The Nature Of Synergy

Program Use:
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Signature Program

Run Time: 6:48

Description:
Stephen R. Covey introduces the concept of synergy with imaginative illustrations from nature.

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Best Practice: Setup
Here are a couple of options:
Write the word SYNERGY on a flip chart. Give participants one minute to write as many words as they can think of that mean the same as the word “synergy.” Have each table group compare their lists and see how many “total matches” (each person in the group has exactly the same word) they come up with. Watch the video for all the paradigms people have about synergy. See debrief #1.

“Has anyone ever played in a jazz band? (If no, try orchestra, marching band, or even rock band!) “In ‘The Nature of Synergy,’ Dr. Covey uses a musical metaphor—a jazz band. Watch for the elements that make up a good jazz band.” See debrief #2.

Best Practice: Debrief
“What were paradigms about synergy from the video? Were any the same as the words you came up with? What are definitions of synergy, according to Dr. Covey?

“What was necessary for a good jazz band sound?”
Possible answers:
- Individual expertise on instruments (Habit 1, each person taking responsibility for practicing their part).
- Listening to the other players (Habit 5).
- Waiting until one person is finished with their solo, then picking it up—not competing for all the attention (Habit 4).
- Allowing people to “solo” then come back together (Habit 6, celebrating diversity).
- Everyone is on the same song, just adding their creative version of it (Habit 2, same end in mind).
- Each person on a different instrument—what would a jazz band be with all saxophones or all drums (synergy)?

Additional Thoughts
Most groups have at least one person with musical experience. While the jazz band is an ideal analogy, parallels can be drawn to orchestras, marching or concert bands, and rock bands. Just use the one that comes from the group in the setup question.

I use this video to introduce Habit 6.