

How to be seen as an influential colleague?

HEI Teacher Day, Turun AMK

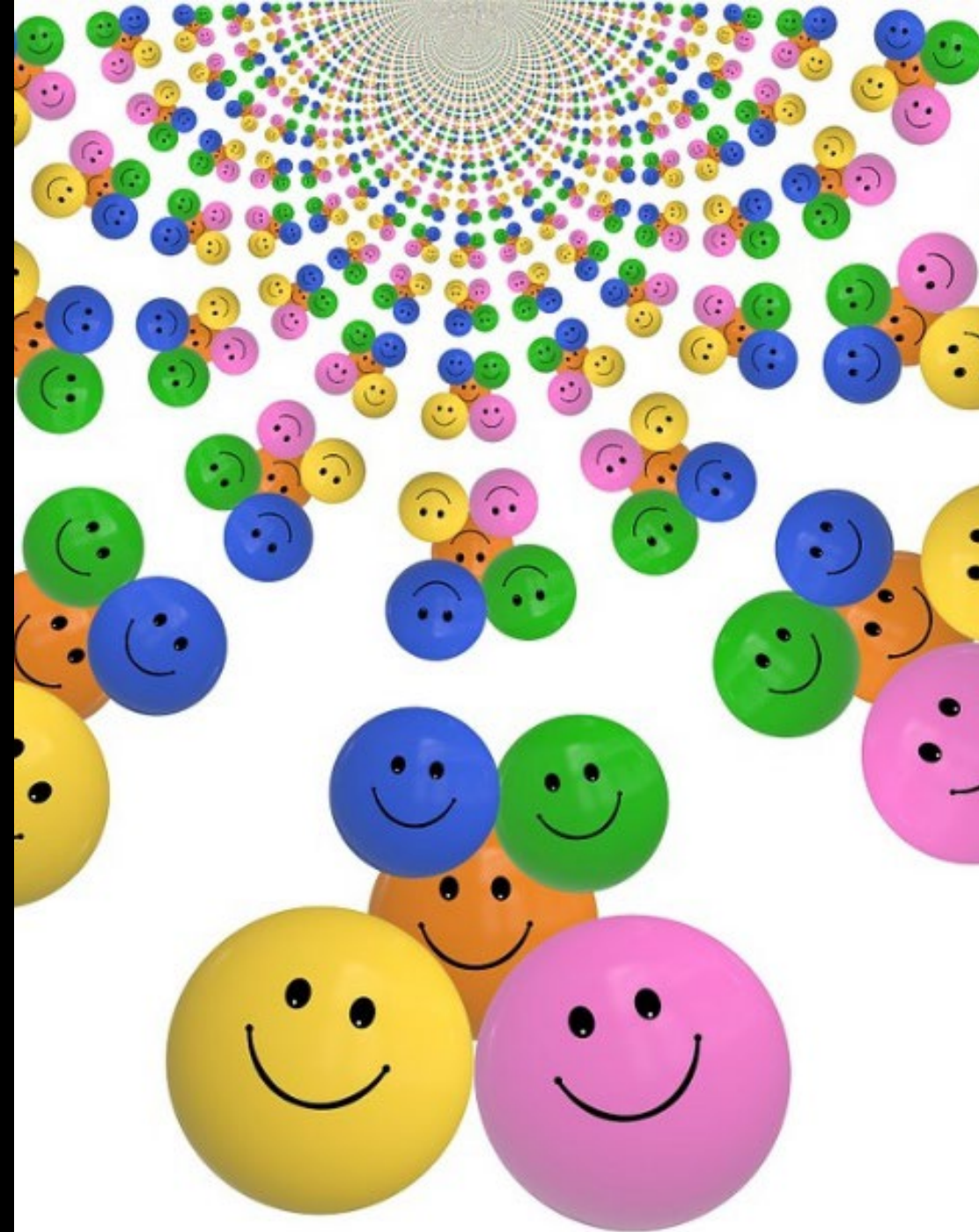
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What we talk about when we talk about influential colleagues?

- The Finnish Work Environment Fund funded project entitled 'Collaborative Collegueship' (2019-21) with Satu Teerikangas, Maarit Laiho and Suvi Satama
 - See our Final Report: Aktiivinen työkaveruus työn arjen voimavarana
- We talk about work, colleagues at work
 - We work for ourselves, for our colleagues, and for our organisation (vs off-work friendship)
- "An influential" – instead of being passive
 - Each has an opportunity to influence and even responsibility to actively take care
 - Not only 'active doers' but also 'silent thinkers'
- "How to be seen" – others have expectations
 - How to take part in our working community
- Everydayness
 - The phenomenon which is maintained everyday and all the time in each encounter (not top-down)



Colleagueship as identity

Individual expertising

valuing top performers in their field, celebrating heroic colleagues who impress through their individual competency and expertise, who show their high self-esteem, and because of whom the organisation's future looks bright.

I want that there appears professional expertise, knowledge. ...that [expertise] is, how to win my confidence. That I can say to my customer without worrying that they should be in contact with my colleague when I am not present. ...if I do not feel that they are experts in this field, I think that it definitely effects how I see them as my colleagues as well.

Team membering

belonging to a bigger unit, whose members publicly confess their identification to working collaboratively for a joint goal and to stand in for one another.

...but I feel that they support me ...that they confirm I do things right. I go and ask that I have thought of doing it in this way, what do you think, is it smart to do it like this, does it make any sense? ...because I hope that we work as a team as well ...that we provide relatively similar service regardless of the issue of who serves whom [customer].

Colleagueship as agency

Mastering one's own tasks

expecting that a colleague masters his/her tasks even without particular support by others, takes care of one's own share of organizational achievement. By doing their best, they spur others to do, in turn, their best through healthy internal competition.

'In my opinion, we have quite a healthy competition between employees. It is not either like beating each other up or winning at any price. ...that [competition] spurs others to do their best [in their duties] shoulder by shoulder.'

Going beyond one's responsibilities

feeling confident among colleagues, who spontaneously take responsibility beyond their own tasks, not avoid thankless, "no-one's", tasks, and display their "entrepreneurial mindset" and "ownership" of joint performance. Such manifestations of colleagueship promote interdependency and collaborative agency.

Customers do not necessarily remember in which office they have their customership. They walk in from that door, which is the closest one in that particular moment. Our co-operation should always be interactional and supporting one another. Not like, 'I do not care to serve this customer properly or I will send him to another office because I won't get personal rewards, bonus, or anything'.

Colleagueship as purpose

Focusing on work

a view that a workplace is only for working and all the activities must be focused on completing work duties effectively. Colleagues are appreciated based on how well they cast social relationships aside and how intensively they focus on work.

You need to enjoy in your workplace and you need to get along with everybody there... but that enjoying there, in my opinion, does not follow from that we come here to have fun. That enjoying rather follows from our joint success in finalising work tasks, not from fun and restful atmosphere.

Empathising with others

a reflexive purpose, seeing oneself in others, and being sensitive and humane towards other employees by being present, taking care of one another, and behaving appropriately. Work and its purpose will be executed well when the focus is on collaboration through empathy.

By paying attention to your colleagues, 'hey, have you eaten something, let's go eat'... We create such a feeling of belonging to a team. That is to say that we support, listen one another and are present in their daily life. I think... that being present in daily life is the right expression. Being present in everything.

Colleagueship as interaction

Speaking out

expressing thoughts and values openly, discussing issues in an outspoken manner, and directly addressing problems.

They speak out to me outright, in a straightforward manner, whether they have a positive or negative message. I think that is a character of a good work mate.

Constructive approaching

a form of colleagueship that implies having an optimistic attitude, a non-blaming, constructive, and collaborative presence among colleagues, and managing to infect others with that positivity.

I never saw her in a bad mood, she always helps ...is extremely busy, if I look at her calendar, it is fully booked for the next one and a half months. When her office is downstairs, if I see from here that she is not with a customer, I rather visit her in her office than send an email or call over Skype. I am infected with her positivity for the rest of my day.

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Team membering

Colleagueship as **agency**

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A heroic colleague

A collaborative colleague

Some points for future ponderings

- Top experts who collaborate in harmony: Is it realistic?
- Continuous contradictions between an influential expert and an influential team player
 - Certain organisational practices may maintain one, while some practices maintain another
- For management teams: Do we have a unit, which strives for maximised efficiency or a unit, which recognises various interests and encourages participation and inclusivity?
- Substitute for leadership: operational level leaders, so called colleagues direct, coordinate and organise activities



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