

PARALLEL LEADERS

O23: KELLY STICKEL 5 WAYS TO GUARD TEAM CULTURE IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

EPISODE NOTES

When people are faced with change and unpredictability, they can feel anxious, stressed, and demotivated, just when teams may be required to be their most resilient.

A healthy team culture can provide the foundation for adapting and pivoting quickly to changing circumstances and adversity, enabling teams to collaborate effectively and make decisions more efficiently. It fosters a sense of camaraderie and support, helping team members overcome challenges and setbacks with greater ease as team members feel a sense of continuity and belonging, feeling more grounded and focused.

► ESTABLISH A STRONG VISION

Having a strong vision is vital to guiding your culture in the right direction.

- 1. A clear vision starts with a problem to solve.** Without a problem to solve, there can be no passion to solve it.
- 2. A common problem to solve can create unity.**
- 3. Unity Shapes healthy culture.**
Culture is simply defined as the way we do things around here, and it can either happen by default or by design.
- 4. A healthy culture must be guarded.**
A healthy culture must be guarded with intentionality and effort.

A clear vision provides the foundation for a strong culture and helps to guide the actions and behaviors of the team.

► GUARDING YOUR CULTURE

1. Increase trust and transparency

Trust is essential for teams to work effectively, and it's the glue that holds them together. To build trust, be honest about your team's challenges and celebrate successes. Don't ignore problems or sweep them under the rug. Admit to struggles and invite your team to be part of the solution. When you explain the reasons behind your decisions, you build transparency and earn trust.

2. Quadruple communication from leadership by sharing your mission, values, and how each team member is contributing to the organization's success.

Over-communication is necessary in such situations. This helps maintain a sense of team spirit and prevent silos from forming. Don't rely on just one platform, but utilize multiple ways to communicate regularly and clearly.

3. Recognize team members for living the values and celebrate their successes.

It's easy to catch people doing something wrong, but what gets rewarded get repeated. So catch people doing something right and find a way to celebrate it, both organizationally and from peers.

4. Create opportunities for more social connection.

In times of uncertainty, teams tend to pull back from social connections, but what they need is more fun and both formal and informal activities to create deeper relationships, more unity, and guard team culture.

5. Care about people as human beings.

While this may seem intuitive, it can be difficult for leaders, and especially task oriented people, to shift their focus from tasks to people. We can get so focused on solving problems that we forget the people working beside us have needs, fears, and uncertainties. To care for them, we must get to know them as whole persons, not just contributors to the task at hand.

Leaders must actively support volunteers' well-being and pay attention to their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Recognizing that some people need to be told to take time off while others need encouragement to come in. If we fail to care for our volunteers, we risk burning them out and losing valuable team members.

By implementing these five steps, you can guard your team culture and keep it strong in the face of uncertainty, helping your team navigate uncertainty successfully, maintain their productivity, and remain motivated to achieve their goals.



RESOURCES + LINKS

- [Podcast: Maximizing Momentum \(Building trust\)](#)
- [Book: Leadership in Turbulent Times by Doris Goodwin](#)
- [Podcast: How to Identify and Design a Healthy Culture](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS + ACTION STEPS

1

How can you balance the need to complete tasks and achieve goals with the need to care for and support the people you work with?

2

What are some steps can you take to ensure that everyone on your team feels valued, cared for, and supported?

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