

## **Team Day**

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### **About the Work:**

So many of us have experienced team away days, where we broke into groups of identify priorities, plan strategy and agree values. Then the feedback, the mutual support and acknowledgment, and that hollow feeling when we realise that nothing much will change as a result of the process. Is teamwork, as Sennett<sup>1</sup> suggests, “the group practice of demeaning superficiality”?

### **About the Author:**

Jenny is recently retired from academia, having worked as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Brighton Business School. Jenny’s use of her own poetry to teach organisational behaviour resulted in her being recognised with a teaching excellence award, and she is now an Honorary Fellow of the University of Brighton. The fellowship is in recognition of her contribution over and above her normal duties. Jenny continues to write poetry for publication as well as for community events. She now enjoys a more relaxed retirement devoted to children, grandchildren and creative enterprises.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Sennett: *The Corrosion of Character - The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*; New York 1998. P. 99

## Team Day

Say 'I' not 'we', don't interrupt,  
Respond with care, don't be abrupt  
Let's keep this confidential, so  
Relationships between us go  
From strength to strength, and we will be  
Effective in our strategy

Forgot to say – the lunch here's nice  
I've booked for tea and coffee twice  
Oh, mobiles off please, for today  
We need the space and time away  
If there's a fire, through the doors  
And down the stairs – just two floors

What do you think? I'd like to know  
Your views on how this team should grow,  
And what should form our corporate vision,  
Action plans, our core decision-  
Making process re our goals  
And how this impacts on our roles

Let's brainstorm, force-field, do a swot,  
Or use a Gantt chart, then let's dot  
The key drivers, using these sticky  
Things, or post-its – nothing tricky  
Make a thingy on the wall  
Which simply clarifies it all.

Hand out the dots, pens, paper too  
Break into groups (numbers will do)  
You have an hour, choose a chair,  
A scribe and someone who will share  
Your feedback, then we'll all agree  
The next steps,

*Into purgatory*

*These empty words, these pointless dots,  
These sticky things, these stupid pots  
Of sweets, the bloody choice of still  
Or sparkling water - will  
The goujons come with spicy sauce?  
At lunch, a veggie choice of course*

*God, let me out, for pity's sake  
Another day to creep and fake  
I know the rules, I know the game  
I know to smile and not to blame  
I know to make a contribution  
To come up with a good solution*

*I know that none of this will hurt  
That all that matters stays covert  
I know that nothing much will change  
Perhaps a gentle re-arrange  
I know that life will carry on  
And this day will have come and gone*

*Pick up the yellow dots and go  
To 'Dickens Room' – the floor below  
Avoid eye contact, or I'll be  
The chair, or scribe, or visionary  
Go through the motions, with my team*

*Did I just hear a distant scream?*