



The Leadership Circle®

GRAVITY STICK EXERCISE

Form group into 1-2 (or more) groups of even numbers (if possible). For each group, form two lines (“A” and “B”) and have them face each other; point at their partner with both hands and then walk forward until their fingers are next to their partners. This should result in the two lines forming a sort of “zipper” of fingers between the two groups.

Then lay the stick on the zipper of fingers and continue to hold it down as you do the rest of the setup instructions (this helps set the tension as they feel the weight of your hand on the stick). (If you have more than one group, it is helpful to have a “volunteer” to hold the other stick on top of the hands of the other group.)

Say the following instructions out loud:

- I (the facilitator) am now your CEO and I have a new vision for our organization here – one that I think you are up to.
- The vision is to gently lower this stick to the ground.
- There are only two requirements: 1) the stick must stay level and 2) no hooking the stick with your fingers
- Oh yeah, there is also a rumor that if you break contact with the stick, bad things happen.
- Go for it!

Facilitator now steps back and observes until they accomplish the outcome (usually only a few minutes).

Debrief (possible inquiries):

- What happened (typically, as soon as the facilitator takes their hands off the stick, the stick quickly moves toward the ceiling!)?
- What orientation were you operating from – Reactive or Creative?
- What beliefs or assumptions were in play? (Bad things will happen if we break contact with the stick, therefore we all must continue to touch the stick; someone else in the group was making the stick go up; etc.)
- What effect did hearing the rumor have on the way the group operated and/or on beliefs and assumptions?