

Pondering Point

The top of an employment ad includes the phrases, "independent, self-starters needed!" and "must be a team player!" How can these opposite sounding requests be in the same ad? While one person may be responsible for specific outcomes, the ideas of many may make any task easier and better.

When all are working as a team, members bring their individuality and free thinking autonomy to the table, and in turn, provide additional tools needed for each person to work independently towards success. It is that sense of community that supports our individual efforts and brings us a wellspring of ideas and opportunity for growth.

Stopping to realize the talents of those around us and what they offer, and vice versa, can leave us feeling more fulfilled and a little less out on our own.

Why do I want anyone's HELP?

Why do others have to be involved?

The balance between Autonomy and Belonging

Imagine... using wings made from the supportive feathers of others to soar on your own!

— From Pondering to Practice —

Activity

"No Man is an island."

- John Donne, Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions, Meditation XVII.

Speaking of Islands... **Try This:**

In a group setting, ask everyone to write down the talents that make up their personalities and which ones they bring to their job. Do not ask them to share this.

Now pose a question to the group, "If you were shipwrecked on an island, what would be your first steps for survival?" Give them several minutes to write down their answers.

Now, have each group member read his/her answers aloud as you go around the room. Record their answers so all can see the myriad responses.

After everyone has had a chance to share, discuss with them the idea that different people bring different solutions to the same problem. Take note of what could be accomplished by working together. For example, if you were working completely autonomously, you may have tried to build a fire and not thought to see if others were on the island.

Be sure to end the exercise with a celebration of the talents and different personality types everyone brings to the table!

Self Reflection Activity

Take some time and ponder these great reflective questions on the subject of autonomy and belonging.

How can I preserve aspects of my independence and belong/contribute to a community in a meaningful way?

Think of a time when you have counted on others, what have they given you? Could you have received the same things without belonging to this community?

How can people empower you? Do you think you can share these thoughts with others?

"I have always relied on the kindness of strangers."

-Blanche Dubois, Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams