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HOW TO CREATE UNITY WITHIN A TEAM

"And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand."
Jesus, Mark 3:25 NIV.

"Unity is strength, division is weakness."
Old Swahili proverb.

Every leader strives for, but not all achieve: unity within a team. As the Greek fabulist Aesop once wrote, "United we stand, divided we fall." This is true not just in the military but in every aspect of life, including the workplace. So, how can leaders create unity within their teams?

Step 1: Define the problem
Clearly define the problem your team or department is called to solve. This involves understanding what your team is designed to do, what would go undone if your team ceased to exist, and what needs to be done in the current environment.

Remember, don't describe the idea before you have a clearly defined a problem to solve otherwise you might be offering solutions to questions no one is asking.

Step 2: Offer a solution
Present your vision as a solution to the problem. Remember, your vision is a mental picture of what could be, fueled by a passion that it should be. This is why it is important to first identify the problem you are called to solve, as it will fuel the passion of other people to help solve it.

- **State it simply.** To create a vision that people will get behind, you need to state it simply. The more simple and portable you can state it, the clearer it will be, and the more likely people are to carry it forward. An excellent example is Bono's One Campaign, whose purpose was to make poverty history.

- **Repeat it regularly.** Remember, vision leaks over time. To prevent this, it's important to regularly revisit and reinforce the vision and values to ensure everyone is aligned and working towards the same goals.
- **Celebrate it systematically.** Create a plan weekly, monthly, and yearly. This helps maintain positive momentum, fosters a culture of recognition and appreciation and reinforces the vision.
- **Embrace it personally.** It signifies a shift from passive acknowledgment to active participation in the problem-solving process. When individuals take ownership of a solution, they become more invested in its success, leading to increased motivation and dedication to seeing it through. This personal investment also promotes a sense of accountability, which ensures that individuals remain committed to their actions, even when faced with challenges or obstacles.

Step 3: Explain "why us"

Start by explaining why your team is the best fit for solving the problem. Don't make the mistake of starting with what. As Simon Sinek says, "Always start with why." Then, move on to what you'll be doing to solve the problem, and finally, explain how you'll accomplish the solution.

Step 4: Explain "why now"

Communicate your vision as a solution to a problem that must be addressed immediately. Creating urgency for the vision helps people understand why it's relevant and necessary in the current moment and the potential consequences of waiting. Without a sense of urgency and relevance, people may not feel compelled to engage with the vision or make it a priority.

Unity is crucial for any team's success, but achieving it is easier said than done. By following the four steps we've discussed, leaders can create a united team that works together to accomplish a common goal. Remember, a united team is a strong team, and a divided team is a weak one.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS + ACTION STEPS

1 Do you, or your team, know why its exists, the problem it's personally called to solve and how they fit into the big picture? Do they understand how they move the vision forward? Ask. You might be surprised by the answers.

2 Do you have a plan to celebrate the vision regularly? How can you incorporate this into your team's routine?