Teaching about Positive Relationships
Jane Dutton, Ross School of Business

1. Designing a course on Positive Relationships

Managing Professional Relationships: Winter 2012 (MBA-3 classes. 20 hours of class)

a. The pitch: Effective leadership is effective relationship management. This course is designed to help managers think and act effectively to build high quality relationships with others. For individuals, high quality relationships generate and sustain energy, equipping people to do their work, and do it well. High quality relationships offer other benefits as well. In a world of continuous change, downsizing, and a press for speed, high quality relationships enable effective individual growth and adaptation to change. Research on managerial effectiveness and derailment also suggests that successful managers are skilled at understanding, managing and leveraging high quality relationships with others. High quality relationships also facilitate the speed and quality of learning, particularly where knowledge is tacit as opposed to explicit. In organizations where knowledge is the basis for competitive advantage, high quality relationships between people enable more effective individual and organizational learning. Finally, in the new economy and free-agent nation, individuals’ commitment and identification with their work organization is no longer a given. Organizations can no longer trade employment security for cooperation and commitment. High quality relationships in organizations build individual commitment and cooperation. Managers of the 21st century need to be effective at building high quality relationships for themselves, and enabling the creation of high quality relationships for others.

Course goals: Enhance self-awareness about your own relationship-building skills and experiences;

1. Develop awareness and specific skills for effectively building high quality professional relationships;
2. Develop awareness and skills for minimizing damage from low quality, corrosive professional relationships;
3. Build a logic for building and managing organizations with relational capability as an organizational strength;
4. Explore and assess the important dimensions of relational leadership

Required text:
Jane E. Dutton, 2003 *Energize your workplace: How to create and sustain high quality relationships at work*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
Assignments:

**Learning Log (60 pts)**A learning log provides you with an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which the issues and concepts raised in class affect you personally and your role as a manager.

**HQC with Clients Analysis (40 points):**

**Letter of Contribution (40 points)**

**Managing Relationally Essay (60 points)**

**DAY 1**

**Module 1: The Relationship Imperative: Why is managing relationships important from an individual and organizational perspective?**

Required readings


**Extra Readings (Optional) on C-tools**


**I. Building Relational Skills**

**Module 2: Enabling the Success of Others: Building Relationships Through Task Enabling**


Video: MO Cheeks

**Module 3: Recognizing, Respecting, Listening: Building Effective Relationships Through Respectful Engagement**

Required readings


**Module 4: True Blue: Building Relationships through Trusting Others**


**Module 5: Playing**
Video: Fish extract on Play

Extra readings (Optional)

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/17/magazine/17play.html?ex=1203915600&en=6871f50fa00bce08&ei=5070&emc=eta1

Video of Jill Vialet, founder of Playworks USA
http://www.ashoka.org/video/jill_tedxsf

Extra video if interested: (Power of touch—part of why play is so powerful a connecting building mechanism. See Dacher Keltner
http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/gg_live/science_meaningful_life_videos/speaker/dacher_keltner/dacher_keltner_on_touch/

Day 2

II. Mastering Relationship Challenges

Module 6: Dealing with Corrosive Relationships at Work

Required Readings


Dealing with a Technical Prima Donna (Video case)

Extra Readings (Optional)


Chris Pearson and Christine Porath 2009 The Cost of Bad Behavior: How Incivility is Damaging Your Business and What to do About it (Chapters 13 and 14 (On c-tools))

Module 7: The Challenge of Power and Bad Times

Required reading

* How to be a Good Boss in a Bad Economy 2009 Harvard Business Review, June, 42-50 (coursepack)

Extra readings (optional)

The power trip: Wall Street Journal, August 14, 2010
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704407804575425561952689390.html
Module 8: The Challenge of Building Connection across Cultural Differences

Extra Readings (Optional) on C-tools


III. Managing Relationally

Module 9: Relational Leaders

Required Readings


Video: John Chambers

Module 10: Designing the Relational Organization

Required Reading

*Dutton, Energize your workplace, Chapter 6

Optional Readings (on C-tools)


Also look at Gittell (2009, cited for the first class). Her book documents the impact of different work practices and systems’ features on relational quality and performance.

DAY 3

Module 11: Simulation: Managing Relationships in the New Economy (We are going to do an extended exercise that will require getting on the floor. Please wear comfortable clothing – avoid skirts and/or dresses.)

Module 12: Living Relationally: Being a Contribution

Required Reading

*Zander and Zander, The Art of Possibility, Chapter 4 Being a contribution (Coursepack)

For class notes that might help with each of these modules, go to http://www.centerforpos.org/the-center/teaching-and-practice-materials/course-syllabi/