



## The Map

Jack Mabrey had just finished listening to his messages and felt like he was about to explode. Dan, one of his employees, had called in sick again, and tonight was the busiest night of the week. Now he had to figure out how to get Dan's work done.

Jack walked out to Dan's desk and saw the pile of papers to be processed. He continued down the hall and saw Lisa leaning back in a chair with her feet on a desk, talking on the phone and laughing. He sat on the desk in front of her, crossed his arms across his chest and waited.

Lisa looked at him and shrugged. "We've got nothing to do, Jack. We can't do anything until Dan

---

gives us the paperwork.”

Jack had a sudden urge to scream. Instead he tried to speak calmly. “Before this job, you did Dan’s job. Did you look on his desk to see if there was anything that you could work on?”

Lisa frowned. “Well, I mean, a lot of things have changed over there, and anyway that’s not my job anymore,” she stammered.

“It is tonight,” he said abruptly. He walked her over to Dan’s desk and gave her specific instructions about what needed to be done.

Jack headed back to his office, asking himself why he ever accepted this job in the first place. For 10 long years he had learned the ropes of this organization in a staff job. He had finally been chosen for a supervisory job. At last, a chance to be a leader, to do things right, to fix problems, slash bureaucracy and start his climb up the corporate ladder. That had been his plan anyway.

Now, two years later, he felt more like a firefighter or a babysitter than a leader. Whenever there was a problem or anything unusual beyond the simplest job responsibility, his subordinates couldn’t (or wouldn’t) make a decision without dragging him into it. Then they waited for him to tell them exactly what to do and how to do it. They rarely put forth any extra effort on

---

the job, and it was a constant challenge just to get them to do the minimum.

The worst part was that he knew it was his own fault. He was not the leader his people needed. He didn't know how to inspire them or how to make work challenging and interesting for them.

The ring of the telephone interrupted his thoughts, and he suddenly remembered that he and his wife had an out-of-town guest arriving tonight. Jack looked quickly at his watch and his stomach turned. It was 6:25 p.m. His company was expected to arrive at 6:30 p.m. He picked up the phone and answered weakly, "Hello?"

He was in big trouble.



Forty-five minutes later he pulled into the driveway. Jack could see his wife and their long-time friend, Jangbu\*, sitting on the front porch. Jack was anxious to see him again. He slid his car into the garage and went inside to clean up.

As he washed, he thought about his Uncle Jangbu. It had been a few years since they had seen each other.

---

\* Pronounced *JUNG-BOO*

---

Jangbu was not really his uncle, but Jack certainly thought of him that way. Jangbu Makti had guided Jack's father to the top of Mount Everest 27 years ago, and the two had remained close friends until his father's death six months ago.

Since their meeting, Jangbu had visited with Jack's parents every few years at the end of the climbing season. Jack always loved listening to the stories of Mount Everest and how Jangbu worked as a Sherpa guide for expeditions up the world's tallest mountain.

Jack opened the screen door and walked onto the porch. "Uncle Jangbu," he said.

"Ah, Jack," Jangbu said, embracing him warmly. "It is good to see you again. I have missed you." Jangbu spoke English fairly well, having worked with westerners on the mountain six months of every year. Still, Jack had to listen carefully to understand his accent.

"I've missed you too, Uncle Jangbu," said Jack as they shook hands. "Sorry I'm late."

"You'd better be," his wife Nancy said half jokingly. "We've been having a very nice conversation. And you're already a glass of wine behind us."

"Does this mean I'm forgiven?" Jack replied.

"As far as you know," she said as she pinched his arm. Jack sat down in the chair next to hers.

---

Jangbu spent the next hour telling Jack and Nancy that although he still enjoyed the mountain, he was bored and in need of new challenges. Finally, Jangbu asked Jack about his job and what he did at work.

"I'm a supervisor," Jack replied, "but maybe not for long. It's not as rewarding as I had hoped it would be. I'm thinking of going back to my old staff job."

Jangbu smiled. "What is the problem, Jack? Maybe I can help."

Jack paused. He couldn't imagine how a Mount Everest guide could help him solve his problems at work. What did mountain climbing have to do with business? What the heck, Jack thought, let's give it a try.

"I feel like I'm responsible for solving all the problems and making all the decisions in my department," Jack explained. "My people can follow the instructions in our standard operating procedures, but the minute they run into anything out of the ordinary everything stops. Then they either call me to find out what to do, or they ignore the problem and wait for me to point it out to them."

"Jack, your department is like an expedition that is stuck at base camp," Jangbu explained. "They are like hikers who are fine as long as they have a map and the path is straight and smooth. You want to lead them up

---

the mountain, but they don't have basic climbing skills. They do not know how to blaze their own trail. You must teach them how to think for themselves, first as individuals and then as a team."

"That makes a lot of sense," agreed Jack. "That is probably why my company is losing money. Years ago our quality, productivity and responsiveness were the best in the industry, but now our competition is as good or better. In order to make a profit we need to find new and better ways to do everything we do. There is no standard operating procedure for how to do that. As you said, we need to blaze new trails, and I can't do it all myself."

"We Sherpas have a saying," Uncle Jangbu said. "A guide who helps too much rarely gets his climbers to the top of the mountain. You have been helping your people too much. They must learn to rely on themselves and each other, not on you. You must coach them instead of carrying them. I would like to show you some things I have learned through the years climbing my mountain. Perhaps it will help you climb yours."

Jack nodded slowly. Jangbu's words already had him thinking. "Let's do it," he said.

"I will need a piece of paper and a pen," Jangbu said.

---

“Wait a minute,” Nancy interrupted. “Aren’t you two hungry? I know I am.”

“Okay, okay,” Jack agreed. “We’ll wait until after dinner.”



After clearing the dinner table, Jack found a large piece of paper and a pen and watched as Jangbu sketched a map.

“That doesn’t look much like Mount Everest,” Jack commented.

Jangbu looked up. “It is not a map of the mountain itself, but it is a map of the psychological journey climbers must make as a group if they hope to reach the summit.”

Jangbu drew for a moment more, labeled several parts of the map and put the pen down. Then he looked at Jack.

Jack looked at the map (see map 1). “Well, aren’t you going to finish it?” he asked.

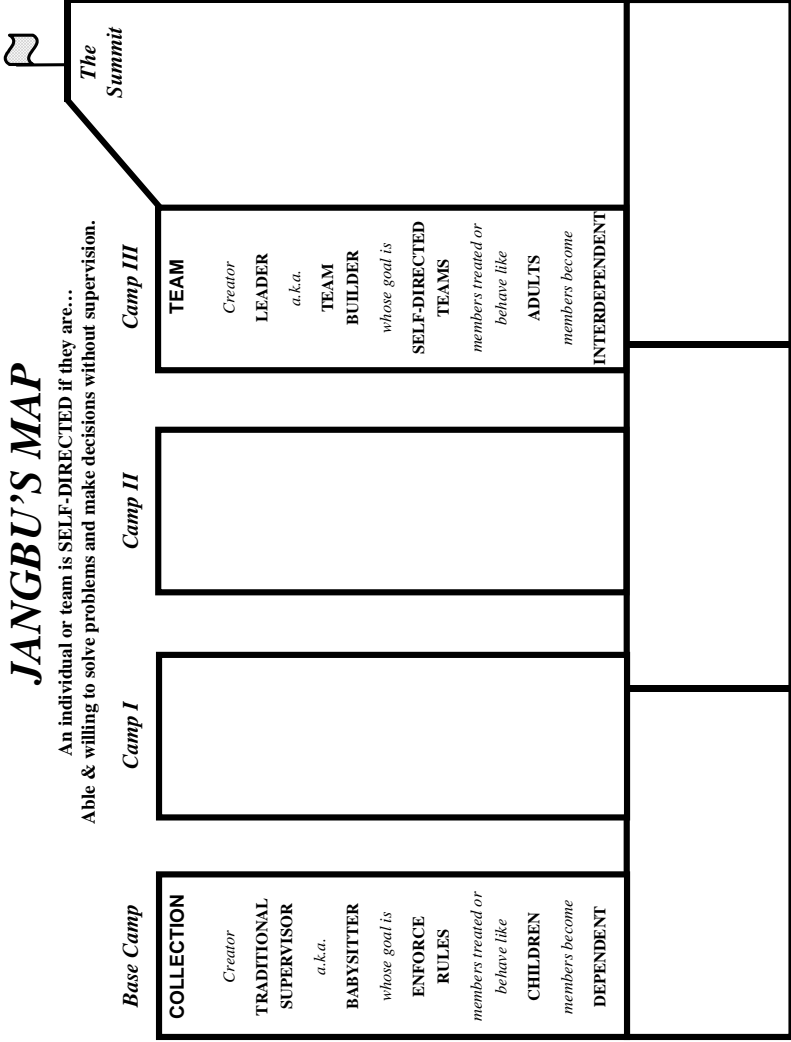
“One step at a time, Jack,” Jangbu replied. “This will become a picture of what we have learned as Sherpa guides over the last 200 years of climbing in the Himalayas. It shows how we transform a group of inexperienced strangers into a team that is capable of

---

reaching the top of the world. It applies to any group of people who desire to accomplish a goal together. We will have to modify the terms and concepts on my map to fit your work environment. For instance, I substituted the

# JANGBU'S MAP

An individual or team is SELF-DIRECTED if they are...  
Able & willing to solve problems and make decisions without supervision.



---

MAP 1

---

term 'supervisor' for 'guide.' You will have to help me express these concepts in ways that fit your business world."

"Go on," urged Jack.

Jangbu nodded. "You see, there are four different ways to organize people to work together," he explained.

"Most groups start out as what we call a COLLECTION\*. Our goal as Sherpas is to turn them into a TEAM. That is your goal also."

Jack studied the map. "I can certainly relate to the area on the diagram labeled COLLECTION," he said. "My job title is SUPERVISOR, but as much as I want to be a LEADER, I can't figure out how to stop acting like a BABYSITTER, spending most of my time ENFORCING RULES. Although the people who work for me are far from being CHILDREN in terms of their ages, they often behave that way at work. I can't understand why the same people who solve difficult problems and make tough decisions in their personal lives seem to leave their brains at the door when they come to work. As capable, creative and intelligent as

---

\* The terms 'collection' and 'work group' (see chapter 2) were adapted from *Coaching and Team Leadership Skills for Managers and Supervisors*, published by SkillPath Seminars.

---

they are, they somehow have become conditioned to be DEPENDENT\* on me to solve all of the problems and make all of the decisions at work."

"It is no surprise you are not enjoying your work," said Jangbu. "If a group of climbers acted that way, I would give them their money back and send them home."

Now Jack looked at the TEAM section on the far right. The terms here were familiar to him: LEADER, TEAM BUILDER and SELF-DIRECTED TEAMS. SELF-DIRECTED was a term that had always confused Jack.

Next he read the definition at the top of the map: ABLE AND WILLING TO SOLVE PROBLEMS AND MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT SUPERVISION.

"I've heard about these team ideas, but I've never experienced them," Jack said. "Lots of supervisors at work refer to their groups of subordinates as 'teams,' but most of those so-called 'teams' are really 'collections,' according to what your map says. To tell you the truth, I doubt that a real team is even possible."

---

\* The idea of maturation from 'dependent', to 'independent' (see chapter 2) to 'interdependent' was adapted from *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, by Steven Covey.

---

“It is possible to build a real team of INTER-DEPENDENT people, but you must take it one step at a time. Let me put it this way,” Jangbu explained. “Do you think Sir Edmund Hillary climbed from the bottom to the top of Mount Everest in one day?”

“Probably not,” said Jack.

“No,” confirmed Jangbu. “If he had attempted to climb the entire mountain in one day, he would have become exhausted, fallen to the ground and frozen to death. Yet that is exactly the mistake most managers make when they try to implement teams. They try to go from traditional management to teams overnight and, overwhelmed with the obstacles they encounter, they get tired and give up.”

“That’s what my company did,” said Jack. “Our top management just changed the labels on the organizational chart. One day they announced that departments would now be called ‘teams’ and supervisors would now be called ‘team leaders.’ For a while everyone was confused. They knew they were supposed to act differently, but they didn’t know how. After a few weeks, everyone went back to acting the same way they always had because it was all they knew how to do. That’s what I did.”

“Instead of trying to climb the mountain in one day,” said Jangbu, “Sir Edmund Hillary established

---

intermediate camps on the mountain and tackled the job in logical pieces. When climbing Mount Everest the human body requires time to acclimate to the lack of oxygen in the air. If you take a person at sea level and instantly place him at the summit, he would be unconscious in minutes and dead shortly thereafter.”

“That’s pretty close to how I felt when they told me I was going to be a ‘team leader,’” said Jack.

“I understand,” said Jangbu. “To continue my example, if a climber takes his time and rests for several days at each intermediate camp, his body will adjust by creating more oxygen-carrying red blood cells so he can survive with less oxygen.”

“Fine,” said Jack, “but we’ve got plenty of oxygen at work, so what’s your point?”

“The point is that just as there are intermediate camps on Mount Everest, there are intermediate camps on the Journey To Teams. The first column on my map, labeled Collection, is the base camp. That is where nearly every business organization must begin. The next three columns are the intermediate camps you must attain before your team will be capable of reaching their potential. Once you have built a true team, you will be able to lead that team to achieve goals that you now believe to be impossible. On Everest, the goal is to reach the summit. What is the goal for your

---

team, Jack?"

"To be the best at what we do, so we can make a profit, keep our jobs, feed our families and maybe even become financially secure," Jack replied.

"Worthy goals, my friend," said Jangbu.

"Well, what are the two intermediate camps between Collection and Team?" Jack asked.

"I'll make you a deal," Jangbu said. "Bring me to your office tomorrow and show me what your department does. Then I will show you the next piece of the map."

Jack looked at his watch. It was nearly 11:00 p.m., and he had to be up at 6:00 a.m. "You've got yourself a deal," Jack said. "Now let's get some sleep."

