

The Emotionally Intelligent Team: Beyond the 5 Dysfunctions

- Marcia Hughes, President, Collaborative Growth

Teams do not go physically flat, they go mentally stale. - Vincent Lombardi

Lombardi is on the right path, teams get stuck in ruts, follow the same way and lose their creativity. An even bigger challenge happens when they go emotionally haywire. This is the 5th article in a series giving ideas on how to be a powerfully functioning team. Using the guidance Patrick Lencioni has articulated in *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, we are exploring how teams can function at the star performer level. As you may recall, the 5 dysfunctions he identified are: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results.

"Inattention to results" is the 5th dysfunction, and is described as acting from a personal, ego focus instead of a collective, team focus. From the star performing team perspective the 5th capability is "focusing on the good of the whole." It's excelling beyond an individual focus on yourself and acting instead to ensure the group's success. The transition is from "ME" to "US." Star Performing teams have learned the math: $1 + 1 = 3$ or 4 or 5. We multiply our capabilities when our focus is on the success of the whole instead of our own individual success. Tapping into multiple capabilities and strengths delivers powerful synergistic results.

Some say it takes a quantum leap to jump from the habitual sense of looking out for ourself - our success, our notoriety, our pay - to begin looking at the collective needs and benefits. I'm not sure, quantum sounds hard, and I find that when a team has the key ingredients they recognize the powerful potential and shift their behavior. The recipe for becoming a star performing team?

- A dose of good understanding – recognizing the importance of focusing on the success of the team, not just "my" success;
- A dose of learning the thinking and behavioral strategies that help us practice what we preach followed by consistent practice and fine tuning;
- A good leader and a good teacher; and
- Continuous praise or recognition of the power of the "Team Way." We repeat what we pay attention to and that which feels good. So it takes deliberate attention to the Team Way to accomplish the desired results.

Star performing teams can be recognized by their high level of emotionally intelligent behavior that will show through the way they pay attention to the team and to the organization as a whole. The key EQ skills needed are the dynamic trio of Interpersonal Relationships, Empathy and Social Responsibility. Exercises to expand these and other EQ skills can be found in our new book, *Emotional Intelligence in Action*.

You will know you're a part of a star performing team when as a group you are focused on what's best for the team, you will all practice the skills required to not fall back into the other dysfunctions. Best of all you will have an abiding sense of well being even when you are faced with busyness and challenges that come your way.