Team Building

Last week I talked about how nature and group activities inspire creative thinking. I also talked about my EO Forum's zip line experience and how it builds a connection between people to help them know and understand each other on a higher level. A lot of people seem to think these kinds of team building exercises are a waste of time and don't help, but I disagree. Although they may not always provide you the level of results you are seeking, I do think they help move you in that direction. Bestselling author and business coach Marshall Goldsmith recently sent me a paper on how to do team building more effectively, without wasting time.

Marshall says that focused feedback and follow up are the keys to successful team building. He has a 14 step process that alone is fairly simple to implement, but it's the follow up that requires determination to make it successful. I will share the first 7 steps below:

STEP ONE. You ask two questions, the first being, "On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being best) how well are we doing in terms of working together as a team?" The second question is "On the same scale, how well do we need to be doing in terms of working together as a team?"

STEP TWO. Calculate your results to define the gap between where you are and where your team believes you should be.

STEP THREE. Now ask everyone on the team to write down 2 key behaviors, broad spectrum across the team, that they believe would help close the gap. Record each person's response on a flip chart.

STEP FOUR. Eliminate the duplicates and prioritize the rest to determine the two most important behaviors that all team members will work to change.

STEP FIVE. Next, the team will disperse into one-on-one groups, spending 5 minutes with each person on the team. During the 5 minutes, they will each make a suggestion to the other of 2 personal behavioral changes that they think that person could make to help the team as a whole.

STEP SIX. After everyone has met, each team member will pick two of their suggested areas for improvement and behavior change that seem the most important, and then they will share them with the rest of the team.

STEP SEVEN: Team members are encouraged to get 5 minute progress reports from all the other team members to show that they are making progress on their two behavior choices. Suggestions may occur where behavior doesn’t match desired expectations.

The remaining steps are on the follow through and maintaining feedback that is useful to both the individual’s and the team’s progress. You can find all of the steps in Coaching for Leadership: How the World’s Greatest Coaches Help Leaders Learn. It exhibits how this process will identify the gaps and give your group the needed direction in areas that need improvement. With the monthly reviews, the feedback keeps the team focused on getting better, both individually and as a team.