

## Is Your Group in Balance? Take the STAR Diagram Assessment to Find out

Groups have the potential to accomplish much more than any one individual. The start up of a group can be full of energy as team members sort out individual expectations and form a direction that is for the benefit of all. Over time, however, every group encounters challenges. These challenges can help the group focus and work together, or they can threaten the relationships that support the work of the group.

The STAR Diagram tool provides guidance for groups that want to maintain positive and productive relationships. Each of the four points around the star represents a critical aspect generative teamwork. A relationship will be most generative when all points of the star are equal in size. When one or more point is out of balance, the group will struggle to sustain itself.

The points of the STAR represent the following aspects:

**Similarities and Differences** – The “S” part of the STAR provides the diversity and creativity required for the work of the team. Any group needs a balance of differences and similarities. When members of the group are too similar, it is often difficult to bring in new ideas or explore new vistas. When there are too many differences, the group is not cohesive enough to stay together.

**Talking and Listening** – The “T” part of the STAR establishes the interactions that support relationships across lines of difference that are necessary to the work. Talking and listening form the exchanges that allow for individual and group transformation. Each individual needs to participate and honor others’ contributions. No one individual or group can do all the talking; no one individual or group should be allowed to withhold his or her contributions.

**Authentic Work** – The “A” facet of the STAR provides the satisfaction and progress of defining and completing concrete and useful tasks. The work of a group forms one kind of container to hold the individuals together as they form shared meaning and action in complex human systems. Group members must feel their work is important and has meaning. If not, they will disengage from the team and invest their energies in other places where they feel more productive.

**Reason for Being** – The R point of the STAR provides the "glue" that brings a team together and holds it in the relationship that allows productive work. Similar to needing authentic work, group members have to believe in their reason for coming together. When they lose a shared concern, they no longer feel any commitment to



their shared success.

### STAR Diagram Assessment

If you are part of a team or group that struggles to stay together or to accomplish meaningful work, use this tool to open a conversation among the members of the group to explore the source of that struggle. Then use that understanding to identify ways to create more generative relationships among the team.

For the questions that follow, please circle the number that best represents your response to the question. At the end of the survey, you can add any comments you wish.

- 1 = Disagree strongly
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Agree
- 4 = Agree strongly

### Similarities and Differences

There are many valuable differences among members of the team.	1	2	3	4
We talk openly about our differences.	1	2	3	4
I feel a part of this team.	1	2	3	4
I notice that others feel a part of this team.	1	2	3	4
It is easy for someone new to join this team.	1	2	3	4
Most of the people who began with this team are still involved.	1	2	3	4
I feel that I can be myself with this team.	1	2	3	4
I feel that others can be themselves with the team.	1	2	3	4
We share history of experiences and learnings.	1	2	3	4
I know what differences make a difference in our team.	1	2	3	4
We are able to use the diversity in the team to learn and be creative.	1	2	3	4
We have had conflict in the past.	1	2	3	4
We have been able to resolve conflict in the past.	1	2	3	4
We face issues that will bring about constructive conflict in the team.	1	2	3	4
<b>Total</b>				
<b>Similarities and Differences Grand Total</b>				

## Talking and Listening

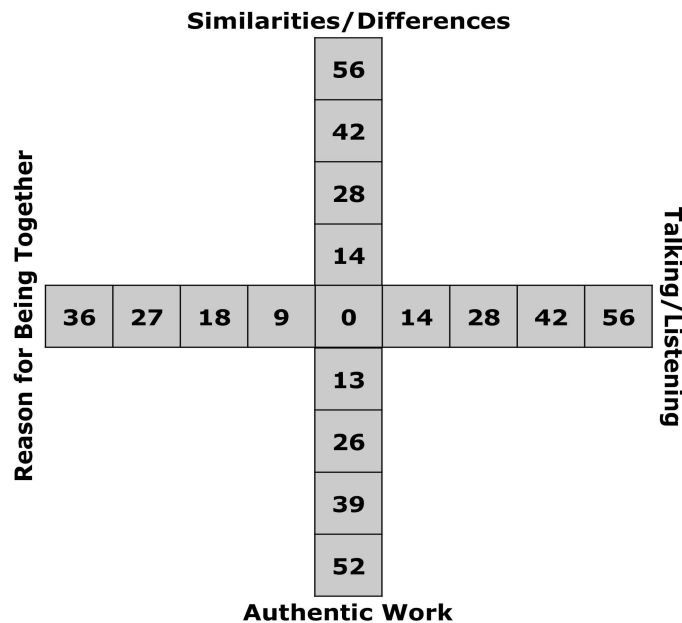
I feel that others in the team listen and speak well.	1	2	3	4
I feel free to share personal information about myself with the team.	1	2	3	4
Everyone in this team has an opportunity to speak and be heard.	1	2	3	4
The conversation of the team is shared equally among members.	1	2	3	4
I usually understand what others in the team are saying.	1	2	3	4
I can predict what others in the team will say before they speak.	1	2	3	4
We spend time reflecting on our work together.	1	2	3	4
We ask many questions of each other as we talk.	1	2	3	4
I do not feel the need to repeat my points many times before they are heard.	1	2	3	4
I feel energized and excited when I leave a meeting of this team.	1	2	3	4
People in the team use words or phrases that are familiar to me.	1	2	3	4
We share common definitions of the words we use to discuss our work.	1	2	3	4
It is fun to be a part of this team.	1	2	3	4
We provide clear feedback to members when they disappoint us.	1	2	3	4
<b>Total</b>				
<b>Talking and Listening Grand Total</b>				

## Authentic Work

Leadership is shared among members of the team.	1	2	3	4
When I need information, I know where to go for help.	1	2	3	4
I say positive things about this team to others.	1	2	3	4
I would encourage others to join this team.	1	2	3	4
The work of the team meets my expectations.	1	2	3	4
The work of the team exceeds my expectations.	1	2	3	4
Over time, we tend to be more effective as a team.	1	2	3	4
Most of us do what we say we will do.	1	2	3	4
I expect myself to fulfill my commitments to the team.	1	2	3	4
We complete our work within schedules we expect.	1	2	3	4
We use our human resources wisely.	1	2	3	4
We use our financial resources wisely.	1	2	3	4
I always know what I am supposed to do.	1	2	3	4
<b>Total</b>				
<b>Authentic Work Grand Total</b>				

## Reasons for Being Together

I know why I participate in this team.	1	2	3	4
I know why others participate in this team.	1	2	3	4
We share the same reason for working together.	1	2	3	4
We have spent enough time talking about why we are here.	1	2	3	4
We have a shared vision of the future.	1	2	3	4
I usually know what will happen when I meet with the team.	1	2	3	4
We are making progress toward our goals.	1	2	3	4
The reason for our being together is the same as when we started our work.	1	2	3	4
The goals of the team match my personal goals.	1	2	3	4
<b>Total</b>				
<b>Reasons for Being Together Grand Total</b>				



Mark your total points on each of the four arms of the STAR, and then consider the following questions:

- Which arm is the longest?
- Which is the shortest?
- How much variation is there among the arms of the STAR?
- What do these relationships tell you about the work of your team?

After your own reflection on these questions, talk to other members of your team. Discuss the following questions with others.

- How are your STAR maps similar?
- How are they different?
- What does this tell you about the work of your team?

Depending on what you find, you may want to focus on strengthening one or another aspect of the STAR. Repeat the assessment often and use it to shape the on-going growth and development of your team.

**Do you have a complex situation you want to change, but don't know where to start? [Download the How to Change a Complex Situation tool now.](#)**

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