

The Wizard of Id





Elements of Vibrant Youth Groups

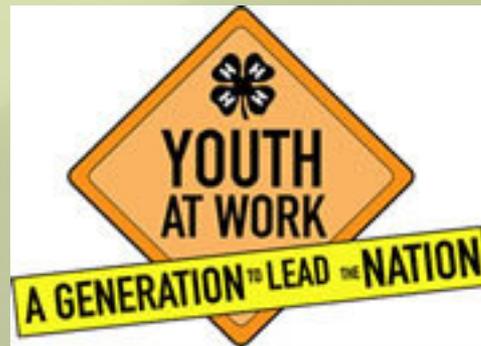
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Research Question

- What accounts for the differences between 4-H clubs within the same area, county or state?



TEAMWORK



Vibrancy

- Pulsating with life, vigor and activity
- Foster a sense of personal influence over life's events rather than submission to the will and whims of others
- Acceptance and respect for youth
- Inner confidence
- Believe in themselves and the future
- Authentic

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4-H Vibrancy Study

- Random selection of counties—urban, rural and “frontier”
- Deci Leadership Survey use with all 4-H club leaders in 3 counties
- Six clubs selected for further study
- Monitored for 12 months—January through December
- Quantitative & qualitative surveys



#1--Focus on Weaning, Not Winning

- High expectations
- Ownership by young people
- Autonomy and self-determination
- “Being our best, not beating the rest”

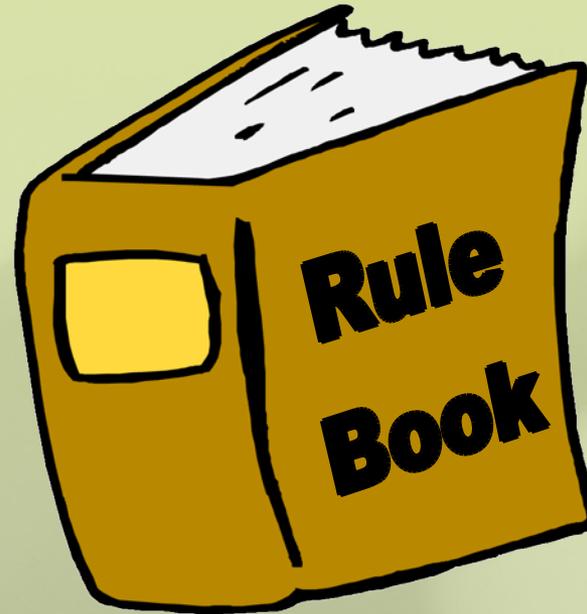


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#2--Firm, Yet Flexible

- Able to change how they do things, but not their core purpose
- Clear standards and group norms
- Consistency and reliability
- Balance between rigidity and chaos



TEAMWORK



#3--Work Hard, Play Hard

- Sense of purpose
- Fun, learning, growth
- Group outings
- Community service
- Develop a positive work ethic



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#4--Empower Rather than Embalm

- Enable youth to lead
- Develop responsibility and decision-making skills
- Provide opportunities to critically test, explore and discuss ideas in safe environments



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#5--Communicate and Listen

- Youth are listened to, respected, and input valued
- Involve members in discussions and decisions
- Atmosphere is characterized by coaching, support, guidance

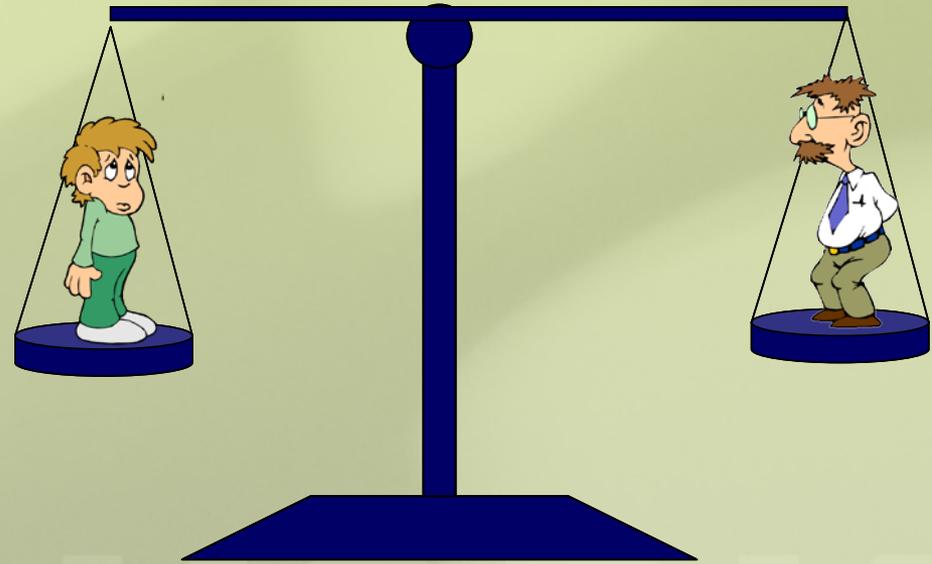


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#6--Balance between Chaos and Rigidity

- Vibrant groups as “chaordic”—balance between chaos and too much order
- Can adapt to changes and move on
- Like families that need balance—not enmeshed nor permissive



NETWORK



#7—Affirm and Support One Another

- Sense of belonging, group cohesiveness
- Defined sense of “self” and group membership
- Take pride in and celebrate the accomplishments of all
- “Not to be the best but do our best”

SUPPORT

TEAMWORK



#8—Value and Practice Service to Others

- Community service is truly valued
- Groups feel an obligation to improve their own community
- Part of the group's fundamental purpose



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#9--Mentoring

- **Intentional about mentoring to socialize new members**
- **Provide a support structure**
- **Indoctrinated into the values, customs and traditions of the club**



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#10—Take Time for Training

- Set aside time to train youth for roles
- Adults see their role as helping with development, not quick solutions
- Help youth grow into positions of leadership and responsibility



TEAMWORK



#11--Synergy

- All elements must be present
- The whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts
- The process is more important than the outcomes

"Youth acquire a sense of significance from doing significant things, from being active participants in their own education."

--Alfie Kohn



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Now it's your turn...

■ REFLECT & SHARE

- What surprised you?
- What seemed to be “common sense”?

■ GENERALIZE

- How would you use these ideas in your 4-H work in your county or reservation?

■ APPLY

- How might you apply this information to other settings? (e.g. office, task groups, etc.)



SUMMARY

- Youth programs that involve youth as key partners in planning, implementation and evaluation are stronger than programs that see youth as “clients” or “recipients”
- Adult attitudes and perceptions of youth capabilities are key in setting group climate (stop global whining)
- Adult leadership styles must vary with age and circumstances
- Eleven elements of vibrancy help add to our knowledge of “best practices” in positive youth development



Empowerment

“If you are here to help me, then you are wasting your time.

But if you are here because your liberation is bound up in mine, then let's begin together.”

--Lilly Walker

an Australian Aborigine

TEAMWORK



Resources

- Astroth, Kirk A. (1996). *Welcome to the Club: Education Where the Bell Never Rings*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Bozeman, MT: Montana State University.
- Astroth, Kirk A. (1998). "Beyond Resiliency: Fostering Vibrancy in Youth Groups," *New Designs for Youth Development, 13(4): 5-11.*
- Astroth, K. A., & Haynes, G. W. (2002). More than cows & cooking: Newest research shows the impact of 4-H youth development. *Journal of Extension* [On-line], 40(4) Article 4FEA6.
- Walker, J., Dunham, T. and Snyder, E. (1998). *Clubs and Groups in the Social Education of Young People*. The Center. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota. Online at: <http://www.fourh.umn.edu/resources/center/PDF/Center-Story4.pdf>