

Group Dynamics



THE UNIVERSITY
OF ARIZONA

Agenda

- Group Roles
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Group Characteristics
- Groupthink

Why study groups?

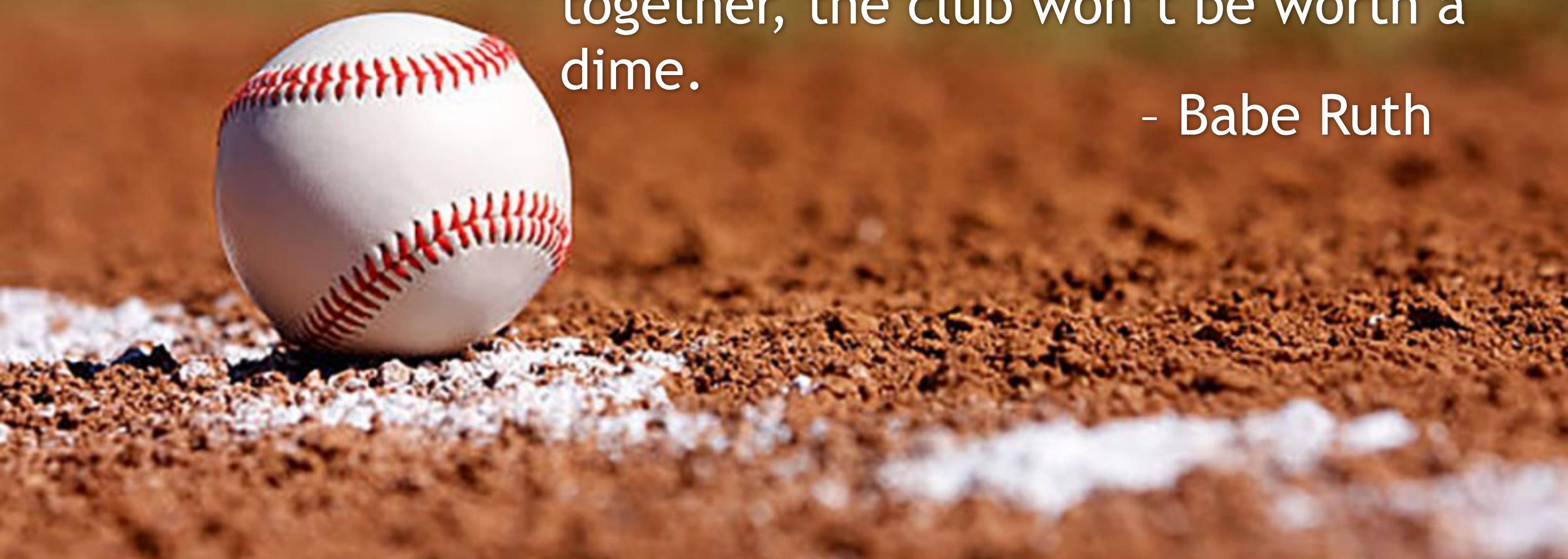
- Group membership is nearly impossible to avoid
- People say/do things in groups they wouldn't normally say/do
- How people feel is influenced by group affiliations
- Every day, important decisions are made by people in groups

Think about the groups you affiliate

- UA Student
- Student Club
- Music Genre Fan
- Religious
- Greek Member
- Honor Society
- Engineering related
- Country/State of Origin
- Sport Fan/Participant
- Language Speaker
- Hobby

“ The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime.

- Babe Ruth



Roles

- Sometimes formalized (president, VP, etc) and other times members informally adopt roles
- Roles can change over time based on length of membership in the group
- Roles can change based on the context of the interaction

Roles



Task



Relational



Hinderer



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
**Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics**

Task Roles



- Task roles refer to the actions of individuals that help move the project, decision, task along
- Task roles help facilitate group communication and decision making processes

Task Roles



- Initiating
- Information/Opinion Seeking
- Consensus Testing
- Clarifying
- Summarizing

Task Roles



- These roles are critical for decision making processes in groups and group meetings
- Roles may be formally assigned or informally adopted by group members
- The **key** is someone has to be responsible for such tasks to ensure group success

Relational Roles



- Relational roles refer to the actions of individuals that help preserve group relations
- **Positive** contributions to group dynamics
- Lack of relational roles in a group can result in **negative** outcomes, damaged relationships, and poor performance

Relational Roles



- Participation encourager
- Harmonizer
- Tension reliever
- Evaluator of emotional climate
- Praise giver
- Empathic listener

Relational Roles



- **All members** of a group have a responsibility to relational roles
- Non-genuine relational acts will not be received well and are best not even shared (e.g. no flattery is better than fake flattery)

Hindering Roles



- Hindering roles refer to actions of individuals that hinder the group's process and progress
- Negative and obstructing actions to group cohesion and social relations

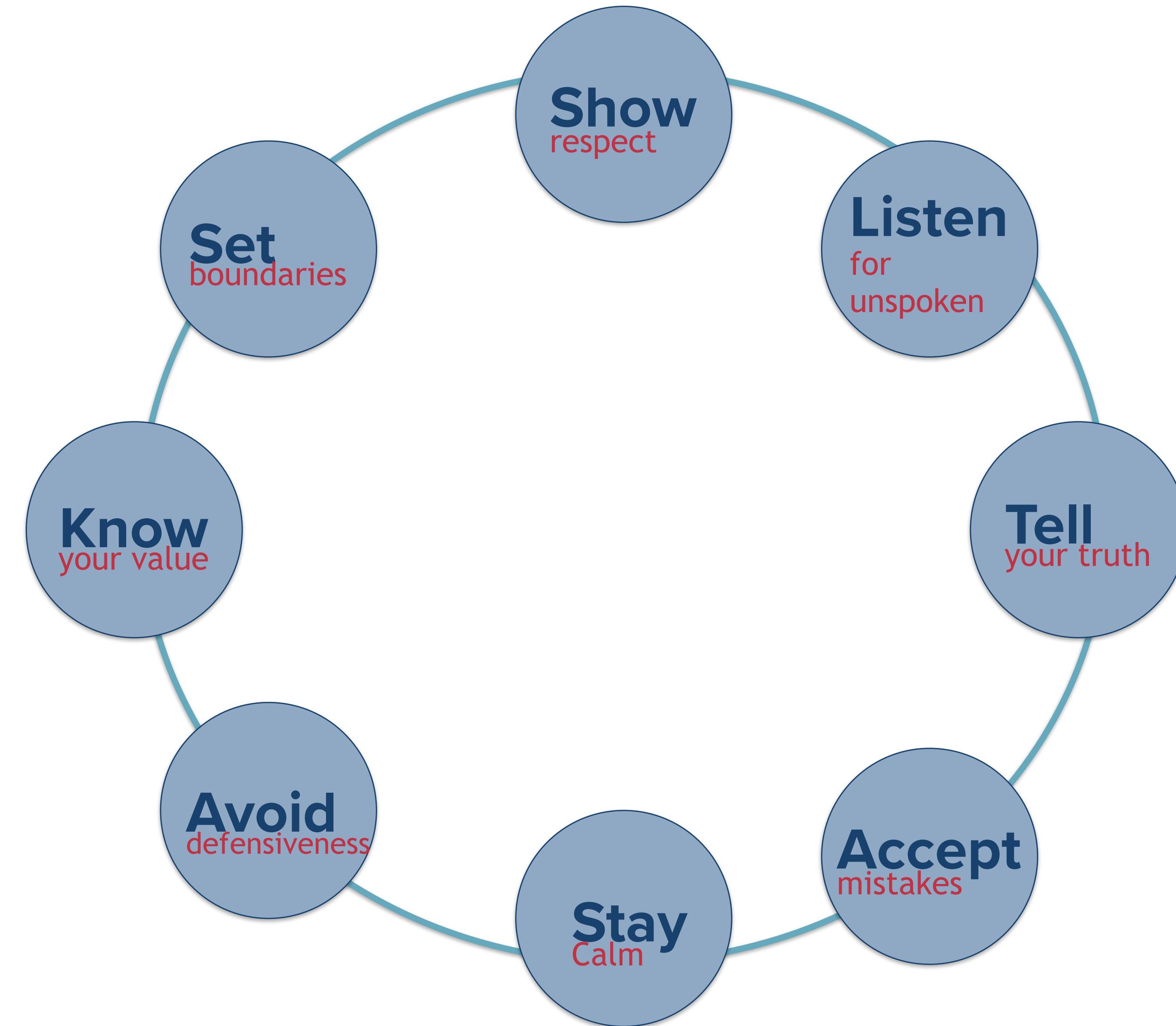
Hindering Roles



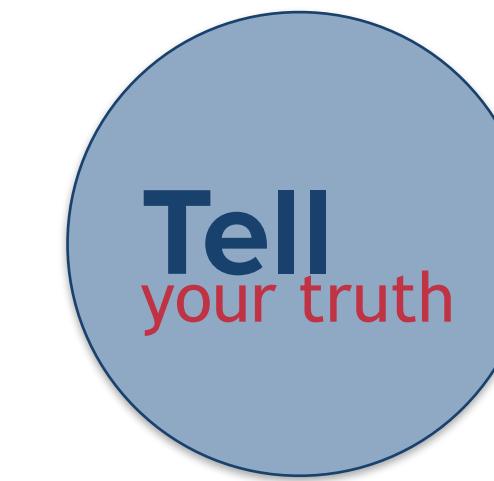
- Blocker
- Attacker
- Recognition-seeker
- Joker
- Withdrawer



Dealing with Difficult People



Dealing with Difficult People



- Even if respect isn't reciprocated
- Assume good intentions, initially
- What is the core issue? Is it the issue being discussed?
- Explain yourself and what your position/thoughts are regarding the topic

Dealing with Difficult People



- Take a deep breath
- Don't retaliate
- Seek solutions



- Loosing your calm is letting them win
- Prevent amygdala hijacking



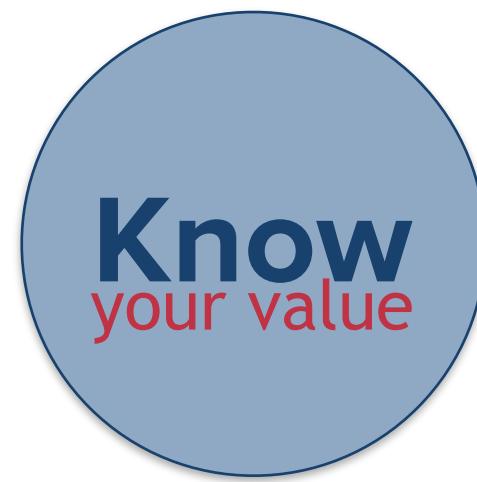
- We all make mistakes
- Honest mistakes should be forgiven to move on



“ By being unflappable and standing up for the principles of fairness, and reason, and mutual best interest, you will be better able to stand up for what’s right – and stand up to them in a way that is neither defensive or provoking.

– Mark Goulston

Dealing with Difficult People



- Respect yourself and worth
- Don't let others define your value or demean you
- Be clear in defining Time, Tone, Topics
- Speak up when violations occur

Group Characteristics



A silhouette photograph of several climbers on a rugged mountain peak against a bright sky. Two climbers are at the top left, one giving a high-five to the other. A rope extends from the top right down the mountain face, with a climber hanging from it. The foreground is dark, showing the rocky texture of the mountain.

**“Alone we can do
so little; together
we can do so
much.”**

- Helen Keller

Characteristics



Size



Cohesiveness



Function



Network



Presence



Characteristics



- 3 or more people is a group, 2 people are a dyad
- Size of group impact dynamics and communication patterns
- Quantity is often inversely related to quality

Characteristics



Amazon Jeff Bezos
Two Pizza Rule



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics

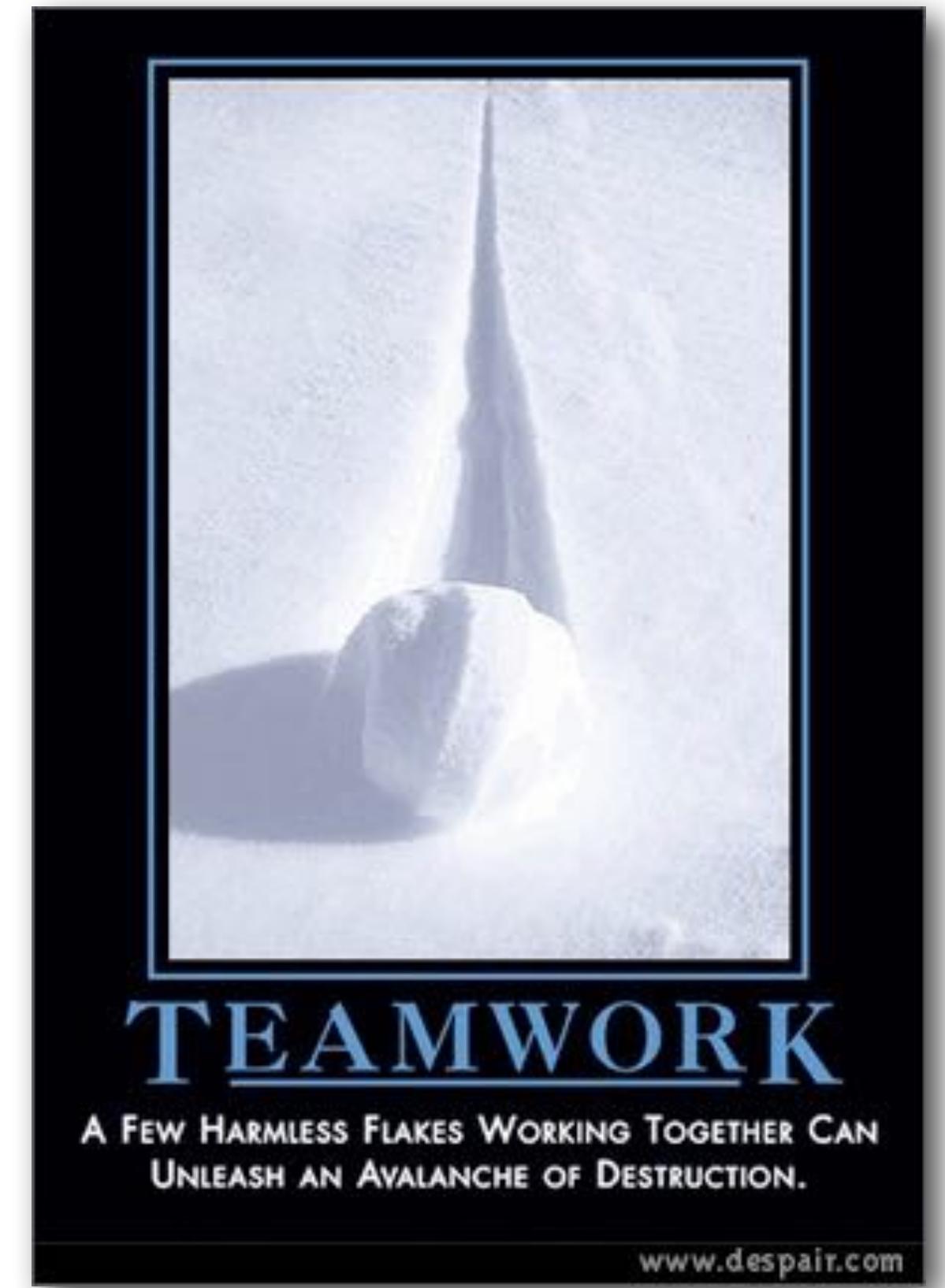
Characteristics



- esprit de corps
- the degree to which the members are attracted to one another and to the group - Wilson & Hanna
- the ability of group members to get along, the feeling of loyalty, pride, & commitment of members to the group - Ellis & Fischer

Pitfalls of non cohesive groups

- Hidden Agendas
- Competition & Compromise
- Resistance & Sabotage



Characteristics



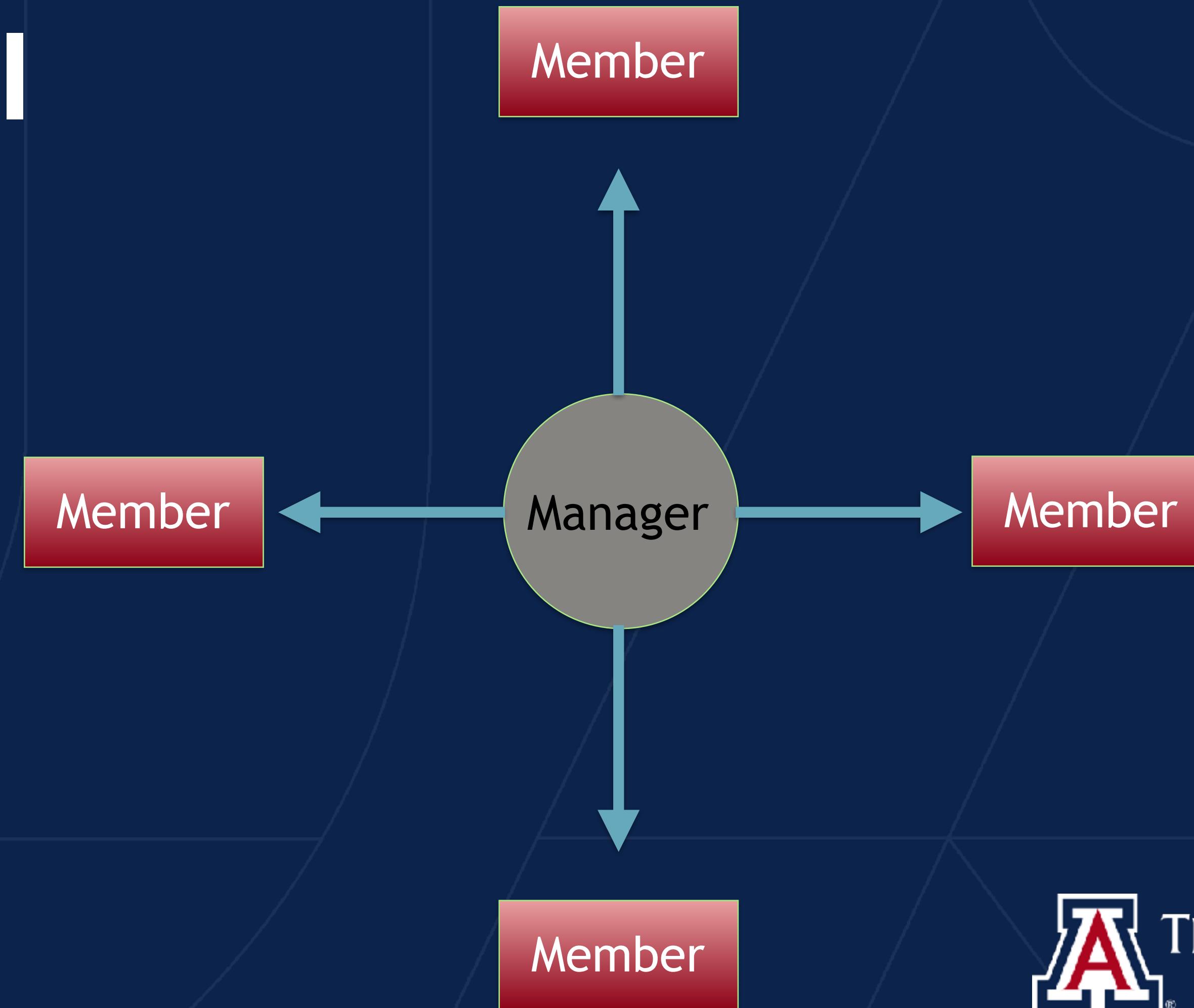
- Social relationships
- Task
- Professional
- Work
- Political
- Religious

Characteristics



- Four types of small group communication networks
 - Wheel Network
 - Chain Network
 - Circle network
 - All channel Network

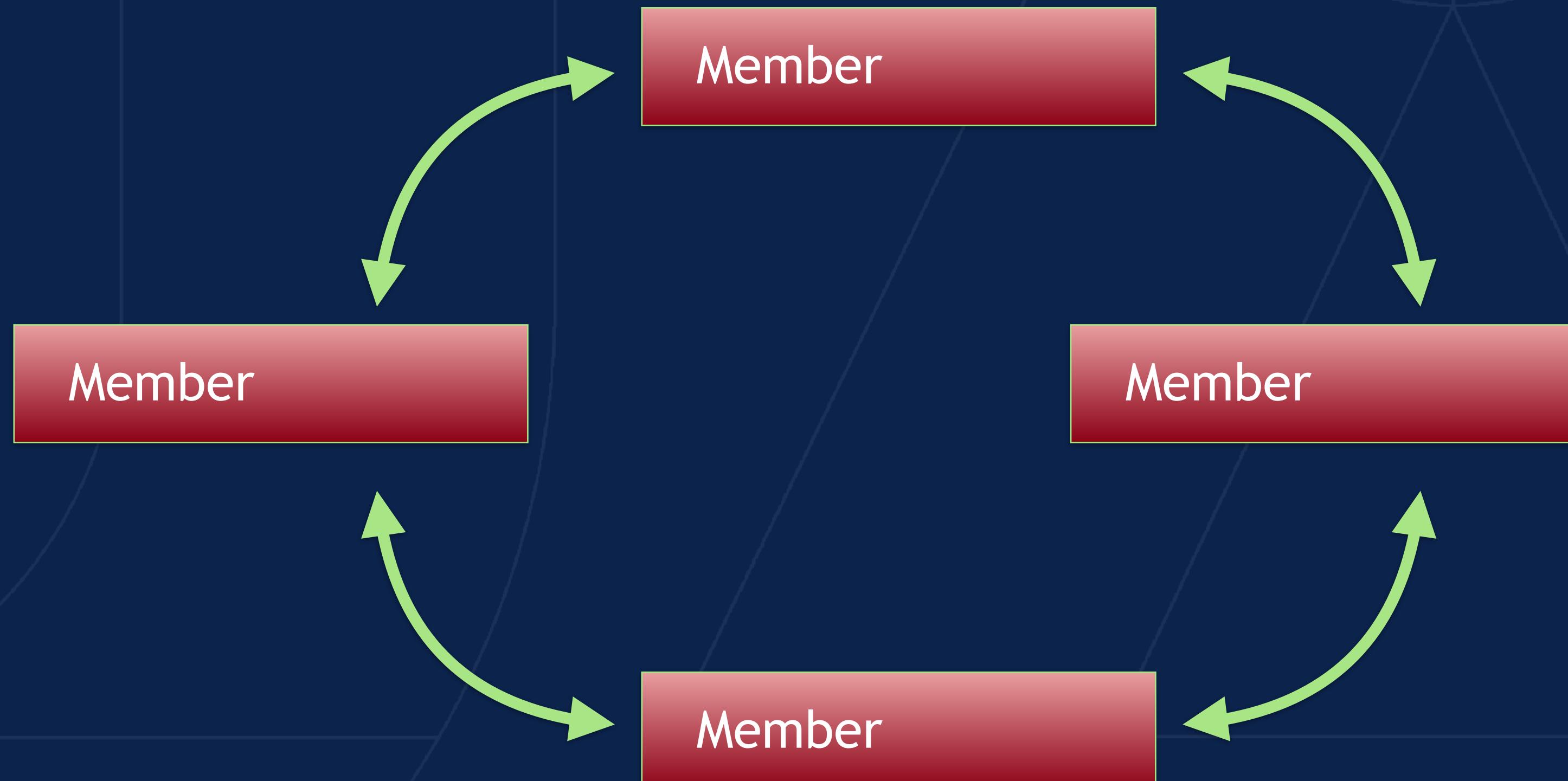
Wheel



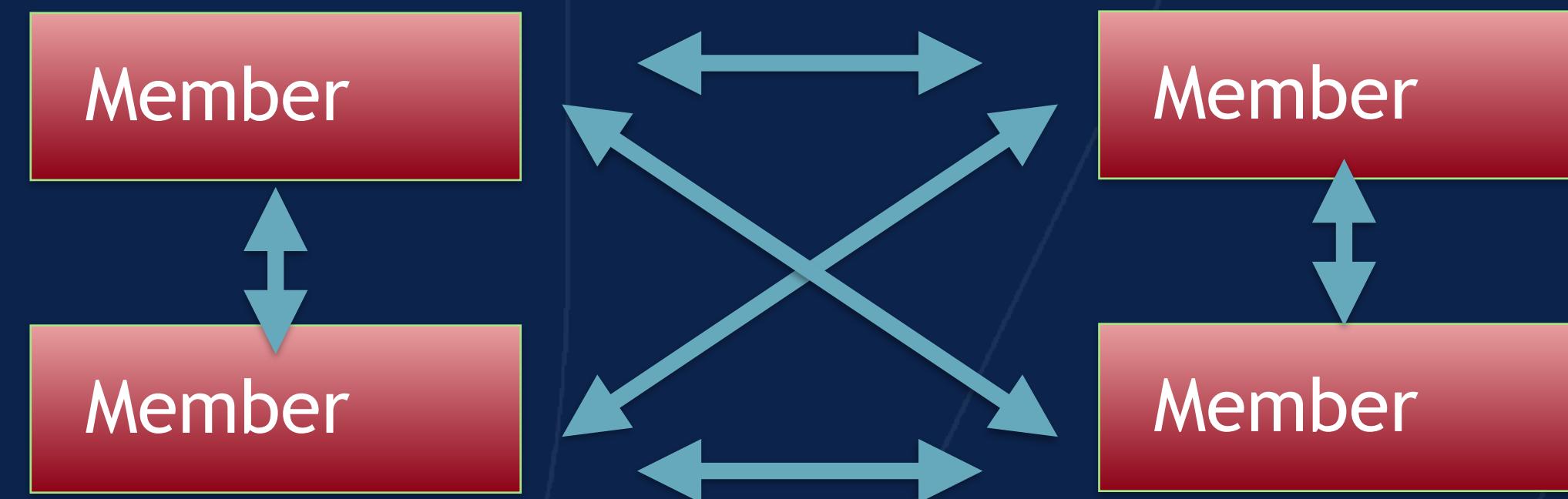
Chain



Circle



All Channel



Characteristics



- Virtual groups are increasingly common
- Groups can be exclusively Face-to-Face, Virtual or a hybrid
- Communication technologies enable groups to have mediated interaction in between physical interactions

What is Group Think?



Characteristics of Groupthink

- Tendency to rationalize or discount negative info
- Group pressure to conform
- Self-censorship
- Illusion of unanimity
- “Mindguards”

“

**The opposite of courage in our society
is not cowardice, it is conformity.**

— Rollo May



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
**Civil & Architectural
Engineering & Mechanics**

Conforming

- Pressure to conform to beliefs/attitudes/behaviors of the majority
- Sometimes conformity is unconscious
- Desire to fit in and need for approval
- Individual belief versus group mandate