

Chapter Eleven — The Six Instinct-Linked Pathways and

Key Triggers For Alignment

Bringing people into alignment in any setting can be an extremely useful thing to do.

We can benefit in a number of important ways from being aligned. We tend to support one another and we tend to not oppose or do damage to one another when we are aligned.

We tend to create positive outcomes for groups of people when people are aligned as a group. When people are aligned and have a sense of group relevance and group value, we tend to avoid the damage that people too often do to one another when people in a setting are divided, conflicted, and functionally not aligned.

Alignment is good to do. It also is very often a very achievable thing to do. There are half a dozen basic alignment triggers that can be used in almost any setting to bring people together in that setting.

The list below contains the six key alignment triggers. All six of those triggers have the potential to increase alignment for people in any setting where they are applied.

People can often be influenced to come together to have a sense of alignment and a sense of positive group functionality in a setting if any of the six key external and functional factors become relevant to them in that setting.

The six basic alignment triggers can each function alone or they can be used in various kinds of combinations and packages to get people to function as an instinct-supported level of “us” in almost any setting.

Each of the six triggers has significant power on its own to create alignments. Many leaders use one or more of those triggers today — either intentionally or unintentionally — to get people in their setting to function as a type of “us.”

Creating A Sense Of “Us” Can Trigger Multiple Benefits

Many people who lead organizations, communities, and even countries know that the likelihood of success for the group they lead can be enhanced significantly if the people in the group are aligned to function and think in key ways as a group.

When people in any group have a collective sense of being aligned and have a sense of being connected as a group as a functioning “us” in a positive and persuasive way, then the group can generally be more effective

as a group. A group with internal alignment can generally have a better sense of cohesiveness and a more useful level of functional identity as a group than a group with no sense of internal alignment.

A group that has internal alignment in key areas can create a very useful sense of “us” for group members. It is useful because having a sense of “us” can activate the positive sets and packages of instinctive behaviors that we all have relative to whoever we perceive to be “us.”

It is generally a good strategy for leaders to create that kind of internal alignment for any group of people they lead. Groups of people who have any or all of those alignment triggers activated are more likely to be collaborative, cooperative, and mutually supportive relative to the other people in that same setting who are being influenced and collectively defined and aligned as a group by those same triggers.

The Six Alignment Triggers Can Work In A Wide Range Of Settings

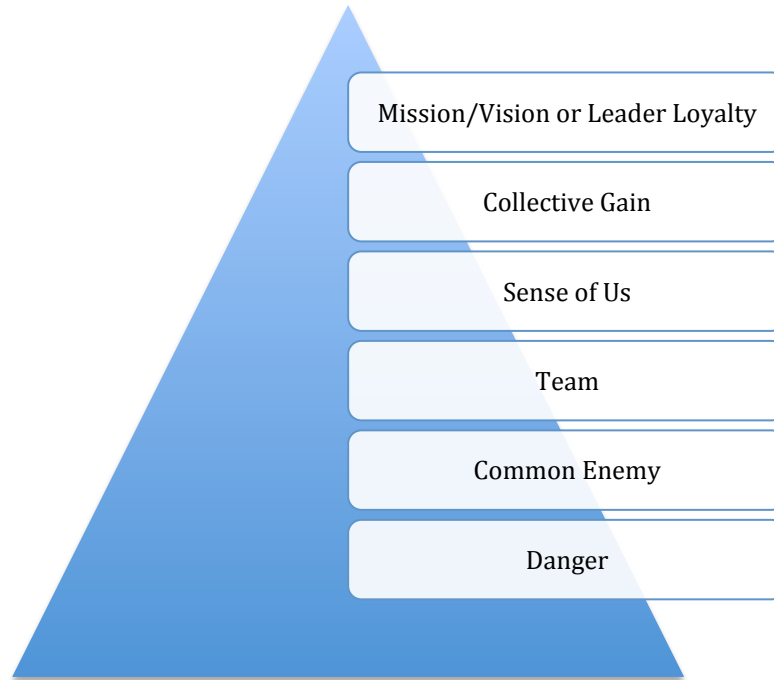
The six tools can actually use our instinctive reactions to trigger a sense of mutual alignment and create a sense of collective identity for people in a wide range of diverse settings.

Each of the six triggers can help create a larger category of us in a setting. Each of the triggers can also help people who are already in a group of some kind function more effectively and more collaboratively as a group.

Those six triggers that are outlined below and that are described in more detail in the books, *The Art of Intergroup Peace* and *Peace In Our Time*, can work in a wide variety of functional group situations. They can be used in schools, work places, communities, cities, nations, and even in families, to bring families closer together as families.

When our goal is to bring people in any setting into functional alignment — into collective group based behaviors for the people in that setting — then the six triggers shown below on the alignment pyramid can each be very useful in getting people to be part of the group and to function in ways that are in the best interest of the group.

Intergroup Alignment Motivator Pyramid



The triggers each work alone. They can also be used in various combinations and packages that are relevant to the circumstances in each setting.

When they are used collectively in an aligned way, their individual impact and their influence can be significantly increased. Skillful leaders often use those triggers both individually and collectively to create and reinforce a sense of group alignment in the settings they lead.

Most leaders who use those specific group alignment approaches today use them either intuitively or experientially — based on their own life

experiences and observations about the functional impacts and the functional consequences that have been created by those triggers in various settings.

They work when they are used intuitively, and they can be even more effective and easy to use when the user has a clear intellectual understanding of their nature and of their most effective use levels and applications.

A leader who understands those six triggers at an intellectual level can look at almost any group situation and get a sense of which triggers will work best in that situation to create or improve the alignment levels of people in that setting.

Danger Is Trigger One

The first trigger that creates alignment is danger.

Danger can bring people together in almost any setting.

The bottom trigger on the alignment pyramid is danger because danger can activate people to be aligned in almost any setting and almost any time. Danger can be a very powerful motivator for individuals and for groups of people.

Danger has the same kinds of impact on groups of people as the primal motivational responses that happen for individual people when people's personal survival instincts are triggered.

When people in any setting feel a shared sense of danger, that sense of shared danger can cause people in that setting to overlook and set aside prior differences between themselves in favor of responding collectively and collaboratively to the danger. Danger can trigger alignment relatively easily almost any time it is relevant to the people in a situation or setting.

A flood, for example, usually brings people from all relevant groups together to fight the flood. People facing a flood will ignore the divisions that existed between them before the danger — race, tribe, social class, ethnicity, etc. — and will band together to resist and survive the danger created by the water.

Similarly, people in a fire setting tend to be aligned together against the fire. Fire fighting easily creates joint and aligned behaviors when the fire danger is real.

So that trigger is easy to understand and easy to use. Danger creates alignment. People in any organization and setting, group, or community who feel a sense of danger to themselves or who feel that there is a danger to their group or organization are more likely to work together to mitigate, avoid, or overcome the perceived danger.

People in an organization or community who believe their organization or community is in danger will often rise to the occasion and will support strategies and calls to action that are intended to offset, and or eliminate the danger.

In various larger community settings, any time people believe that a danger is both relevant and real, that perception can be used to get people aligned to collectively protect themselves against the danger.

Like our basic survival instincts, the sense of danger can take on a very high priority in our thinking about being aligned with other people and with other groups of people. Leaders who want to get their own people aligned behind them in any setting often find that communicating and conveying a sense of danger to the group can trigger, activate, and reinforce both alignment and support.

Common Enemy Is Trigger Number Two

Common enemies also can help create alignment at instinctively powerful levels in group settings.

It is often easy to bring people together in a setting if the people have a collective sense that a common enemy exists who truly is an enemy to the people in the group.

The old saying “The enemy of my enemy is my friend” has survived the test of time as an adage because it is so often true. When people in any setting perceive that they truly have a common enemy, people who have had a variety prior alignments will often band together in various ways and do things in a collaborative and aligned way to defeat their common enemy.

Effective leaders who want to get people in a setting to band together often very clearly identify a common enemy and then invoke the threat of that enemy to create internal support and to get people in that setting aligned.

The Art of Intergroup Peace and *Peace In Our Time* both explain how that can be done.

Alpha leaders in many settings who want to increase their own power in those settings often identify a common enemy to their own group to create internal alignment within their group and to create a level of loyalty to themselves as a leader who is resisting that common enemy.

When leaders in any setting want to bring their groups together, identifying a common enemy can help that alignment and group support process to happen — as long as the people in that setting believe that an actual enemy exists.

People in any setting who truly believe that they are at risk from a common enemy will often overlook prior differences to align together against that enemy.

Once people believe a common enemy exists, that enemy generally is perceived to be a category of “Them” — and all of the ethical standards and values that apply to defeating or damaging “Them” can easily become part of the collective response mind set, emotional response, and strategic direction relative to that enemy.

Team Instincts Are Trigger Number Three

Team instincts create a very similar set of alignment triggering behaviors that can bring people together to act in aligned ways.

People love to be on teams.

One of the best and most effective ways of getting people in a setting aligned in a common cause to jointly achieve collective goals is to invoke and trigger the instincts we all have to be on teams.

We have very powerful instincts to be on teams and we have powerful instincts to function as teams when teams are created in any situation or setting.

Our team instincts can be triggered in many settings — and when they are triggered, people can overlook and at least temporarily set aside other prior divisions or other groupings that currently exist in those settings relative to the people on the team.

Our team instincts and our ability to set aside prior differences in some team settings in order to succeed as teams were probably very useful to people who lived in both early hunting settings and in early war settings.

In each of those settings, it could have been a very good thing for the survival of the family or the clan or the tribe to have people in that setting and situation able to overlook and set aside prior inter-family and inter-clan divisions conflicts and angers in favor of working together as larger groups to collectively achieve the tasks that were needed by everyone to function successfully either as a hunting group or as a war-team.

People with team instincts activated tend to create instinct supported loyalty feelings for their team.

That suppression and suspension of prior levels of conflicted us/them status for team members is part of a process that creates new loyalty levels for team members as an “us.” That can happen very effectively as long as

the team that is created is perceived to have legitimacy at a primal and functional level as a real team.

Team instincts are both powerful and seductive.

They are most easily activated and most easily reinforced when several basic team components that trigger those team instincts are all in place.

Simply Calling People A Team Is Not Sufficient

The component parts of team structure and purpose are key to the process. Simply calling a group of people a team is generally not sufficient to activate our actual team instincts.

When people are identified as a team, when they function as a team, when they have a collective purpose as a team and when people also have a perceived collective agenda and are organized to function as a team, then basic team instincts can be triggered, activated, reinforced, and utilized to achieve a wide range of group-related goals.

Good leaders often know how to invoke team instincts. Good leaders also often know how to focus those instincts and those team behaviors on achieving organizational success for the group they lead.

A Sense of “Us” Is Trigger Number Four

The fourth trigger on the alignment pyramid that works to bring people together is to create a sense of “us” for a group of people.

Being “us” is a very useful and powerful sense. It tends to be very attractive to people to be an “us.” We all want to be part of an “us.”

We are most easily able to trigger that sense of “us” at our most basic and traditional levels. Clan, family, and tribe are each key definers of “us” that give each of us a sense of basic group identity at a very primal level.

We also have the ability to also extend our sense of “us” to broader sets of people who we believe can perform the key functions of an “us” in a situationally relevant way.

Creating a sense of “us” that goes beyond family, clan, or tribe generally needs to involve some level of common identity and a level of common interest.

Marines can trigger a sense of us for being Marines. Professors can trigger a sense of us for being professors.

People very much tend to identify with whoever they perceive triggers a basic sense of us. We very much want to be in an “us.”

Being in a relevant “us” alignment can create a sense of well being and security for people. We generally want to be part of an “us,” and we

each tend to feel stress or even anxiety when we are not currently in an “us” situation.

The trigger of being an “us” can be used strategically by leaders in many settings and situations because although we each have our primal us alignments — race, ethnicity, nationality, tribe, clan, or family — we each also have the ability to add on a number of layers of group identity to our us that can also invoke and activate our “us” instincts in very useful ways.

Leaders in many settings can effectively invoke that sense of “us” for their group and use it to both encourage collective behavior and alignment and to create a sense of conflict, anxiety, fear, division, and stress relative to people in that setting who aren’t “us.”

“Us” can be used as an alignment tool at multiple levels. Layers of “us” can exist.

It is possible for someone to align with all of the basic and primal us definitions that normally exist for each of us at some levels and to also identify with additional us levels that are relevant to our lives.

We can each have a family “us” identity that is also part of a clan “us” identity that is also part of a tribe “us” identity that is also part of a race or part of an ethnicity “us” or part of a culture of “us” that can exist in the

context of a country or nation — and we can each accept each part of that entire package to be a fully accurate, useful, believable, and situationally relevant working definition of “us.”

We can invoke us related instincts relative to other people who we perceive to be “us” and we can invoke those positive instincts at each of those “us” identity levels. Many levels of “us” can be relevant to each of us.

We can also be an “us” based on our occupation, our profession, our job status, our political conviction, and our religious affiliation.

Doctors can be a functional and collectively perceived category of “Us” — as can surgeons and pediatricians and other sets of medical specialists who each can identify themselves as subsets of a medical “us.”

We can be very creative and hugely functional in setting up categories of “us” that are relevant to our lives. Leaders who understand those processes use them to make leading easier.

Any leader in any setting who is trying to get the people in that setting collectively aligned for common purposes is much more likely to succeed in that effort if the leader can trigger a collective sense of “us” for the relevant sets of people. That is true for all of the reasons outlined in the first five

chapters of this book relative to alignments and to us/them instinctive packages of behaviors.

Creating a common identity and a common sense of “us” can be a good leadership tool, and skillful leaders generally work to make sure that they create and support a sense of us for all of the people who are part of their collective group.

A Sense of Collective Gain is Trigger Number Five

Another trigger that can be used to bring people together in an aligned way is to give people in a setting a sense that they will benefit personally in some way from the alignment. Personal benefit can very often significantly motivate people.

Greed can create alignments. So can a sense of collective and individual gain. We all have instincts to acquire and own various possessions. We all have instincts to have resources available to us for our own use and for the safety and the success of our families and children.

Each of those instinctive acquisition desires can be triggered to bring people into alignment as a group if the result of the alignment will be to succeed in having the needs of that instinct satisfied.

The fifth trigger on the basic set of instinctive alignment motivators is, therefore, to convince people in a setting that being aligned and functioning as a group will create common gain and will create common good for the members of the aligned group.

Labor Unions often use that particular motivation tool for alignment purposes. People in the union believe they are more likely to have adequate compensation and more likely to have job security if they are unionized.

That belief about common gain and the collective benefits that result from union status causes people to join unions and that joining process can cause people to identify at an “us” level with the unions they join.

People in community settings are more likely to do collaborative things as a group if there is a sense that their community will collectively gain from that common behavior.

People are more likely to support the schools in a community if there is a sense that everyone in the community who supports the schools will benefit from having better educated children.

People who run businesses sometimes set up bonus programs or stock option programs for their businesses that are structured to incent people to work together in aligned ways to have the business succeed.

Again, good leaders know how to use the prospect of collective common gain to bring people together and to create alignment in a group setting. Leaders looking to bring people together in a setting can often benefit by figuring out what kinds of collective gains can be created and incorporated into the strategy for that setting.

When the prospective gains are clearly presented and when the people in a setting believe that the prospective gains are real, relevant, and meaningful, then that trigger can cause people to come together in aligned ways.

A Mission or Vision is Trigger Number Six

There are two triggers for alignment that share the top level on the alignment pyramid. The two triggers function in almost identical ways to get groups of people to be motivated to do aligned things in any setting.

One of the triggers is allegiance or loyalty to a leader. The other trigger is allegiance or commitment to a vision, mission, or belief system for the organization.

People will act in aligned ways to follow and support a leader they feel loyalty and allegiance to — and people will act in aligned ways to

accomplish a mission or to follow the teachings and precepts of a belief system.

Both approaches are widely used as alignment tools.

Creating a sense of mission is often not an easy motivation and alignment tool to use. But when it is done well, it can have a powerful impact on people's sense of alignment and on people's willingness to align with other people who share that particular belief or vision.

Inside a corporation or business setting, having a shared mission can often have value as a motivation tool and an alignment tool. It can be a very good tool to use to focus strategic thinking. Some work forces do feel a strong sense of common mission — and those work forces often create high levels of internal alignment and internal support.

The truth is that having a collective mission is often a less powerful motivator for many business settings than the motivation that can be triggered in those same work settings by common gain, collective survival, or even having a common enemy as a work force.

But for a community, a country, a political group, or a religious group having a sense of shared vision can help bring people in a group together in a highly aligned way. When people understand the vision of a group and

when people fully support the vision and share the belief system of the group, then those people are much more likely to make their daily decisions in the context of that vision and they are much more likely to feel and directly welcome a sense of alignment with the other people who share that particular vision.

For many people, a significant short or long-term threat or a clearly perceived danger can over power and push aside the influence of a basic sense of vision. People who are starving often don't assign a high priority to more thoughtful or more aspirational mission-based collective uses of their time and their energy.

Abraham Maslow, in his individual hierarchy of needs work, basically said that danger tends to trump self-actualization goals for individual people when both sets of circumstances and realities are simultaneously triggered and when both are simultaneously relevant to an individual.

Dr. Maslow believed that people can be motivated and guided by their sense of self-actualization and by their individual growth, but he believed that people will generally give up that self-actualization priority for their lives when their life is actually at risk.

Similarly, for the alignment tools that can help bring people together or that can cause people to split apart in business settings, a strong sense of real danger can often overpower a mildly felt sense of shared mission for the people in that setting.

Mission and vision can be, however, the most powerful motivation tool for many settings and for many people. Skillful leaders often use a level of mission, purpose, or vision as a group motivator because that motivation points people toward aligned behavior.

Some people rate their own personal commitment to their belief system — to their religion or their political affiliation or to some other equivalent societal commitment — to be their top personal priority.

Many people run their lives and make a wide range of basic functional decisions based on that particular priority. There is a wide continuum of relative impact for that particular alignment trigger.

Many people are affected more by other life issues, and life factors and many people rate their belief systems as a less powerful motivator for their lives then, for example, their need to support their families or their need to defeat a perceived enemy.

But some people who believe deeply in a mission or in a belief system will use that priority as the key guide for their decisions and their lives.

Groups or organizations that are mission based can find themselves with true believers as members who are highly motivated by their mission for their thoughts and behaviors.

Having a clear mission can also be very focusing in helping the people in a group figure out what things to do collectively to make the mission a success. Strong missions can have a strong functional component that can strongly impact and influence both individual and group decision-making and behavior.

Some Groups Have Loyalty To Leaders As The Primary Motivator

For many organizations, the role of the mission or the vision for the group as the key focus and functional direction setter for the group is filled by a sense of commitment by group members to the actual leader of the group.

Some people feel loyalty to a mission or vision — and other people feel very right exhibiting equally intense and direct loyalty to a leader.

In many settings, the loyalty to a leader transcends all other loyalties. Loyalties to a king, for example, can shape people's thoughts and behaviors in ways that structure people's lives in major ways in the settings where kings are the leaders of a group. People in many settings have been willing to die to protect their king and even more willing to kill for their king.

Leader loyalty tends to feel right to people as a clearly instinctive behavior. People will often defend and obey their leader and make their obedience and support for a leader a key component of their own lives.

Some Leaders Use Loyalty — Some Use Mission

Some leaders use personal loyalty to themselves as a primary alignment motivator for their groups. Other leaders choose to use mission and vision and core beliefs as motivational tools for their groups.

Some settings combine the two triggers and have people who are loyal both to the group mission and to the group leader. That can be a very powerful alignment tool in those settings.

Each of those alignment triggers can be used — and the key is to figure out what combination of leader loyalty and belief loyalty is the best approach for any given group or setting.

Many of our best leaders can use basic belief-system motivators as tools to create, shape, and sustain both intergroup and intragroup alignment.

When people are linked into their belief system and into their loyalty beliefs — and when people’s behaviors are in full compliance and full harmony with that belief system — then those specific behaviors that are aligned with that system can feel very “right” to each person at a deep instinctive level.

That ability to make specific individual and group behaviors feel right isn’t limited to the leader/mission trigger set. Each of the six triggers can cause alignment with relevant behaviors to feel very right to the people who are aligned in the context of that trigger.

We Need to Use All Six Triggers to Align America

That pyramid contains a very useful set of instinct-grounded leadership and group creation tools.

Each of the tools on the alignment pyramid outlined in this chapter can help bring people together to function as a group. Each of the triggers can work in multiple settings... and their relevance in each setting is heavily dependent on the facts, circumstances, and situations that exist in each setting.

It is increasingly clear that we will need to use that entire set of alignment triggers all to achieve our collective goals as a country if we want to succeed in creating intergroup Peace for our country.

We will be well served if we use all six triggers to help make the American Dream available to all of us as a country.

As we look at our future as a country, we will need to figure out the best ways to use all six of the six alignment triggers to help create and protect intergroup Peace in various settings for America.

Our instincts to be aligned with each other in the face of specific alignment triggers can be very useful to us collectively, because those instincts create a context where trust, cooperation, and mutual best interest defines our collective values and guides our collective behaviors.

Alignment also gives us a best chance of creating win/win outcomes for all of the groups that make up the collective American “Us.”

We need to build a future anchored in win/win strategies that works successfully and skillfully with all of those alignment factors for America to give us a future where we all win.

It is easiest for us all to win if and when we have all been appropriately aligned with each other’s beliefs and values.

We Need To Understand Our Past To Understand Our Future

Before making our choices about using each of those alignment triggers and before putting the various support processes in place that are needed to maximize the likelihood of those strategies succeeding in our country today, it makes sense to take a clear, cold, and sometimes painfully honest historical look at the ways all of our packages of instincts have affected us as a nation over time.

We need to understand our past in order to build our future. We need to understand our history, so we can appreciate and understand where we are today and so we can use the reality of where we are now as the anchor to build what we want to build and to do what we need to do next.

The next chapter does exactly that. The next chapter looks at American history and it looks at the American Dream. It looks at how our instinctive behaviors have shaped our history.

We have done some wonderful things and we have done some horrible things in our history as a nation. We need to understand all of the things we have done — so we can create the future we need to create using our instincts and cultures as a tool and invoking the entire set of alignment triggers effectively to bring us to the alignment we need.

Before we build that future, we need to understand our past.