Getting to Genuine Collaboration

Shared Vision

The members of a collaborative team - 1) share common reasons for working together that foster camaraderie; 2) clearly understand who's on the team and why; and 3) know what their shared vision is, why it's important, and who it matters to.

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Knowing Self

Collaborative team members - 1) know their own strengths and weaknesses from the inside out; 2) are keenly aware of how their communication and leadership styles affect their relationships, both positively and negatively; and 3) actively desire and request feedback on their overall impact on others.

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Understanding Others

Collaborative team members - 1) understand their teammates' strengths and challenges, 2) consider what's important to others and how they think, 3) know how best to communicate and what problem solving style is preferred, and 4) they are aware of what motivates each other.

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Effective Communication

The members of a collaborative team - 1) are open and honest with each other; 2) think through how communication affects others and try to avoid misunderstandings; 3) give feedback respectfully, directly and as soon as is reasonable; 4) are willing and able to say what needs to be said, both reinforcing and redirecting; and 5) check for understanding, both in what they hear and what they say.

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Trust

Collaborative team members - 1) display high levels of trust and trustworthiness in all their interactions; 2) make commitments and follow through on them; if something prevents that follow through, they negotiate another option; 3) watch out for each other, give each other the benefit of the doubt, and look for opportunities to offer help; and 4) provide honest, helpful feedback

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Genuine Collaboration

These five components of the Collaboration Equation are interdependent and follow an intentional sequence. The first ones must be in place for the others to work well; a shared vision is fundamental. While teams sometimes feel they have trust issues, it is more likely that one or more of the earlier components are not being put into practice effectively.