

# **Knot or Not A Knot**

## **Team Building Event**



*Creating Transformational Experiences*  
[www.BuildingTeams.com](http://www.BuildingTeams.com)  
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# Knot or Not A Knot

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## Be Legendary.

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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**

Most of our jobs involve a heavy amount of decision making. Many of us make decisions that affect one person to thousands of people everyday. As most of us make decisions we tend to decide based on our own personal perceptions.

This team building activity simulates how we make decisions when given time and when we are under a time crunch. This activity will challenge your group to make a decision and stand by it, understand and accept the decisions of others, and see the whole picture and not just the so called “critical information”.

Participants identify what is needed to break through self-imposed limitations, think creatively and focus on the most efficient way to come to a decision.

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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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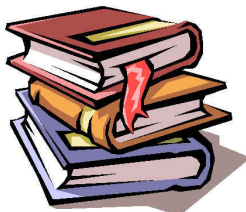
## Safety Tips

- Make sure the participants do not jump over or touch the rope when it is being pulled.
- This activity can be very intense so please be cautious of name calling, putdowns, and other forms of negative actions.



## Equipment You Will Need

At least 40 feet of 8-12mm rope. It is important to use a thick rope that does not fray easily.



## Storyline

You are at a very critical point in a major project and the group must come to decision. The decision will affect the organization as a whole from the very bottom all the way to the top. It is up to each individual to decide what is best for the organization.

### **Alternative**

It is the end of the quarter and there are many critical projects that need to be done before the end of the day. You have decided as a group to get together in one room and try to decide which projects are the most important. A decision must be made quickly and efficiently.

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## Setup

1. You will need one other person to help pull the ends of the rope.
  2. You need to bundle the rope in the middle of the floor with two feet of rope between the ends (of the rope) and the bundle.
  3. You will give the story line and then say this exact statement only once, "*the challenge for your group is to decide when the rope is pulled tight whether there will be a knot in the rope or whether there will be no knot*". **(Tell the group to listen up because you are only going to say this once).**
  4. Ask them if they think there will be a knot in the rope when pulled tight to stand on one side of the rope and if they think there will not be a knot to stand on the other side of the rope. Once the group is divided ask them, "Are you okay with your decision?" If not they can move to the other side at this time. Only give them a few seconds to do this.
  5. Once everyone is happy you and the volunteer can begin to very slowly pull the ends of the rope out. While you are pulling the rope it is the job of each side to try and convince the other side that their decision is the right one.
  6. When you have pulled about a 1/3 of the rope out you stop (this should take 2-3 minutes, so pull the rope slowly).
  7. At this point ask the group members if based on the evidence, the current state of the rope, and the other side's argument if they have changed their minds and would like to switch sides. Give them a full minute to do this.
  8. Once a full minute has gone by make sure that everyone is happy with their decisions. Next tell the group that for the next 30 seconds they can switch sides at will. During this time you will be pulling the rope out slowly. After 30 seconds is up everyone must stay on their side.
  9. Finish pulling the rope tight and see if it is in knot or not a knot.
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## Variations

- After the first time pulling the rope (first 1/3) you can give the sides 3 minutes or so to come up with a presentation to the other group highlighting their points or reasons for their decision.
- You can make it so participants can only decide once at the very beginning. This will allow them to see the consequences of making a uniformed decision.
- You can make it so the participants can move freely from one side to the other throughout the activity, except for the last 1/3 of the rope.



## Dynamics to Watch For:

Every now and again a group will catch that the challenge is for the “GROUP” to decide. Do not prevent this from happening or think that the group has “Got It” and the activity is over. Remember there are numerous chances for individuals to change their minds. If the group stays together the whole time be sure to congratulate them. You can follow up with the following questions:

1. What made you come to a decision as a group? If it was an individual who caught on to the word Group, ask the others why they followed that person.
2. Did anybody upon hearing the challenge think that the rope was going to turn out opposite from which the group decided? If so why did you go along with the group’s decision? Why did you not stand up for what you thought was right?
3. What does it mean to stick together as a group even when the outcome is negative? When the outcome is positive?
4. What can us as individuals take away from this activity? As a group?

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## Questions for Group Discussion

Be sure to look at the additional pages for more ideas on good questions to ask. Have this material in front of you when you are facilitating the debrief.

1. Who in the group feels they were successful in this activity? Why?
    - This question must be asked first in order to bring out the point of the activity.
  2. Does anyone remember what the challenge for the group was?
    - Have a couple people give their interpretations of the challenge. Then tell the group that nobody was successful. They will all look at you in amazement and ask why? Repeat to the group the exact statement you made earlier *“the challenge for your group is to decide when the rope is pulled tight whether there will be a knot in the rope or whether there will be no knot”*.
  3. Would any body like to clarify why no one was successful?
  4. Why did you automatically make the decision about the rope as an individual instead of making the decision as a group?
  5. How many of you switched sides? Why?
  6. How did it make you feel when the other side was trying to convince you that your decision is wrong?
  7. What do you think the point of this activity is?
  8. Does it matter when making a decision that you are right?
  9. What matters more when making a decision? Being right or Have group support.
  10. If you said having group support and you were right about the rope activity, then why did cheer upon your so called success?
  11. What does this activity mean to you?
  12. What does this activity mean to you and your view of group decision making?
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## Tips and Tricks from Our Professional Facilitators

- The key to this activity is in the statement *“the challenge for your group is to decide when the rope is pulled tight whether there will be a knot in the rope or whether there will be no knot”* Do not overstate or over-exaggerate this sentence.
  - Some participants will claim that you tricked them or mislead them. Ask them why they feel this way. As the facilitator what do you think about this?
  - Do not let the participants see you set the rope up!!!
  - When setting up the rope do not initially manipulate it so there is or is not a knot. It does not matter. Just make sure that the two ends are separated from the bundle and on opposite sides from one another.
  - This activity is a very hands off one for you as the facilitator. Let the group do what they need to do as long as it is within the scope of the activity.
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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:

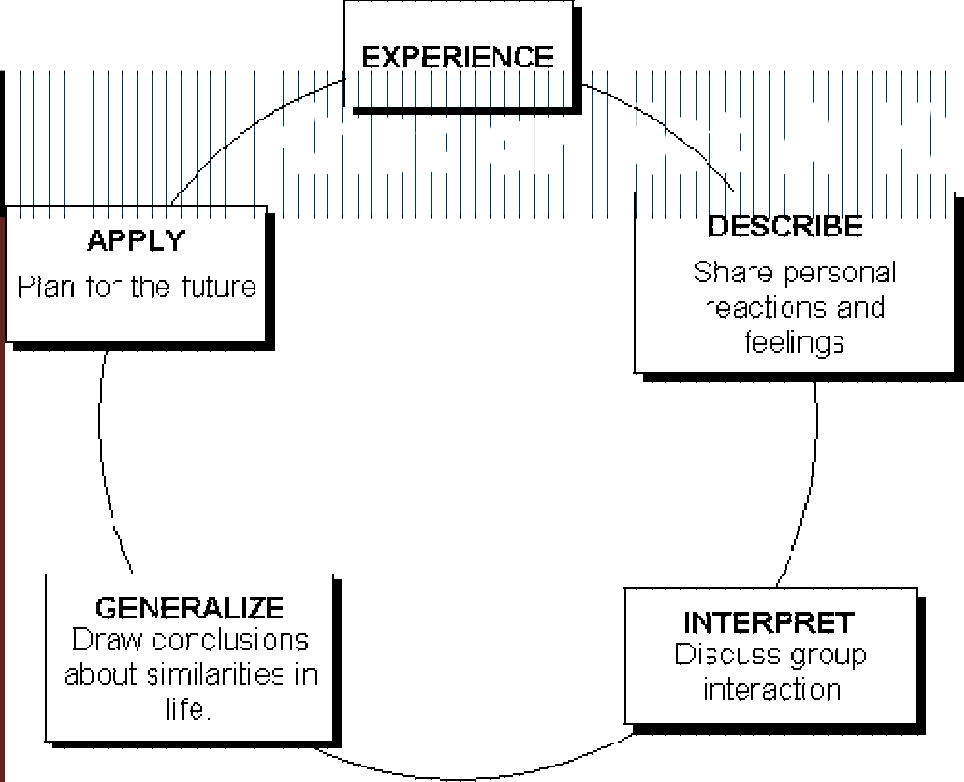
*"The issue you just raised sounds like an important one to you. Can we finish debriefing this event, before we move on to discuss your issue?"*

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## Clarity Tools

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

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1975 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, University Associates

## Learning Cycle Stages

### 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?"*

### 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?"*

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*"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."*

*"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*

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*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.