Interpersonal Skills in Organizations 6th edition Janasz Solutions Manual

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Chapter Two
Self-disclosure and Trust

Chapter Overview

Getting along and establishing personal and professional relationships with others is dependent on our ability to share appropriately with others and to build others' trust in us. In this chapter we discuss the concepts of self-disclosure and trust—what they are, why they're important, the benefits of disclosing to and building trust with others, and strategies for self-disclosure and building trust. We discuss some potential concerns about self-disclosure and building trust as well as offer guidelines for effectively self-disclosing and building trust with others and in organizations. We conclude with a series of individual, small-group and in-class exercises.

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, the student/reader will be able to:

- Improve personal and professional relationships.
- Understand the role of social media in self-disclosure.
- Learn how to trust others, especially when trust has been broken.
- Determine the appropriate amount to disclose to others.
- Use situational cues to guide self-disclosure and trust.
- Share feelings about reactions to people and situations, in addition to facts.
- Demonstrate being worthy of others' trust.

Chapter Outline

What is Self-disclosure?

- Self-disclosure is the process of making the self known to others by letting others know what you think, feel, and want. It is revealing personal information to another that results in an enhanced and trusting business or personal relationship.

Why is Self-disclosure important?

- Provides psychological relief
- Validates perception of reality
- Reduces stress and tension
- Improves physiological health
- Opens and creates clear lines of communication
- Enhances and strengthens relationships
- Affects team productivity
- Has benefits for people globally
- Strengthens on-line communication
- Improves organizational communication

Strategies for Self-disclosure

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- Effective self-disclosure involves:
  - Feelings as well as facts
  - Transparency
  - Authenticity
  - Greater breadth and depth over time
  - A focus on the present rather than the past
  - Reciprocity
  - Risk
  - Work focus

Concerns about Self-disclosure

- Uncertainty of how information will be received or used
- Previous negative experiences
- Others may perceive this as a weakness or shortcoming
- Judgment and image
- Popularity of internet
- On-line disclosure

Some Guidelines for Self-disclosure

- Discuss situations as they happen.
- Choose appropriate place and time.
- Choose appropriate level of disclosure.
- Be careful when revealing information about your employer online.
- Be sensitive to cultural differences.
- Create an emotional connection.

The Role of Self-disclosure in Increasing Self-awareness

- Gaining self-awareness through disclosure and feedback from others.

- *Johari Window* – illustrates how personal and professional relationships can be improved by selecting appropriate aspects of ourselves to share with others.

  The Four Windows are based on the degree to which we know ourselves and the degree to which information about us is known to others.
  1. *Open* – known to self and to others, this window is relatively small at the beginning of a relationship and will expand through the use of self-disclosure.
  2. *Hidden* – known to self and unknown to others, this window will decrease as we disclose information to others. Certain aspects of the hidden window can become barriers to interpersonal development.
  3. *Blind* – unknown to self and known to others, this window will decrease as we receive feedback from others.
  4. *Unknown* – unknown to self and to others, this will decrease as we gain experience and are exposed to new situations.

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Trust

What Is Trust?

Trust is the confidence we have in the honesty, integrity and reliability of a person or thing.

Why is Trust Important?

- Essential in the work environment
- Individual impact
- Organizational impact

Concerns about Building Trust

- Risk
- Attribution theory

Strategies for Building Trust:

1. *Integrity* – honesty and sincerity
2. *Competence* – knowledge and ability
3. *Consistency* – conformity with previous practice, good judgment
4. *Loyalty* – faithfulness to one's friends and ideas
5. *Openness* – willingness to share ideas with others

Five Elements of Trust

- Competence
- Consistency
- Loyalty
- Openness
- Integrity

Personal Trust-Builders

- Follow through on promises and commitments
- Don't reveal confidences
- Avoid unnecessary gossip
- Avoid self-flattering or boasting
- Develop reputation for loyalty
- Be consistent
- Be realistic
- Develop personal competence
- Be honest and truthful
- Make actions consistent with words

Organizational Trust-Builders

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- Organizational cultures associated with high levels of trust emphasize:
  - Depth of relationships
  - Understanding of roles and responsibilities
  - Frequent, timely and forthright communication
  - Member self-esteem and self-awareness
  - High levels of skill competence
  - Clarity of shared purpose, direction and vision
  - Honoring promises and commitments

Tips for Building Trust

- Practice what you preach
- Open lines of communication
- Accept disagreements
- Keep information confidential
- Let others know what you stand for
- Create an open environment
- Main high level of integrity
- Know yourself
- Build credibility
- Avoid micromanaging

A Note of Caution About Trust

- Trust is earned
- Trust is situation-dependent
- Trust is fragile

Teaching Notes

Motivating the discussion:

At the start of the session, ask students, "Let's say you had a really bad day. You failed an exam, your wallet was stolen and your car wouldn't start. How would you cope with this? What would you do?" Some responses might be cry, drink a beer, or be alone…but many will say that after doing the above (or instead of), they talk to a friend or loved one. Most of us cope with life's frustrations by disclosing our feelings, concerns, etc. with someone else. Preferably someone who listens, but doesn't judge or offer solutions. Someone who could relate to what we're feeling or experiencing.

- Other questions to get the discussion started:
  - Is there a person in your life (a family member, significant other, co-worker, roommate) with whom you would like to have an enhanced relationship?
  - Are you reluctant to share your thoughts and feelings with others? If yes, why?
  - Has someone with whom you were close ever violated your trust in him or her? Were you able to trust them again? If so, how?
  - Do you find yourself sometimes revealing more about yourself to others than others reveal to you?

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    - Do you sometimes feel as though you've said too much about yourself in conversation with others?
    - Have you ever felt like your inability or reluctance to share thoughts or feelings with another cost you your relationship with that person?

- You've heard the statement 'misery loves company?' Talking helps us to process information and gives us added perspective. It can ground us in reality; through sharing, we are able to get feedback from others and have a better-rounded view of our situation.

- This chapter is directed at individuals rather than organizations. This is intentional, because we all know that true change has to start at the individual level. That's how organizations change—through the efforts of individuals. The need for trust will probably increase as organizations become more team oriented. Also, trust will be more important as work is done "virtually"—where people are expected to work autonomously and essentially self-manage.

- Many of us are accustomed to sharing about ourselves in personal situations—with a parent or relative or close friend. Self-disclosure is also important in business. The best managers are those who can relate to their employees and build a rapport with them. You don't want to disclose everything there is to know about yourself at work, but you want to share enough that others can understand what makes you "tick."

- A "caveat:" disclosure isn't always a good thing. We need to be selective, especially women, whose communication styles are viewed sometimes as more "open." Some women feel they suffer for this in the presence of what are often more closed, and competitive "male" cultures/organizations.

- Discuss the differences in the quality and quantity of self-disclosure in computer-mediated communication (CMC) and face-to-fact communication (FTF).

- Acknowledge that some will feel very comfortable with disclosure whereas others will be more naturally reserved. This is fine. We each have a level beyond which we are uncomfortable sharing, especially in business situations. Each can decide the level with which they're comfortable, and focus on sharing enough that others in the workplace will be able to understand and work with them. If the information you're thinking of sharing has little or nothing to do with the project or your work style, it probably doesn't need to be shared, especially as the relationship is just being formed.

- Our personal and professional relationships can be greatly improved through understanding ourselves in depth and selecting those aspects of us that are appropriate to share with others.

- On the topic of trust, you could ask students if they've ever told someone something in confidence only to hear some version repeated by someone else? How did that feel? Or perhaps you've heard through the grapevine that your boyfriend or girlfriend was seen at a party across town with someone else. "Trust is hard to build but easy to destroy." Have students discuss their reactions to this statement in small groups.

- A caveat about trust: trust is actually very difficult to establish and maintain. Establishing this in relationships, whether they be personal or professional relationships, takes hard

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work. The issue of integrity can be brought up here. Integrity is probably a larger component of trust than some other elements cited in the chapter. If integrity is missing, the other elements are irrelevant.

Ideas for presenting material:

- Ask students to form pairs and interview one another. Provide a list of questions (such as the one in Exercise 2-B/Multiple introductions). Allow 5-10 minutes for this activity. Ask students whether they preferred being on the interviewee or interviewer end. Probe into reasons why (some prefer not to disclose info but enjoy asking others to, for example). Ask why this is so. What are risks in disclosing information? What are risks in not disclosing information?

- Discuss participants' experiences with and concerns about on-line disclosure. Do the benefits outweigh the disadvantages? How can one disclose online and yet guard privacy?

- Have the participants research differences in disclosure and trust based on country of origin.

- Discuss potential generational differences in terms of disclosure and trust, especially on-line versus in-person.

- Start with a short intro on self-disclosure—what it is, why it's important in the workplace. Then have students participate in the show and share exercise (Exercise 2–B) in small groups. Discuss students' comfort level in participating in this activity.

- A very powerful demonstration of trust can be illustrated by blindfolding half the class and having the other half of the class act as guides as they are escorted around the building or eat a meal. (See exercise 2–F for more information). Talk about levels of trust—did they change whether individuals were sighted first and then blind? Did trust build over time (once individuals realized they were in no real danger)?

Discussion Questions

Self-disclosure has benefits, but it also has risks. Discuss both.

- *Benefits:* brings relief, helps us validate our perceptions of reality, reduces stress and tension, improves communication and relationships with diverse others.

- *Risks:* others can be untrustworthy and leave the discloser vulnerable, uncertainty about how the info will be used, fear that the discloser will be judged, fear that others won't reciprocate—leaving a feeling of imbalance.

Was Emily Townsend's disclosure appropriate in the chapter opening case? Why or why not? [Follow-on questions could include: "Was Emily confiding in a family friend, an employer, or a mentor?" "Would a male employee have been as open with Michael as Emily obviously was?"]

- Emily's perception of her relationship with Michael would influence her level of disclosure. Most of what she disclosed was not work-related. While her disclosure was with a family friend, it was in the work context, so she should have been more guarded.

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Another option would have been to contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) about getting counseling for stress.

- Deborah Tannen argues that females disclose more emotional information (feelings) than men.[1] As mentioned above, women need to be attuned to the culture/organizational mores of their work environment before making a decision to disclose personal information to colleagues, male or female.

With so much work being done by work teams; in what ways can self-disclosure improve team performance?

- Helps others know our work style, habits, preferences, strengths, etc.
- Disclosure leads to trust. Trust may be the largest single factor separating effective from ineffective work teams.
- By demonstrating your willingness to give information, others are likely to reciprocate. When this information contains performance feedback, team members are able to improve their performance individually and collectively.

Have you ever worked for a boss you didn't trust? How can this be a problem?

- First, they set a bad example…you might lose trust in others who report to him/her.
- You are less likely to disclose pertinent information about you or tasks you perform. Problems are likely not to be reported for fear of negative consequences. This hinders individual and organizational learning.
- We have little confidence that they'll do what they say they'll do.
- Given a choice, we might go elsewhere. Without trust, loyalty is low.
- We might carry our concerns about their honesty and sincerity to their competence. Did they really perform this task in the past? Is their advice worthy of being followed?

We contend that we might trust certain but not all aspects of a person. Do you agree or disagree?

- We may trust the co-worker to keep sensitive information confidential. However, we may not trust in the decisions they make for a variety of reasons.
- It is possible that trust (or lack thereof) about some aspects of a person spill over into other aspects of that person. Our trust may be person- and situation-dependent, however, over time, our desire to discern where and when to trust others might lead us to blanket evaluations.

How does trust impact organizations? How can untrustworthy members impact an entire organization? How can organizations ensure members will be trustworthy?

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- Recent examples of corporate scandals or bankruptcies help to illustrate how trust impacts organizational members and all primary and secondary stakeholders. Discuss means for organizations to regain trust with stakeholders and the general public.

Comment on these statements: "Trust is fragile." "Trust is earned."

- Trust is difficult to build and maintain, yet easy to lose. Unfortunately, as is true in many areas of life, people remember the bad things more vividly than the good things. Also, the dynamics of trust become more complex as a relationship evolves over time.

Notes on Selected Exercises

Before attempting any of the exercises in this chapter, review the ground rules for group sharing that are described in the introduction to this manual.

Exercise 2-A PEOPLE HUNT

Purpose: To allow participants to begin disclosing and to become acquainted with class members.

Time: 20-30 min

Resources/Set-up: Copies of information gathering sheet (see chapter)

Activity Instructions: Instruct participants to write their responses on the first column of their information sheet. They should then attempt to meet as many people as possible, using any one person for no more than three categories, in order to fill out their information sheet.

Discussion/Debrief: See questions in text.

Exercise 2-B ICEBREAKERS

Purpose: To allow participants to get acquainted and to begin disclosing in order to obtain a more relaxed environment for future disclosure.

Time: 15-30 min.

Resources/Set-up: Dependent on which activity used, several balls, large note cards, paper and pens

Activity Instructions:

Name, Face and Fact – Have participants sit in a circle. The first person will state their name and a fact about themselves. The next person should repeat the first person's name and fact, then add their own name and fact. The third person repeats the first person's name and fact and the second person's name and fact, then adds their own name and fact. This continues on around the circle.

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Name Repetition – Participants stand in a circle and state their names. Start with one person throwing a ball stating their name first and saying the name of the person they throw it to. Continue this for about 10 minutes.

Name Tags – Participants are to write their name on a large index card or piece of paper. In each corner, instruct them to write certain information regarding themselves. You can select any type of information that you believe will get them to discuss. Examples are hometown, major, college graduated from, career plans, likes, current job, preferred (ideal) career, hobbies and interests, favorite book, movie, play, TV show, etc.

Show and Share – This activity works great as both an illustration of disclosure and an opener for a discussion on self-disclosure (fears and benefits). Have participants bring in an item that has some type of personal significance to them. Have them show the item and discuss the reason for its sentimental value.

Multiple Introductions – Write out several topics on the board. Start with easy topics, move toward more revealing topics. Suggestions (depending on the nature of the audience) are: major in school and why chosen; what you did last summer (and what you would have preferred to do!), college attending/attended and why chosen; thoughts on a recent election or world event of interest; three strengths and limitations; a personal goal you'd like to achieve in your lifetime or within the next six months; favorite book/show and why. An interesting question with which to end is "why you did or didn't like this activity!"

Have participant's select one topic and introduce themselves to one person and discuss this one topic. After one to one-and-one-half minutes (depending on the question being discussed), call time. Have participants select another topic and use this along with an introduction to another member of the class. Continue until each participant has met at least seven other participants.

Discussion/Debrief: Most of these exercises are geared toward allowing individuals to get to know others. The first three exercises involve minimal or safe self-disclosure. Participants are likely to find these exercises less threatening or difficult than the fourth and fifth exercises. It would also be worthwhile to spend some time discussing listening without judgment, revisiting the ground rules for group sharing. Students who show personal items (Show and Share) are taking a risk. If others laugh or negatively judge them, risk-taking through disclosure is likely to cease. Instead, students should use this activity to find commonalities with other students. Some questions you might ask include:

1. What did you like about this activity and why?
2. What didn't you like about this activity and why?
3. What concerns did you have at the start of the activity? Do these concerns still exist?
4. How can you use activities like these in school or work group settings to speed up the trust-building process?

Exercise 2-C FISHBOWL

Purpose: To allow participants to practice feeling comfortable with self-disclosure.

Time: 2-3 minutes per participant plus time to set up and de-brief the exercise.

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Resources/Set-up: A small paper bag or a clear glass bowl for cards or suggestions; copy of disclosure situations (see sample topics)—one item per card (cards can be typed and laminated in advance).

Activity Instructions: Have participants select a disclosure topic and prepare a short, impromptu (2-3 minute) presentation according to the criteria set in the participant instructions. Offer participants the chance to return a card in exchange for another one if they've drawn a topic they absolutely do not want to discuss with others. Have each participant read their card aloud and then share the experience with others in the room.

Allow for other participants to ask questions for clarification and to give feedback to each presenter.

Discussion/Debrief: This can be done as an impromptu speech or you can allow them to choose before the class period. One thing that works well is for the instructor to go first—demonstrating his/her willingness to self-disclose. The fishbowl can be completed in one class session or distributed over the course of several meetings. Another variation is to deal the disclosure cards to newly created student work groups and have students respond in their small group. For participants with limited presentation experience, this exercise can be somewhat intimidating, especially if done impromptu. In addition, some individuals are extroverts—tending to speak before thinking, while others are introverts—tending to think before speaking. These differences make for both comfort and skill differences among participants.

Sample topics:

A happy/sad holiday memory
Your most/least enjoyable travel experience
An accomplishment you worked hard to attain
A lesson you learned in childhood that remains with you to this day
A time when you felt angry/mad or lost your temper
A time when you felt sad
A time when you felt embarrassed
A time when you felt lucky
A time when upon reflection you may have over-shared
A positive experience you had with disclosure on-line
A negative experience you had sharing on-line
A memorable experience from grade school
A time you realized you were more like your mother/father than you care to admit
A time you realized the value of friendship
A time you felt proud
A time you felt watched over/protected
A time you felt weak or helpless
A time you felt strong or in control
A time when you felt jealousy or envy towards someone or their possessions
A surprising experience (surprised, shocked, taken off guard)
A guilty experience (felt ashamed or sorry)
A time you interacted positively with someone from a culture other than your own
A time when cultural differences affected your ability to relate easily with another individual
A time when you felt you played a leadership role
A time when you felt competitive with someone who was a good friend

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A situation in which you had a misunderstanding with a member of the opposite sex
A memorable day (good or bad)
A funny/comical experience
The most significant experience you've had recently
An early memory of friend or relative
A frightening experience, when you felt scared or worried
A time you felt confused
A situation in which you realized it was your responsibility to change
A painful experience (physical or mental)
A time when you realized that you differ from most other people
A time you succeeded in accomplishing something that was very difficult to do
An experience that captures the best of how you think about yourself
A time you felt successful
A time you were affected negatively by miscommunication (e.g., a rumor)
A time you felt taken advantage of

Exercise 2-D JOHARI WINDOW QUESTIONNAIRE

Purpose: To understand and assess participant's behavior in interpersonal relationships and to determine willingness to disclose and receptiveness to feedback.

Time: 30 min.

Resources/Set-up: Questionnaire and scoring form (see chapter)

Activity Instructions:
1. Participants are to complete the questionnaire.
2. Participants are to use the answer key to obtain their score on two factors—openness to feedback and willingness to self-disclose.
3. The scores for each should be placed on the interpretation grid on the summary sheet.

Discussion/Debrief:
1. Do you think your scores accurately represent your openness to feedback and willingness to self-disclose?
2. Is there anything you'd like to change about these behaviors? For example, if you are uncomfortable about disclosing, what aspect is most difficult for you?
3. Do you ever feel like you trust too much (or too little)? How can this be a problem? What would you like to change about this behavior?

Exercise 2-E CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Purpose: To examine interpersonal relationships and determine the level of disclosure used or needed to maintain or enhance the relationship.

Time: 20-40 min.

Resources/Set-up: Relationship rating sheets (see chapter)

Activity Instructions: Can be used as a homework or reflection assignment or as a discussion tool.

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Participants are to complete the relationship sheet by adding names of people in the various categories and then rating the level of trust and level of self-disclosure for each relationship. They should then write comments or flag situations that need to have improved trust and disclosure.

Discussion/Debrief: See questions in text.

Exercise 2-F TRUST BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Purpose: To expose participants to trust and the elements necessary to obtain a comfort level with trusting.

Time: 20-60 min.

Resources/Set-up: Need to work in pairs or groups, open space, blindfold (bandanas or scarves will do)

Activity Instructions:

Blind Walk – have participants work in pairs, taking turns leading and being "blind." Allow them to explore outside of the classroom to give a varied experience. The blind person must keep their eyes closed. Give them a time limit and then have them change positions.

As an alternative: *Trust fall* – to be done in pairs or triads. Make sure the participants are physically capable of catching the falling student. Have the falling students close their eyes and give a signal as to when they are ready to perform the fall.

Trust meal – done in pairs (one blindfolded, one not). Provide a meal or various items to eat or drink. The person should be blindfolded for the activity. Check for food allergies in advance.

Discussion/Debrief: See questions in text.

These activities work well in illustrating trust and lead to a lecture or discussion of the questions in the chapter.

Exercise 2-G IDEAL CARDS: A SELF-DISCLOSURE ACTIVITY

Purpose: To encourage interaction and self-disclosure of ideas and to reveal group members' priorities for their ideals.

Time: 50-75 min.

Resources/Set-up: Two index cards (3"x5") with a different ideal on each card, for each participant (see suggested Ideal Cards on next page), play money (enough to give each participant $200 in various denominations).

Activity Instructions:

1. Form groups of five to seven members.
2. Distribute play money and two ideal cards to each participant.

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3. Explain the following ground rules for buying, selling or trading cards:
    a. Each individual must sell or trade at least one of his/her Ideal Cards sometime during the entire experience.
    b. Each individual may buy, sell or trade Ideal Cards within his/her group. Cards may be bought or sold for any mutually agreed-upon price or traded outright.
4. Participants trade cards within their subgroups.
5. When the trading is done within the subgroups, announce that participants may exchange cards (in accordance with the rules) with any other person in the room.
6. Participants are asked to individually reflect on the following questions:
    a. What were the original Ideal Cards you received? Why did you want to keep/trade them?
    b. How much money did you have at the end of the experience?
    b) Were you more interested in obtaining meaningful Ideal cards or accumulating the most money possible?
    c) Which Ideal cards did you most wish to obtain? Why?
    d) Are you satisfied with the Ideal Cards you now have? Why or why not?
7. Groups should then reassemble and discuss the answers to these questions.

Discussion/Debrief: Discuss the five questions noted in #6 above.

SUGGESTED IDEAL CARDS

1. To persevere in what I am doing.
2. To be honest.
3. Never to be worried about having enough food.
4. To be a member of the opposite sex.
5. To be needed and to be important to others.
6. To have better feelings about myself.
7. To have a better relationship with God.
8. To be a good conversationalist.
9. To have my opinions respected.
10. To develop my potential.
11. To be esteemed by others.
12. To be a peacemaker.
13. To put chauvinists in their place.
14. To believe in myself.
15. To be attractive to members of the opposite sex.

16 To be happy in all that I do.

26. To live up to my convictions.
27. To be at ease with other people.
28. Never to be lonely.
29. To be secure.
30. To be loved by a special few.
31. To give of myself freely in helping others.
32. Never to be bored.
33. To be taller (shorter).
34. To be a great movie star.
35. To be an effective leader.
36. To be very creative.
37. To have an affinity with nature.
38. To be an entrepreneur.
39. To be considered different and unique.
40. To be President of the United States.
41. Never to lose.

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17. To be warm and sincere.
18. To be sexy.
19. To be known as a great lover.
20. To be a good parent.
21. To have a better relationship with my parents.
22. To graduate with honors.
23. To make an impact on others.
24. To be competent in making love.
25. To be accepted.
42. To be a great musician.
43. To be less easily influenced.
44. To be loved by everyone.
45. To be free.
46. To know myself better.
47. To be witty.
48. To be more physically attractive.
49. To be secure monetarily.
50. To begin all over again.

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Exercise 2-H SELF-DISCLOSURE POKER

Assign activity in class, monitor small group work, and facilitate discussion using guidelines in the text.

Exercise 2-I DISCLOSURE AND TRUST IN ACTION

Discuss questions listed in the chapter and assign activities.

Exercise 2-J REFLECTION/ACTION PLAN

This can be done by the participants as an assignment or as a paired discussion exercise. Alternatively, this can be a class discussion facilitated by the Instructor.

Additional Resources

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Endnotes

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