

Synergy.

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“Where no oxen are, the trough is clean;
But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.”
(Proverbs 14:4)

It is an interesting paradox of life: growth and progress are often very messy endeavors. But it is also true that messy situations and uncleanness often slow growth and progress. How do we avoid this catch-22 in life and relationships?

The short answer is: we need to be aware of and regulate both, the relationship and the situation. If the relationship is a “high-trust” relationship, it creates safety to any work. And if the situation is “low-risk,” it reduces the danger to the people involved. People with high-trust relationships working through low-risk situations can create a “synergistic” environment that is highly productive and messy at the same time.

When two or more people are working in synergy, things can get downright dirty. Voices will be raised with energy. Thoughts will be interrupted mid-sentence. There will be disagreements, disputes, and even arguments as everyone in the group contributes in an effort to find the best solution for all. And these environments generate ideas and creativity greater than what any single person could do on their own.

The single greatest danger to synergy in any environment is insecurity. Insecure people demand that others be agreeable with their viewpoint and opinion. They see conflict as a win-lose proposition. And they reduce trust and increase risk in any situation.

When working with insecure people, go slow, lead with empathy, and keep your risks low. But if you want to work on a team that can accomplish more than you could ever do on your own, synergy is needed. Enjoy the ride...you can clean up the mess later.