



SEASON 1, EPISODE 8

Collaboration

by David Marquez

DISCUSSION GUIDE

In this episode, David Marquez reflects on how building trust, embracing collaboration, and getting to know his teammates as people helped shape his leadership style in TSA and beyond. From team competitions to officer roles and scientific research, David shares that strong relationships—both formal and informal—are the foundation of great leadership. Whether preparing for a competition or camping at 10,000 feet for a research project, he shows that when teams support one another, they thrive.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Middle School

1. David shares that teamwork is not just about your own role, it is about reading the room and knowing when to step in or step back. What does that mean to you?
2. Humor helped David's team feel more connected and perform better. How can fun and friendship strengthen a team?
3. David compares good teams to lichens—two organisms that help each other thrive. What do you think makes a team strong and successful?
4. Have you ever been part of a group where everyone had a different strength? What did you contribute—and what did you learn from others?
5. David says some of the most meaningful teamwork comes from friendships. How can you build stronger connections with your TSA teammates?

High School

1. David learned that being passionate doesn't always mean people communicate well. What are some ways to improve communication on a driven, high-energy team?
2. He emphasizes that support isn't extra—it is the foundation of a great team. How can you create a culture of care within your TSA chapter or group projects?
3. David describes how his team learned each other's "why." Why is it helpful to know what motivates your teammates?
4. Think about an informal conversation, late-night brainstorm, or unexpected chat that helped you grow as a leader. What made it meaningful?
5. David uses lichens to explain that strong teams allow each person to specialize while supporting each other's weaknesses. What strengths do you bring to a team—and what kind of support do you need?

Optional Extension Activity

Draw a "Lichen Team Map." Create a visual map of your TSA team, group, or class. For each member, list their strengths and how they support others. Use arrows or icons to show how each person helps the team thrive—just like the fungi and algae in a lichen.