps off the carpet, the group must start over. If the carpet is large and the group easily gets through the first piece, then you will provide them with a smaller piece.

Ask these Questions:

- What was your role in regard to coming up with a solution?
- Were you active or passive?
- Who did the most work?
- What might this activity symbolize within our own fraternal experiences?

Tips for Success:

If you exceed 12 people it will become more and more difficult and then eventually impossible to complete the objective so be mindful of group size.

Variations:

You can add limitations to certain participants (can't see, can't use a certain body part, can't talk, etc) so that others have to step up and lead.

Egg Drop

This is:

An activity in which participants work together in small teams to build a contraption.

The Purpose is:

Have participants see that unconventional methods can be used to solve problems (i.e. using the random objects to create the contraption).

Materials:

Random objects (cotton swabs, tampons, rubber bands, small boxes, toilet paper, tape, etc) and eggs (a couple of eggs per group).

How To:

Big and little brothers are teamed together to create a contraption from the random objects provided to them that will protect the egg when it is dropped. The big/little brother teams will compete against each other when the time limit expires.

If multiple eggs stay intact after first drop, second, third, and subsequent drops can occur from higher distances.

Rules:

A time limit for creation of the contraption should be imposed. All random objects given must be used.

Ask these Questions:

- What was challenging about this activity?
- How was this challenge comparable to real life?
- What was each team member's role when creating and implementing the plan?
 - Example: Did one think of the idea while the other put it together?
- What might this activity symbolize within our own fraternal experiences?

Tips for Success: This activity helps to promote strong big/little brother relations. The egg drop also promotes teamwork, innovative ideas, and outside the box thought process.

Variations:

N/A

Blocks of Success

This is:

An activity in which participants create a goal and then work together creatively to achieve the goal.

The Purpose is:

To have participants come together and rely on each other to complete the activity.

Materials:

Many 1ft square blocks (1 block per person you have participating)

How To:

Have New Member class stand on the blocks provided (for at least 3 seconds) without falling off the blocks.

After the class has stood on the blocks provided for at least 3 seconds they have successfully passed that part and so a block is removed and the group is asked to do the challenge again but with one fewer block this time. Continue taking away blocks after each successful attempt.

Rules: Before starting the exercise, ask the group to set a number of blocks as a goal in which they want to have the entire group stand on. If a member falls off while attempting to stand on the blocks (before three seconds have elapsed, then they group must all come off the blocks and reassemble themselves again on the blocks.

Ask these Questions:

- What was your original goal?
- Were you surprised with how your group performed?
- Was this activity harder or easier than it originally seemed? Why?
- What might this activity symbolize within our own fraternal experiences?

Tips for Success: Normally the group will be able to stand on about half as many blocks as they start with depending on the size of the group. This activity promotes team development, trust, persistence, goal setting, etc.

Variations:

You can add limitations to certain participants (can't see, can't use a certain body part, can't talk, etc) so that others have to step up and lead.

Human Knot

This is:

An activity in which participants work together to untangle themselves.

The Purpose is:

To observe that various group members need to lead and to follow at different times. Also, that communication must be very clear and that sometimes to achieve a goal, we may need to step outside of our comfort zone.

Materials:

None

How To:

Have your New Member class get in a circle and put all their hands in the middle. Once all hands are in the middle then the facilitator will ask the group to grab different brothers' hands across from them (can't be people beside each other). The facilitator will also inform the group that they are not allowed to let go of the hands after they grab them. The team will then proceed to find a way to completely untangle themselves without breaking grips. Once the activity is complete the groups will stand in a circle and be completely untangled. There are four possible solutions: a circle, two separate circles, two interlocking circles, or two circles with an overhand knot in it. If none of those outcomes happen then the facilitator should start the activity again but have them grab different people's hands.

Rules: Once participants lock hands with another, they are not allowed to let go to perform a movement.

Ask these Questions:

- Was this challenging? – Why/why not?
- What was most frustrating about this exercise?
- How did you approach the task?
 - Act first, think second? The other way around?
- How do we approach problems in our chapter?
- Was everyone in the group heard?
- Who was the immediate leader? – Did he continue to lead throughout the exercise?
- Were any good ideas lost?
- What did you learn from yourself as a result of this exercise?

Tips for Success:

The objective of this activity is for individuals to examine communication and teamwork in a group setting. There should be one observer for each group to listen to statements, watch for the natural leaders, watch the members who don't give input, and oversee the general group dynamic.

Variations:

You can add limitations to certain participants (can't see, can't use a certain body part, can't talk, etc) so that others have to step up and lead.

The Web of Brotherhood

This is:

An activity in which participants work together to creatively solve a problem/

The Purpose is:

To get participants from one side of the web to the other through creative problem solving, clear communication, and team work.

Materials:

Rope/thick string and small bells to be attached to rope – this activity should be done between two trees or poles between 10-20 feet apart.

How To:

Make a web using the rope with many different size holes between the poles. If you so choose, you can even weave in the letter of Pi Lambda Phi into the web. Once the web has been completed, you will tie bells all over the web so they will sound if the rope is hit. The objective of this exercise is to get the entire group from one side to the other without hitting the rope. Eventually the group will strategize the best possible solution to get everyone through the web.

Rules: The first person may not run and jump over the rope. He may not exit head first for safety reasons. The last person may not jump the fence, or otherwise exit under their power alone – encourage group work. When going over the rope, participants may NOT touch the rope, the connecting trees/poles, nor break the plane under the rope. If the bell is sounds then that person must go back to the original side and start again. (could make rule where if one hits the bell then they must all go back and start again)

The facilitators MUST emphasize the importance of spotting and personal safety.

Spotting rules:

- If they begin to step on the backs of others, remind them to not step directly on the spine or the neck of another participant. Instruct them to step on the shoulder and hips, if necessary.
- Only one participant will be moved at a time.
- The facilitator spots the first two participants over the fence, and then the groups are fully responsible for spotting. The facilitator will also spot the last participant out.
- The facilitator does not physically support the participants unless necessary in the instance of a fall.
- Spot until the person in transit is completely through the web and on the ground.
- Be careful to spot the head and shoulder all the time.
- Do not let someone be a “step” for too long.
- Heads and shoulders must always be above the feet.

Ask these Questions:

- Was the group challenged by this exercise?
- Was communication strained? Why?
- How did the group accept individual ideas?
- Who led or followed during this exercise? Why?
- What type of positive or negative reinforcement did you receive?
- What would you do differently in your next attempt?
- How would you work better as a team?

Tips for Success:

This is a great activity to start the new member period off. They will develop a strong team, strategize together, and learn that they need to have one leader directing the actions of the group. If for some reason the event is taking an unusual amount of time 1 1/5 hr plus then you may want to allow the group 1 or 2 touches of the string. While this event is going on the entire brotherhood will be surrounding the web, watching and supporting the success of the new member class.

Variations:

You can add limitations to certain participants (can't see, can't use a certain body part, can't talk, etc) so that others have to step up and lead.

Human Handshake

This is:

An activity in which participants set a goal and then work to refine their process of achieving the goal.

The Purpose is:

Send a signal through the group without talking as quickly as possible.

Materials:

None

How To:

All participants stand in a circle and are asked to grab each others hands. Once this is done, the facilitator informs the group that they will squeeze their right hand every time they feel their left hand squeezed. A group leader is assigned and starts off by squeezing his right hand. Because the group is interconnected each brother will have their hand squeezed.

Before the activity begins the facilitator asks the group to set a goal of how long it will take to pass the squeeze all the way around the circle. The group will set a goal and work until they achieve it. Normally the group takes 3-4 tries to finally reach their goal. A group of about 20 can easily reach a goal of 4 seconds.

Rules:

Participants can't squeeze their right hand until their left hand has been squeezed by another.

Ask these Questions:

- What make this activity challenging?
- What is the significance of waiting for the person to our left to squeeze our hand before we can then squeeze the person's to our right?
- What might this activity symbolize within our own fraternal experiences?

Tips for Success:

This activity is a great team building, communication, and goal setting demonstration. This example shows that sometimes a chain of events or actions has to occur for the final product to exist. If even one of the participants chooses to not squeeze their right hand after having their left hand squeezed, then the group will not be able to finish. This corresponds with how in the fraternity everyone needs to fulfill their role for the chapter to be its best and achieve its goals.

Variations:

N/A

Walking the Plank

This is:

An activity in which participants have to all move in unison to have success with this task.

The Purpose is:

To help participants see that if not everyone is on the same page (moving at the same time) the group may struggle to move forward. The ability to move forward together successfully comes from a defined plan and clear communication.

Materials:

1. Two wooden planks 16 ft long by 6 in. wide (sizes can vary)
2. Very thick rope (amount will vary based on need)

Construction

1. Drill five proportionate holes down the length of the 16ft piece of wood
2. Tie about 10 ft. of rope in each one of the drilled holes around the wood so that you will be able to pick up the wood by lifting up the rope

How To:

Divide the participants into teams of five. You will then have each team stand on the planks of wood. They are given a certain distance to race to and they must all stay on the wood. The group will lift up the wood with the attached rope.

Rules:

If a team member falls off the wooden planks the entire team must go back to the beginning point and start over. If racing, they could be assessed penalty seconds.

Ask these Questions:

- What made this activity challenging?
- How did you overcome this challenge?
- What might this activity symbolize within our own fraternal experiences?

Tips for Success: This is a very hard activity because as they will soon discover, every member of the team has to lift up their foot at the same time while lifting on the rope. Each group will compete to get the best time. This activity promotes team building, communication, and an outside the box approach to accomplishing goals.

Variations:

- Once a group becomes efficient with this challenge, the facilitator can have them move sideways and/or backward.
- Participants who are normally more vocal can be “muted” and told they cannot contribute – this forces other to step up and lead.

- Individual participants can be blindfolded which forces them to focus more on the listening piece of this challenge.

Invisible Chairs

This is:

An activity in which participants have to show trust in each other.

The Purpose is:

To help participants see that if everyone sticks together, the group can maintain itself even through tough situations.

Materials:

1. 4 chairs without side arm rests for each team.

How To:

Divide teams into groups of four. Bring chairs together in a square face them inward.

Rules:

The players then sit across the chairs so that the backing of the chair is to their side. Participants will sit so that their legs are always behind the back of another participant. Facilitator then instructs the players to lean back so that their backs then come down on the legs/lap of one of the other members of the team. The Facilitator will instruct the members to relax but tighten their core muscles because he will be soon pulling away the chairs.

Once all participants have done this, the Facilitator will then slowly pull out the chairs one by one and the group will be able to support itself. The Facilitator should let the group stand on their own for a few seconds. Then have each participant put their outside hand down on the ground as they get themselves out of the position.

Ask these Questions:

- What made this activity challenging?
- How did you overcome this challenge?
- What might this activity symbolize about our brotherhood and our fraternity?

Tips for Success:

Make sure you explain the directions carefully. You may want to try this with other brothers separately first to ensure success.

Variations:

N/A

Maze

This is:

An activity in which participants have to learn to pay attention to detail as they complete this task.

The Purpose is:

To help participants see that if even within a team, everyone has a responsibility and that we can't rely on others to do the work for us.

Materials:

- Pre-laid maze of tape potentially on a tarp or bed sheet – 1 foot by 1 foot squares

How To:

- Have group get through the maze without making any mistakes
- The maze has been pre-determined and the facilitator is the only one who knows it
- The whole team must get through the maze one at a time
- If anyone makes a mistake the whole group must start over.
- When a mistake or a misstep occur, the participant should leave the maze
- There is to be NO COMMUNICATING between team members
- No maps or markers can be used to indicate the pattern
- The group must establish a batting order and stick to it.

Misstep

When any group member fails to discover the next unknown step in the pattern through the maze. There is no penalty for a misstep, but the member making the misstep must move to the back of the line.

Mistake

When any group member steps into any maze square that is not part of the pattern that has already been learned by other group members. If a mistake is made, the batting order must start over again including any member who has already successfully completed the maze.

Ask these Questions:

- What were the most challenging aspects of this exercise? How did you overcome the challenges?
- How did you feel when you were inside the maze versus waiting to enter?
- How were you able to contribute if you were not the person in the maze?
- How can you connect the concept of mistakes and missteps to the fraternity experience?
- What's the significance of the predetermined path? Do we have predetermined paths within our chapters?
- Who is holding us accountable to following the path? Ideally? In reality?

- Why is it often that a fraternity that solves a problem in the organization may see the problem emerge again 5 years later? Can this be prevented?
- What significance will you take from this activity?

Tips for Success:

Participants may become frustrated with each other when “mistakes” are made. Praise participants for doing a good job as a team and continue to encourage them on by remaining positive.

Variations:

Could keep track of time needed to complete activity with a stopwatch.

Staying In Balance

This is:

An activity in which participants are asked to balance themselves on a balance board.

The Purpose is:

To help participants see that having balance in their lives is important and that often times brothers and friends may see us sliding out of balance and their help can enable us to get back to that healthy balance.

Materials:

1. Indo Board or balance board.

How To:

- Facilitator should demonstrate how to achieve balance on the board first
- Using the Indo Board, each member must achieve a state of balance for at least 5 seconds
- Make sure safety is considered and spotters are encircled around the participant to assist

Ask these Questions:

- What was most challenging about this task?
- For those who struggled initially, how did you overcome the challenge? How can this be related to fraternity life?
- For those who found balance right away, how did you help others who struggled?
- Does this activity resemble anything that occurs in the chapter setting or in life?

Tips for Success: This is a challenging activity and safety must be considered first and foremost. Have spotters around the participant trying to find balance so that in case he falls off he can be assisted. Also have the facilitator give feedback and suggestions both before and during the attempt to balance. Encourage other team members to give advice and feedback too. For someone who is struggling initially, consider letting them put their hands on the facilitator's shoulders so get comfortable with being on the board. Once comfort is established they can remove their hands from the facilitator's shoulders.

Variations:

N/A