

The Maze

Team Building Exercise

By Doug Kelley • www.DougKelley.com

Instructions: Print out the mazes on the 2nd page and copy enough for your group. Then cut the sheets into four, which will give you four mazes per sheet. Then hand out a maze to each participant. Please feel free to adapt this exercise to your particular group.

Syllabus

Everybody put your pen on the starting point, but please don't start until I say "go." We're going to all do the maze together.

Okay, get ready, get set, NOW CLOSE YOUR EYES! [Wait for response/laughter.]

Can you do it? No... so don't even try. STOP, STOP, STOP.

Everybody pair up into groups of 2, one of you play the roll of the manager, one the employee [if there is an odd person, they can serve as an observer]. If you feel less comfortable with one of the roles, I suggest you choose that role.

[After they have paired up and decided who will play each role] Okay, MANAGERS ONLY, go ahead and complete the puzzle. Employees, please don't watch them. [Pause for a moment while the managers complete the maze.]

Okay employees, now it's your turn. Put your pens on the starting point, but wait until I give you the signal. Okay, get ready, get set, NOW EMPLOYEES, CLOSE YOUR EYES WHILE YOUR MANAGER GIVES YOU DIRECTION GETTING THROUGH THE MAZE. Managers, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM TOUCHING THEIR HANDS! Go ahead and begin.

[Wander around the room and observe the teams doing the maze. When everyone is finished, continue.]

PART 2

Break the managers into small groups of 3 or 4, and do the same with employees. Ask each group to write down their respective feelings and any lessons they learned from the role they played.

DEBRIEF

Start with the employee groups. Ask them how they felt while doing this exercise with their eyes closed.

Ask the entire group, How many actually did the maze in your mind before we ever did it on paper? Most of the group will raise their hands. What's the lesson? You can't fight human nature... the maze just calls to you doesn't it?

Ask how many found the short way. Ask how many found the long way.

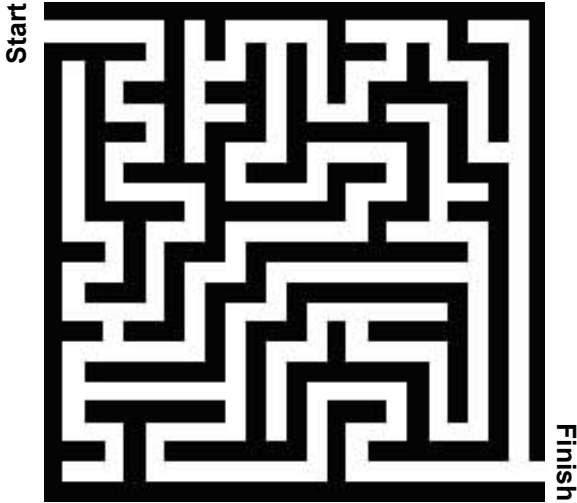
Ask employees if their manager took them a different direction (such as the long way) and they realized it during the exercise causing some consternation. Lesson: If someone has a better way, what do you do? Listen.

Next, ask the manager groups how they felt and what they learned while taking the employee through the maze with their eyes closed.

Ask how many were tempted to touch the employees hands during the exercise. Lesson: Rather than do things for others, give them a chance to do it for themselves and learn in the process.

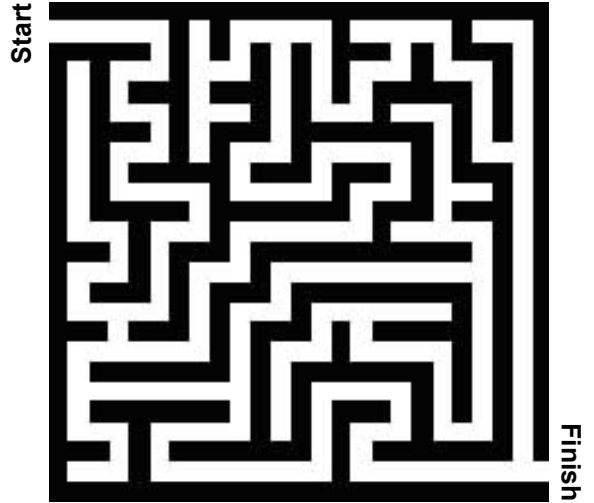
[Point out any lessons you want to share with your specific team.]

(Please wait to do the maze!)



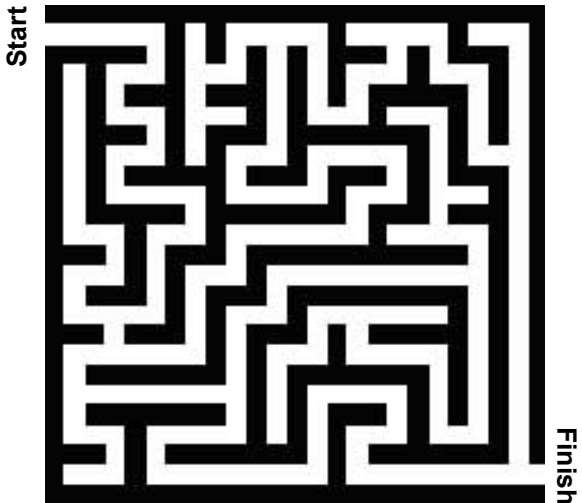
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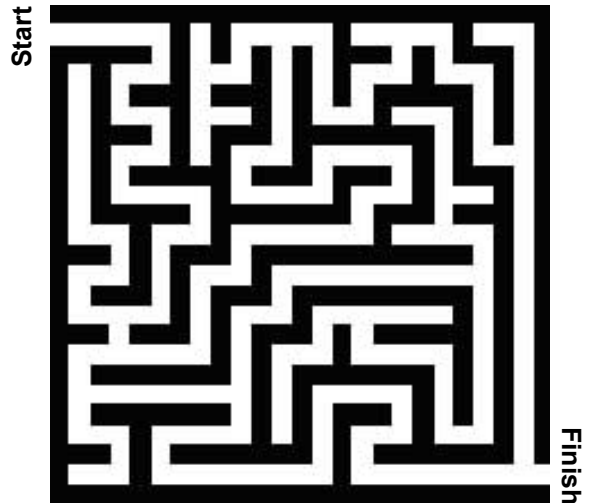
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