

MENTOR GUIDE

MODULE 8: BUILDING A HEALTHY TEAM

INTRODUCTION

In this module, **Melanie Forsythe-Lee** teaches how a leader can intentionally build a healthy team through clear communication and expectations.



These two videos will help you answer two central questions:

1. What are the necessary components of a healthy team culture?
2. And how can I intentionally build a healthy team?

SESSION 1: BUILDING A HEALTHY TEAM

PART 1

Video Notes

- 1. Every healthy team needs a leader.** A leader is an overseer who sets the tone and takes responsibility for a team.
- 2. A team leader needs to articulate and share the “why” of the team.**
The truth is that a team needs a “why” that is deeper than the “imminent now” knee-jerk response to a felt need. The leader needs to discern, articulate, and share the “why” with the people they recruit onto their team.
- 3. A leader must establish the team's “who.”** The most effective way for a leader to build a team is to recruit people using the team’s “why.” The leader is the number one selling point of the team and their job is to get out and pitch their vision.
- 4. A leader must clearly communicate the team's “how.”** Before you start recruiting your team, define the practicalities of being a successful member.
- 5. A leader needs to communicate the “what” of the team clearly.** Clarity is a gift to the people you are leading. Specifically, you must be able to communicate what they need to be and do in order to fill their role.

SESSION 1: BUILDING A HEALTHY TEAM

PART 1

Participant Reflection Questions

After watching the video, participants will answer or journal the following questions for reflection. Feel free to utilize these questions for discussion at your next Coaching Session.

1. Think about the team that you are a part of in your church. Is the “why” communicated and understood well among your team members? Explain your answer.
2. Describe the “who” of your team. As a team member or leader, do you consider it your responsibility to personally recruit others to join your team? If so, how do you go about doing that? If not, why not, and who do you think is responsible for recruiting new team members?
3. When you consider your team's "how," is this clearly defined? For example, is it clear how to sign up for the team, how many times to meet, how the team communicates, etc.?

If so, how has that helped you to lead or participate in your team?

If not, how has that impacted your experience on the team?

4. When you think about how leaders communicate the “what” of the team(s) you lead or participate in, how would you rate the communication on a scale from 1 to 10(1 = very poor; 10 = excellent)? Why did you give your team that rating? What would you change if you could?

SESSION 2: BUILDING A HEALTHY TEAM

PART 2

Video Notes

1. Culture = the soul of your team. The team leader creates the culture.

Your team will flourish when you are in a healthy place inside yourself, emotionally and spiritually. Conversely, your capacity to receive feedback is limited when you hide a part of your life from others or if you are unable to be honest about your struggles and situations that feel out of control. This can lead to feeling like a failure, being short-tempered, feeling defensive, and negative thoughts.

2. Leaders can take intentional steps to create a healthy team culture. In a healthy culture, everyone on the team feels comfortable communicating with one another and with the leader. To do this, a leader must:

- *Develop self-awareness.* Be aware of your needs and biases and be brutally aware of your motivations.
- *Encourage transparency and honesty.* Your team will only be as transparent and honest with you as you are with them.
- *Expresses the importance of every role.* Some form of hierarchy will likely exist for accountability, but a healthy team values all perspectives.
- *Model grace.* Make your team the most gracious environment on earth.
- *Create a feedback-friendly environment.* You are responsible for your reactions, and how you respond matters.
- *Model co-discernment.* You DO NOT have to make all of the decisions.
- *Ask, "What voices are we missing?"* This question sets your team on mission and allows them to invite others who are not in the room to give perspective.
- *Make time for fun!* Shared experience is what bonds a team together.

3. The leader sets the culture, but it should quickly spread to the team.

You will know this is happening when your team starts to live out and reinforce the culture that you, as a leader, are trying to cultivate.

SESSION 2: BUILDING A HEALTHY TEAM PART 2

Reflection Questions

1. Based on Melanie's teaching, how healthy is the culture of the team you are a part of? How does it feel to be a part of your team? What is the emotional environment of your team? How are people treated? Are feedback and questions welcomed or discouraged?
2. A leader's emotional and spiritual health can directly impact the team's health. Think of a time when you were led by someone you considered emotionally and spiritually healthy. What was that experience like for you?

Now, think of a time when you were led by someone who was not emotionally and spiritually healthy. What was that experience like for you? If you don't have this experience, what do you imagine it would have been like to be led by a person like this?

3. Melanie described eight keys that help create a healthy team culture. Which of these areas is most difficult for you as a leader? Explain your answer.

ACTIVATION ASSIGNMENT

Put This Into Practice

This module was all about how to build a healthy team culture. As you begin this time of reflection, take a few minutes to pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what He sees, and take an honest look at the health of your leadership and your team. Commit to letting Him correct you, encourage you, and challenge you.

Then, answer the following questions.

What is the group/team you currently serve or lead?

What is your current involvement in this group or team?

- **Member**
- **Apprenticing for Leadership**
- **Leader**
- **Other**

To the best of your ability, describe:

- **The “why” of this team or group.** Could other members of this group/team clearly articulate the “why?”
- **Describe the “who” of this team or group.** Who can be involved, and how do new people join? Could other members of this group/team clearly articulate the “who?”
- **Describe the “how” of this team or group.** How do people sign up? Is there training required? How many times do we need to meet? How does the team communicate? Could other members of this group/team clearly articulate the “how?”

Whether or not you are currently leading, take some time to evaluate yourself in the areas Melanie listed as crucial to building a healthy team culture. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10: 1: Needs lots of improvement; 10: Hitting it out of the park.

- Develop self-awareness. Be aware of your needs and biases, and be brutally aware of your motivations.
- Encourage transparency and honesty. Your team will only be as transparent and honest with you as you are with them.
- Expresses the importance of every role. Some form of hierarchy will always exist for accountability, but a healthy team values all perspectives.
- Model grace. Make your team the most gracious environment on earth.
- Create a feedback-friendly environment. You are responsible for your reactions, and how you respond matters.
- Model co-discernment. You DO NOT have to make all of the decisions.
- Ask, “What voices are we missing?” This question sets your team on mission and allows them to invite others who are not in the room to give perspective.
- Make time for fun! Shared experience is what bonds a team together.

What is your vision for your team? Take some time to think it through, and write down what you think might help the culture of your ministry team to grow. What would it look like for your team to flourish?

What action steps do you need to take today to start working towards this vision of a flourishing team?

MODULE 8: COACHING CONVERSATION

This final module focuses on growing healthy teams through developing a healthy team culture. We think this gathering is a good opportunity to talk together about the church teams you are each involved in - whether as formal leaders or not - and to center your discussion around how you can use what you have learned about yourself and your leadership throughout VLE: Foundations 1 to strengthen the culture of your teams.

Consider this meeting an opportunity to dream together about the flourishing of your church.

On a whiteboard, large paper, or some other shared space, begin by asking everyone to write as many words or phrases as possible to describe the best aspects of your church's leadership culture. Give them 5 minutes to do so. Duplication is ok.

Then, together, identify the top 5-10 qualities that make your church's leadership culture distinctively strong. One way to do this is to look for duplicates and similarities—words or phrases that came from multiple people.

Then, if applicable, break everyone up into groups based on the area of the church where they lead/serve most frequently (if your group is too small to work in pairs, you could either do this individually OR pick one particular ministry that more than one participant is involved in and only focus on that area).

Ensure each group has a list of the areas Melanie listed as essential to building team culture. Then, as a group, answer this question: “How does the culture of our team contribute positively to the overall leadership culture of the church?” Encourage groups or individuals to be as specific as possible.

Next, have the individual groups identify which item or items from Melanie's list of essentials are most significant to this group's contribution to the church's leadership culture.

After 10 or 15 minutes, bring the groups back together (if applicable) to share what they discussed with the larger group.

Now, shift the conversation to how you would like to strengthen your church's leadership culture based on what you have learned so far in VLE, and how you are growing as individual leaders.

How can you, as individuals and as a leadership group, strengthen your church's leadership culture over the next 3 months? 6 months? 1 year? What would you most like to do?

Close your time together in prayer - praying for your church's leaders and for where God is leading you all.

MENTOR SESSION GUIDE

The real transformation and development of VLE: Foundations will happen in the context of the time you are spending with this group, collectively and individually. So press into the relational aspect more than anything. Use this time to observe your participants and pay attention to areas of need, growth, challenge, and ministry.

Connection time (10 minutes). The relationships formed among VLE participants are central to the process. Take a couple of minutes for participants to talk about their week, initial thoughts on the material covered, etc. This is a great opportunity to connect with participants.

Celebration time (10 minutes). Ask the group if they have seen God do something in their lives or ministry that they'd like to share. This is an opportunity for you to affirm and reinforce the good growth happening in your group.

Coaching Conversation (40 minutes). Use this time to share some of your own experiences in or leading teams. These are great ways to help your participants see real-life examples of healthy or unhealthy teams. Walk through key discussion and activation questions from the module to dive into deeper understanding of the topic.

Care & Prayer / Ministry Time (25 minutes). This is arguably the most important thing you can do in these sessions, by providing space for the work of the Holy Spirit among us. You could have a "Hot Seat" in the center and have the group pray for someone, you could have groups of 2 or 3 split up and pray for each other, or you can pray collectively for the group.

Communication time (5 minutes). This is the time to highlight important events, share church announcements, introduce the next module topic, and so forth.