



Unit: Flexibility and Adaptability

Skill 12: Thinking on Your Feet

Activity A: That Wasn't The Plan

Activity Skills:

Small group dialogue, personal reflection, creative problem solving.

Leadership Skills:

Thinking on your feet, planning for the unexpected, turning challenges into success.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

25-35 minutes

Supplies needed:

- A sheet of paper and a pencil for every participant.

Do Ahead:

Read instructions and think about an experience where something didn't go as planned.

Source:

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BACKGROUND:

For even the best of leaders, things don't always go as planned, but knowing how to think on your feet can keep the unexpected from sabotaging your hard work.

It is important to emphasize that:

- There is always more than one way to do something.
- More heads are better than one!

WHAT TO DO:

Start by asking participants to reflect individually upon a time when something did not go the way they planned.

- How was what happened different from what you expected?
- How did it feel when things didn't go as planned?
- What could you have done differently to be more successful?

Ask if anybody would like to share their experience. Be sure to prompt any volunteers by asking how they felt or how they responded to the situation. (If no one feels comfortable sharing their experience, share one of your own)

Now, break people into groups of 4-6 people, to consider the following scenario:

You and your group members belong to an organization that promotes community service, and you have all been planning a ceremony to honor local volunteers. You invited a guest speaker for your ceremony and you are very excited that she will be there to talk about community service and volunteerism. On the morning of the event, however, you find out that your speaker has gotten sick and cannot attend.

What can you do to still make this event successful?

When each group has had time to discuss the scenario, ask them to report back to the larger group on what they came up with.

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- What is the hardest part about coping with the unexpected?
- Are there ways to plan for the unexpected?
- What kind of attitude do you need to have when things just don't go the way you planned? Why?

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Notes:

Apply:

- What are some things you need to work on to better prepare yourself when things don't go as planned?
- What tips or strategies from your group work do you find most helpful?

Now that everyone is familiar with the topic, distribute the reference "Thinking on Your Feet," to reinforce the concepts discussed in this activity.

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Option 1: Find 3 people you admire, and ask them about a time when things didn't go the way they planned. Ask them how they coped with the situation, what they learned, and what advice they have to give you when things don't go your way.

Option 2: Take some more time to reflect upon your personal experiences. Consider several instances when things didn't happen the way you expected them to. What were the causes in each of the circumstances? Do certain reasons seem to keep popping up? Try to establish a personal plan to minimize the recurrence of unexpected surprises.

Resources And Web Links: