# The Positive Edge
Activating Potential into Performance

TINA HALLIS, PH.D
PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER & CONSULTANT

608.448.3576
tina@thepositiveedge.org
www.thepositiveedge.org

# Taking the tantrum out of teams

## Why you actually want team members to disagree

Why do we bother to create a team instead of giving a project to a single individual?  Of course it's to get different perspectives and more ideas so a great solution can be found easily and quickly. To make this work, you need a diverse selection of team members with different backgrounds and viewpoints.  But diversity brings its own challenges, and diversity by itself is not enough. Team members need to trust and respect each other so they can openly share their thoughts and give honest feedback. They need to be able to disagree without worrying about offending others or causing them to disengage from the team.   Yet creating an environment that promotes open sharing can be very difficult.

**WHY IT'S SO HARD TO OPENLY SHARE ON TEAMS**

How many of you like mustard? I like mustard on my pretzels, sandwiches, and hot dogs. WHAT? You don't like mustard? What could you possibly not like about mustard? There must be something wrong with you. . .  This might be the type of reaction we have (at least in our minds) when we meet someone who has different preference than us. It's actually a normal response based on how our brain is wired.   When we interact with someone who has a different perspective, our brains signal "DANGER!"  This social threat registers as a real physical danger and can cause us to become defensive, suspicious, and distrusting.  You

can imagine how this causes all kinds of problems with our ability to effectively cooperate, communicate and collaborate with others.

**WHAT TO DO?**

One approach to counteract this reaction is to help team members understand each other better by using a personality assessment tool such as Myers-Briggs or DiSC®. The true power of these tools is not just in identifying your own personality style, but also in gaining insight and understanding the styles and preferences of your team members. Ultimately this allows you to create more open dialogue so everyone can work together more effectively. It's also recognizing that one person's preferences are not better or worse than another's. They are just different approaches in how we view the world. The key is to find common ground or a common goal to build on and to ask questions to understand and not as a way to blame or judge.

- Instead of taking John's bluntness personally, people appreciate his focus on getting things done.
- Instead of getting frustrated with Sarah's optimism, everyone recognizes the energy she gives the group.
- Instead of feeling that Jerry is too quiet and skeptical, the team values his attention to detail and quality.
- Instead of getting irritated that Sally won't make up her mind, the group knows that she makes sure everyone gets a chance to share their opinions.

Suddenly ideas flow more freely, people choose the action items that fit their style and preferences, and when disagreements arise, the team can more easily discuss the bigger goal and the compromises that are needed to get there.

*Tina Hallis, Ph.D., is a Professional Speaker and Consultant. Her company, The Positive Edge, is dedicated to helping people and organizations fulfill their true potential using strategies from the science of Positive Psychology.*