



70: Q&A WITH PATRICK LENCIONI: WHAT'S YOUR MOTIVATION?

Thank you for joining the *Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast*!

What's your motivation? What's your reason for wanting to be a leader? In this episode, Craig sits down with Patrick Lencioni, a leading voice in building healthy organizations and the founder of The Table Group, to talk about what motivates us to lead—and how that motivation can determine if we succeed or fail.

At the core, people are motivated to lead for two reasons: they are either **reward-centered** or **responsibility-centered**. Reward-centered leaders look at leadership as a reward for long years of hard work. They see it as prestigious, important, high-paying, or full of perks. Meanwhile, responsibility-centered leaders see leadership as a duty. If they don't make the hard calls, do the research, shoulder the burden, and envision the future, no one else will.

Patrick has been studying these two motivations in leaders, which led to his book *The Motive: Why So Many Leaders Abdicate Their Most Important Responsibility*. He's identified five incredibly important functions of a leader that are often the first to go when a leader isn't leading for the right reasons. They're things that might make a leader uncomfortable, but leaders should be willing to do the most uncomfortable things for the sake of their people and their mission.

“Leaders should be willing to do the most uncomfortable things. If the leader won't do them, nobody will.” —*Patrick Lencioni*

A leader who's leading for the wrong reasons will usually abandon these responsibilities first:

1. Having difficult conversations.

We often tell ourselves that we avoid certain tough conversations to protect the other person, to shield them from hurt or embarrassment. But Pat says that's not true; we avoid the conversations to protect ourselves from having to do something uncomfortable, painful, and time-consuming. It's actually a selfish act to keep the truth from someone in your care. If you love the people who work for you—and Pat says you *should* love them—don't withhold their chance to grow by hearing the truth. You also lose credibility with your team when you avoid the conversations that everyone knows are necessary.

2. Leading great meetings.

So many people view meetings as boring, unproductive necessities that must be muscled through. Pat says this is patently wrong—meetings can be great! It's the leader's responsibility to make them great. A meeting is simply sitting down with a group of other leaders and solving problems. A meeting is working with people we care about to make the difficult decisions that will advance the mission. It doesn't have to be minutes, PowerPoint presentations, agenda items, or monologues. With a little planning, you can lead great meetings.

3. Managing direct reports.

As a leader, you need to know what your team is working on. You should be able to coach them, answer questions, see problems early, and guide them through. That's not micro-managing; that's managing.

4. Building a healthy team.

Taking time out to build a healthy team is the leader's responsibility. For Pat, he describes a healthy team as having a "hard culture." This means the leader expects everyone to show up passionate, interested, and willing to grow. Creating an atmosphere where people are expected to give feedback and are rewarded for sharpening each other takes work, and a leader can't expect it to happen without guidance.

5. Repeating yourself constantly to reinforce culture and mission.

A leader must be a "Chief Reminding Officer." No matter how bored you become of repeating the mission statement, reinforcing core values, or realigning to the roadmap, a leader must constantly repeat those key directives.

What's your motivation?

It can be difficult to see ourselves accurately in the mirror. What kinds of leaders are we, really? Ask yourself these questions to tell if you have reward-centered or responsibility-centered motivation for your leadership.

1. **When is the last time someone challenged you?** If your team perceives that you're not focused on the mission, they may believe you don't care about growing, being challenged, or sharpening your skills.
2. **When is the last time you suffered for the mission?** Leadership doesn't have to always be hard, but it shouldn't always be easy. If it's been a while since you labored over a decision, stayed up late thinking about a problem, or had a hard conversation, you may not be leading.

"Servant leadership is the only kind of leadership. I'm hoping one day, we won't even need to say 'servant leadership' because it will be understood." —*Patrick Lencioni*

To the leader who is getting started or getting burned out:

If you're starting out, identify why you want to become a leader. Is it out of a sense of responsibility? Is it to accomplish the mission of your organization? Or, is it to gain all the perceived perks and prestige of a leadership role?

If you've been leading for a while, and you've lost your energy and passion, reflect on your motivation. When is the last time you got excited about what you and your team are doing? If you find yourself caring more about pay increases and parking spots, do what you need to do to reacquaint yourself with the mission and purpose of your organization.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Be honest with yourself: are your aspirations for leadership fueled by the rewards of leadership or the responsibilities of leadership?
2. When is the last time someone challenged you to grow?
3. When is the last time you suffered for the mission of your organization?

EXERCISES

If you have a basic level of trust with your team, try the exercise Pat outlined in this episode. Go around the room and name the strengths that each person uniquely brings to the team. Then, go around and let each person know a blind spot or weak area that could be improved. As the leader, you can model what receiving both praise and feedback look like for your team.

Based on the feedback you get in this setting, create a small reminder or sticky note for yourself that you can display at work to help you break negative habits and grow healthier.

List out a few common activities that would lend themselves to immediate feedback. For example, if you give presentations often or if you lead meetings a lot in your organization, ask for feedback afterwards. If you're the leader, build in five minutes at the end of the activity to get some quick constructive criticism. If you're not the leader, take this idea to your leader and talk about implementing it.

MORE FROM PATRICK LENCIONI

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