Teamwork

Fluff Disclaimer:
I’m not a fan of fluffy discussion about being nice.

But teamwork is critical to having a successful career

We can all get better at teamwork.
Topics

1) Teamwork
   a) What’s a team?
   b) Team rules

2) Habits of Highly Effective People

Source: "Teamwork and Team Building", Jeff Butterfield.
Why Teamwork?

• Group
  – people working on similar tasks,..
  – Ex: Some programmers in same office, individually working on similar but different projects.
  – Ex: Study group

• Team
  – ..
  – ..
  – ..
Successful teams can:

- Complete more/larger tasks
  - can divide big tasks into small tasks for individuals
- ..
  - diverse skills reinforce abilities of team members
- Learn and improve
  - learn from the skills of other team members
- Respond to change
  - people join/leave, jobs change: team can react
- Stronger sense of commitment
  - depending on each other enhances morale
Basics: Team Stages

- polite getting-to-know each other
- members compete to voice opinions; conflict normal.
- conflicts resolved; relationships allow effective teamwork (norms).
- Team has gelled, productive "teamwork"
- extraordinarily productive; not usually attained
- Done work; disbanding.
Basics: Advice

- Positive attitude correlated with success: work harder, cooperate better
  - good skills with positive attitude better than expert with negative attitude
- Big teams (>10 members) less productive due to communication/decision overhead
Exercise

• Who thinks they are a safer than average driver?

• Who thinks they are a better than average team member?

• If we ranked everyone by teamwork skills, there would be the bottom 10 people.
  – What advice could we give them to improve?
Basics: Team Rules

• respect everyone

• ..
  - accept constructive criticism; strive to improve it not defend it.

• ..
  - no BCC to others or forwarding comments without permission

• do the work you commit to;
  - inform team quickly will not complete
Basics: Team Rules (cont)

• Communication
  – everyone has their say;..
  – each person able to speak: allow equal participation
  – one person speaks at a time
  – no side discussions
  – be brief and on topic

• Meetings
  – be on time; be focused: no electronic interruptions
    (text/email/..)
  – don't do work during meetings
Basics: Team Decision Making

• Agree on how decisions are made
  – how many people need to vote?
  – is majority good enough (breeds discontentment)

• Don't avoid conflict to get a decision
  – ..
    discuss alternatives.
  – nominate someone to play devil's advocate

• Respect different opinions
  – dissenters may see some aspect you overlooked
  – this avoids group-think

• Use time to soften disagreements.
Habits of Highly Effective People

This may sound like a lot of fluff, but try to see how it applies to you. Make an effort to improve your group work and interpersonal skills.
1: ..

- Life doesn't just happen; make choices
  - You choose engagement or you choose ambivalence
- Reactive people are governed by..
- Proactive people choose their behaviour.
  - Take responsibility for your actions/situations.
4: ..

- Success is not based on competition:
  - someone need not lose for you to win.

- ..
  - Find mutually beneficial solutions.

- Be courageous to express and fight for your ideas;
  - Be considerate of feelings of others.
  - Balance courage and consideration!

- Believe there is plenty for everyone
  - not a zero-sum game
• Listen.
  – First listen and try to understand before reacting/judging.
  – Ex: PhD candidate misunderstanding questions!

• Listen with an intent..
  – Don't half-listen waiting for a chance to make a point.

• Be able to restate a person's view/questions before replying.
• 2 heads better than one
• diverse group able to create better solutions together
• ..
  - everyone doesn't have to be the same to be part of the team.
• Truly value diversity
  - not "I wish everyone would agree with me faster so we could make some progress!"
Summary

- Teams
  - Team stages
  - Team rules
  - Team decision making

- Habits
  - Be proactive
  - Win-Win
  - Seek first to understand, then to be understood
  - Synergize / collaborate