

# China Syndrome

## Team Building Event



*Creating Transformational Experiences*

[www.BuildingTeams.com](http://www.BuildingTeams.com)

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## Introduction to Be Legendary and [www.BuildingTeams.com](http://www.BuildingTeams.com)

Be Legendary was founded to help organizations build successful teams through individual discovery and experience.

A real team requires many attributes to be successfully implemented:

- Common Goals
- Leading and Leadership
- Communication
- Trust
- Accountability
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making

As a company, we focus on every aspect of a 'real' team. We have developed 'team building' products and workshops to help your team successfully implement the attributes we have listed above.

We have created these products to be as easy as possible to run and still achieve your desired outcomes. You could have purchased, or may own, any number of books on team building activities with hundreds

If you are like most of our customers, after looking through the team building activity book, you are wringing your hands and wondering,

*'Which one of these activities is ACTUALLY going to work!?'*

We are here to help.

You did not simply purchase this activity, you purchased our professional expertise. You can call and speak with any one of our facilitators about your specific needs, your group and your environment to make sure this event is going to work for you and how to possibly tailor it to fit your group.

Many times, we all simply need to talk to someone and be reassured that the activity IS going to work. We are more than happy to talk you through the activity as many times as necessary.

This the same approach we take with our workshops so you may want to consider giving us a call for your next workshop, event, retreat, meeting or conference and find out how we can help you.

Make it a great day!

Be Legendary Facilitative Staff.

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## *Complete Instructions to Run a Successful Event*



### **Purpose**

This event is often considered impossible in the beginning and can be very stressful for some participants.

Creativity, group coordination, communication, leadership, perseverance and determination are just some of the qualities that are put to the test during this activity. It is important for teams to find different ways to look at situations and support each other even when there is no clear path and no one is the expert.

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### **Length of Exercise and Short Agenda**

Total time is roughly 30 to 45 minutes and should not exceed 60 minutes. This depends largely upon how quickly your group accomplishes the task and how much discussion is generated.

- 5 Min. Introduce Activity & Cover Ground Rules, if any
- 15 Min. Activity
- 20 Min. Group Discussion
- 5 Min. Wrap up and Set Expectations – Miracle 10%

The discussion is the most important piece of this agenda as that is where the knowledge learned in the activity is transferred back to life, work, etc.

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### **Safety Tips**

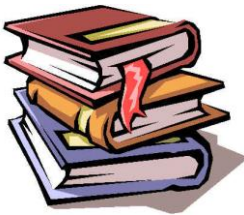
- Be sure people do not grip the rope too tightly or cut off the circulation by wrapping it around their hand.
  - No leaning or diving into the circle to try to pour the coolant.
  - Be sure blindfolded people are kept in control and safe.
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## Equipment You Will Need

- One 60 foot rope circle
- 8 Blindfolds
- 8, 20 foot pieces of rope
- Two containers, both with a small amount of water



## Storyline

There has been an accident in the nuclear lab. A melt down will occur unless you are able to mix the coolant with the unstable material. You may not get any closer to the nuclear material than the safety boundary indicates. You must have eye protection (blindfolds) on if you are working on pouring the coolant. You only have the limited supplies provided and you will lose the use of any supplies that touch the ground within the melt down area. Hurry!



## Setup

1. Before the team arrives, you will want to lay out the 60 foot circle and place the containers in the middle of the circle with water in both of the containers. Have the other prop nearby.
2. Gather the entire team near the circle and the props.
3. Let them know the limitations or rules if they are not clear in the story:
  - a. They may only use the props you have given them.
  - b. No person may enter the circle.
  - c. If a person touches the ground within the circle, something bad will happen (lose your voice or use of a body part).
  - d. Any prop that touches the ground is lost forever.
  - e. If a piece of rope is ever extending into the circle, the person holding the rope must be blindfolded.

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- f. You will need all the coolant to stop the China Syndrome.
  - g. No person may touch the containers. If the containers move, the circle will move with them.
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## Variations

- Give them a time limit of 20 – 30 minutes.
  - You may have each person assigned to helping a partner. This person is to coach only their blindfolded person when they are trying to stop the melt down.
  - You can have the strings tied to the bungee cord like a wagon wheel before they arrive or let them figure that out.
  - You may have all members able to see but no talking.
- 



## Dynamics to Watch For:

- Different styles of coaching and hearing people's ideas.
  - Time management and how the team changes if the plan is not working and time is short.
  - Member of the team who become disenfranchised and what was the cause.
- 



## Questions for Group Discussion

1. What qualities did you appreciate about your leader and could those qualities be effective in other areas of life? Give an example.
  2. If you were blindfolded, what was it like?
  3. Blindfolded people, is there anything you learned that you could apply in other areas of your life?
  4. Are you surprised in any way with your results?
  5. What might you change to get different results?
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## Tips and Tricks from Our Professional Facilitators

- This activity is great because it requires all the necessary components of work – leadership, communication, cooperation, strategic planning, critical thinking, problem solving and of course, teamwork.
  - The activity requires a number of supporting individuals at any given time. Keep changing the ‘playing field’ by changing the rules. This simulates what work is really like because SOMEONE is always changing the work – the customer, a new manager, etc. You might want to force the sharing of leadership by silencing the natural leader for a time, etc.
  - The activity also works extremely well with cross-functional teams for all the reasons above.
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## Facilitative Tools

The key to a good facilitation is to let the group discover the learning that is appropriate. As the facilitator, do not try to manipulate the questioning to get the group to discover what YOU feel is important.

Below are some tools to help you in your questioning to help the group discover their own learning without manipulating the conversation.

### Maintenance Tools

#### Throw-Back:

Team Member: *"How can we possibly get through this obstacle?"*  
Facilitator: *"If it was possible, what would need to happen?"*

#### Share Observations:

Facilitator: *"It is very quiet. What does the silence mean?"*

Facilitator: *"It seems that not everyone is actively participating. Is there a reason for this?"*

#### Review Group Agreements:

It is very important to review when the group becomes disinterested, when rule violations are occurring without thought, and if the group is attacking each other personally.

Facilitator: *"Remember the ground rules we discussed as we begin to talk about this event." (If there are any)*

#### Check-In:

If a group is really struggling or people are becoming very frustrated, interrupt the activity and ask:

*"So what are you doing right now that is working?"*

*"What is not working? Why?"*

#### Accept/Legitimize/Deal With or Defer:

Create a safe environment for participation by:

- Responding neutrally to a speaker whose ideas are "out of synch" with others in the group
- Legitimize his or her contribution
- Agree together how to move forward

#### Facilitator:

*"You're not convinced we're not getting anywhere? That's OK, you may be right. Would you be willing to hang on for fifteen more minutes and see what happens? Yes? Thanks."*

#### Facilitator:

*"The issue you just raised sounds like an important one to you. Can we finish debriefing this event, before we move on to discuss your issue?"*

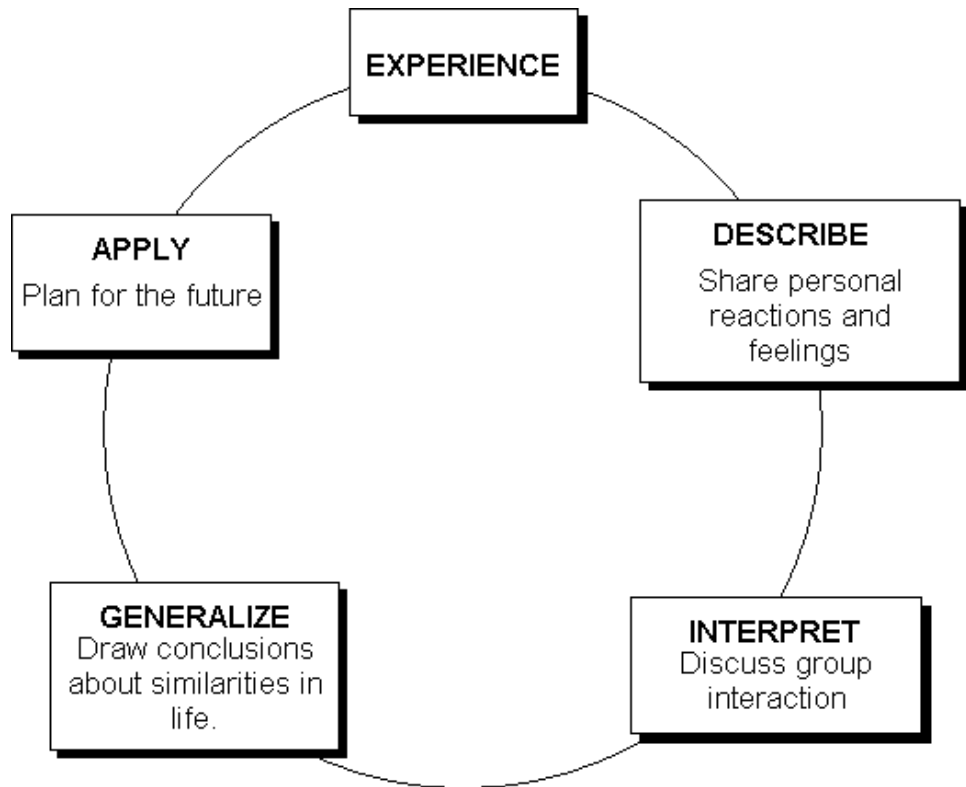
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## Clarity Tools

	When You Hear:	Respond With:
<b>Universals</b>	All Every Never	"All?" "Every?" "Never?"
<b>Rules</b>	Should Shouldn't Must Can't	"What would happen if...?": "What causes or prevents...?" "Must?" "Can't?"
<b>Non-Specific Verbs</b>		"How specifically?"
<b>Non-Specific Nouns</b>	We  It	"Who specifically?"  "What specifically?"
<b>Quantifiers</b>	Too Much Too Many Too Expensive	"Compared to what?"
<b>Statements</b>	I Don't Know That Is Impossible	"Well, if you did know, ..."  "If it were possible, what would need to happen?"

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## Learning Cycle Stages



*1975 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, University Associates*

### Stage 1: Experience

The experience forms the basis for the rest of the cycle. A structured activity, new game, or community service project can all be good experiences from which to draw learning.

### Stage 2: Describe

In this stage, the facilitator asks the participants about their feelings and reactions to the experience. The focus in this stage is on the individuals' feelings and experiences. Ask questions such as:

*"How did you feel?"*

*"What did you do?"*

*"What happened to you?"*

### Stage 3: Interpret

In this stage, participants discuss what went on between group members during the exercise. To process individual reactions into collective ideas, good questions to ask include:

*"Why do you feel the way you do? "*

*"What caused that particular result or feeling? "*

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## Stage 4: Generalize

In this stage, the group generalizes from this experience to see how it might be reflected in other areas of their lives. Participants are asked to focus on situations in their personal or work lives that are similar to those in the activity. The task is to identify similarities and state principles that they can apply to other situations. Some questions that could be asked are:

*"What did you learn from the experience?"*

*"What other similar situations have you experienced? "*

*"How does this relate to your work life?"*

## Stage 5: Apply

Finally, participants can decide on a course of action for the future. As a facilitator, ask questions such as:

*"What do you want to remember from this experience?"*

*"What would you do differently in a similar situation?"*

## The Miracle 10% - One Idea for Closure

### The Miracle 10%

This is quite possibly the easiest method of participant buy-in for change we have in our arsenal.

In front of the group simply ask:

*"Who feels they cannot improve <insert topic, i.e. communication> 10%?"*

99.9% of the time, everyone will raise their hand. (This is not saying that the same people are not trying as hard as they can. Many are giving the 100% effort, but that does not mean they cannot improve. Sometimes you need to make the distinction.)

*"Does everyone agree that improving 10% is a reasonable goal?"*

Everyone will agree. After all we are not asking for a HUGE change, just a small one.

*"There are 'X' (i.e. 15 in the workshop) number of you here. So if each person improved 10% that is a 150% improvement. What would work be like with that improvement? How much better would our communication be? (Open up for discussion and create a specific list)*

*"So it sounds like everyone agrees that with just a small effort to improve from each person, we would all be much happier."*

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*“Each person will be responsible for their own improvement.  
You will each need to hold yourself accountable.”*

Set the right expectation.

*“We all agree 10% improvement is a reasonable goal but I want you to think for just a moment what that REALLY means.”*

*“After we leave today, we will be expecting to see a difference in <insert topic>. But a 10% improvement means that 9 times out of 10, you will see me (use yourself as an example) doing the same old crap I always did.”*

*“And the one time I actually do the right thing, you may not be around. So you may see me do the same old crap 15 or 20 times before you actually see me improving. It is important to have trust in me and the fact that I have agreed to work on improving and that I am consciously doing so.”*

*“Each person here must have that expectation and when you do see the right change, make every effort to point it out to the person who did it and to everyone else. It is hard to become tired of praise, regardless of how well you handle it.”*

At the end of the workshop, you can have everyone spend 15 minutes and write out how they will improve the 10%. Not simply “improve communication” or something generic, but the behaviors that will improve communication.

For example, ***“I will focus on and listen to what the other person is saying and not on how I will respond”***.

Help them drill it down until they have something that they can act upon every single day.