

# Giving, Taking, and Matching: Leveraging the Power of Diverse Collaborative Behaviors to Build a Successful Radiology Team

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## Abstract

Within a radiology team, members individually lean toward being givers or takers. Radiology leadership must recognize this characteristic and leverage the strengths of givers and takers to best assist the team and to provide effective motivation. Understanding the importance of balancing these qualities within a team improves productivity and morale and reduces burnout.

**Key Words:** Teamwork, leadership, organizational psychology, management

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## THE PLAYERS

A radiology team leader can identify individual members' attitudes toward contribution to fall into three primary groups: givers, takers, and matchers. These three groups are defined by how their members interact with other members of the team and what their expectations are for reciprocity. Those persons who give without expectations to the team are givers; those who position themselves to only be at the receiving end of help, credit, or favors without providing reciprocity are takers; and those who lean toward fostering a tit-for-tat environment are matchers [1]. In judging someone as a giver, taker, or matcher, the agreeability of that individual plays a strong role in the leader's and other team members' perceptions. Agreeability depends on how acquiescent a giver or taker is when faced with requests. For example, an agreeable giver is not questioning or critical in a comment, whereas a disagreeable giver may be unwelcomingly honest in expressing disapproval or conflicting ideas and viewed as a difficult team member. The disagreeable giver is often

the most unappreciated employee, despite his or her altruism toward the team while providing beneficial criticism [1,2]. Correspondingly, although a disagreeable taker is easy for team members and leaders to identify and condemn, an agreeable taker may be veiled behind perceived amenability, while his or her lack of giving deprives the team of efficiently achieving its vision [1,2].

*Scenario: Joan, Andy, Chris, and Ruth are asked to create their practice's on-call schedule for the following year. Joan quickly offers that if needed, she can take more than her share and voices that she will agree with the group's decision for coverage, regardless of how it is finalized (agreeable giver). Andy carefully looks over the previous and future year on-call plans and identifies that it is unfair to junior members and that there may be a potentially uncovered Monday holiday; he voices his concern over staffing several times, including potential for problems if they lose a colleague, but he volunteers to cover the extra day (disagreeable giver). Chris delays joining the meeting and selecting a shift until most of the junior members have picked the holidays and positions himself to accept the least number of shifts (agreeable taker). Ruth cites her seniority, her busy social calendar, and a remote year when she took an extra day, and disagrees until the schedule is in her favor (disagreeable taker).*

An effective radiology leader must be aware of the heterogeneity of teams and the tendency of

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individuals to lean more toward one or another of these traits. This allows the leader to position and reward the members individually to maximize productivity and decrease interpersonal conflicts. Understanding this is also important in radiology groups in which there are complex teamwork interactions and the team members are highly trained, high-value employees.

## TO GIVE MAY NOT ALWAYS BE BETTER THAN TO RECEIVE

It is incorrect to assume that a team consisting only of givers would be best for highest productivity and be the most collegial for team dynamics. Among all occupations, the givers tend to be both the most accomplished and the least accomplished individual members [1-3]. For example, the giver may be the person in the group with the fewest relative value units who selflessly takes on less desirable tasks such as interpreting outside imaging or lower productivity modalities. Givers are also most likely to be taken advantage of and viewed as weak and submissive if they are amicable givers. The selfless giver with low personal interest is self-sacrificing, which places him or her at a higher risk for burnout [1]. The converse can also be true: some of the highest achieving individuals within an organization are strong givers, including disagreeable givers, who gain advantage from being recognized, are well liked for their generosity, and benefit from the organization's valuation and reciprocity toward them. These givers have both high interest for others and for themselves.

Likewise, takers can be highly successful or be ousted by the rest of their team. The team may also blame the leader if a disagreeable taker is included or if an agreeable taker is overlooked. Takers have high self-interest with low concern for others' interests. The radiology leader should recognize that takers exist, and that they can effectively assist the team by using rewards that target their self-interest.

## LEVERAGING GIVERS AND TAKERS AS A RADIOLOGY LEADER

A radiology leader should use his or her understanding of givers and takers to provide the most appropriate and satisfying motivation [4]. This motivation should be personalized to provide each team member a sense of purpose, autonomy, voice, and career satisfaction while leaning the team toward giving. The leader should bring the focus of the team to giving, both by providing the right motivation and by personally leaning toward giving to foster an environment in which giving is accepted as the norm.

The leader can assist the group's givers in setting up boundaries to avoid exploitation or strain, while giving to the organization to fulfill a personal sense of gratification (Table 1). The leader can empower givers to be more assertive, helping to avoid burnout. Educating the team, particularly the givers, about burnout is important to retain talent and encourage givers to develop positive self-interest.

*Scenario: In a busy multimodality practice, a position can be created for an agreeable giver, a float shift, whereby the designated radiologist is unassigned to a work list for that shift but is available to help peers when assistance is needed. An agreeable giver is ideal for such a role because he or she gains an opportunity to be helpful without feeling unwelcome or not having a clear way to create a meaningful positive impact in the overall team's performance.*

Givers should also be encouraged to job-craft, a technique that empowers employees to redesign their jobs to better fit their motivation [1]. This provides givers meaningful interactions through opportunities to increase impact by best using their skills, which increases their engagement and personal satisfaction.

*Scenario: A giver asked to job-craft within her position expands service by providing MR-targeted prostate biopsy. The employee enjoys the satisfaction of using her skill to help patients, and the positive feedback from the clinical team provides the giver the much-needed motivation to stay engaged.*

**Table 1.** Leadership tips for assisting givers and takers to provide effective contribution to the team

How to Help Givers	How to Help Takers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Position them strategically in various teams to maximize impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Set clear expectations and emphasize repeatedly</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mentor to channel skills or interests through job-crafting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Help model workflow to avoid abuse by takers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Set boundaries and practice assertiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide opportunities to give help to others</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Show how selective giving can prevent burnout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide positive feedback through acknowledgment of giving</li> </ul>

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