



## About Extraordinary Groups

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by Geoffrey M. Bellman

Why do some teams achieve amazing results? What do extraordinary teams have in common? How can we create terrific teams more often?

Consultants Geoff Bellman and Kathleen Ryan sought definitive answers to these questions. Over three years, they interviewed members of sixty extraordinary teams; they searched out the behaviors, motives, and feelings that caused these teams to perform amazingly well. They presented their conclusions in this book, *Extraordinary Groups: How Ordinary Teams Achieve Amazing Results* (Wiley, 2009).

They interviewed a wonderful array of teams in information technology, the military, health care, sports, marketing, government, community activists, youth camps, insurance, and philanthropy. The people worked as small business owners, corporate executives, trainers, counselors, staff managers, coaches, teachers, doctors, nurses, community volunteers, consultants, government contractors, philanthropists, students, book club members, white-water rafters, motorcycle riders, and board members.

Ryan and Bellman pursued answers to the three questions posed earlier. They listened to the many stories and analyzed what they heard. They sought out what these diverse and highly successful teams had in common. Their study reveals that the transformation of teams to extraordinary is rooted in eight performance indicators, six core needs, and four feelings.

### **EIGHT INDICATORS OF AN EXTRAORDINARY TEAM**

Eight indicators were found to be especially important to performance in great teams:

1. **Compelling Purpose**
2. **Shared Leadership**
3. **Just Enough Structure**
4. **Full Engagement**

5. **Embracing Differences**
6. **Unexpected Learning**
7. **Strengthened Relationships**
8. **Great Results**

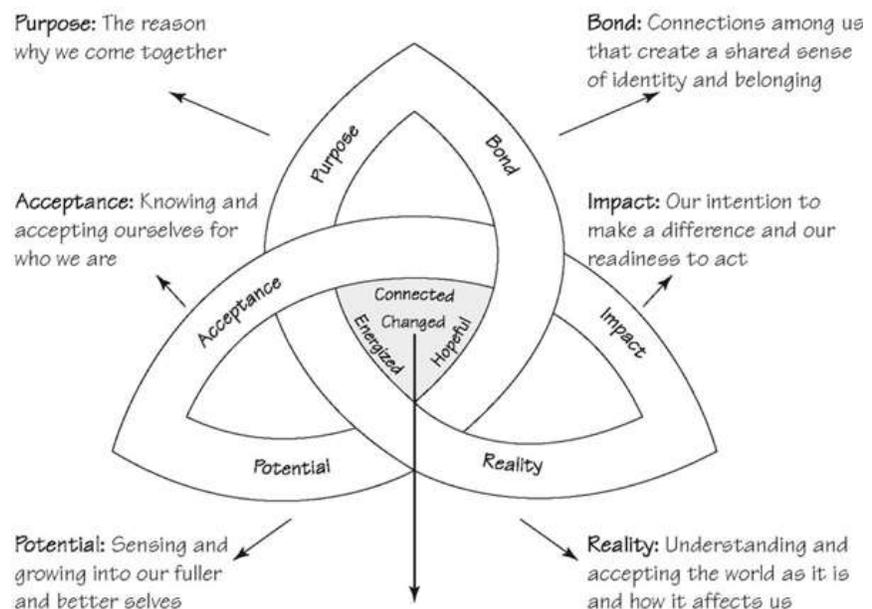
The book elaborates on these indicators, allowing readers to visualize the behaviors, dynamics, and circumstances that support outstanding team achievement. *The Extraordinary Teams Inventory* assessment tool builds on these indicators.

## SIX NEEDS WE MEET BY WORKING TOGETHER

Six core needs are about what people seek when they join a team. These needs vary, person to person, but when they are often met in small groups like those studied in this book. Meeting more individual needs moves a team toward extraordinary. The six needs come in three pairs:

- **The Individual: Acceptance** of self while moving toward one's **Potential**.
- **The Group: The Bond** with others that grows while pursuing a common **Purpose**.
- **The World: Understanding the Reality** of the world while joining to make an **Impact**.

These three pairs of needs are in a creative dynamic with each other, as shown here:





The book illustrates the importance of these needs through stories and offers numerous practical suggestions for meeting each of these needs. Team members find fulfillment when any of these six needs are met. And, fulfillment means more productivity, more motivation, and an increased likelihood of becoming an extraordinary team!

## **FOUR FEELINGS RESULTING FROM TEAM SUCCESS**

Great performance is accompanied by great feelings. From the hundreds of feelings described across our study of sixty teams, four stood out. Teammates on extraordinary teams of all types feel...

- **Energized!**
- **Connected!**
- **Hopeful!**
- **Changed!**

These are the natural, positive, emotional outcomes for teams with behavior aligned with the eight indicators and the six group needs of team members. Most of us at least occasionally experience these feelings, but how do we get there? That's where the indicators and the needs and this book come in.

Bellman and Ryan pass along the learning they gained during their field study and their long experience consulting with teams and organizations. These combine to fill chapters with practical tools, examples, exercises, and actions. Twenty stories from the field illustrate key points. The book offers readers 26 strategies, 83 action steps, and 110 reflective questions. And their research has continued, resulting in the *Extraordinary Teams Inventory*, a useful tool for putting the book into action!

Think about your organization, its goals, and its challenges. If you believe that teams such as the ones described above would make a positive difference, consider an investment in building extraordinary teams.