Creating Bonded Groups: The Building Blocks of Belonging

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473K - A Belonging Experience
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Being part of a community is to feel...

- **I Matter — Meaningfulness:** “I have an important role here.” The feeling members have for being recognized by the group as an important asset.

- **I Belong — Ownership:** “I feel part of.” To feel a sense of ownership of the existence of the group.

- **I Am Committed — Responsibility:** “I care.” To act from concern for other members and the common goal.

- **I Trust — Faith:** “I know that they will be there for me.” Members deep belief that in their community or group, people help each other.

- **I’m Proud — Identification:** “This community is a part of who I am.” Belonging to the community is part of self identity.
The world rests on three pillars:

- Torah
- Avodah
- G’milut Hasadim

(Pirkei Avot 1:18)

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Components of Bonded Community Groups

- Common Vision = Torah
- Communal relationship = Avodah
- Shared Actions = G’milut Hasadim

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Torah: **Common Vision** – Each person’s values and beliefs contribute to creating shared vision.

Avodah: Creating **communal relationships** among the individuals in the group.

G’milut Hasadim: **Shared actions**, the actual work we do together, manifesting our common vision and communal relationships. “We walk the talk.”
Communal Relationships:

- **Multi-dimensional**: Individuals share many aspects of themselves.
- **Multi-aspect**: The group’s interaction is not limited to simply one context.
- Face to face interaction
- Structures and roles
- Live on (beyond specific individuals)
Bonded Community Groups’ Meeting Structure

1. *Shacharit* / opening ritual

2. Heart of the meeting: centered around our shared action/work

3. Makeover/First aid: Supporting each other in our challenges

4. *Arvit* / closing ritual

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“Moments of Truth”

An experience in the group that gives a deep sense of belonging.

Bonded Community Groups are the means for providing moments of truth.

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The individuals belonging to the community complement one another existentially. Each individual possesses something unique, rare, which is unknown to others; each individual has a unique message to communicate, a special color to add to the communal spectrum. Hence, when a lonely person joins the community, they add a new dimension to the community awareness. They contribute something which no one else could have contributed. They enrich the community existentially; they are irreplaceable.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik
“If I had an hour to solve a problem I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions.”

— Albert Einstein
Step by Step – Makeover Guide (aka “First Aid”)

- **Mins 3**: The presenter gives an overview of the situation / dilemma.
- **Mins 3**: The group asks clarifying questions of the presenter; questions with brief, factual answers!
- **Mins 4**: The group asks probing questions to expand thinking and perspective.
- **Mins 5**: The group talks about the situation – refrain from solutions! (Presenter goes to “balcony”)
- **Mins 7**: Redesign – Keeping the 10 Principles in mind, and the learnings of BCGs, share ideas to redesign a gathering of this group. (Presenter in balcony)
- **Mins 3**: The presenter rejoins the circle and reflects back: How do you feel? Share one thing you heard that was eye-opening.
Presenting the situation / dilemma

The presenter gives an overview of their selected group and its dilemma/challenges

- The overview should provide as much background information as possible:
  - Describe the situation - What’s the group and what is their role? Why are they important?
  - What are your goals for this group?
  - What’s the current situation?
  - What is the desired outcome for this group?
  - What’s preventing you from getting there?
  - How do they impact the organization?
Clarifying Questions

Clarifying questions are questions with brief, factual answers!

The group asks **clarifying questions** of the presenter

- Is this what you said...?
- Did I hear you say...?
- Did I understand you when you said...?
- Did I paraphrase what you said correctly?
- I'd be interested in hearing more about...
- If you'd give me an example of...so I can be sure I understand?
- So, are you suggesting that...?
- Tell me what you mean when you say...
Probing Questions – Examples

These questions are designed to help the presenter clarify and expand their thinking about the dilemma, to gain insights.

The group asks **probing questions** to expand thinking and perspective

- Why do you think this is the case?
- What would you have to change in order for...?
- What do you feel is right in your heart?
- What do you wish...?
- What’s another way you might...?
- How was... different from...?

- What was your decision-making process?
- If you were _______________, how would you see this situation?
- What if time, money, etc. were not an Issue?
- What is the best outcome in this situation?
- When have you done/experienced something like this before? What happened then?
- What do you assume to be true about...?
Possible questions to frame the discussion:

The group (without presenter) talks about the dilemma presented – refrain from solutions!

- What did we hear?
- What didn’t we hear that might be relevant?
- What assumptions seem to be operating?
- What questions does the dilemma raise for us?
- What do we think about the dilemma?
- What might we do or try if faced with a similar dilemma?
- What have we done in similar situations?
Reflect and Redesign

Share ideas – what might you do to **redesign** a regular gathering (meeting, program, event, other activity) of this group so that it is on a path toward becoming a BCG?

Redesign – Keeping the 10 Principles in mind, and what we’ve learned about Bonded Community Groups, share ideas to redesign a regular gathering of this group.
Next Steps

The presenter reflects back and shares their thoughts and any next steps they may take.