

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

How to Avoid the Fundamental Attribution Error - Episode 205

3 Signs That Your Team Is Stuck

A lot of stuck churches have stuck teams. This may be a result of the leader's tendency toward health or performance. On the other hand, it may be a transparency issue: Staff members will often only show their "best selves" to the lead pastor, which can lead to a false assumption of health and performance.

Healthy churches need leadership teams that are both healthy **and** high-performing. So in this new podcast series, we'll be working through three of the signs that your team is stuck, beginning with the "**Fundamental Attribution Error**."

In the results of our [Unstuck Teams Assessment](#), personal health and personal performance **almost always reflect higher scores** than team health and team performance. In other words, most team members feel like their personal health is better than the health of their team, and that their performance is better than the performance of their team. This is the [Fundamental Attribution Error](#) in action: We naturally see ourselves as better, healthier, and more competent than the people around us. We assume the worst of others while giving ourselves the benefit of the doubt.

When it comes to other people's failures, we tend to fill the gap with suspicion. But when it comes to our failures, we tend to fill the gap with trust.

If you're trying to develop a healthy and high-performing team, lack of trust is a big issue. When there is a lack of trust, team members tend to:

- Conceal weaknesses and mistakes
- Hesitate to ask or offer help
- Jump to conclusions
- Dread meetings
- Hold grudges

All of these things can be expected if your team can't trust one another, causing the health *and* performance of your team to suffer. So the question becomes, **how can we create a dynamic of trust on a team?** We have to model and practice **vulnerability**. Admitting when we need help, sharing our struggles, and owning up to our mistakes will build trust better than anything else.

There are a few other reasons why we see a discrepancy in personal scores vs. team scores:

1. Team members (especially younger ones) set higher expectations for their leaders.
2. Team members expect their work to be recognized and affirmed by their leaders.
3. Team members expect their leaders to get nearly everything right.

It's not uncommon for a leader to be surprised by the scores they receive. But when processed together as a team, these scores provide an opportunity for honesty and vulnerability between the group and a demonstration of humility from the leader. They also provide an opportunity for self-reflection on our own biases and attribution errors.

How to Avoid the Fundamental Attribution Error:

1. Fill in the gaps with trust where we tend to have suspicion.
2. Focus on gratitude for the positive attributes of your team members.
3. Give others the benefit of the doubt that you give yourself.
4. Pray for your team members and put yourself in their shoes.

More Resources

Take the Unstuck Teams Assessment

Building a thriving and high-performing team is no small task. Step 1: Get a better understanding of your current reality. Use this online tool to engage your staff in an honest assessment of 6 Critical Areas for a High-Impact Team.

[Take the Unstuck Teams Assessment](#) for free today (usually \$49) with code **teams2021**.

Join us for Healthy & High-Performing: An Unstuck Teams Masterclass on August 19, 2021

A year of remote work, online church, quick pivots, compounding strategy changes, and unfathomable personal stress took a heavy toll on ministry staff teams—and the effects are lingering. In [this 1-Day Masterclass](#), Lance Witt, Tony Morgan, Amy Anderson, and special guests from churches across the U.S., will teach you the principles and the skills you need to get your team back on track. [Join us on August 19.](#)

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