



LUTHER SNOW

ASSETS FOR THE GOOD IN GROUPS

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In This Issue

[Ask the Good Groups Guru](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Lutherism](#)

[Want to exchange links?](#)

Quick Links

[Register Now](#)

[About Us](#)

[Link exchange](#)

Featured Link



[Shorebank](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Dear Subscriber,

Got a question about how to handle a group, community, or network you're involved with? **Ask the Good Groups Guru!**

This newsletter marks the first edition of a new advice column designed to inform and entertain leaders like you. I'm drawing on 35 years of experience and over 25,000 leaders served, and building on the concepts of Asset Mapping and positive group dynamics. Hope you like it!

This issue features a link to old friends **South Shore Bank**, global pioneers in social enterprise, and a new Glossary entry and "Lutherism." Enjoy!

Luther
contact me at info@luthersnow.com

A Problem Person" in the Group?

Ask the Good Groups Guru

Dear Good Groups Guru

I've just been appointed chair of a voluntary committee, and already I see trouble. John, one of the committee members, took me aside to complain about Juan, another committee member. John says Juan is always picking problems with the group work and coming up with his own ideas that no one else wants to do. I don't want to turn Juan away. What do I do with the obstructionist on the team?

The Newbie

Dear Newbie

Wait, you aren't talking about me are you? No? Well, it could have been. At one point or another I've played all three of these roles, the "obstructionist," the "good committee member," and the chair trying to balance the peace. In our own ways, we've all been "insiders" and "outsiders" at various times, so we know how it feels. And that's a good start for making good group dynamics.



Ask the Good Groups
Guru!

We all want to contribute to, and gain from, community. Bad group dynamics happen when some or all group members feel blocked from contributing their gifts. Sounds like Juan felt that way at some point, which led to him trying harder to assert his value in the group. But this only made the other group members push him away more.

You can help shift the group dynamic to the positive by learning about Juan's interests and appreciating his gifts. Sit down and have coffee with him. Ask him what he cares about and what he brings to the committee. Thank him for his voluntary service and investment.

Then you can reframe the committee discussion, away from "either/or," and toward "both/and." Encourage both John and Juan to pursue their good ideas in the wider community. Reach out to others outside the committee, and find mutually advantageous connections and relationships for getting things done.

You might be surprised at the good things that will happen. Juan's efforts might end up supporting John's efforts, and vice versa. If Juan's work builds steam, John might get on board that train. And even if Juan's work doesn't catch on, he will still feel appreciated in the group, and that will lead to more positive contributions and a better group dynamic.

I've seen some passionate "obstructionists" become powerful and positive leaders when they are given the chance to shine. After all, Juan wouldn't even bother participating in a difficult group if he didn't really care. Tap that passion for the good of the group, and watch what emerges.

Luther

Got a question for the Good Groups Guru? Write to me at guru@luthersnow.com

Glossary: Either/Or? Both/And?

In groups, choices are often presented as an "either/or" choice. That is, **either** we do what one person wants **or** we do what another person wants. This is a "fixed-sum" way of putting things.

But we can also consider choices as "both/and." That is, we can take action **both** on what one person wants **and** on what another person wants. This is an "open-sum" way of putting things, and contributes to positive group dynamics.

Today's Lutherism

We all want to contribute to, and gain from, community."

Want to exchange links?

Strengthen our network and promote your site, newsletter, or blog



Strengthen our network

I think you and I are part of a larger, emerging movement of people who care about the common good and want to work with others to get things done for the better. So, if you have a website, or email newsletter, or blog, or ning, or whatever, let's exchange links. I'll post yours on the [Networking](#) section of my website, and I will periodically feature links in this newsletter.

Send me a message describing your site and how you will link back, to info@luthersnow.com

I'd also welcome a connection with you on Facebook , LinkedIn , or Twitter . Just click the link.

Thank you, and keep up the good work!

Yours truly
Luther K. Snow