Web Exercises

# Chapter 10: Listening to Out-Group Members

## Intercept

Outward Bound is a non-profit organization that provides challenging outdoor adventures for people of all ages. Ask students to peruse the Outward Bound website and click on the link for at-risk youth (<http://www.outwardbound.org/intercept/intercept/>) Have them read about the various programs offered and watch the 8 minute video about the Intercept course. Assign the following questions for a reflection paper or class discussion: What reasons are given for the program’s impact on teens? What role does nature play in giving humans a perspective on their lives? Can some of the same lessons be learned in other settings? What skills do the Outward Bound leaders have that enable them to work with at-risk youth?

## Patch Adams

Dr. Patch Adams makes an excellent subject for the topic of out-groups, due to his unconventional approach to practicing medicine in the U.S. Dr. Adams gained visibility through the eponymous film starring Robin Williams, which would make a good homework assignment as well. Dr. Adams is the Founder and Director of the Gesundheit Institute, a holistic medical community providing free medical care to thousands of patients since 1971. The website offers links to videos of some of Dr. Adams’ lectures (<http://www.patchadams.org>), which can be shown in class or assigned as homework. Discuss how Adam’s vision was formed. How did he develop compassion for the outsider and marginalized? Is compassion inborn or learned? How does humor fit into health care delivery? Why aren’t there more people like Adams?

## How Poachers Became Caretakers

Ask students to watch John Kasaona’s presentation on poaching in Namibia at *TED talks* (<http://www.ted.com/talks>). Have them reflect on the following questions, in writing or in small group discussions:

* What lesson did Kasaona learn from his father about the different animals in Africa?
* What are the four steps involved in converting poachers into animal preservationists?
* What are the leadership actions required to make such a dramatic change in others possible?
* Consider each of Kasaona’s steps for change. Can any of them be effectively used in your own community to convert out-group members into participants?

## Skills Coaching Déjà Vu

Have students revisit Marshall Goldsmith’s website and reread the article, “Coaching for Behavioral Change” which is found under the “articles” link. (<http://www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com.>) From the perspective of out-groups, assign the following questions for written reflection or class discussion:

* What kinds of out-group members does Goldsmith suggest leaders not spend time on? Why?
* Using the suggestions in chapter 10, how would you recommend a leader respond to the different types of individuals Goldsmith describes?
* At what point should a leader not invest more energy into out-group members?

## Enhancing Group Dynamics at Meetings

In many cases, issues related to out-group members become evident during meetings and group events. Ask students to research on the web ideas regarding how to enhance group dynamics at meetings and to report some of the ideas they like.

## Positive Thinking

Martin Seligman, a psychologist who has been referenced in other chapter resources, writes and teaches about the power of positivity to change perspectives and lives. The link here offers a one hour classroom exercise on re-framing negative scenarios into more optimistic ones. It is useful for identifying how we, and others, think and speak in ways that inhibit our best performance.

<http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/supporting-schools/deal-teaching-resources/developing-emotional-awareness-and/copin-1>

An alternative exercise is to ask students to generate a list of common negative or de-motivating scripts they use or have heard others use. Examples: This is too hard; I’ll never master this; Jim is better in this than I am; I will never use this once I get out of college; I doubt I’ll get this interview – others are more qualified; and so on. Then have the class consider ways of reframing this negative self-talk into more affirming statements that are still realistic. Example: I worked hard on that cover letter; I managed to get through Statistics in college, so I think I can learn SPSS even if it takes me longer than others; if I break this problem into smaller pieces, I can tackle them one at a time. Have students write down one negative script they have used for themselves, and its positive reframing. Ask them to practice using the positive statement throughout the week. The more we learn to control negative self-talk, and use positive scripts, we re-direct our energies toward building confidence in our own abilities. We also learn how to encourage others.

## Tweets

If you have asked students to follow a thought leader on social media (Twitter, blog, etc.) throughout the academic term, have them report on:

* How this person speaks about people who differ from him or her,
* Whether he or she listens to people with different, or even radical, points of view,
* Whether this person gives special attention to any groups of followers, and
* Who the student thinks would be in this leader’s in-group.

Does Twitter itself create in-groups and out-groups?

## Social Identity Theory

Have students use their library’s online catalog to find and read:

Tajfel H. and Turner J.C. (1986). The Social Identity Theory of Inter-Group Behavior, in S. Worchel and L. W. Austin (eds). *Psychology of Intergroup Relations.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall. This chapter has been reprinted in subsequent academic outlets. Instructors can create a reading guide for students to complete and turn in, or use the following questions for class discussion:

1. What is the difference between a personal identity and a social identity? Can you give examples?
2. According to SI Theory, what motivates people to join certain groups? Do you agree? Have you experienced this? Which groups are most central to your identity?
3. In what ways do people show preference for the groups they already belong to?
4. On what basis do people form their social identity? How well does this describe your own experience?
5. How do people decide what comprises an in-group or out-group?
6. What is the communication continuum from “interindividual” to “intergroup”?
7. When members of different groups come together, how do they compare themselves?
8. What more would you like to learn about this theory?