

# 4 DYNAMICS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEAMS



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Every team, just like every individual, is different. Teams have nuances, personalities, dimensions, shadows, bright spots, histories, pasts, and futures. Teams come in all shapes and sizes. There are four important dynamics that impact a team's ability to thrive. **Building an effective team can be elusive, but when these four dynamics are present, your organization can soar to new heights and achieve amazing things together.**

## DYNAMIC

1

**CENTERED  
ON A  
UNIFYING  
PURPOSE**

Successful teams start by defining the core underlying purpose of the team itself. This might seem obvious, but many teams simply don't take the time to focus on this primary dynamic. In *The Five Most Important Questions*, Peter Drucker says that the first question all organizations (and teams) must consider is:

**“Why do we exist?”**

When a team is centered on a unifying purpose, members begin to see themselves as a part of something larger than themselves, part of something greater, part of a cause.

**When we see ourselves within this larger context, we have the opportunity to step back and consider a few things:**

- What role do I play in this larger enterprise?
- What roles do my teammates play?
- What gifts and talents can we employ individually and collectively toward this greater effort?
- What might we need to learn to advance our unified purpose even further?

**At the end of the day, why we are here really does matter.**

# DYNAMIC

2

## CONNECTED THROUGH RELATIONSHIP

The ability of a team to perform as a unit (especially those at the top of an organizational system, such as a board of directors or executive team) is directly correlated to the health of the relationships between team members.

The higher level of relationship, the higher functioning the team. The lower level of relationship, the lower functioning the team.

### **This relational dynamic has many factors in play:**

- Our commitment to being open and transparent
- Our willingness to communicate
- Our readiness to be vulnerable come quickly to mind

“All for one and one for all” actually works. Thank you, d’Artagnan.

# DYNAMIC

3

## AGREED ON AND ACCOUNTABLE FOR DESIRED OUTCOMES

This team dynamic is *two for the price of one*. Notice the two verbs being used: *agreed and accountable*.

It’s one thing to agree on a desired outcome, such as “we want to have more open and honest conversations as a team.” It’s an entirely different thing when a team is agreed on and accountable for a shared outcome: “We want to have more open and honest conversations as a team, and we commit to speaking the truth in love and listening when others do the same.” Being **agreed on and accountable for** something means that we each do our part and are willing to hold each other accountable if we miss the mark. No questions asked.

### **In *Braving the Wilderness*, Brené Brown affirms that incivility can:**

- Fracture a team
- Destroy collaboration
- Splinter members’ sense of psychological safety
- Hamper team effectiveness

All of which are essential in achieving a shared purpose and staying connected through relationship.

In his book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Patrick Lencioni describes five relational challenges that teams can suffer from time to time.

### **Being agreed on and accountable for a shared outcome can help you deal with two of Lencioni’s dysfunctions:**

- Avoidance of accountability
- Inattention to results

When we are able to build consensus and mutually agree upon an outcome, it becomes easier to be held accountable and hold others accountable to what we seek to achieve together.

# DYNAMIC

4

## ALIGNED ON WHEN AND HOW TO PROCEED

This is another two-for-one, and achieving this dynamic can only happen when the other three are in place. Perhaps the most important word in this dynamic is the first word: **aligned**.

### When working as a team, it is essential to be aligned on:

- Purpose
- Relationship
- Outcome
- Timing
- Method

In Daniel H. Pink's bestselling book *When*, the reader gets a glimpse into the scientific nature of timing. He challenges our notion that now is the best timeframe for getting something done. When we're doing something that matters, waiting and being patient before we proceed might actually help.

Process consultants believe that how we do something matters a great deal. This is one reason why it is the last step in the process of inquiry, even if how we proceed is listening or observing for what is emerging before we choose to act (This matches Maria Montessori's educational principle "Follow the Child" quite nicely).

**Pausing, listening, and observing can bring clarity, build understanding, and embed trust within your team, which is crucial to achieving a common purpose.**

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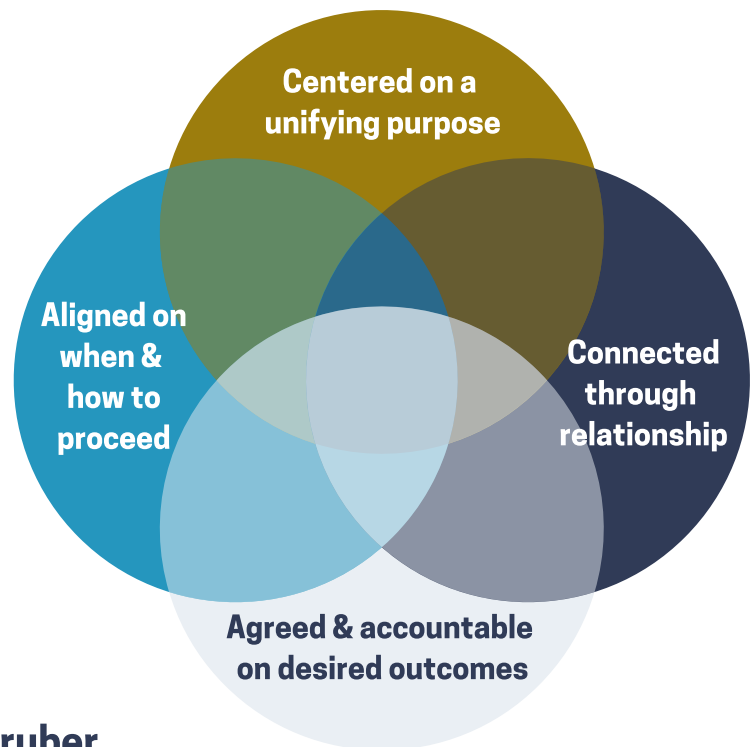
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