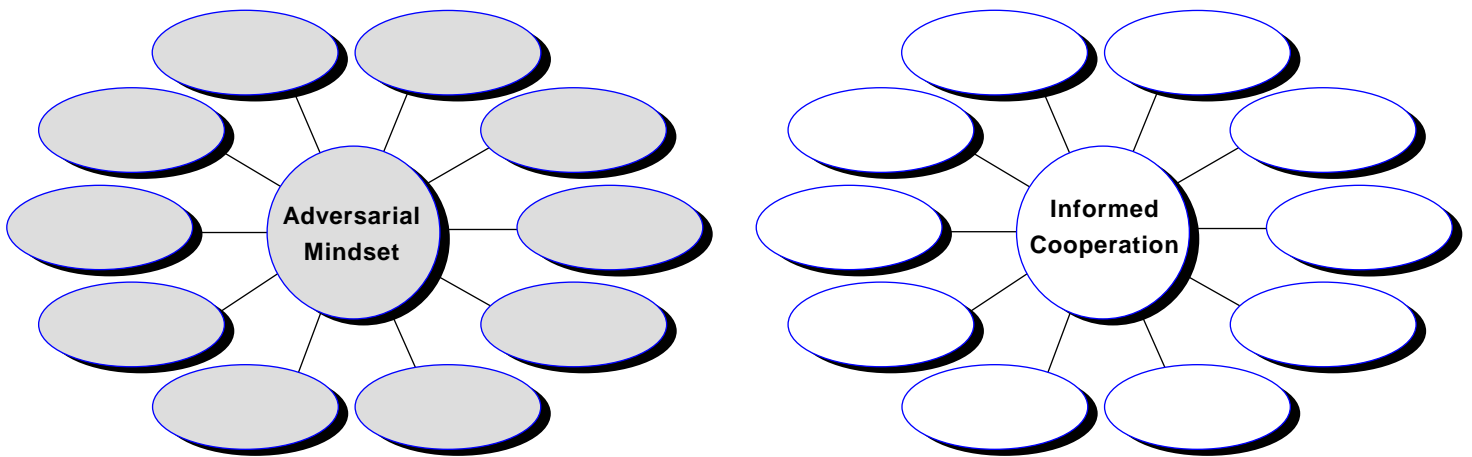


# TEAMWORK: A DYNAMIC MODEL



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# TEAMWORK: A DYNAMIC MODEL

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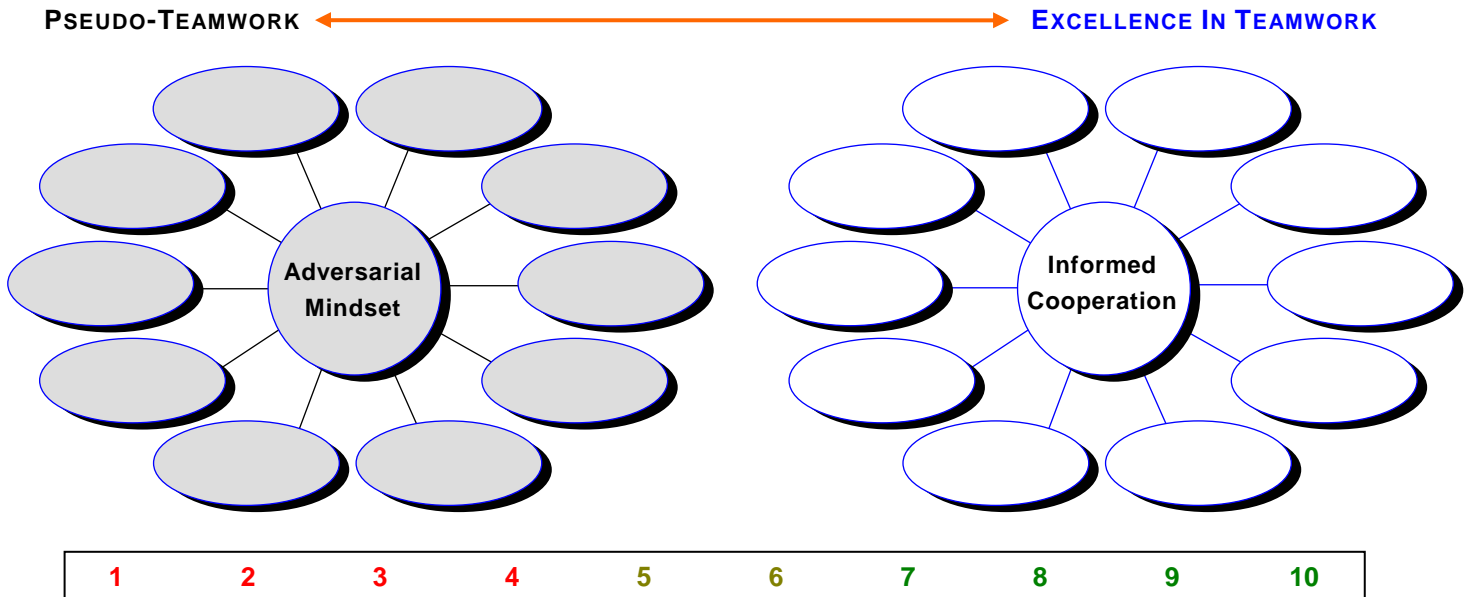
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## TEAMWORK IS A DYNAMIC CHARACTERISTIC OF EVERY GROUP

It varies every day—even moment to moment—from Pseudo-Teamwork on one end of the continuum to Excellence in Teamwork on the other.



What is loosely called “teamwork” in most organizations is on the wrong end of the continuum. Most people come into organizations with a mixed history of team experiences. They have been participating in teams and observing teams all their lives, but they have never taken the time to sort through what works and what doesn’t work. Some are eager to join teams and others prefer to work alone.

Fortunately, everyone is capable of learning effective team skills. Because of the prevalence of Pseudo-teamwork, we think the best place to begin the learning process is with an acknowledgement of what doesn’t work. The explanation of Pseudo-teamwork that follows is purposefully as brief as possible to get across the concept. What we really want to focus and dwell on are the positive team skills on the excellent end of the continuum.



## PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

### ADVERSARIAL MINDSET

Each of the characteristics that typify pseudo-teamwork can be primary causes of the behavior and can contribute to sustaining it. We place an adversarial mindset in the center because it seems to be the one characteristic most common to poor teamwork, but certainly any of the remaining ones could be central in any given situation.

At the core of most pseudo-teamwork is an adversarial mindset—that is, a predisposition to compete—to take an opposing view—to make knee-jerk negative judgements of other’s ideas—to win *over* others. No one is born with an adversarial mindset, but we are socialized in an adversarial society—so much so that many people conclude (incorrectly) that it’s the normal way to behave.



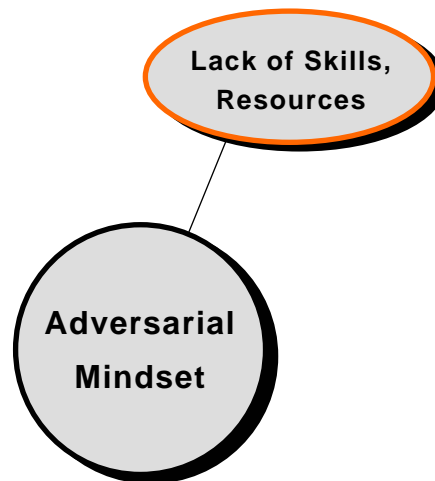


## PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

### LACK OF SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE/RESOURCES

In an ideal world, team members would be selected based on having skills and knowledge relevant to the team's task. In the real world, they are often assigned based on their availability almost without regard to their talents.

Likewise, you would think teams would always be provided the resources they need to be successful. But too often, teams must do the best they can with limited resources. It is unreasonable to expect teams to perform miracles when the deficits in human and other resources are too severe.





## PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

### AMBIGUOUS GOALS & ROLES

Common sense tells us that in order to work together well, we must have good clarity about *what* we're trying to do together and *who's* going to do what. Yet many teams are formed and continue to operate without this fundamental requirement. It's an almost guaranteed recipe for less than optimum results and even failure.





## PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

### SELF-CENTERED PLANNING

Mature human beings are natural planners. Being a responsible adult involves thinking ahead about what needs to be done and setting priorities about how we will use our time and resources. In the absence of clarity about how our work fits with others, we can't take adequate account of their needs and the planning we do will inevitably be seen as self-centered.





## PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

### SELF-SERVING COMMUNICATION

Communicating with others is a key means of establishing relationships and getting things done at work. Most of us prefer to avoid conflict so we tend to communicate more with those who share our view of the world and less with those who take different and opposing views. Not surprisingly, others see this style of communication as self-serving.





## PSEUDO-TEAMWORK

### WIN-LOSE CONFLICT

Since competition for scarce resources is common to all organizations, the stage is now set for win-lose conflict. The competitive mindset that pervades our adversarial culture assumes that there must be a winner and a loser in every competitive encounter. Men in particular have been conditioned to compete at the drop of a hat—and to win at any cost. Competing without insisting that there be a loser is a highly developed skill which is seldom seen in adversarial situations.

