

Group Contract

An interesting thing happened in our group. For the first four weeks I thought that we had a wonderful group. Everyone did what they said that they would do and no one shirked their duty. We set a deadline to get the paper to our collator and she received every part on time. In fact, I was the last person to get mine to her. As far as we knew, we had no problems with our values.

The week before everything was due, things fell apart. One person became very frustrated with the rest of the group and withdrew without communicating what her frustrations were. The rest of the group developed the presentation entirely without her input, except to add her PowerPoint slides. We had no communication with her until the moment we walked into class to present. Our presentation went well. She then joined us to compile the paper but quickly left when pressed for an explanation of her behavior.

Here is where I learned something new. I went to talk with Patsy about the best way to handle the situation. I came away with a new understanding of my responsibility toward my fellow classmates. Sometimes what they need is not to be treated as a peer, but as one of my patients. What this person needs right now is not condemnation from me about her inappropriate behavior but some compassion and care. In fact, if I had all the facts, her behavior probably is not inappropriate at all.

So, goals and values are great, as far as they go. No one can live up to them all of the time. I can wave a paper under someone's nose and show them their signature but, along with the personal responsibility of upholding my stated values, comes the responsibility of helping others live up to theirs.