

[The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, Enhanced Edition: A Leadership Fable \(J-B Lencioni Series\)](#) by

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Last annotated on November 4, 2016

absence of trust.[Read more at location 593](#)

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“Trust is the foundation of real teamwork. And so the first dysfunction is a failure on the part of team members to understand and open up to one another.[Read more at location 596](#)

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“They are unafraid to air their dirty laundry. They admit their mistakes, their weaknesses, and their concerns without fear of reprisal.”[Read more at location 601](#)

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every effective team I've ever observed had a substantial level of debate.[Read more at location 627](#)

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you don't agree on most things, and yet you don't seem willing to admit that you have concerns.[Read more at location 645](#)

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No matter how good an individual on the team might be feeling about his or her situation, if the team loses, everyone loses.” Kathryn[Read more at location 911](#)

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“The key, of course, is to define our goals, our results, in a way that is simple enough to grasp easily, and specific enough to be actionable.[Read more at location 986](#)

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Because of her consistent behavior over the past day and a half, and the confidence with which Kathryn made her remark, most of her staff seemed convinced that she was sincere.[Read more at location 1105](#)

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“Politics is when people choose their words and actions based on how they want others to react rather than based on what they really think.” The room was silent.[Read more at location 1110](#)

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When people don't unload their opinions and feel like they've been listened to, they won't really get on board.” “They do if you make them,” countered Nick. “I'm guessing your husband doesn't let his players vote on whether they want to run wind-sprints.” Kathryn welcomed this kind of challenge. “No, he doesn't. But he'd let them make a case why they think they shouldn't. And if he disagreed with them, which in that situation I'm sure he would, he'd tell them why and then send them off running.” “So this isn't a consensus thing.” Jan's statement was really a question. “Heavens no,” insisted Kathryn, sounding like a school teacher again. “Consensus is horrible. I mean, if everyone really agrees on something and consensus comes about quickly and naturally, well that's terrific. But that isn't how it usually works, and so consensus becomes an attempt to please everyone.”[Read more at location 1169](#)

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“Once we achieve clarity and buy-in, it is then that we have to hold each other accountable for what we sign up to do, for high standards of performance and behavior. And as simple as that sounds, most executives hate to do it, especially when it comes to a peer’s behavior, because they want to avoid interpersonal discomfort.”[Read more at location 1211](#)

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I am going to be pretty intolerant of behavior that demonstrates an absence of trust, or a focus on individual ego. I will be encouraging conflict, driving for clear commitments, and expecting all of you to hold each other accountable. I will be calling out bad behavior when I see it, and I’d like to see you doing the same. We don’t have time to waste.”[Read more at location 1415](#)

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Trust is knowing that when a team member does push you, they’re doing it because they care about the team.”[Read more at location 1852](#)

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“Let me tell you a quick story about myself. One that I’m not too proud of.”[Read more at location 2030](#)

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Teams that lack trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. Instead, they resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments.[Read more at location 2270](#)

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Without having aired their opinions in the course of passionate and open debate, team members rarely, if ever, buy in and commit to decisions, though they may feign agreement during meetings.[Read more at location 2273](#)

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imagine how members of truly cohesive teams behave: They trust one another. They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas. They commit to decisions and plans of action. They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans. They focus on the achievement of collective results.[Read more at location 2282](#)

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Teams that lack trust waste inordinate amounts of time and energy managing their behaviors and interactions within the group. They tend to dread team meetings, and are reluctant to take risks in asking for or offering assistance to others.[Read more at location 2368](#)

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Questions need not be overly sensitive in nature and might include the following: number of siblings, hometown, unique challenges of childhood, favorite hobbies, first job, and worst job.[Read more at location 2393](#)

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Great teams understand the danger of seeking consensus, and find ways to achieve buy-in even when complete agreement is impossible.[Read more at location 2512](#)

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Great teams ensure that everyone's ideas are genuinely considered, which then creates a willingness to rally around whatever decision is ultimately made by the group. And when that is not possible due to an impasse, the leader of the team is allowed to make the call.[Read more at location 2514](#)

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Great teams also pride themselves on being able to unite behind decisions and commit to clear courses of action even when there is little assurance about whether the decision is correct. That's because they understand the old military axiom that a decision is better than no decision.[Read more at location 2517](#)

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conflict underlies the willingness to commit without perfect information.[Read more at location 2523](#)

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teams have all the information they need, but it resides within the hearts and minds of the team itself and must be extracted through unfiltered debate.[Read more at location 2524](#)

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More than any policy or system, there is nothing like the fear of letting down respected teammates that motivates people to improve their performance.[Read more at location 2591](#)

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avoided, it is important to note that many teams are simply not results focused. They do not live and breathe in order to achieve meaningful objectives, but rather merely to exist or survive.[Read more at location 2651](#)

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Teams that are willing to commit publicly to specific results are more likely to work with a passionate, even desperate desire to achieve those results. Teams that say, "We'll do our best," are subtly, if not purposefully, preparing themselves for failure.[Read more at location 2670](#)

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Success is not a matter of mastering subtle, sophisticated theory, but rather of embracing common sense with uncommon levels of discipline and persistence.[Read more at location 2684](#)

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