12 Angry Men

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Introduction

Through group communication, we can see group becoming a good thing or a bad thing. When we work in group we tend to create some division if ideas go out of hand, or we create a good vibe if we are able to get along with one another. When it comes to groups, each member might have different values or personalities that would be different. Personality would begin to clash when each member began to work with one another. We actually see different personality clashing in the movie 12 Angry Men. This was based on a teleplay by Reginald Rose. It was directed by Sidney Lumet and starred Henry Fonda and Lee J. Cobb. Through this paper, I would explain how the information that I learned in the textbook Communicating in Groups and Team: Sharing Leadership would come in connection with the movie 12 Angry Men.

12 Angry Men

12 Angry Men was a movie that was filmed in 1957. Based on a play written by Reginald Rose, it focuses on a specific meeting between twelve jurors. The twelve jurors are making a decision that has happened between an eighteen year old teen and his father. The boy is being convicted of murdering his father and many sittings in court, the jurors were close to making a decision to end this case. Eleven jurors decided that the teen was guilty. Only one of the juror believed that the teen was innocent and that the teen didn’t kill his father. When the jurors sat to meet, they had to come to agreement with all the jurors agreeing either the defendant is guilty or innocent. That lead to amount time spend time, with the jurors trying to get an anonymous decision.

Through out the movie, we saw each juror getting angry and restless due to the fact that not everyone had a mutual agreement. Whats crazy about being part of the jury is that you would have people who would come from different backgrounds and have different personality. For example, juror number one was an assistant football coach, juror number two is a bank worker, juror number three is a businessman, etc. With the occupation that each jurors have, it can show the personality of the person. I
also think that the experience that the person goes through can show the character of a person. For example, in the movie the main antagonist was juror number three who tried so hard to prove that the teen was guilty and he killed the father. Juror number three’s story dealt with him being a distraught father, opinionated, disrespectful, and stubborn. This could have been a reason why he was very defensive about proving that the kid was guilty. It could be because he was a father.

When I watched this film, I was able to see a lot of connections with group communication. With communication, you are able to see the things that is very important like teamwork, leadership, challenges the people have to endure. With group communication, you are able to build a great bond but it would take some time. Just like in the movie, everyone had to deal with the stress of coming with a decision and tension was built. It came down to working with one another. In the Communication book, the authors talk specific things that would help communicate in groups. I would talk about how five of them could be connected to the movie.

**Role in Groups**

One thing that I think plays a part in the movies would be the roles of the group. In the communication book, the authors talk about being in groups and team experiences. The authors says “your vision of groups and teams may be shiny or it may be dim. On the shiny side, it's a great feeling to be part of of a winning team. The dim picture, however, is that working in a group can be pain. It requires you to work on many levels at once with people, with relationships, with information, with ideas” (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 2).

The authors explain certain factors that would help your group or team. They are: Expectations, Investment, Pressures, Personal characteristics and preferences, Gender, and Culture. All these factor would help bring a great experience. Having expectations, it would help color the perceptions of future events (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 3). With Investment, you would have to make some time and would spend a lot of energy to get the group communication thing down. Investing your time
in the group would show the effort of coming to a conclusion. Pressure would become a factor in group. It can cause stress, and division between every member. With pressure, we it can cause people to work hard but it can cause dishonest, unethical, or at least foolish decisions (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 3). You also have personal characteristics, gender, and culture that plays a factor. Everyone is different in their own way from characteristics to culture. Everyone has done something differently and you would see that come in to play in group.

Just like in the movie, each juror has their different personality. That's why it was difficult for the jurors made a quick decision. It went from all deciding the teen was guilty, to them being confused. Each member had a role in the group decision. Juror number one was the jury foreman, which is the jury's representative and is responsible for communicating the jury's needs or concerns to the judge. Juror number three took lead on the teen being guilty, and juror number eight took lead on the teen being innocent. Throughout the movie, you saw the struggle due to the personality of each member clashing. It took time for everyone to make a decision because everyone had a different opinion. Each member did its part towards the end while they were able to get in the same page.

In the article “The Role of Communication in Creating and Maintaining a Learning Organization: Preconditions, Indicators, and Disciplines”, the authors discusses the role communication plays in creating and maintaining learning organizations (Barker, & Camarata, 1998, pg. 443). The authors also discuss how attention us given to the communication embedded in the preconditions necessary for developing learning organizations like trust, commitment, perceived, and organizational support (Barker, & Camarata, 1998, pg. 443). As we can see that, that in this article, the authors tried to prove how communications can be used in different situations and the role of it. With this article, it can tie in with what I have learned about group communication or what I saw when I watched 12 Angry Men. When it comes to groups, you never know what you gonna get. Its going to take some time but it would work out eventually.
Sharing Leadership

When we look at group communication, we got to look at the leadership roles. The leadership role is very important. In the textbook, *Communicating in Groups and Teams*, the authors explains the decision of choosing an leader. Gay Lumsden, Donald Lumsden and Carolyn Wiethoff also go and talk about the meaning of Leadership. Leadership was defined as verbal and nonverbal communication that facilitates a team's transactional and task processes in achieving members' and the team's needs and goals (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 28). These authors, also explained how in today's teams leadership is seldom the responsibility of only one person (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 29). In the movie, we definitely saw leadership being shared.

In *12 Angry Men*, we see that there is three parts where leadership is show and shared. The first part of leadership would be when juror number one was chosen to be the jury foreman. He was the lead juror who is responsible to giving information to the Judge. Then you had juror three who took leadership by putting the effort to make sure the teen was guilty. Juror number 8 took leadership, when he tried to prove that the teen was innocent. Juror three and eight lead the session trying to prove their argument. The tension in the room, was dealt due the argument. Throughout the movie, both jurors began to work with one another without arguing.

With leadership, we definitely have to look at each identity of each person. In the article, “Donation Behavior towards In-Groups and Out-Groups: The Role of Gender and Moral Identity”, the authors go and investigate two important identitities. They went and looked at gender identity and moral identity. They said, “Results from three studies indicate that moral identity important to increase donations to out-groups and not to in-groups (Winterich, Mittal, & Ross Jr., 2009, pg. 199). When we see more of their identity, we can see the reason they act like that. That has happened in the movie. Towards the end of the movie, we see the reason why juror number three was so defensive. He proved to have some leadership as well.
Verbal/Nonverbal Communication

One big thing that I find when we look at communication is the verbal and nonverbal communication. With these types of communication, we are able to look more in depth with the expressions. In the group communication textbook, the authors go and talk about leadership in nonverbal communication. Being a skilled nonverbal communicator helps you to provide leadership, both through facilitating others' participation and through participating yourself (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 222). We can see how nonverbal communication how big it can play.

There's a lot that can go into nonverbal communication. Gestures, emotions, and movements can all be part of group communication. It is also effective in different culture. Authors Larry Samovar, Richard Porter, Edwin McDaniel, and Carolyn Roy, goes in to detail about nonverbal communication. They said, “Nonverbal communication, like much of your behavior, is produced by a host of variables, and culture is but one of them” (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, & Roy, 2010, pg. 272). Nonverbal is something can cue a message that we are able to see with our words coming out.

You also deal with verbal communication. Verbal communication is the connection with words. You are able to sense what someone is going through or their emotion by the tone of their voice. You could get a different tone for it. Verbal and nonverbal is very important just because it is a way for people to communicate with. Especially in groups, it gives people a way to see what other is feeling. In the movie, each juror played its part and had its reason for their decision.

In *12 Angry Men*, we see that all the jurors were kind of out done buy one of the jurors. By seeing their expressions you see that they were getting angry and stressed out, now that they would have to spend time until they got a specific answer. Then, the emotions on the face began to seem restless and angry. Their verbal and nonverbal expressions become very helpful when the jurors are stuck in the a room for hours trying to come to an agreement. Without these signs we would not be able to see the tension between the two jurors.
**Challenges in Leadership**

In *12 Angry Men*, we definitely see some leadership. Like I explained previously leadership was split into three people. One person had full leadership, but two people took control and it definitely had its challenges. Both jurors were out to prove that their reasoning was right. The rest of the jurors was stuck with one decision until hearing the other side. Juror eight didn't take a lot of control, he just wanted to give his opinion. Juror three took leadership and was very demanding. When other jurors would switch their opinion, he would get really mad. That could definitely put some challenges in the leadership role.

Earlier in the paper we described the meaning of leadership. Sometimes we see leadership as something we would like to have. There is going to be some challenges and some pressure to it. In our textbook, the authors talk about team pressures. They explained that pressure on the team is created by individual members who deviate from what the team expects; pressure on individuals builds when other members try to get them to conform to the group's preferences (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 276).

Another challenge that group would deal with is groupthink. Groupthink is describe a set of behaviors consistently exhibited by high-power groups that made disastrous decisions (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 282). There are a few ways that groupthink can happen and they are through: Cohesiveness, Structure, Situation, and Leadership. For cohesiveness, members can contribute to productivity but also can give members illusions about their group's effectiveness (Lumsden, Lumsden, Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 283). The other conditions also plays a big factor in why groupthink exist.

Authors Linjuan Rita Men and Don W. Stacks, wrote an article about looking at the impact of leadership style. Their purpose was to examine the impact of organizational leadership style and employee empowerment on employees' perception of organizational reputation by testing a
hypothesized model (Men, & Stacks, 2013, pg. 171). The result that they got was that transformational leadership positively influences employees’ perception of organizational reputation, not only directly but also indirectly, through empowering employees (Men, & Stacks, 2013, pg. 171). This article shows that if leadership was to be a positive leadership, then the employees would be empowered. Unlike the movie, the leadership was not positive and the jurors ended up arguing.

**Creative Teamwork**

Throughout this movie there was no sense of communication. Everyone was going against each other, and they were trying to leave. They were also becoming impatient. Teamwork was not existent, but after they were going over the case and the evidence they began to listen and see what they missed. They were able to begin to bond and understand one another. In this instance, we saw teamwork beginning to come through, as evidence made sense to them. You were able to understand every juror, and learn about them.

For teamwork to work, it would need a few improvements. The authors of the Communication textbook talked about how there are ways for teamwork to improve. They explained, that teams need systematic approaches for getting and using feedback to assess and improve their accomplishments (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 104). A constant feedback loop can get information from parent organization, from team members, and from related sources (Lumsden, Lumsden, & Wiethoff, 2010, pg. 105). Feedback is a very important too that can make teamwork better.

Feedback is used everywhere. For example, there is a television show named *Undercover Boss* that is about bosses of companies that would go undercover to see what needs improvement in their company. Bosses from companies like *Hooters, Waste Management*, and the *Chicago Cubs*, would go undercover to see what they need to do improve the morale or work ethics. After their experiences, they made changes that would benefit the workers and improve teamwork. It showed the workers that the bosses are listening their opinions and helped create unity.
**Christian Aspect**

We see that it can be a little crazy when we work with people that we don't normally work with. Within the movie, we saw a group of people who were called to jury duty. They did not know one another but came to the court hearing, listen to the case and had to make a decision. Once they got in to that room, tension took over. In a way division took over, because there many different opinions and arguments would just take over. As Christians, we are called to become one with people and walk in love with one another.

In Proverbs 27: 17, it says, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another” (ESV). In 1 Peter 4:10, it says, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace” (ESV). These two verses, shows us a way to help one another. No matter what the situations that happens, we should learn to come to one another. We should be able to let each group member speak and share their opinion. In the movie, that did not happen. They were quick to judge, but towards the end they were able to see eye to eye.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we that there can be challenges when it comes to group communication. Looking through our textbook to see some guidelines on how to improve, or actually experiencing group communication, it can be tough. Its having the ability to endure the challenges and overcoming the obstacle. We see that in the movie *12 Angry Men*. In the movie, we deal with twelve jurors making a decision on a case. With eleven deciding that the defendant was guilty, one juror decided that the defendant was innocent. That led to a long meeting that make a decision where all the jurors would make a decision. What we that in the beginning, we had a rocky foundation for teamwork, but at the end we see that everyone was able to meet eye to eye and agree without being forced.
References


