

LÉONCE B.
CRUMP
JR.

WARREN
BIRD

RYAN T.
HARTWIG

FOREWORD
BY TOD
BOLSINGER

THE RESILIENCE FACTOR

A STEP-BY-STEP
GUIDE TO CATALYZE
AN UNBREAKABLE TEAM



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MOVEMENT 3

GATHER AN ALL-STAR CAST (STEPS 11-15)

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO SETTLE—
YOU CAN BUILD A TEAM OF TOP
PERFORMERS**

YOU'D THINK MOST TEAMS would be made up of the people who could best contribute to the team. The sad reality for most teams is otherwise. In this chapter we'll acknowledge why people often settle for the constraints that too commonly drive team membership, but we'll also offer practical frameworks to imagine an all-star cast, how to recruit those people, and how to tactfully change team membership when necessary and allowable.

Ryan, you won't believe this," the email from an executive pastor in Southern California began. "Remember your recent workshop when I told you that I was tired of not having the right people on our leadership team but wasn't sure how to move a couple of people off the team to make room for others to join? Well, I took your advice, and we worked to clarify our purpose. A couple of weeks later, both of the people who I felt needed to move to another ministry volunteered to step back from the team! They said they aren't a good match for where the team is going. We now feel like we have the right people on our team, with room to add maybe one or two more, and we're ready to move forward."

We suspect that you can identify with parts of this pastor's story. If only all challenges could be solved in two weeks! But right now you know something's got to shift. You're just not sure how to make changes without destroying your team. Are you stuck with a team you

inherited that doesn't give you the firepower you and your organization need to achieve remarkable results? Unsure how to imagine and then make the changes that need to take place? Hesitant to upset the apple cart of your current team?

Or maybe you've been humming along, not thinking about who's filling the chairs (or Zoom squares) and whether they're the right people and the right mix?

Either way, you're not alone. Once you've clarified your team's purpose as movement two outlined, it's time to make sure you've got the right people around the table and that they're optimized to make their greatest contribution.

Settle no more. Instead, build a team of top performers.

STEP 11: EVALUATE THE TEAM YOU'VE GOT

Start with an inventory. At different seasons every team needs to take a self-assessment. In many respects taking stock of a team is like taking a sabbath. It's a time to pause the work, reflect on what's been done, look up to see what God is saying, and look forward to what he has before us. Sometimes teams self-assess by every team member taking the StrengthsFinder, MBTI, or SDI and discussing their results together.¹ Other times this is done at the beginning of a new season or new fiscal year. But too often teams don't pause to take stock simply because they are so busy doing the work that they forget to reflect on the work, how it's getting done, and who is doing it. If you've ever tried to cut firewood with a dull chainsaw, you know the importance of pausing to sharpen your saw!

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

On your own, no matter your role on the team, take a few minutes to complete **Exercise 3.1** to take stock of your team's membership.

Once you and the other members of your team have prayerfully, thoughtfully, and separately considered the strengths and contributions of each member, gather as a team and complete **Exercise 3.2**.

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EXERCISE 3.1—Assessing your team members’ greatest contributions



1. Write your team’s purpose from movement two (you must keep this constantly front and center in any team analysis).

2. Explore the unique contributions of each member of your team.

Team member name	In what ways does this person most powerfully contribute to your team?	What are this person’s key strengths in relation to your team’s tasks?	What are this person’s key strengths in relation to your team’s cohesion and connectedness?	If this person were suddenly no longer on your team, what would your team miss most?

EXERCISE 3.2—Optimizing your team’s strengths



1. Go around the room and tell each person what the other team members see that person most powerfully brings to the team.

2. Discuss the following questions:

In an ideal situation, what additional skill, perspective, or approach would your team include that it currently does not have?

How could you as a team get more of that skill, perspective, or approach? Consider how you could add additional team members or by up-skilling your current team members.

3. Your discussion notes:

These exercises will act like a rototiller, churning up good questions and reflections about your team’s composition. Once that happens, you’re ready to move to the next step.

In healthy teams, leaders model going the extra mile—even daily—to give compliments to and affirm team members. Warren is on a team like that at the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). One memorable meeting ended with each person affirming the strength and contribution of each other team member. Warren remembers what hard work it was to craft a gushy but genuine sentence about each person there. It made him listen carefully to the compliments that others read about his peers on the team.

The outcome surprised him. He walked away with tons of fresh insight about the strengths each person represented and ways he and other team members could do a better job tapping into them as a team.

STEP 12: INVEST IN YOUR CURRENT TEAM MEMBERS

Now that you have taken stock of your team, it is time to identify ways you can invest in your current team members. In today’s and tomorrow’s leadership context the “most successful leaders . . . will be those who have the ability to develop the talents of others.”² Take some time today to look over these ideas and decide on one or two ways you will each become better trained in a skill or perspective that will help your team. You’re not finished until you have decided who will do what by when.

For example, “Within the next 48 hours, Janice will find a 15–30 minute highly practical video on the subject of conflict management and send us the link so we can all watch it before our next meeting.”

Here are some options:

1. Pursue additional group training in how to be a team.
 - Bring in an expert.
 - Watch a training video together.
 - Interview an author who wrote a book about teams (hmm!).

2. Enhance technical skill in a specific area.

- Watch an online course.
- Read a book.
- Attend a conference.
- Shadow someone.
- Visit another similar organization.
- Work toward certification.

3. Better develop your strengths.

- Work with a coach.
- Take an assessment.
- Find a mentor.

The key is to identify opportunities, encourage (and grant permission to) people to engage, create space in people's schedules to do so, and hold each other accountable for follow-up. Along the way, everyone encourages each other that "we can get better as a team!"

For instance, ECFA offers several free tools to help governing boards be more effective. One is an annual board member renewal document designed to help board members evaluate whether they're able to meet

*Identify opportunities,
encourage engagement,
create space to do
so, and follow up.*

the expectations or requirements of serving on the board.³ In essence it provides a safe, face-saving way for people to decide to opt not to join a team or for the team leader to initiate a discussion on the topic. The strategy can apply to any type of team.

STEP 13: EMBRACE AND ENGAGE THE NECESSARY, HARD CONVERSATIONS

Sometimes it's not just about who you will add but about who you must subtract. Most people know that it would probably be good to press into hard conversations about calling, match, passion, or commitment

levels, but they often struggle to develop the gumption to take action. So, first, let us help you build a sense of urgency and then equip you to handle these conversations as well as possible.

The following are reasons to engage in hard conversations.

1. You want to model biblical mandates of speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), forgiving (Matthew 6:14-15), not nursing a grudge (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 11:25), not harboring anger (James 1:20), not letting the sun go down on your anger (Ephesians 4:26), and living at peace with others whenever possible (Romans 12:18). In short, when you need to confront, a Christian's call is to keep short accounts.
2. Your organization's mission is too important to allow a significant team weakness to continue.
3. The right people will leave when the wrong people are allowed to stay.
4. You want to signal to the rest of your team that your work is consequential, and your team will be accountable for results, as you pursue both faithfulness and fruitfulness.
5. You can't afford to allow the person who is a bad fit to set the culture for everyone else. That's in essence letting the person who is a bad fit shape the group's norms and expectations.
6. You want all other members to feel safe and protected from bad behavior, such as low commitment, poor performance, mismatched talents, or other unhealthy habits.

Once you've developed the conviction and courage to have the hard conversation (and perhaps recruited a prayer partner or two), here are some tips to do it well.

1. If the issue is performance-related and can be improved, invite the person into a development plan. Outline the expectations for improvement, what you'll offer in terms of support and coaching, and a time frame to reassess how things are going. Then stick to it.

2. If the issue is simply related to a mismatch of skill and contribution to your team's purpose, then move forward.
 - Acknowledge the team member's strengths and where they can make the most impact.
 - Discuss your desire to see each person contribute in a place where they can make the most impact (which will be good for them and the ministry).
 - Identify a plan to find a new, adjusted role. Establish a time frame to revisit your progress in moving that person to a better fit.
 - Couch the entire conversation with a kingdom mindset, your fidelity to your organization or ministry's important mission, as well as your deep care and concern for the person.
3. Follow up after the hard conversation, both with the team member you've confronted and the remainder of the team. Changes within your team's membership will stir stress and challenge among others, so you must be present to the emotions and challenges that arise in the process and handle them well, realizing the hurt and distrust generated by transitions motivated by power plays and/or generated by insufficient reasons.

At this step, consider the hard but necessary conversations you need to have and begin to plan now what they are, how you'll handle them, and when you'll engage them.

STEP 14: ARTICULATE TEAM MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Remember the team charter you began to develop on step 10? Pull it back out. Now is the time to add another section to it: "Qualifications and Requirements for Team Members."

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Working through these qualifications—just as you would for an individual's job description—will help you identify the unique skills and

perspectives you need on your team, as well as the shared interactional behaviors you expect for your team (see **Exercise 3.3**).

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EXERCISE 3.3—Developing qualifications and requirements for team members



1. Essential skills we need on our team:

2. Essential perspectives that must be considered by our team:

3. When we look to replace or add new team members, we will look for people who . . .

• Possess this kind of character:

• Will jibe with our team because:

• Commit to connecting with others by:

When you do this, you'll press back against the all-too-common practice of determining your team's membership by drawing a circle around a certain part of the organizational chart or by simply making a convenient choice, such as grabbing everyone whose office is nearby or who frequents the same coffee stop. Instead, you will have identified the particular mix of skills, strengths, and perspectives your team needs to be most successful, and how you will need to interact to leverage the strengths each person brings. Now, when you have to decide who should serve on your team and who shouldn't, you have a guideline to help you.

When Bill Walsh came to San Francisco to take the reins as the head coach of the 49ers, the team was in shambles. The team had a losing record, and they were consistently pummeled by their rival, the Dallas Cowboys. Enter the late Bill Walsh, now a Hall of Fame coach and considered to be the architect of the 49ers dynasty.

Coach Walsh popularized and perfected the now-renowned "West Coast offense," which paved the way for five Super Bowl victories for the 49ers. His innovations provided a frequently copied blueprint for coaches at every level of the game and propelled players such as Joe Montana, Steve Young, and Jerry Rice toward Hall of Fame careers of their own.

Walsh knew what he needed to take his team to the next level, he was versed in the mix of skills and characteristics required for them to become champions, and he was revered for bringing the best out of his players.

Walsh is credited as one of the most important figures in football in the 1980s, not just for winning but also for his intentionality in assembling a winning team. You can do the same, even if it takes time and incremental development of your existing team members.

STEP 15: LOOK BEYOND THE USUAL SUSPECTS TO ADD TO OR COMPLEMENT YOUR TEAM

At this point you've taken stock of who you have on your team and what's missing, identified the unique strengths each team member

brings, put forward a plan to invest in growth, begun to consider who may not be a good fit on the team, and developed a list of key qualifications and requirements for your team members. After all of this you may realize that you need more or different people with particular skill sets, experiences, or perspectives.

When it comes to supplementing your team, you have two primary options. One is to recruit and permanently add new members to your team. The other is to ask people to join your team temporarily at strategic, intermittent times and bring their expertise.

As you ponder, consider what your optimal team size should be, assuming you're not required to have a certain number of members. You want a minimum of three and ideally five, with the logic that one personality won't unduly shape the group, but you also have the diversity of perspective, experience, and skill to benefit from collaboration.⁴ At the same time, when a team goes beyond a dozen or so, then too many people remain unengaged or underutilized.

In her outstanding book, *Creating Effective Teams*, researcher Susan Wheelan explained, "successful teams contain the smallest number of members necessary to accomplish goals and tasks," with that number often landing between three and six members.⁵

Start with option 1: if you can add more team members without making the team too big, by all means do so. You have nothing to lose by shooting high! In such a case clearly describe what you are looking for and how that new person will add to and complement the team, pray, and then find them.

Either way, dream big and pray big. Reach high (the worst that can happen is that someone prays about your *ask* and says no). Also think outside the box beyond the predictable suspects. For instance, instead of just targeting grandmas, moms, and soon-to-be moms to serve in children's ministry, why not consider recruiting men? Or suppose you're on a sermon feedback team. If, for instance, you're in a church with complementarian convictions, don't just invite the preachers, all of whom would be male, to form the team that listens to and provides feedback on the sermon before it is preached. If more than half of the

listeners to that sermon will be women, wouldn't you want some of them to advise on whether the illustrations connect and points convict? Maybe you'd also want to invite a college student or high schooler onto the team.

Or if you're on a team that's doing outreach into your community, would it be appropriate to tap into a community person in some way? Or maybe you are part of a team that does a lot of its work online. Do any of your members have an older relative in a retirement home who could mobilize any seniors there to join and assist you? In short, be creative and consider how you can reach higher to find the help you need to get the right staff on your team.

The reality for many readers, however, is that your team is made up of paid staff, and you don't have another paid staff spot, so you must be creative to get more firepower into your team without significant financial resources to throw at it. That's okay. The following are a few creative ways to do this.

1. Identify other people in your broader organization who have particular skills or perspectives you need, and ask them to invest a small number of hours with your team or on specific projects. Of course, this will require approval from those persons' supervisors, but you've done enough analysis about your team's needs over the last fourteen steps that you should be able to build a pretty compelling case.
2. Invite a freelancer to join you for a slice of a project. Even a small, volunteer-led ministry or church can usually find enough money to offer an outside person. "Could we pay you \$200 (or whatever fits your budget) to come to our next meeting, prepared to walk us through such-and-such where none of us has expertise?"
3. Invite a volunteer leader or two with significant capacity to assist your effort. When one church in California wanted to develop a serious leadership development program, the lead pastor invited a group of three laypeople who worked in leadership education and consulting to develop the curriculum. Not only did it yield a

more robust and effective program than what the staff could have developed on their own, but it also gave those church members a meaningful way to contribute their talents to their local church, deepening their engagement and connection to the church. Remember, as you ask for help from volunteers, they might need more lead time than a paid staff member will need.

4. Don't let geography constrain you. The pandemic created many more opportunities to tap into talent that isn't local. Expertise, skill, and perspective reside everywhere, and remote work connections make it much easier to tap into them.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Exercise 3.4 will help you creatively discover where to find what your team needs.

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EXERCISE 3.4—Discovering where you can find what your team needs



My team needs	Where in my sphere of influence does this skill reside?

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

As you consider inviting or bringing someone new onto your team, ask the eleven questions in **Exercise 3.5**, which will help you better understand that person and how they will fit on your team. The first four questions include suggested tools you can use to aid in discovering the unique ways a potential team member is gifted, wired, and wounded. The next seven are sometimes referred to as the seven Cs of leadership and team dynamic fit. Leverage these questions and tools to minimize the possibility of making a blind hire. Instead make an informed, thoughtful choice.

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EXERCISE 3.5—Eleven questions to ask when bringing someone new onto your team



Question to ask	Tool or Characteristic
1. What is your spiritual vocation?	A.P.E.S.T. (apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher)
2. What are your spiritual gifts?	Spiritual gifts assessment
3. What is your Myers-Briggs type?	Myers-Briggs test
4. What is your Enneagram number?	Enneagram test
5. Who are you at your core?	Character
6. What drives you?	Conviction
7. How do you engage, own, and finish?	Conduct
8. Are you a fit?	Chemistry
9. What is your calling?	Clarity
10. How big is your plate?	Capacity
11. What skills do you have?	Competency

At this point, you've sought God and started to dream again, and you've addressed your team's mission and membership. Now it's time to get to work and take steps to build your team strong, effective, and resilient. The next movement will help you do just that.

END-OF-CHAPTER SUMMARY AND ACTION ITEMS

If you forget everything else, remember this as you assess and assemble your all-star cast:

1. Take time to pause and reflect on the work you are doing and whether you have the right people to best achieve your team's purpose.
2. Build into your existing team by encouraging, giving permission, and scheduling space for your team members to develop both individually and as a team.
3. Leverage hard conversations to ensure that the right people stay and the wrong people leave, rather than the other way around.
4. Articulate the unique skills and perspectives you need on your team, as well as the shared interactional behaviors you expect from your team.
5. Creatively and intentionally complement your existing team to infuse new perspectives and possibilities into the team.

Reflection and Discussion Questions

1. What was the most useful or helpful insight you read in the five steps of this movement?
2. Think of a time when you have been on a team where someone has overstayed their welcome, causing the team to settle instead of excel. If you could go back to that time now as the leader of that team, what would you do differently and why?
3. What did it feel like for each of you to think through and discuss your unique contributions to the team? How did it encourage you, and did it nudge you forward in any way?

4. What did you do or learn this week that you believe will be most useful to this team moving forward?
5. How do you carry forward what you learned here?

Take It Deeper

1. Ask one or more trusted mentors about a time when they engaged in a hard conversation like the ones discussed in step 13. Probe that situation to discover insights that might be helpful to your current situation.
2. Go the extra mile to personally tell a teammate or two how grateful you are for them and the roles they play on your team.
3. Make a list of several people who possess insights or expertise that could benefit your team. Consider people from both inside and outside your organization.
4. As you move on to the next steps, carry with you the action steps you identified this week.

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