TRILOGY RESILIENCE 2023

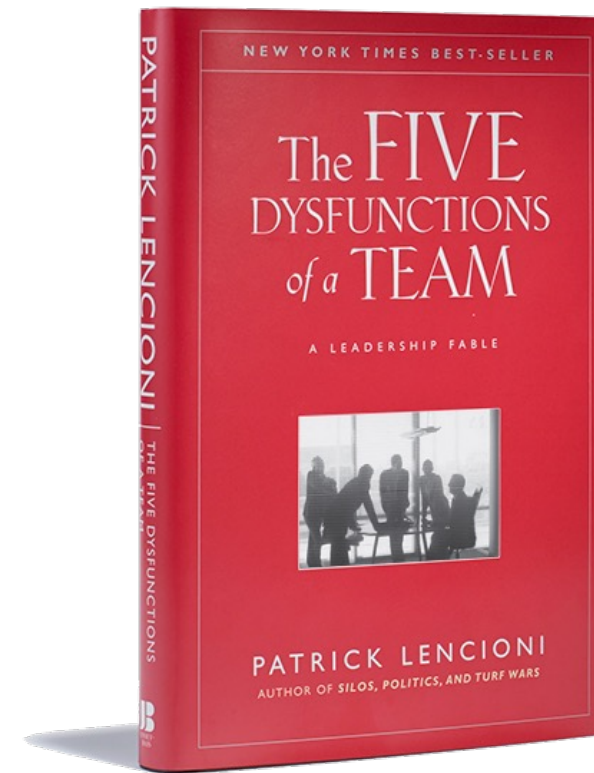5 DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

SUMMARY

With Dr. J

OVERVIEW

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team is the fictional story of a new CEO and the team she is tasked to lead.

Written by Patrick Lencioni, this *New York Times* bestseller takes the reader through a series of issues that CEO Kathryn Peterson encounters as she tries to lead her new team.

Many business leaders have praised this leadership fable because it solves a problem most individuals encounter at some point: how to make dysfunctional teams work better together.

The story introduces a new model for teamwork, the 5 Dysfunctions of a Team Model, which real-life teams can use to understand their issues and how to overcome them to work better together.

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THE 5 DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

SUMMARY

#1 Absence of Trust
Bottom of the pyramid is the absence of trust, when team members are unable to show their weakness, resulting in being reluctant to be vulnerable and being open with one another. Team members will be afraid of admitting their mistakes and will be unwilling to ask for help.

#2 Fear of Conflict
Lack of trust results in fear of conflict which in turn results in team members incapable of engaging in debates or openly voicing their opinions. The team completely avoids conflicts which results in inferior results.

#3 Lack of Commitment
Fear of conflict results in lack of commitment. As team members have not bought into the decisions, they don't feel committed to the same which resulting in an environment where ambiguity prevails.

#4 Avoidance of Accountability
Lack of commitment results in team members not making each other accountable. If one has not bought into the decision, they won't make their peers too accountable.

#5 Inattention to Results
If the team members don't feel accountable, they put their own needs [ego, recognition, career development etc.] ahead of the team goals. This results in team loosing sight and the company suffers.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Overcoming the five dysfunctions of a team.

Concept by Patrick Lencioni.

BiteSize Learning

Symptom	Function	Outcome
Status games →	Focus on results	→ Collective success
Flakiness →	Hold each other accountable	→ High standards
Hesitancy →	Commit as a team	→ Clarity
Resentment →	Resolve conflict	→ Candour
Guardedness →	Build trust	→ Openness

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ABSENCE OF TRUST

Trust is the foundation of teamwork. Teams who lack trust conceal weaknesses and mistakes, are reluctant to ask for help, and jump to conclusions about the intentions of other team members. It is crucial to establish a team culture where individuals feel able to admit to mistakes and weaknesses, and use them as opportunities for development.

Diagnosing an absence of trust:

1. Do my team members feel comfortable admitting mistakes, weaknesses, and fears to each other?

2. Is there a prevailing sense of guardedness among team members, or do they openly share their thoughts and ideas?

3. Have team members had the opportunity to really get to know another, and understand how each other tick?

ABSENCE OF TRUST

Tactics for developing mutual trust among team members:

1.Facilitate team-building exercises: Such activities can help team members to learn more about each other on a personal level, fostering a sense of camaraderie and understanding that can build trust. This might be as straightforward as taking a few minutes to chat socially either side of a meeting, enjoying a lunch together, or it could be a more deliberate activity designed to drive social results.

2.Model vulnerability: You can lead by example by being open about your own mistakes and weaknesses. This can encourage team members to do the same, fostering an environment of honesty and mutual respect.

3.Promote open communication: Encourage team members to share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns openly. Try making an extra effort to include people who are a little more reserved, and recruit more outgoing members to Regular team occasions where everyone has a chance to speak can help create a culture of transparency and trust.

FEAR OF CONFLICT

Teams who lack trust fear conflict and are often reluctant to discuss controversial topics and share perspectives and ideas. These discussions are necessary to enable the team to reach a decision, or agree on how to approach and resolve a problem. Solutions: Identify conflicts within the team and address them openly, encourage debate about key issues.

Questions to diagnose a fear of conflict:

1. Are team discussions and meetings generally passive and uneventful, or dynamic and passionate?

2. Do team members avoid disagreements and debates, or do they actively engage in them, understanding them as a tool for decision-making?

3. Are decisions usually made without contest, or do team members challenge and question decisions to ensure the best outcomes?

4. When problems come to the surface, do they do so at a fairly early opportunity, or have they been going on for a long time?

FEAR OF CONFLICT

Tactics to overcome a fear of conflict:

1.**Establish shared rules for healthy debate:** Make it clear that disagreement is not only acceptable, but encouraged – as long as it's respectful and constructive.

2.**Reward candor:** if someone has a problem or disagreement, thank them for raising the issue, even if they don't up getting their own way. When issues are resolved successfully, consider sharing the story in a more open forum (when appropriate!) as an example of constructive conflict or compromise, rather than an awkward 'secret' to be concealed.

3.**Mediate disagreements:** When conflicts arise, help mediate the situation. This can help ensure that the conflict stays focused on ideas and does not become personal.

LACK OF COMMITMENT

When teams do not engage in open discussion due to a fear of conflict, team members often feel that their ideas and opinions are not valued. They may become detached or even resentful, and fail to commit to the chosen approach or common goal as a result.

Question to diagnose a lack of commitment:

1. Can team members readily describe the team's goals and strategy, or is there ambiguity and hesitation?

2. Do team members clearly understand how their work contributes to the bigger picture?

3. Do team members follow through on their tasks and responsibilities consistently?

LACK OF COMMITMENT

Tactics to overcome a lack of commitment:

1.Involve team members in decision-making: Ensure that everyone feels they have a voice in decisions that affect the team. This can lead to higher levels of commitment.

2.Clearly communicate the team's vision and goals: Regularly remind your team of what they're working towards to keep them committed. Provide the larger context (whether in your business, with your customers, or in your industry) that informs the team's work. Make it clear how team members' work contributes to the bigger picture by illustrating dependencies between the team's tasks.

3.Celebrate achievements and track progress: Recognising and celebrating when the team meets their goals can help reinforce commitment.

AVOIDANCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Team members who have not bought-in to the chosen approach or goal will not feel accountable for achieving it.

The desire to manage personal risk and avoid conflict also prevents team members from holding one another accountable for their contributions. As a result, team members miss deadlines and deliver mediocre work.

Question to diagnose an avoidance of accountability:

1. Do team members expect good work from each other, or do they overlook low standards and errors?

2. Does the team identify as 'high-performing'? Would a new team member pursuing excellence 'stand out' or 'fit in'?

3. Are team members able to 'ask for better' from one another, or are they reluctant?

4. Have I, as a manager, defined clear standards for performance and behavior, and are they consistently applied and upheld?

AVOIDANCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Tactics to overcome an avoidance of accountability:

1.**Set clear expectations:** Make sure each team member understands what is expected of them, both by the manager and one another. Invite the team to explicitly define a shared set of standards (e.g: response time, meeting cadence) and collectively commit to sticking to them.

2.**Be consistent:** Apply rules and standards to everyone equally – if you are always letting certain things slide, the standards are not really 'a standard', and you would be better off 'legalizing' what you're currently overlooking. Scheduled feedback sessions can provide an opportunity for team members to improve their work.

3.**Set team targets and make progress visible:** In some types of team, consider setting shared targets and making performance visible. This encourages everyone to pull their weight – some people don't mind slacking-off on the boss but don't want to let their mates down.

4.**Lead by example:** Hold yourself accountable, and expect the same from your team. This can help foster a culture of responsibility and accountability.

INATTENTION TO RESULTS

Team members who are not held accountable for their contributions are more likely to become distracted and focus on individual goals instead of collective success.

Questions to diagnose inattention to results:

1. Is the team more focused on personal success and recognition, or on achieving collective results?

2. Could I imagine people on this team making a reasonable personal sacrifice if it helped the larger team?

3. Do decisions feel driven by the desire to achieve team goals, or are they just compromises between individual members' interests?

4. Does the team evaluate their progress towards achieving their collective goals and adjust their plans accordingly, or is progress primarily measured in terms of personal performance or workload?

INATTENTION TO RESULTS

Tactics to increase attention to results:

1.Set team goals: Establish clear, measurable goals for the team and regularly check in on progress.

2.Reward team success: Implement a system to recognize and reward the team for achieving their goals.

3.Reiterate the importance of team success: Regularly communicate the value of collective results over individual accomplishments. Recognise and reward people for putting the team goals ahead of their own. Contextualise individual performance through how it impacts the overall success of the team.

FINAL THOUGHTS & INDICATORS

Regularly ask these simple questions to understand the level of performance you are facing:

- Which area is your top concern, in which teams and relationships?

- Do team members openly and readily disclose their opinions?

- Are team meetings compelling and productive?

- Does the team come to decisions quickly and avoid getting bogged down by consensus?

- Do team members confront one another about their shortcomings in a supportive way?

- Do team members compromise their own interests, in a balanced way, for the good of the team?