

6 Tips on how to use team building quotes to inspire your corporate team

By Lyndsay Swinton

Team pep talks can be poop talks unless you learn how to inspire your team. Building quotes into your everyday team talk can mean the difference between your words being heard as, “blah, blah, blah,” or landing like little golden nuggets of wisdom in the appreciative ears of your listeners. And best of all, there’s no need to think them up yourself! Just dig into the treasure trove of team building quotes by proven motivators and you can save the day. Here’s a few to start you off, and more importantly 6 tips on how to use them.

Quote Dead People, Poets, Politicians and Players... and Jack Black

You are not a poet—you manage a business. You’re great at fixing problems not waxing lyrical. If you want to *inspire* your team, your best bet is to use someone else’s words—someone “touched by the heavens”, linguistically speaking.

Tip: If you are working with customer facing or sales teams, then Jack Black’s quote could emphasize that body language is critical in successful communication, in a light-hearted non directive way.

Yes, your most narcissistic, cynical or downright awkward worker will probably snigger at positive, optimistic team building quotes but hey, their glass is probably half empty most of the time. By drip drip dripping teaminess into their glass using quotes and other [team building techniques](#), their glass will eventually fill up and their awkwardness will slip quietly away.

Inspirational Team-building quotes: The Power of “We”

Andrew Carnegie, the great American philanthropist who built U.S. Steel, knew more than a little bit about the importance of teamwork. He merged the giant Carnegie Steel Company with several smaller companies to create the first mega-corporation and eventually became the second richest man in the world. Before he died, he gave most of his fortune away to create libraries, schools, foundations and other good works. Here is what he had to say on the subject of teamwork:

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision--the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."

Tip: You could use this quote to kick start discussions about what teamwork means to your team or how individual goals need may differ from organizational goals. This might flush out areas for improvement, such as better communication within the team, or from you as the manager, or you fill in the blanks!

Beloved author and political activist Helen Keller, who was also the world's first deaf-blind lecturer—a feat which could never have been facilitated without the lifetime partnership and teamwork of her companion and teacher, Annie Sullivan— delivered a similar message during one of her most-quoted public lectures, saying, *"Alone, we can do so little. Together, we can do so much."*

Author Ryunosuke Satoro poetically championed the same power of collaboration, writing, *"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."*

Tip: It's not enough to just come out with the quote and expect your team to stroke their chin in wonderment. Tell the story and build enough context for the quote to be meaningful and inspirational. This is especially important when you have a range of ages or cultures that might not know the back-story.

Team –building Philosophies: You're never alone

If you have a manager on your team who fancies himself more of a "lone wolf" than a team player, promote the advantages of collaboration by quoting author Margaret Carty, who stated, quite encouragingly, *"The nice thing about teamwork is that you always have others on your side,"*— a pronouncement that sounds a lot like a Stephen Sondheim lyric from "The Jets Song" in the Broadway musical *West Side Story*.

The street gang member sings, *"You're never alone. You're never disconnected. You're home with your own. When company's expected, you're well-protected... when you're a Jet, you stay a Jet."*

Tip: Don't be stuffy about your sources for inspiration. If the quote resonates, then use it. Consider getting your team involved with bringing their own team building quotes to share.

Bring out the big guns

"The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" book has sold over 15 million copies in 38 languages – hmmm maybe that's got a few meaty quotes in it?

"Synergy is the highest activity of life; it creates new untapped alternatives; it values and exploits the mental, emotional, and psychological differences between people." - Stephen Covey, "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People".

Tip: You could use this quote with a team who already subscribe to the group “thing” but are having “issues” with a fellow teammate. This quote could remind them that every opinion has value, every effort moves the team forward, and even those who may feel, think or act differently than the rest of the group are part of the unified team force.

Use the Force

Reminding him that no one in the Universe can exist without a universal power, Obi Wan Kenobi delivers his own motivational speech to a self-doubting Luke Skywalker:

“The Force is what gives a Jedi his power,” he says. “It’s an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together...May the Force be with you.”

Tip: You know you’ve hit a sweet spot when your team use shared coded language. If a team member is going into a tough meeting, using a special team word or phrase can gently remind them that they’re not alone and the team is rooting for them outside – the “force” is with them.

Used appropriately, team building quotes can help facilitate discussion, strengthen bonds and improve performance. Just 5 minutes research online can dig up a whole bagful of treasure, so over to you to share the loot with your team.

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