**Hula Hoop Activity**

The following exercise was developed by Marty Kaplan:

**Collective Wisdom:**  
**Activities for Attunement, Discernment and Calibration**   
  
**Name:** Hula Hoop Activity  
**Number of People**: 6-10  
**Materials Required:** Hula Hoop  
**Space Requirements:** Sufficient space for 6-10 people to stand in a circle  
**Time Requirements:**  25 - 35 minutes

* 5 minutes set-up
* 10-15 minutes active problem solving
* 10-15 minutes discussion

Purpose of Activity:

* To heighten awareness about how people in a group need to collaborate in order to accomplish a deceptively simple task

**Outcomes:**

* Insight into communication practices that help and hinder
* Insight into the dynamics of concentration and focus in groups
* Insight into how a “collective” operates under pressure
* Insight into how groups become aware of their interdependence

**Detailed Steps:**

1. Ask people to stand and to form into a circle facing each other
2. Introduce the hula hoop, and tell them that their task will be to lower it to the ground without anyone losing contact with it.
3. Have them point their index fingers and extend their arms at roughly waist level.
4. Place the hula hoop on their fingers and get the group to adjust their finger heights until the hoop is horizontal and everyone’s index finger is touching the stick. Pinching or grabbing the stick is not allowed – it must rest on top of fingers.
5. Remind them that their task is to lower the hoop to the group, and should anyone’s finger lose contact with the hoop, they are to reset the hoop to the starting height and begin anew.
6. Begin and continue until the group either succeeds at the task or is ready to stop. Note the tendency for the hoop to rise as members strive to maintain contact with it.

**Discussion Questions for Inquiry**  
Note: It’s important for your group to maintain an attitude of curiosity while discussing its answers to these questions, and to avoid the natural tendency toward evaluation and judgment; err in the direction of being descriptive.  
  
*Level 1 Inquiry – General Review*

* How’d we do on this task?
* What seemed to help us along?
* What seemed to get in our way?
* What skills did it take to be successful as a group?
* What was the nature of our interdependence?
* What creative solutions were suggested and how were they received?

*Level 2 Inquiry – Personal and Interpersonal Characteristics*

* What roles did people play?
* What did we each learn about ourselves?
* What would an outside observer have seen as the strengths and weaknesses of our group?
* What skills and competencies would we need to develop as a group if we wanted to become truly masterful at this task?
* How might we develop those skills and competencies?

*Level 3 Inquiry – Keeping the Whole System in Mind*

* How was appreciation for what worked in evidence?
* When was it possible to give and receive feedback without it becoming charged with feelings of criticism or blame?
* What behaviors might have indicated higher levels of “sensing together” – i.e. silence, deeper listening, intentional experimenting and reflecting on results, etc.
* How was acting together different than acting alone?