An experience can only be measured against itself. The same can be said of a group. No two groups are the same. Through this project, my biggest takeaway was learning to understand how my role and the skills I need to bring to the process will adjust based on the needs of the group.

The dynamics of the group are dependent upon the group. The role I played in my learning group was not the same role I needed to play in this group. While I had this realization towards the end of the process, I would go back and verbally discuss it with the group as soon as the realization was made because I think it could have added value to the process and improved our deliverable.

My role in this group was a primary leadership position. Part of this was needed and part was overcompensation on my part. My default position is to be a pair of hands rather than holding the space for others who may not operate at the same speed. Left unchecked, this can be a detriment to the overall group effectiveness.

Identifying and communicating roles are essential. We each have a default space we are comfortable in and like to remain close to. The challenge is this may not align with the needs of the group or the objective to be solved.

During our initial discussion on the first night, Irena asked to take lead on the project. We all said this would work. About 24 hours into the project, she slowly moved out of the leadership role. I hesitantly assumed the role unsure if I was pushing her out of a space she wanted to be in or if it was a vacancy in leadership that would be welcomed by the group. I wish I had taken a few moments to discuss how I was feeling rather than moving forward on assumptions about role definition. A quick conversation with Irena and other members of the group would have settled these internal feelings and created a higher level of communication within the group. This was a major takeaway for me. I should have the conversation rather than making assumptions about who is doing what. It only takes a few minutes and reaffirms the team is working towards the same objectives.

Additionally, some members of the group have additional skills to help the group, but they may be hesitant to step into the space. One of the roles I should have provided with the group and be aware of for future groups is holding space and calling other members into higher versions of themselves when I can see potential in themselves they potentially cannot see. If they are unwilling or hesitant, it provides a new opportunity to help assist in the growth and development of others.

A second takeaway for me is the importance of a common language. A “superior” product to one member of the team could be “inferior” to another. This may be based on past experiences or personal levels of satisfaction. We could have improved the quality of our deliverable to the client by clarifying what we meant internally with our deliverables. This is another place where having the conversation is important rather than moving forward based on assumptions.

With each additional group project I am part of in this program, my POV shifts. I am starting to gain a deeper understanding that my skillset is not static or predefined. It is a bag of tools that require different usage depending on the project and other tools within the group. The primary objective is understanding how and when to use them. Previously my primary driver was getting the work done, which often led to leaving others on the sideline because they work at a different pace or with a different primary driver than I did.

I am thankful for this project. It helped me grow and stretch in ways I did not expect.

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