

Something we can learn from Geese

Adapted from the work of Dr. Angeles Arrien

Fact No. 1

As each bird flaps its wings it creates an uplift for the bird following, by flying in a "V" formation; the whole flock has 71% greater flying range than if the bird flew alone. Many of us recognise that there is a lot I can do by myself, there is a lot I can do with a colleague or partner, but the power of what I can get done with a network group is quantum. The lesson from this fact - people who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are travelling on the thrust of one another.

Fact No. 2

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation to take an advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front. Lesson from this fact – if we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go and be willing to accept their help, as well as give ours to others who are looking for support.

Fact No. 3

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position – an invaluable lesson for us to apply to all our group work. It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing the leadership. With people, as with geese, we are inter-dependent on each other's skills and capabilities and unique arrangements of power and resources; no one person is right to lead in all circumstances and at all times. Leaders need to learn to let go at times, and others must feel comfortable in stepping forward – no false modesty – no greed for power and position for its own sake.

Fact No. 4

When a goose becomes ill or wounded or shot down, two geese move out of information and follow it down to help protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies, then they launch out together with another formation or they catch up with their flock. Lesson – if we have as much sense as geese, we, too, will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

Fact No.5

The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. Lesson – we need to make sure our honking from behind is encouragement and not something else! In groups where there is great encouragement against great odds, the production is much greater by the power of encouragement. The word "courage" means to stand by one's heart, to stand by one's core, to encourage someone else's core, to encourage someone else's heart – that's the quality of honking.