What if the greatest attribute a person needed to begin the process of taking a team to the next level was desire? What if a person nurtured that desire to the point that it became so strong that they were willing to try almost anything to create a more harmonious and high-spirited team? Well, I’m here to tell you that if you have the desire and are willing to take the first step and try what I am suggesting, then you have enough to begin building your team right now!

Hey, This Could Be FUN!
WOW! I am so excited to join you on this piece of your journey—a journey that will be rewarding, challenging, and fun…really fun! Remember, when in the process of building great teams, or building great communities, or anytime we find ourselves in the process of building a worthy cause … we should expect to be challenged, to experience growth, and that’s right, have fun.

It’s as Easy as 1, 2, 3
Easy is right…and no, I’m not forgetting about team dynamics, group development theory, organizational psychology, or all the thousands of books on team building that say this process is much more technical than it needs to be. What I am saying is that too often we spend more time in a state of intellectual paralysis rather than in a state of active participation and discovery. So, let’s get out of our books, out of our office, and in with our people.

Doodle Activity
This teambuilding exercise is a great way to promote discovery, illustrate commonalities and connections, create warmth and trust among team members, increase the appreciation team members have for one another and their differences, create an atmosphere conducive to forgiveness and renewal, and it always results in laughter (we could all use more of this!). On the adjoining page is a simple white sheet with 9 squares and various designs within each. To begin, follow the steps below:

**Step 1**
Make copies of the Doodle page for every member of your team, including yourself. Be sure and save the backside of the Doodle page from SupportWorld (don’t copy the backside; it’s your debrief instructions for the last half of the exercise).

**Step 2**
Distribute and have your team complete the Doodle page, allowing ample time. For example, pass out Doodle pages at your weekly team meeting and then have team members return with completed sheets the following week.

**Step 3**
After Step 2 is complete, take the backside of the Doodle page that you saved from Step 1 (the Doodles debrief sheet).
Step 4
Follow instructions on debrief sheet, relax, have fun and connect with your team.

“Using the Doodle activity, I learned more about some of my teammates in 30 minutes than I had learned in the last 5 years.” Help Desk Practitioner, Atlanta based Playing to Win workshop.

Tips
Picture your team (they may be wondering if you have lost your mind) as they sit with their Doodles, a few probably still doing some last minute doodles, and at least one member of your team drooling. You will see curious heads sneaking peaks at their coworker’s doodles, and they may have begun to visibly compare their doodles to others. Many wonder if this is a competition and if so, have they won? Others have taken great pride in their artwork and creativity, so be sure you give them the validation they need for their efforts.

Explain to them that they are to relax and have fun, as together you learn what these sketches mean. After each box is explained, a question will be addressed to the entire group. (Don’t worry the questions are pretty safe.) For example, after the first Doodle is described and everyone has a chance to chuckle...the question is “Describe one thing you can do really well.” Then, every team member gets a chance to answer the group.

Don’t accept one-word answers. While the answer can be work related, the greater context for these questions is life: meaning home, hobbies, family, work...all of it. If you do receive one-word answers, probe for details as you see appropriate.

In my experience, with a variety of audiences from every conceivable population, this activity has been a hit 100% of the time. Two things to consider when you share this activity with your team: First, the size of your group. Everyone averages one minute per question, so if your team is 5-8 go for it, but you’ll have to hustle to finish up. If your team is much larger (I sometimes work with hundreds of people), then split them into groups of 4 or 5 to share their answers.

Finally, this experience is intended to bring your people closer together; it will challenge them with some disclosure, but in a safe and fun way. It will help to grow and strengthen relationships, and hopefully move some farther from tolerance and closer towards unconditional acceptance of other’s differences. It will be one more step your group takes towards building a stronger sense of community and connectedness.

Additional Thoughts
We all want to be connected to something meaningful, to be needed, and to have our needs met; in essence, we want to be part of a healthy community, fulfilling what industrial psychologist Abraham Maslow called, “the need for belonging.”

A gracious thank you to dear friend Dr. Jim Cain, a master team builder and author of TeamWork & TeamPlay, for letting us use this activity. More can be learned about Jim Cain and his work by visiting his Web site at www.teamworkandteamplay.com.

I hope you enjoy the simplicity of this activity, have fun, and grow closer as a result. Building a great team and community is a constant and exciting journey with many steps. This activity is just one of those steps...the staff at SupportWorld would love to hear about your experience with this activity or any of the other steps you have taken to help build successful teams. You can tell us about your experience at supportworld@thinkhdi.com.

Kirk Weisler is the President and Founder of Team Dynamics Inc., a leadership development laboratory dedicated to helping people help themselves and their organizations through the creation of sensory rich and emotionally laden experiences that accelerate relationships, learning, and positive team behaviors. Kirk recently accepted a position as Chief Morale Officer of the Help Desk Institute where he will be helping HDI provide culture and team building expertise and resources to members.
DOODLES – Evaluating the Results

The following information has little or no scientific bases. The real purpose of this exercise is more in the conversation surrounding the evaluation of your doodles than in the actual evaluation. In other words, have fun, and don’t take the answers (or yourself) too seriously.

Instructions
Have each member of the group read one of the following subjects. The question at the end of each paragraph can be answered by the reader and then by the other members of the group. Take time for participants to share their personal stories and experiences surrounding each subject.

Confidence
The line at the middle of this block indicates your confidence with the world around you. Items drawn above the line are objects which you have a command over. Items drawn below the line are things which are generally out of your control.

Question: What is one thing that you can do really well?

Imagination
Life is full of circles. We travel, and we return. We learn, and we forget. This block illustrates how you use your imagination. If you draw the face of an animal or person, you show a liking for pets or friends. If you draw an object, such as a bowling ball, you are inventive.

Question: What is your favorite day dream?

Home
This box strongly identifies with your home. If you draw inside the box, your interests are within your home. Not surprisingly, if you draw outside the box, you have interests outside the home. Home symbols such as a fireplace, house, windows, or doors indicate a strong desire for a home atmosphere.

Question: What is your favorite memory of home?

Aspiration
If you make this shape into a mountain range you have high aspirations and goals. You enjoy challenges and solving problems. If you make geometric patterns from this design, you are able to add creativity to solving the challenges in your life.

Question: What is a goal you have set for yourself to accomplish in the next five years? Twenty years?

Decision Making Skills
This block describes your decision making skills. If you draw lines or arrows that intersect or point to the center, this indicates that you are focused on your decision. If you draw non-linear shapes, such as circles or irregular wavy lines, it indicates that you are not overly concerned with making decisions.

Question: What is the biggest decision you have had to make recently?

Plans for the Future
The arch in this block indicates a passage way to your future. If you draw a dark tunnel, this indicates that you may be expecting some stormy times ahead. If you draw a rainbow, rose trellis, or doorway, you are looking forward to your future. If the door is open, opportunity lies ahead. If you happen to draw a refrigerator, you are probably hungry.

Question: What is the one thing you would most like to do in your future?

Personal Motto
What you draw on this sign suggests a personal motto for you. If the sign is positive, you generally have a pleasant outlook on life. If the sign is a warning—watch out! If the sign indicates directions, you are likely ready for a change in your life.

Question: If you could have any bumpersticker on your car, what would it say?

Creativity
If you draw an ice cream cone, the V-neck of a shirt or sweater, or the tip of a pencil you have average creativity. If you used the Vshape as part of a more complex pattern or object, you are a complex thinker, and probably know how to program your VCR without using the manual.

Question: Have you ever created a better way to do something? Have you ever invented something?

The Great Unknown
This block illustrates what is filling up your thoughts these days. Chances are the item in the square is important to you. If the drawing shows a person, it may be a friend or acquaintance that you would like to know better. If it shows an object, it may indicate a new hobby or interest for you.

Question: What is your favorite thing to do when you have lots of time?
Instructions: Draw, sketch, write, doodle or scribble something in each of the nine squares.