

Teamwork - Personal Characteristics That Make You Valuable As Team Member

By [Ashutosh Agrawal](#)

There is a catchphrase in Hindi on teamwork, whose English translation will go like this. *"Two better than one. Four better than two"*. We have all used *"1+1 = 11"* as a catchphrase for teamwork. There are numerous books espousing benefits of teamwork. But why do we need so much emphasis and training on something as obvious and simple as teamwork? Maybe because the inclination towards teamwork and personal qualities required for it are not common and easy to come by. Some people have natural gift towards team work, but others too can develop it, if they choose to.

In academics, the success is more a function of one's own hardwork and dedication. As one steps in professional life, a compelling change of mindset is required because teamwork becomes the key to success. In my professional life, I have grappled with issues of teamwork at all levels. As team member, team leader, team facilitator etc. I sought guidance from my seniors, read books, and underwent training programs to develop team skills. A gist of my experience and learning with regard to teamwork is presented here.

The first and foremost challenge is to change one's own mindset and develop the inclination towards teamwork. Its easier said than done. People like to work alone. Many say that the best thing about their work is that they are not dependent on anyone else to complete their task. But not everyone has similar work conditions, especially those in management. One can use following Mantras to guide oneself.

- The first mantra to change mindset is '**Enjoy** with team members & team work'. Double emphasis on word 'Enjoy'. Yes! A little fun along with serious work in team goes a long way in work satisfaction, breaking barriers and building mutual trust.
- Second Mantra is to understand that 'An outcome of teamwork is not only better in content, but also less opposed during implementation'. Change Agents! Hope they are listening.
- Now, we also know that everyone has an urge to be a leader. This is where third mantra comes in, 'A good leader is a good follower too'. So be proactive in supporting your team members.
- The fourth Mantra is self-awareness. A team goes through various stages, as described in many management books, of Forming, Storming, Norming & Performing. So, if tension is building up in team, don't get perturbed, it's normal and will come down. Keep your own feelings in check all the time.

In addition, there are some specific attitudes which when adopted by a team member, influences and improves the performance of the whole team.

- Commit oneself wholeheartedly to team's objectives. Expect & trust other members to do the same.

- One must think that he is there to provide anything that his team needs. To play any role that will help his team.
- One has to be honest and express ideas fearlessly. Your ideas are as important as everyone else's. At the same time, be flexible to accept other view points and change your own perceptions.
- Stir positive & intense dialogues and avoid 'Group Think'.
- Always work through conflicts openly, never allow them to take the form of personal attacks and try to build a consensus by objective discussions.
- Be polite and amiable by nature so that team members feel comfortable while working with you.
- Last but not the least, celebrate the team success. Have a small party or outing.

There is lot of good literature from eminent authors available on teamwork. Reading them will give one, deep insights in teamwork and hone teamwork skills. The views presented here are my personal opinions. Wish you a great team performance.