

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

(Lencioni)

Study Guide

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This document contains discussion questions for The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni.

The book and this guide will be most relevant to peer teams although many of the learnings apply to any type of team.

After discussing the Fable, it may be helpful to take the Team Assessment. You may take it as a group or take it individually, then merge the results.

On the Model review, this guide offers some Bible verses that you may find helpful. Note that these are not in the book.

On the Role of the Leader, this guide offers a graphical representation of how the leader's roles relate to the Five Dysfunctions of a Team. Note that this graphic is not in the book.

The Fable

Part 1-Underachievement

- What did Kathryn do on her first two weeks on the job that concerned everyone?
- Of the behaviors that Kathryn's staff demonstrated in meetings, what would you find most annoying and why?

Part 2-Lighting the Fire

- Discuss the analogy of a broken leg that Kathryn used to describe her team.
- What key indicator did Kathryn give as her reason for concluding there was lack of trust on the team?
- Think about the members of your team.
 - ▶ Which are introverts and which are extroverts? What do they do that makes you think that?
 - ▶ Which tend to gather data with sensory input and which rely on patterns or hunches?
 - ▶ Which tend to make decisions based on impersonal, analytical factors and which tend to make decisions based on subjective assessment of people factors.
 - ▶ Which prefer to keep options open and which push for closure?
- Discuss why you agree or disagree with Kathryn's statement, "Teamwork begins by building trust and the only way to do that is to overcome our need for invulnerability."
- Carlos stated that people "need to weigh in before they can really buy in." When your team makes decisions, how often do you believe other members on the team listen to and consider your point of view?

- To what degree do members on your team hold one another accountable?
- When is conflict good and when is it bad?

Part 3-Heavy Lifting

- Who do you consider to be your first team (your peer team or the people who report to you)?
 - ▶ Why is it your first team?
 - ▶ In what way does your answer indicate that your peer team needs some development?

Trust is knowing that when a team member pushes you, they are doing it because they care about the team.

- Using the above definition of trust, what is the level of trust on your team?
- After Mikey left and the team was fighting, why did Kathryn tell them the fighting was a good thing?

Part 4-Traction

What factors do you consider when you decide whether to remain on a team? (Think about why Jeff left Kathryn's team.)

Team Assessment

		<i>Usually -----Rarely</i>
1	Team members are passionate and unguarded in their discussion of issues.	3 - 2 - 1
2	Team members call out one another's deficiencies or unproductive behaviors.	3 - 2 - 1
3	Team members know what their peers are working on and how they contribute to the collective good of the team.	3 - 2 - 1
4	Team members quickly and genuinely apologize to one another when they say or do something inappropriate or possibly damaging to the team.	3 - 2 - 1
5	Team members willingly make sacrifices in their departments or areas of expertise for the good of the team.	3 - 2 - 1
6	Team members openly admit their weaknesses and mistakes.	3 - 2 - 1
7	Team meetings are compelling, not boring.	3 - 2 - 1
8	Team members leave meetings confident that their peers are completely committed to the decisions they made even if there was initial disagreement.	3 - 2 - 1
9	Morale is significantly affected by the failure to achieve team goals.	3 - 2 - 1
10	During team meetings, the most important and difficult issues are put on the table to be resolved.	3 - 2 - 1
11	Team members are deeply concerned about the prospect of letting down their peers.	3 - 2 - 1
12	Team members know about one another's personal lives and are comfortable discussing them.	3 - 2 - 1
13	Team members end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.	3 - 2 - 1
14	Team members challenge one another about their plans and approaches.	3 - 2 - 1
15	Team members are slow to seek credit for their own contributions, but quick to point out those of others.	3 - 2 - 1

Scoring: Place the score for each statement in the table below. Total each column.

Stmt 4 =	Stmt 1 =	Stmt 3 =	Stmt 2 =	Stmt 5 =
Stmt 6 =	Stmt 7 =	Stmt 8 =	Stmt 11 =	Stmt 9 =
Stmt 12 =	Stmt 10 =	Stmt 13 =	Stmt 14 =	Stmt 15 =
<i>Total =</i>	<i>Total =</i>	<i>Total =</i>	<i>Total =</i>	<i>Total =</i>
<i>Absence of Trust</i>	<i>Fear of Conflict</i>	<i>Lack of Commitment</i>	<i>Avoidance of Accountability</i>	<i>Inattention to Results</i>

8 or 9 = indicates that the dysfunction is probably not a current problem for your team

6 or 7 = indicates that the dysfunction could be a problem for your team

3 to 5 = indicates that the dysfunction is something your team should address

The Model



Five Dysfunctions of a Team

- Which of the five dysfunctions needs the most attention on your team?
- Which of the five dysfunctions is the biggest challenge for you personally and why?

FYI: summary with related Bible verses.

1. Absence of Trust originates with unwillingness to be vulnerable within the group ([Pro 11:3](#) and [Pro 25:19](#)).
2. Fear of Conflict leads to guarded comments and veiled discussion ([Php 2:4](#), [Eph 4:26](#), [Pro 27:6](#)).
3. Lack of Commitment occurs because team members hesitate to air their opinions and don't know the real opinions of others ([Mat 5:34-37](#), [Ecc 5:5](#), [Col 3:23](#), [Ecc 9:10](#)).
4. Avoidance of Accountability is the result of team members not committing to a clear plan of action ([Pro 27:17](#) and [Luke 17:3](#)).
5. Inattention to Results happens when team members do not hold one another accountable for the collective goals of the team ([2Tim 4:7](#), [Acts 20:24](#), [Php 3:14](#), [Ecc 4:9](#)).

Suggestions for Overcoming Dysfunctions

1. Overcome Absence of Trust
 - ▶ Has our team shared experiences over time?
 - ▶ What can we do to better understand the unique attributes of team members (abilities, temperaments, mindsets)?
2. Overcome Fear of Conflict
 - ▶ What can we do to uncover buried disagreements?
 - ▶ How can we ensure that the team works through issues?
 - ▶ Do we understand how different team members approach conflict?
3. Overcome Lack of Commitment
 - ▶ Are we clear on desired outcomes for the team? What are they?
 - ▶ Have we set clear deadlines?
 - ▶ Have we clarified worst-case scenarios?
4. Overcome Avoidance of Accountability
 - ▶ How often do we publish team objectives and standards?
 - ▶ How often do we conduct reviews of progress on objectives and adherence to standards?
 - ▶ To what degree do we base rewards on team performance rather than individual performance?
5. Overcome Inattention to Results
 - ▶ How successful are we at rewarding only those behaviors that contribute to team results?
 - ▶ Do we tie compensation to team results?

Role of the Leader



1. Leader, are you the first to demonstrate vulnerability on the team? What else can you do to increase the level of trust on your team?
2. Leader, do you model appropriate conflict behavior? What do you do to uncover conflict?
3. Leader, how hard do you push for closure on issues? What else can you do to force clarity and closure?
4. Leader, do you step in when necessary while teaching the team to share responsibility. What else can you do to nurture mutual accountability?
5. Leader, do you set the tone for a focus on team results? What else can you do to help team members put team goals above individual goals?