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Paradoxes of Group Life: Understanding Conflict, Paralysis, and Movement in Group Dynamics (Jossey-Bass Management Series/Jossey-Bass Social and Behavioral Science Series)

Kenwyn K. Smith, David N. Berg

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During the past decade, leaders have increasingly relied on self-managing work groups, multifunctional teams, and cross-national executive groups to create the organization of the future. Yet groups are not a panacea for organizational problems; conflicts between individuals or factions within a group often create seemingly contradictory situations?paradoxes?that can prevent the group from reaching its goals.

In this groundbreaking classic, Kenwyn Smith and David Berg offer a revolutionary approach to understanding groups and overcoming the problems that often paralyze group members, the group as a whole, and relations among groups. They explore the hidden dynamics that can prevent a group from functioning effectively. And they show how an apparently paradoxical suggestion?for example, inviting a success oriented group to risk failure, or affirming the benefits of going nowhere to a group focused on moving ahead?can break action barriers, overcome conflicts, and improve group performance.

Smith and Berg offer a different way of thinking about groups that will open new avenues of inquiry for professors and students of group behavior, and they propose many innovative ideas that will prove valuable to consultants, trainers, therapists, and others who work with groups on a regular basis.

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