



SHOW NOTES

SEASON 2 EPISODE 9: LEADING A DIVIDED TEAM

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Society has become increasingly polarized in recent years, especially since the advent of social media. Where there used to be lots of neutral ground, people are putting their beliefs front and center, and it's leading to more and more division in our communities. So how do we as leaders handle this in the workplace? How do we lead teams of people who fall on polar ends of a particular issue?

First, we have to manage ourselves. If we are not modeling the way, then we are part of the problem. As leaders, many of us have significant influence. If we are displaying anger and other erratic emotional behavior, then we are undermining our own ability to lead others toward unity. Instead, we should listen, empathize, ask questions, smile, and be willing to validate a differing point of view. Validating doesn't mean we have to agree, it is simply saying that we hear the other person and we accept that they have a different viewpoint.

So then, how do we bring unity to a divided team?

1. Focus on the common ground – what do we agree on?
2. Develop your WHY? Why are we doing this as a team?
3. Explain why again, and again, and again. When tensions rise, you'll need to remind everyone to focus on the "why" and not on what divides us.
4. If necessary, develop rules of engagement (for example, no provocative or suggestive t-shirts).
5. Show respect for different viewpoints. Model tolerance by seeking to understand.
6. Be firm on the inside (hold to your beliefs), but be soft on the outside (smile, listen). "A soft answer turns away wrath."
7. Don't take it personally. Don't hold a grudge.