

For one thing, groups tend to be exclusive. In time, a healthy group will have no uncertainty about who is in and who is out, and about the rules for membership. You might keep this in mind when, without much thought, you simply hire someone to replace a departing member of your staff, giving no thought, perhaps, to the question of whether this person is qualified for membership in the group--qualified in the eyes of the members. It is a distressing fate, as some of you may have experienced, to be inserted by managerial act into an organization where, by the rules of the group, you are excluded from full membership. Life can be rather grim under these circumstances. There are lots of ways in which your work and your personal life can be sabotaged.

Groups tend to be exclusive. They tend to divide the organization. They tend to create barriers to the easy movement of people and ideas. At the same time, groups make possible the binding together of organizations. People usually belong to more than one group. Within the organization there will be groups of various kinds, and multiple membership is the rule rather than the exception. This means that it is possible for a single individual, because of his joint membership in two or more groups, to transmit some of the values and attitudes, perceptions and problems of one group to the other. In effect, one person is maintaining a communication linkage that serves many, and he is able to do it quite effectively, whereas it would be impossible for all members of both groups to attempt to maintain the same degree of linkage. The existence of groups with overlapping membership makes it possible in principle for a large, diffused organization to remain connected. It keeps communication channels open and efficient. Note the implication of this. What I am saying is that the communication within your organization probably is good or not good depending on the vitality and health of the group processes of your organization.

Another characteristic of groups is that they develop what we social scientists call "cohesiveness." Now, cohesiveness, technically, is defined as the sum of all the forces on the member toward remaining in the group--the net sum, after subtracting the forces on him toward leaving the group. The more cohesive the group is, the more power the group has over the member. Group cohesiveness generates social power. This sequence of ideas leads to the conclusion that one of the primary sources of social power in our organizations is the cohesiveness of the work groups. This is a tremendously important idea.

Groups generate power. This is why managers have to be concerned with the nature of groups, how they are formed, their