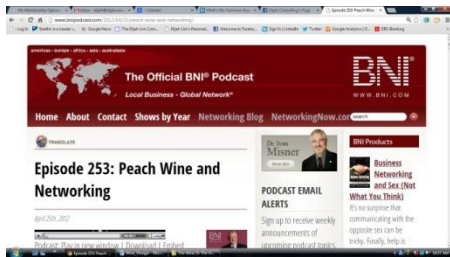


**You Get Wine Or You Get Vinegar. Same Process.**

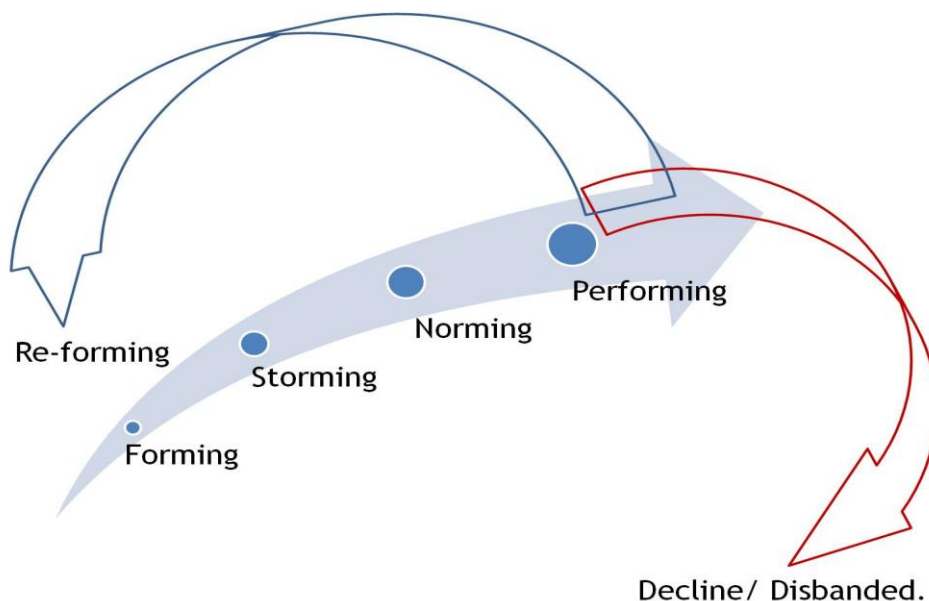


Founder and Chairman of Business Networking International (BNI) Dr Ivan Misner has a podcast titled “Peach Wine and Networking” (Episode 253) that illustrates how the development of good business relationships must be allowed to take its course, and not be rushed. You can listen to the podcast [here](http://bit.ly/13buCjO): <http://bit.ly/13buCjO>.

This morning, before writing this article, I read something on LinkedIn that immediately reminded me of BNI podcast 253. It was an article by Adam Grant, Wharton Professor and author of *Give and Take*. The article was “[What’s the Common Ingredient for Success Across Teams of Surgeons, Bank Analysts, Software Developers, Airline Pilots, and Basketball Players?](#)”

In that article, Adam Grant explained how competence was only one reason for a team’s success. The other, and far more important, was how long the team had worked or played together. Adam went on to say that even in teams that were successful because they had worked or played together for some time beforehand, there appeared to be a decline in success over time. In other words:

1. You put a team of highly skilled, competent people together for whatever purpose.
2. The team works together for some time. Initially, the team might be ok, but not very successful. The team gets better as they work together more.
3. The team becomes highly successful.
4. Over some more time, the team experiences less and less success, perhaps disbanding eventually or re-forming.



Why does this happen? Adam Grant thinks that changing a team member or two or changing the coach might make all the difference before the highly successful team starts the spiral downwards. After all, we do know that “injecting fresh blood”, “cross-pollination” and related concepts and procedures are necessary in order to maintain freshness, are they not? Is that why so many people get divorced and remarry over and over again? What do you think?

My thoughts are that as long as “Me-ism” is not replaced or at least overshadowed by a genuine “We-ism”, even highly successful teams will not last. What will last are relationships. There are at least two types that I can see here:

1. Professional relationships.

These are relationships based more on professional or technical competence. Members are focused on contributing to the team goals because the team’s success means their success, too. Individual aspirations and desires may be suppressed at least temporarily in order to achieve this team success. Teams will be highly successful but their successes may not last over a prolonged period.

2. Emotional-connectedness relationships.

These are rare outside of the marriage relationship. By “marriage relationship” I am referring to a highly-fulfilling and productive marriage relationship which gets better as time goes by. These types of marriages are not common in our day and age. That does not mean we should not aspire to have them. Corporate teams which are able to nurture emotional-connectedness relationships will outlast other teams and be more successful for a much longer period of time, even for life. The kind of emotional bonding that takes place here is not as intense as that of the marriage relationship, but perhaps can be likened to what the relationship between soldiers fighting for each other is like. The team members are not only extremely enthusiastic and passionate about achieving the team’s goals but are just as enthusiastic about taking care of each other. They become like a very close-knit, fully functional family unit. Very often, their own families will be very close to each other as well.

So, do you want highly successful, long-lasting teams, perhaps even for life? Focus on the roots of team effectiveness, which is high-quality relationships, and let the process take its course. Don’t rush it, or you’ll get vinegar instead of wine.

