

# The Leader as a Coach: Building an Effective Team

## How to Enlist and Empower the Right People for the Task

*And the Lord said, "Behold they are one people, and they all have the same language... And now nothing which they purpose to do shall be impossible for them." (Genesis 11:6)*

BIBLICAL  
BASIS

As a leader, you will face the challenge of finding the right people for your team, communicating your vision, and developing them into a cohesive team; a team that not only possesses great individual talents, but also they work well together. Wow. It might make you tired just thinking about it. Let's begin by looking at some principles of teamwork from Dr. Maxwell's book, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork*. We believe these principles are both universal and timeless:

1. The Law of \_\_\_\_\_: One is too small a number to achieve God's purposes.
2. The Law of the \_\_\_\_\_: The goal is more important than the role.
3. The Law of the \_\_\_\_\_: All team members have a place where they add the most value.
4. The Law of the \_\_\_\_\_: Vision gives team members direction and confidence.
5. The Law of the \_\_\_\_\_: Rotten attitudes can ruin a good team.
6. The Law of \_\_\_\_\_: Interaction fuels action.
7. The Law of the \_\_\_\_\_: The strength of the team is impacted by its weakest link.

Teams are what God uses to accomplish His purposes. He usually calls an individual to a vision, then that individual realizes the vision is bigger than he is. Eventually, this individual recognizes he must become a leader because other people are needed to reach the goal. The vision is God-sized, not human-sized! Finally, the leader recognizes he must develop this group of people into a team that works well together. There is a difference between a group and a team.

### Genesis 11:6

In Genesis 11:6, God speaks of the team of people who were building the Tower of Babel. These people were acting independently from God, accomplishing their own goals, not the Lord's. However, it is a great illustration of the power of teamwork. Even God thought so! What do we learn from them about teamwork?

1. They shared a \_\_\_\_\_.  
*"Behold, they are one people..."* A common identity means we experience shared values.
2. They shared a \_\_\_\_\_.  
*"...they all have the same language."* A common language means we communicate well.
3. They shared a \_\_\_\_\_.  
*"...nothing shall be impossible for them."* A common goal means we share vision/purpose.

**Discussion:** Does your team share these three characteristics?

## Recruiting and Enlisting Team Members

Your first step in team building is to find the right people. In fact, the most important part of any organization is how the staff is put together. Great athletic coaches know they must have talent to win games. Therefore, they take a major role in hiring team members. Winning is not an accident.

Small organizations such as churches often make the mistake of thinking they can get by with inferior team members (both staff and volunteers) because they are small. The opposite is true. In a corporation of one hundred employees, if one is inferior, the loss is only one percent. But if a church has a leadership team of two and one is inferior, the loss is fifty percent!

## When Choosing Team Members

Look for people with the following qualities. (In English this list spells GIFTS). Try to find team members who are:

\_\_\_\_\_ – They have abilities in the areas where you have needs.

\_\_\_\_\_ – They are leaders who have influence in their circles.

\_\_\_\_\_ – They get results and do what it takes to get the job done.

\_\_\_\_\_ – They have integrity. It's difficult to train for character.

\_\_\_\_\_ – They have a generous, servant's heart.

### EXAMINE THE WORD

**Bible Example:** Jesus had definite expectations of His disciples when He chose them. He prayed all night; then He specifically chose twelve men who turned out to be faithful and available. They showed initiative, they were teachable and they were hungry. He didn't leave the selection of His team to chance! Your expectations of each team member should be clear in their minds. Here are some expectations you might communicate to each person you add to the team:

1. Attitude – You expect them to keep a positive attitude on the job.
2. Growth – You expect them to continue growing as a person and as a leader.
3. Relationships – You expect them to work with others as a team.
4. Mentoring – You expect them to be developing other leaders.

## Sharing Your Vision with Team Members

Once you have your team in place, you will want to communicate the God-given vision this team will be pursuing. Remember, team members will catch your vision at different rates. Some will understand it and embrace it quickly. Others may need to hear it several times. Author Howard Gardner teaches us that people have preferences as to how they capture a vision. You will want to be creative in how you cast the vision. Some people are...

1. \_\_\_\_\_ – They catch the vision by hearing a leader describe it verbally.

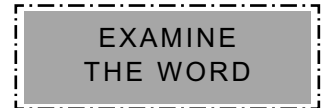
**Application:** You will want to teach and preach about the vision.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ – They catch the vision through pictures and images.

**Application:** You may want to have some visual aids to help show them the future vision.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ – They catch the vision by receiving statistics and facts about it.  
**Application:** You will want to communicate the facts and figures surrounding the vision.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ – They catch the vision by hearing a song on the theme of the vision.  
**Application:** You might ask a team member to write an inspirational song that captures the idea.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ – They catch the vision in the midst of small group interaction.  
**Application:** You will want to host small discussion groups on the vision.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ – They catch the vision through personal thinking and reflecting time.  
**Application:** You may want to create a devotional guide to allow a person to reflect on the vision.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ – They catch the vision kinesthetically through experiences and movement.  
**Application:** You may want to host an experience such as walking on the new property.

**Bible Examples:** Nehemiah first communicated his vision to rebuild Jerusalem's walls to a group of men in Nehemiah 2:16-18. They fulfilled that dream in a record 52 days! From this story, however, we learn that the team got discouraged about halfway through the project. So, Nehemiah gathered them together – and communicated the vision again. Nehemiah teaches us that people need to continue hearing the vision even as they work toward its fulfillment. (The wall builders needed to hear it every 26 days – so it might be good to remind your people of the vision at least once a month.)



What qualities did Jonathan and David possess that created such a powerful partnership? We examined this important truth in an earlier *Million Leaders Mandate* lesson. A quick review of I Samuel 20 reminds us of the ingredients that create an effective partnership.

### Removing and Replacing Team Members

This is one of the most difficult tasks for a Christian leader. No one enjoys telling someone else they are failing to do their job. Keep in mind, you may simply need to consider finding a better position for a failing team member. Maybe you simply have the right person in the wrong place. However, from time to time, every leader makes a mistake and enlists the wrong person. They simply don't fit on the team.

#### Questions to Ask Before Removing a Team Member:

1. **Has the project or the ministry outgrown the person or vice-versa?**  
Do they no longer fit the position because they have grown, or because they can't keep up?
2. **Who believes this team member needs to be replaced?**  
If you are the only one who thinks this person has failed, take caution. Get confirmation.
3. **What will be the basis of his / her dismissal?**  
Areas where you have good grounds to dismiss a team member are:
 

a. Failed character	c. Bad attitude
b. Relational problems	d. Incompetence

**CHECK YOUR  
HEART****How to Remove a Team Member****1. Do it \_\_\_\_\_.**

A personal encounter allows you to communicate your heart. It also communicates they are important. To simply write a letter or note is too cruel. The news should be delivered promptly and directly by the leader who is taking action, so rumors don't spread to the team member before the leader can get to them.

**2. Do it \_\_\_\_\_, without bitterness or malice.**

When the dismissal is uttered, the team member may become angry or defensive. Be gentle. Remember, a "soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). Don't communicate any bitterness or malice, but be honest. Gentleness doesn't require deception. Proverbs 27:6 says, "faithful are the wounds of a friend." Details on the decision may be discussed at a second meeting after the emotional grief has dissipated.

**3. End their \_\_\_\_\_ quickly.**

The longer a team member remains in the wrong position, the lower the productivity, and often the more they depress others around them. If possible replace them quickly, even if it is temporary. Allow them and your organization to make progress toward the next step.

**4. Be \_\_\_\_\_.**

Leaders must be of "one mind" as to when and why they remove a team member. Lead your organization by principles that the team can align themselves with and clearly understand.

**5. Be \_\_\_\_\_.**

All the facts do not need to be divulged to those whose interest is slander or gossip. For instance, sharing the details of a moral failure may serve to worsen the situation instead of strengthen it. Choose your words cautiously and look out for the future ministry of the person you remove.

**6. Help the person find their \_\_\_\_\_ step.**

Although you may have no moral obligation to help the team member find their next position, be on the look out for an opportunity that fits them. It is always great when you can offer a solution to the challenge you've just created for them. Help them find a place that fits their gifts and heart.

**7. Anticipate the \_\_\_\_\_.**

When the team member leaves, anticipate where he will go and what he will say. For the team that remains, anticipate who will be hurt, how the change will affect them, and the best replacement for the lost team member. Let your team know you anticipate these difficulties when you make such decisions.

**Building Your Team**

Team building is an important part of a leader's job. Once you have the right team members, and they know the vision they are pursuing, you must move the members from a "group" to a "team."

Evaluate how well you experience each of the following characteristics of team building. Give yourself a score between 1 and 5 (1 means poor and 5 means excellent).

<b>Characteristics of Good Team Building:</b>	<b>Score</b>
1. Team members have a high level of interdependence among themselves.	_____
2. The team leader has good people skills and is committed to a team approach.	_____
3. Each team member is willing to contribute.	_____
4. The team develops a relaxed climate for communication.	_____
5. Team members develop mutual trust.	_____
6. They are prepared to take risks.	_____
7. The team is clear about goals and establishes specific targets.	_____
8. Team members' roles are defined.	_____
9. They know how to evaluate mistakes without making personal attacks.	_____
10. The team has the capacity to create new ideas.	_____

**ASSESSMENT:** Which of the four sections of this lesson must you work on first?

**ACTION  
PLAN**

**APPLICATION:** What is one step you can take to enlist and empower your team?