

# GROUP DYNAMICS - INPUT

## INTRODUCTION

Group dynamics are behavioural patterns and psychological processes that occur within a group or between groups that describe the way groups and individuals act and react to changing circumstances.

Researchers have studied groups' behavior for a long time and identified several interesting and defining characteristics of the way groups form and interact. At the core of their studies was the concept that groups possess "phenomena" that did not exist in an individual (Wilhelm Wundt) and hence cannot be understood by merely studying their individual members. "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts". The term "group dynamics" was later first used by social psychologist and change management expert Kurt Lewin who is commonly identified as the initiator of the scientific study of groups.

Given that it is not possible to draw from the entire literature and research, we include in the following pages high-level insights in the field of group dynamics that could prove useful for leadership. Note that this section is quite longer (14 pages) than the previous ones.

## MAIN IDEAS

### Understanding groups

A sound understanding of group dynamics is particularly relevant to successful leadership and management work for a variety of reasons. Studying group dynamics helps in:

- understanding how groups and teams form, develop, and mature, thus allowing leadership to adapt interventions accordingly to each stage,
- understanding how members in a group relate to one another and to the authority of the group,
- identifying the various roles played by members, thus allowing to select strong future leaders that benefit the organization as a whole,
- noticing factors and behaviors that influence the functioning of group and managing them to maximize productivity and cohesion.

Each group culture or style of interaction is unique to its specific context and circumstances. Group dynamics cover a wide range of dimensions covering the group structure and composition, the group context and environment, as well as group processes. The following page outlines key basic components that could be the focus of group dynamics.

The suggested dimensions are meant as a set of helpful directions which are by no mean exhaustive. (Refer to the resources section and literature on the field for a deeper exploration of the subject).

## Group dynamics cover a wide range of dimensions, including:

- Group size
- Group formation, maturity and developmental stage (and the underlying needs in each phase)
- Group context and environment
- Group purpose
- Group members resources (knowledge, abilities, skills)
- Group members personality (family of origin) and needs
- Group roles
- Group operating style
- Group norms (accepted behaviors and sanctions)
- Information sharing
- Leadership style
- Power dynamics and influence
- Decision making style
- Communication style
- Expertise within the group
- Group productivity and task focus
- Work avoidance and social loafing
- Group cohesiveness
- Social tension, conflicts and conflict resolution style
- Group identity and members' self-identification
- Non-verbal behaviors
- Silences
- Proxemics (use of physical space, distances between members as they interact)
- Alliances within the group
- Divergence of thinking and group think
- Regulating behaviors, the way the group keeps equilibrium

While it may be impossible for the group leader to pay attention to all of these dimensions and notice how people are behaving at any given moment, it is particularly helpful to increase the group's awareness of the above themes. The role of leaders in groups becomes much more manageable when they invite group members to monitor their own dynamics (as well as that of others) and engage in a discussion to share observations and make sense of what is happening. The following pages will briefly explore some of the above themes.

## Interpersonal needs driving group dynamics

Beyond the physiological needs (for food and safety), human beings have interpersonal needs that strongly drive their behaviors especially in group settings. (William Schutz, 1967,1973). Three basic interpersonal human needs have been generally recognized to drive group dynamics. Group members have different levels of desire to express these needs as well as receive them from others:

1. The need to belong, or to be involved (**Inclusion**):
  - Am I "in" or "out" of the group?
  - Can I drive the inclusion of others?
2. The need to have a voice to influence (**Control**):
  - Am I at the top or bottom of the influence/power ladder?
  - How important is it to me to be in charge? Or "not managed/controlled"?
  - How much does my voice count? Can I provide structure and guide decisions in my group? Am I satisfied with the responsibilities/power I have?
  - How much do I desire to lead and influence decision-making in the group?
  - How much do I need (and expect) others to lead and provide structure?
3. The need to care and feel cared for (**Affection**):
  - Am I close or far from group members?
  - How important is it to me to experience closeness and encourage it in the group?
  - Am I liked enough? Am I seen as worthy of interest and attention?

Understanding these interpersonal needs gives leadership a better sense of why group members behave in a certain situation, and the processes they use (both functional and dysfunctional) to be satisfied in a group and have their needs met.

## **Group Cohesiveness and Productivity**

Successful group functioning and decision-making is a direct result of each member's integration into group membership. This is referred to as group cohesion. Groups form because members derive a sense of satisfaction, stability and purpose from being together. Group cohesion can be understood as a social glue or the degree of camaraderie and attachment among group members.

Many factors affect group cohesion including similarities shared by group members, the time spent together, the frequency of interaction, the size of the group, as well as support and satisfaction within the group (encouragement of group members, mutual and reciprocal self-disclosure, interpersonal trust, approved behaviors, conformity to group norms, agreement on group goals, favourable evaluation, etc...). Bonding within a group tends to increase when the group is in intense competition with others, or face a serious external threat.

Generally speaking, the more cohesive a group is, the more productive it will be and the more fulfilling the experience will be for members (Beal et al., 2003; Evans & Dion, 1991). Benefits of group cohesiveness include greater personal satisfaction, greater self-confidence, active participation of members fostered by a sense of belonging.

While cohesiveness creates harmony, safety and strength within a group it can also generate bias, prejudice, and group think that limits creativity and innovation. Hence the importance of leadership interventions to help the group gain perspective and do the work it was assigned to do (focusing on productivity).

In this context, social scientists have distinguished between task-oriented behaviors in a group and socially-related behaviors. Since these functions often overlap and merge in actual group processes, it may be more accurate and more useful to understand both the task and social dimensions of the group process as interdependent instead of separating them.

In any group setting, much of the work exists on both task and social planes. Group members engage in several components of work, some of which are internally directed (lying in the relational or social plane of the group, and ensuring group maintenance and cohesion). Therefore, when analyzing and interpreting group behavior, it is best to do so from the perspective of the work the group is doing and the work the group is actually avoiding.

In other words, the group's job (or purpose) may involve several components of work, some of which are internally directed and thus lie in the relational or social plane (group maintenance), and some of which are externally directed and thus lie in the task-oriented plane (task commitment).

In this perspective, behaviors which might traditionally be described as "socially-oriented" (i.e. focused on cohesiveness) can often be seen as necessary elements of work which the group needs to perform in the interest of accomplishing the overall purpose. (Ronald Heifetz)

## How does group cohesion affect productivity and performance?

The two dimensions (cohesiveness and productivity) are correlated. As cohesiveness goes up in a group, productivity goes up as well, but only to a point.

- In some instances, the group's focus may shift from accomplishing their assigned task to meeting the social needs of members (for example: having fun together), which may limit group productivity. Hence the role of leadership in noticing group work avoidance and helping the group remain focused on the overall purpose.
- A very cohesive group risks becoming a separate entity where members gradually diverge from the organization's goal and exclude those trying to keep focus on it (e.g. making fun of those who remain focused on the task at hand)
- Similarly, when members start valuing belonging more than anything else, the risk of falling into groupthink (Janis, 1972) and developing blindspots becomes significant, hence restricting healthy conflict, creative thinking and fresh solutions. In these groups, an internal pressure to conform may gradually arise, thus pushing some members to comply to group norms (Goodman, Ravlin, & Schminke, 1987). This could mean discarding valuable contributions or censoring sensitive issues to maintain a false sense of harmony and avoid marginalization or criticism.

	Task Commitment Low	Task Commitment High
Group Cohesion Low	Low performance	Performance depends on a number of factors
Group Cohesion High	Low performance	High performance

## Group Norms

Every group develops its own standards (group norms) to guide the behavior of its members (e.g. dress code, meeting norms, ...). Norms are created to facilitate group survival, make behavior more predictable, avoid deep conflicts and express the values of the group. With time, as the group develops, the range of acceptable behaviors becomes clearly identified so that some behaviors are appropriate and others are inappropriate within the group context.

Members who violate group norms are sanctioned by the group. Punishment can take various forms including:

- Frustration with the persons who do not conform
- Ignoring their views/opinions, withholding information from them
- Limiting their organizational influence
- Excluding violators from meetings and group activities
- Direct attacks or sabotage from offended group members
- Limiting promotions, demotions, termination (asking violators to leave the group).

In the event where the majority of group members do not respect the norms, these norms no longer serve as a standard for evaluating behavior and will eventually need to be assessed and adapted.

## Group Roles

When analyzing group dynamics, it helps to remember that a group is more than the sum of its individual participants and can be described as an interlocking network of roles. A play or a dance could be helpful images to describe group members interacting through interdependent roles, producing dance patterns and shaping the group's overall narrative.

In formal groups, specific roles (duties, responsibilities) are usually predetermined and assigned to group members. There are many potential benefits of using assigned roles in group work:

- Assigned roles provide an opportunity for high quality and focused interactions (group members are more likely to stay on task when their roles in the collaboration are clearly defined and distinct from other members' roles).
- Roles also foster accountability in a group.
- They give members a chance to contribute and feel needed.
- Clear roles reduce the likelihood of one member completing the task on behalf of the whole group, or "taking over," at the expense of other members' learning.
- Roles can also help in disrupting stereotypical behaviors about oneself and group members and build members' confidence in handling various tasks (by for example alternating roles in different points of the group life, assigning "technical" roles to women and "communicative roles" to men in the group...)

In addition to these assigned roles, there are however, emergent and informal roles that develop naturally to meet the needs of the groups.

Group members often take on distinct roles and behaviors when they are in a group setting. And in every group, members share a set of expectations concerning the behavior of a person who occupies a given position. These expectations are referred to as group roles and are distinct from the formal roles or positions of members (Hare, 1976, p. 131). Group dynamics is concerned with analyzing the effects of these roles/behaviors on other members and the group as a whole.

Group members adopt particular roles in groups depending on various factors:

- Group members' family of origin, personality and needs,
- The composition of the group (size, group members)
- What gets triggered by the dynamics of the situation.

Some of the roles that group members take may seem somehow ingrained (think for example of those who tend to seek attention and behave in a way to keep eyes on them) while others are more situational and contextual (being supportive around young members or quiet around old people).

These emergent roles may often substitute the formal roles as group members begin to assert themselves in the group.

A number of experts have studied the typical roles that people play in groups and described these roles in categories.

One classification divided roles between those that contribute to the positive functioning of the group and the dysfunctional roles that disrupt group progress and weaken its cohesion (Benne and Sheats, 1948).

- **Task-oriented roles** (initiating tasks, brainstorming, seeking opinion, summarizing, elaborating...)
- **Group maintenance roles** or social-emotional activities that maintain people's involvement and commitment (listening, harmonizing, encouraging, expressing group feelings, mediating,...)
- **Blocking roles** or activities that tend to disrupt the group, although not necessarily intended as negative (avoiding, blocking, distracting, dominating,...)

More examples detailing the above functions are provided in the resources section.

While knowing the common roles that group members take on is helpful in recognizing patterns and helping members get out of them when needed, it is important not to perceive these roles as concrete nor as an opportunity for labeling people. Roles do not represent who people are. Many of these roles have been taught and acquired, and there is often a chance to adopt alternative roles. It is also important to keep in mind that in actual group processes, these functions are not separate and distinct entities but will often overlap and merge. Hence pigeonholing group members in specific functions and labels may be counterproductive for group work and not very realistic.

Regardless of the roles that are adopted in a group, a key leadership function is to help the group see itself and support group members in adapting their behavior and taking on various functions depending on what serves best the purpose of the group and situation.

When trying to understand group roles, it helps to keep in mind the following considerations (Heifetz):

- A role can transcend a position: for example a child in a family can play the role of parent even though he or she does not occupy that position in the family.
- Roles emerge and differentiate as each member resonates differently, according to the chords being struck in the group and the nature of his or her own personality (or harp).
- Roles develop, in part, as certain behaviors are reinforced by the feedback responses of other group members. However, this is not as simple as saying positive feedback reinforces positively and so on; because what constitutes positive feedback for one person may constitute negative feedback to another.
- Rigidly dividing the roles into group task roles, group maintenance roles, and individual roles is often counterproductive to work. Roles are fluid and interdependent. In some instances supporting others proves key to accomplishing the task at hand, whereas in other instances it could be a blockage and a cause of work avoidance. Think of the following:
  - When a group member frequently takes the lead in providing encouragement and supporting other members his role is often seen as helpful for accomplishing the task as well.

However, the same role can be seen as dysfunctional when it stands in the way of group development and purpose achievement. Examples:

- Intervening to lower group tension and support others at any cost when things get intense because of one's inability to tolerate conflict.
- Rescuing others continuously stands in the way of learning

- When thinking about group roles, it helps to recognize that each member's role in the group "belongs" less to the individual member than to the group as a whole. Think of the following example: "I was considered a blocker in this group, I can't understand why."

Each member's role is the product of the entire group interaction. The result of such group interaction is that the group as a whole works out the role, both in terms of behaviors and expectation, of each individual member. In this sense, role performance should not be confused with behaviors or personality characteristics that are identified solely with an individual group member and with no one else.

- Groups can witness role conflict.
  - This can arise when a person represents two different groups, and there are conflicting demands from different sources while performing the task, or when the perceived role and role behaviour seem inconsistent. A typical example is balancing work roles and family roles. Another example is balancing group goals with organizational goals.
  - Role conflict may also arise when there is ambiguity between the sent role and the received role, for example when the role conflicts with the person's individual values, talents, and purposes. This ambiguity often leads to frustration, dissatisfaction and turnover.

These role conflicts are often resolved by delineating a boundary that separates the individual self from the role one performs. If one is not one's role, then one has the freedom to play the role without being as personally vulnerable, and thus paradoxically, to put all of oneself into the role. (Ronald Heifetz)

## Group Dynamics and Leadership

The relationship between group dynamics and leadership processes is a reciprocal one:

- The way a group leader performs his functions in the pursuit of the group's goals (organizing, directing, coordinating, encouraging,...) impacts the group and its dynamics;
- Similarly, the leader's own actions and reactions are shaped by the group as well.

Lewin et al. (1939) were among the first experts to affirm empirically this close connection between leadership and group dynamics. Their research project showed that as leaders of small groups adopted various leadership styles (autocratic, participative and laissez-faire), the group's dynamics were influenced significantly. Among the key findings that were reported, we summarize the following:

- Under autocratic/directive leadership, groups spent more time working than did the other groups. Their productivity however, dropped significantly when the group leader left the room. These groups also witnessed higher degrees of conflict, more demands for attention and a greater tendency to blame and scapegoat members.
- Under participative leadership, groups worked hard even when the leader was not present.

The impact of leadership processes on group dynamics is confirmed by various experts:

- Research shows that groups tend to accomplish more when a leader is present, as this limits social loafing and improves coordination (Karau and Williams 1993).
- When looking for solutions to problems, a group of individuals may spend too much time discussing various views. The group's ability to focus increases in the presence of a leader who directs discussions (Larson et al. 1996).

- In emergency situations, groups of individuals often fail to respond appropriately, whereas in the presence of a leader the likelihood of the bystander effect is reduced (Baumeister et al. 1988).
- When seeking creative solutions to challenges, groups tend to perform less effectively than individuals working on creative solutions alone. Results improve when a leader is present in the group who encourages members to accomplish higher standards (Offner et al. 1996).

Just as group leaders influence group processes, various group dynamics significantly shape the leader's behavior within the group. For example:

- The group's acceptance of the leader's influence (position power) plays a big role in determining the success of a leader's interventions. Skilled group leaders therefore will need to adapt their approach and style depending on the group dynamics. (Hersey and Blanchard 1982).
- Studies of social identity suggest that the tendency to take on the qualities of a group as one's own (identification) plays a big role in determining who will be accepted as the leader of that group. Leaders may therefore be unconsciously influenced to behave in a way that best fits with the shared prototype of the group (Fielding and Hogg 1997).
- Janis's theory of groupthink (1982) is another example of how group processes may influence leadership. Leaders working in highly cohesive groups where members fail to provide them with accurate feedback, may find themselves pushed to lead unintentionally without asking for members' reactions, and may fall in directive approaches that negatively impact results and performance.

### **Leadership beyond authority**

Ronald Heifetz emphasizes that all existing perspectives on leadership that focus on traits, styles, and situations have one key element in common. Each assumes that leadership is centered in the person who occupies the leadership position (authority) in the group's network of roles. When analyzing leadership in a group, he suggests to focus on the function's perspective of leadership and analyze the behaviors and interventions performed in the group instead of keeping attention only on the person in the formal authority role.

For Heifetz, the essence of leadership work in a group is to help the group make progress and achieve its purpose. Since the behaviors of the formal group leader (the person in authority) and the remaining members are interdependent during the process of group interaction, both members and formal leaders face a collective responsibility.

The question of shared leadership in a group goes beyond neatly organized roles that may pigeonhole some individuals as being for example the task specialists and others as being socio-emotional specialists. Instead of focusing solely on the functions that the formal leader performs or needs to perform, Heifetz suggests focusing on the work that the group collectively needs to do to reach its purpose. This requires to discriminate and inquire about which functions/behaviors are needed for this end, and most importantly with whom and at what time these functions should be performed.

- What is the work that is being done? What is the work that is being avoided?
- What is the impact of each behavior/intervention on the group's overall purpose?

Under this perspective, several members of the group may perform leadership functions that help the group move forward towards accomplishing its purpose, even though only one person may have the senior position of authority.

Some of the key leadership behaviors in a group include:

- Eliciting views and opinions of members;
- Expressing opinions as well as eliciting from others, i.e., taking stands as well as listening and eliciting stands;
- Tailoring one's interactions to each individual in the group (becoming adept at knowing when to initiate, when not to initiate, when to respond, and with whom). While group members tend to interact with other members in the same way in which they interact throughout the entire group process, a leader's behaviors are not the same to everyone, but are more of an adaptation of specific functions to specific members.

## **Social Tension in a Group**

Social tension is both normal and essential to the forming and functioning of a group. It is primarily related to the phase of becoming a group, and secondarily related to a break of the group's routine. Any type of activity goes hand in hand with tension, hence a functioning group is not a group at rest but an active group and consequently experiencing some degree of tension. Just like healthy tension holds the group together and keep it moving, excessive tension risks ripping the group apart. (Fisher)

A key function of authority and leadership in the group is to monitor the tension and find mechanisms to keep the tension at manageable levels or reducing it when needed. Group leaders are therefore requested to manage between two apparently conflicting functions: protecting/maintaining the group versus pulling the group forward and enabling its creative force.

- At times, individuals in authority will need to protect the group from destructive tension, or manage the heat by allowing some "flight" responses (avoidance) that provide group members with a breathing room.
- In other cases, leaders may see it appropriate to allow a healthy amount of tension and directing it toward the creative and productive work at hand (putting the issue on the table and inviting the group to tackle it).

Both roles require a close monitoring of tension in the group and an appropriate application of measures to manage it. (Ronald Heifetz)

## **Self-differentiation and connection to the group**

In addition to managing conflict in a group, leaders are also required to develop their capacity to manage another tension, namely maintaining themselves (self-differentiation) while still remaining connected to the group. This balance is not a matter of developing skills or reaching a goal but is an ongoing process of growth, self-awareness and self-regulation. (Edwin Friedman, 1996). The process includes the capacity to:

- say "I" when others are demanding "we";
- be able to see things differently;
- stand firm in the face of intense resistance;

- remain grounded even in the face of others' anxieties;
- contain one's reactivity to others' emotions and reactions
- dare to be vulnerable and take responsibility for one's own emotional being rather than blaming or pushing
- be able to self-regulate and recharge when faced with opposition or sabotage.
- accept the painful solitude that comes with leadership
- be clear about one's values and purpose;

## Prevalent Dysfunctions in Groups

Group leaders and team members commonly sabotage themselves in various ways, resulting in poor group dynamics. Problems that groups face are not merely related to the suppression of members' ideas and perspectives, but to social and cognitive pitfalls that group leaders and members are called to be aware of and manage.

Prevalent dysfunctions in groups include:

- **Social Proof**  
People tend to assume that if many people are doing something, there must be a valid reason behind this action. That explains why a crowd tends to become more influential as it grows.
- **Herding**  
Individuals prefer to stay with the big crowd because they find it less risky than taking radical initiatives that might fail, or that could induce social backlash.
- **Information Cascades**  
Another common dysfunction occurs when group members start passing on information they assume to be true, but cannot know to be true, based on information on what other members are doing. This social pitfall undermines members' critical thinking and leads to flawed decision-making.

Other dysfunctions are related to:

- Group norms violation
- Role conflict and ambiguity
- Groupthink and conformity (where group members are under the illusion that they can do no wrong, or that the group is in perfect agreement). In these situations, members seek consensus and tend to ignore or suppress alternative ideas.
- Weak leadership
- Excessive deference to authority (members desire to be seen in agreement with their leaders and withhold their views)
- Blocking (disrupting the flow of information and work within the group, aggressing others, withdrawing from discussions, introducing humor at inappropriate times...)
- Excessive work avoidance
- Evaluation apprehension (when group members feel that they are being judged excessively harshly by others and hold back their opinions as a result)
- Free riding (when group members leave their colleagues to do all the work or limit their contribution in group settings - see below)

## Social Loafing

The tendency of individuals to put in less effort when doing work in a group context (also known as social loafing) is quite frequent in large groups (Karau & Williams, 1993).

This phenomena is not an indicator of laziness but more linked to the perception that group members have of their contribution (whether their efforts are adequate and needed, whether they will be noticed or rewarded...). Research shows that teams that are perceived as fair experience less social loafing (Price, Harrison, & Gavin, 2006).

Common rationales in social loafing include:

- “Others aren’t working hard, so why should I?”
- “My share will probably have little impact on results”
- “I’m not sure they need more hands”
- “What is the purpose of putting more efforts? No one has been complaining”
- “Even if I work harder, I doubt that they will notice”

Considerations for leadership to limit social loafing in groups:

- Keep the size of the group manageable. In 10+ groups, members’ likelihood of “hiding” or feeling unneeded increases.
- Clearly assign individual tasks in front of all group members and agree on accountabilities (measures of success and evaluation/feedback). Specific goals (as opposed to general group responsibilities) result in higher accountability and less social loafing. “By Friday, each member will share with the group three suggestions of activities for our upcoming team building”.
- Notice social loafing and invite the group to discuss personal observations and ways to proceed.
- Inject tasks with meaning/purpose. Make sure group members are engaged in challenging and varied responsibilities that have an impact on themselves, on the group, on the organization or the overall community.
- Build the group. Members’ commitment to the group’s work increases as trust and belonging develop.
- Give feedback and praise as members need to feel needed and noticed.

## IGNATIAN NOTE

During 1977 a group of individuals from several Jesuit Spirituality Centres met in Pennsylvania to discuss the notion of social grace. From that meeting those present decided to form a group that would later be called the ISECP Group, which stands for: Ignatian Spiritual Exercises for the Corporate Person. They left a good legacy in the form of manuals, that offer great insights. For our task here, we are going to focus on the manual called: “Focusing Group Energies”. In the First Volume of this manual, shared with you in the resources section, we find their proposal for the “ 43 rules for the discernment of spirits in groups”. We offer you this list here:

1. At the beginning of group life, there will be an unconscious, natural defining of roles, setting of group standards and norms, selecting of group leadership, and establishing a meaningful vocabulary over and above the conscious selection of authority/leadership and group goals and objectives.
2. The conscious goals and objectives of a group need to arise from a shared faith, myth and dream.

3. The higher the position of leadership, the more important it is for the leader to foster the myth and charism of the group.
4. Flexibility is an act of justice in groups. There is a need to honor the constructive use of differences among the various members.
5. Variety of procedure and timing is a necessity in a group if all are to be honored.
6. The tendency of a group to maintain its own equilibrium will blind its members to the group's less conscious behavior and attitudes.
7. The role of the facilitator is to provide a process whereby the group can enter into conscious and formal dialogue with its members about its agenda.
8. Part of a group's individuation comes about when the group makes conscious its archetypal behavior and chooses its decisions based on the content truly present in a situation.
9. Groups will move through the cycle of infatuation, manipulation, crisis of projections, before moving into a deepening of their commitments to each other and the apostolate.
10. Dysfunctioning in a group, whether social, physical, or psychological, is a defense against anxiety and needs a systematic as well as a personal remedy.
11. The group as a whole is more than the sum of its parts.
12. The Holy Week mystery of death and resurrection is the model in the Third and Fourth Weeks for moving through the maturing process:
  - Palm Sunday · Infatuation
  - Holy Week · Manipulation
  - Good Friday · Crisis
  - Holy Saturday · Descent into the hell of the unconscious
  - Easter Sunday · Integration: becoming creative, wise, joyful, peaceful, loving.
13. Persons of similar individuation and emotional dependency tend to group together and create comfort and additional dependencies for each other.
14. Change involves loss as well as gain. These losses must be mourned and the grief integrated by the individual persons and the group before free movement can be resumed in the group.
15. Movement of persons in and out of a group changes the sense of equilibrium and creates anxiety that needs to be dealt with directly and consciously.
16. Life within a group allows for a coalescence of energies for a focused apostolate and an arena for individual growth and development as members take the opportunity for coming to terms with their projections and anxieties.

17. When one is changing energy fields (masculine to feminine, or feminine to masculine) there needs to be transitional bridging. Projections will be lively here.
18. Without concrete expression, there is no practical sense of the corporate body.
19. One needs his/her own identity, *id quod volo*, to make a new group. The unwillingness to express the *id quod volo* prevents the formation of community (see deceitful lover, [326] Rules for Discernment). However, even temporary relationships have their importance and value, since even a temporary relationship can serve to help a person become aware of his/her identity, even though one finds it necessary to move on.
20. When a group takes a long time to articulate a policy, there will be trouble justifying the policy and enforcing it later on.
21. The fear of death, change, destruction prevents a group from participating in evaluation. A group prefers to maintain its own moderate comfort rather than to face evaluation, which will put it in touch with these issues.
22. The fear of facing collectively past failures will prevent people from using evaluation. People can't do what they are not trying to do. A group will fear evaluation when it does not know its evaluative criteria. If there is no meaning in a previous evaluation, they will not do a subsequent evaluation. Individuals will not experience the same consolations/desolations.
23. In time of turmoil and desolation, there is a need for administrative space so that clear decisions can be made. The phrase "I can live with it" often indicates an attitude of no commitment
24. Rules for discernment mean more when a group pairs a rule with an actual experience.
25. Not articulating agenda simply and clearly in a way clear to others can be a subterfuge for not forming community.
26. Not to have a vision for the concrete situation is to be condemned to literalize the unconscious imagination.
27. Hanging on to a past problem is a "respectable" way of avoiding the present agenda.
28. Interpersonal agenda needs definite boundaries in a group.
29. It is sometimes easier to hang on to a desolation from the past rather than face a present desolation. This addictive behavior becomes a fixation and shields the group from having to make decisions about its future.
30. A false sense of security and identity can come from a past moment of glory or crisis. The group has not chosen to move on.
31. Undue concern over wording can be a displacement for deeper conflicts in a group

32. A static or nebulous appeal to charisma in identifying a present experience can inhibit the freedom of a group to look at several alternatives.
33. Reversals of the power cycle (evaluating a recommendation or deciding about an evaluation) will disempower a group.
34. Unwillingness to spend the time required together in meetings is the biggest obstacle in the way of the spiritual growth of the group.
35. The "rush to be finished" inhibits many in the group from articulating their real agenda.
36. A group that does not complete the power cycle into action will die.
37. The more a leadership group can distance itself from the projections of the group it serves, the freer it will be to serve them.
38. Lofty expectations that are not rooted in reality and that bypass a practical vision for the concrete will debilitate a group.
39. What is not consciously structured is unjustly structured.
40. One enters a group for salvation, not for well-being. A group offers an individual an opportunity for growing and developing beyond what that individual would be capable of on his/her own.
41. Groups that have no significant power-cycle will be disempowered, fall into a malaise and ultimately die.
42. Every group needs a recognized focus of leadership.
43. Creating a "leadership vacuum" in a group so that others will assume leadership responsibility is a disintegrating practice of leadership; good delegation is the empowering way to achieve this end.

## EXPECTED LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES

1. Understanding that group dynamics is not only useful but key to our leadership development
2. Learning about the different dimensions in groups, the needs that individuals have to express in groups, what cohesiveness means and how it affects productivity, group roles, the relevance of leadership in groups, the dysfunctions and other relevant concepts in group dynamics
3. Internalising a handful of rules for discernment of spirits in groups

*"It takes two flints to make a fire"*  
**Louisa May Alcott**