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HONORS THESIS

The Monster of Management

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to cross-examine the philosophy, history, and psychology of power dynamics as seen in literature, teamwork case studies, and parenting styles. Mary Shelley's 1818 novel Frankenstein best defines what it means to be locked in an imbalanced power struggle. This thesis develops Shelley's story into one rich with interpersonal relationship philosophy as it acts as both a counterargument and a continuation of the cited works. Management case studies support these philosophical claims through a comparison of fictional, hypothetical, and real-life scenarios. Research presented an unexpected discovery that placed trust-based conflict at the core of innovative team success. This thesis shows the long history of positive, constructive conflict in three fields heavily centered on power structures. Their optimal methods for achieving idealistic operating conditions were all the same. Being genuinely curious, building trust, and finding commonalities between ourselves and others are as timeless as they are familiar. This work takes the concept of story analysis a step further by conducting parallel analyses between case studies and literature to unite the humanities with the business world.

INTRODUCTION

Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein* captures what it means to be a creator. Like all leaders who construct a living, independently thinking team, Victor Frankenstein confronts power dynamics, conflict dysfunctions, and unforeseen responsibilities to his creation. Through an analysis of management case studies, developmental psychology, and philosophies of community and team building, I set out to prove that *Frankenstein* reveals a timeless secret that good management creates dynamic and resilient teams full of empathy, understanding, and conflict. Hence, this thesis synthesizes material across disciplines to arrive at a rich, nuanced notion of team/approaches to the team and team leadership.

NOVEL SUMMARY

In a bright, brilliant moment, Victor Frankenstein forces life back into the patchworked body of a man; an explosion of honorable, mad genius turns monstrous overnight. For over 200 years, Mary Shelley's parable of failed parenting and existential agony has haunted generations of creators. *Frankenstein* teaches the importance of taking responsibility for one's power to create and the consequences of doing so.

The story's narrator, a young captain of an exploration vessel, records a dying and regretful Victor Frankenstein's direct warning against reproducing the same error he endured. Victor's extensive backstory provides clarity on his motives. The early death of his mother and encouragement to pursue whatever he pleases guide Victor through his motions in the early part of the novel. Victor leaves his home in Geneva, Switzerland to attend medical school in Ingolstadt, Germany. It is not long before his daily arguments with professors and peers cause him to drop out of school. They never considered his interest in natural philosophy and alchemy as anything more than play with fictitious magic. Instead, he seeks the mentorship of a professor, M. Waldman, who encourages him to study chemistry, a form of modern-day alchemy. It is with Waldman's support and a newfound sense of valor that Victor decides it is his mission to harness the force of life itself.

As predicted, his iconic experiment succeeds. Victor stitches together the limbs and organs of human and animal remains in a form he declares is "beautiful, Beautiful!" Victor's

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experiment takes more than two painstaking years, driving him to mental and physical illness. He leaves our narrator with vague information about the specifics of his experiment for fear that someone would reattempt his mistake, but it is implied that galvanization brought the Creature to life. Just as quickly as the lightning convulsed and revived the corpse, Victor's thrill at his success turns into utter horror with the realization of what he has created. Cloudy, yellow eyes open on the eight-foot-tall form and look upon Victor with the curiosity of a newborn. Overwhelmed, Victor flees the room immediately, leaving the Creature to awake and stumble from the dormitory attic alone. The only warmth he receives from his creator is the coat he takes from the laboratory to cover himself as he exits into the cool November night, unloved and unnamed.

Two more years pass before Victor and the Creature reunite again. Victor has since been nursed back to mental and physical health by his visiting best friend, Henry Clerval. Shortly after he recovers, Victor receives news that his youngest brother, nine-year-old William, has been murdered and rushes home promptly to console his family and his fiancé, Elizabeth Lavenza. After the funeral, in the flashes of a storm, Victor catches a glimpse of his creature lurking at the forest's edge just outside his estate and knows instantly that his creation is the murderer of his brother. However, Victor is determined to hide the secret of his creation at any cost, lest he appear insane. He refuses to tell anyone, allowing the Creature to successfully frame the family's beloved nanny, Justine Mortiz. She is hanged for the crime and Victor says nothing. This occurrence displays the Creature's high intelligence and clever mind, traits that tie him to his creator, like a son to his father. His success at this trick implies that the Creature was well aware of societal functions and the predictability of human behavior, especially in regard to Victor's response. To clear his mind, Victor leaves for a solo hiking trip in the mountains where the Creature awaits their first real encounter.

In the glacier mountains of Switzerland, the Creature recounts his story to Frankenstein. He has learned to speak and read. He deciphers the story of his own creation as introduced to him by laboratory notes from the coat pocket and he has given meaning to his existence through the lens of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The Creature was once full of the love and curiosity of a newborn. He explored the world and welcomed its inhabitants. Unfortunately, he was met

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with harsh rejection at every turn, unrequited love, betrayal, and utter loneliness. The Creature's pure soul was corrupted into a cold, calculating murderer with a heart full of revenge and self-pity. It is for this reason he demands Victor to build a second, female creature to be a companion to him as reparation. In desperation for the nightmare to stop, Victor agrees.

Just when Victor and the Creature's conflict seems to resolve, their story spirals out of control as mistrust leads to the impossibility of redemption in their relationship. Out of fear of replicating another monster, Victor goes back on his word and destroys the Creature's near-finished bride. This unforgivable act continues the nightmare for Victor. In rage, the Creature counters Victor's offense by strangling his best friend Henry Clerval and fiancé Elizabeth Lavenza. Their deaths caused an overpowering grief that kills Victor's father with heartbreak. Now utterly alone, Victor survives his creation's attack but can never truly escape the nightmare. Therefore, Victor decides to hunt the Creature. By this point, both characters treat the giving and taking of life as a game. Fueled by loneliness, anger, and resentment, the two chase each other across northern Europe and Russia until they reach the Arctic. After years of hunting, Victor has weakened from exhaustion and starvation while his immune and immortal Creature persists. The story's narrator, the ship captain, finds Victor on the ice and cares for him until his end.

On his deathbed, Victor denies that the nightmare he has lived might at all have been his own fault. He admits that he could have done better by the Creature, but that abandonment was no cause to murder five people. In the night, the young captain returns to Victor's room to investigate the sound of a voice. He is shocked to find that Victor's story was true when he sees the large Creature standing above his creator's remains, crying. The Creature stays to speak with the narrator only when he is asked to stay, quite possibly for the first time in his life. Though, this momentary interest in the other is not enough to undo past trauma. The Creature argues that his existence is more tragic than any revenge inflicted upon Victor. Neither creator nor the creation believes he is at full fault for the horrors of the past few years. The story concludes with the Creature leaving, carrying Victor in his arms, and speaking a promise to destroy the both of them on Victor's funeral pyre.

THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM

In short, Frankenstein's Monster was a dysfunctional team. From the moment of rebirth, he is alone; the Creature's ghastly appearance denies him the opportunities to form relationships with others. When considering the psychological development of the Creature, one must ask the classic question: was the Creature's violent, rebellious behavior a result of his nature or his nurture? While his physical nature caused an adverse reaction from his environment, the environment that nurtured him is ultimately to blame. Patrick Lencioni's *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* illustrates the pyramid of steps a team takes when it unknowingly yet actively divides itself (see Appendix A). In the figure, the pyramid runs top to bottom: Inattention to Results, Avoidance of Accountability, Lack of Commitment, Fear of Conflict, and Absence of Trust (Lencioni, 2002, pp. 188-189). When any one of these five factors exist, a team's environment becomes un conducive to community building and negates the possibility of a team.

Inattention to Results

At the top of Lencioni's pyramid lies the ego and self-obsession portrayed by Victor Frankenstein. Inattention to Results refers to team results. It "occurs when team members put their individual goals (such as ego, career development, or recognition) or even the needs of their divisions above the collective goals of the team" (Lencioni, 2002, p. 189). They are more interested in their own performance than the team's. Often this brews unhealthy competition internally. Victor makes his goal an individual one when he states that "wealth was an inferior object, but what glory would attend the discovery if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death" (Shelley, 2022, p. 36)! His goal is to achieve the ultimate fame and glory from the success of reviving the dead, a goal that quickly shatters when his creation awakes. Victor's immediate rejection of the creation he worked so passionately for conveys a sense of selfish ignorance. The Creature does not match Victor's visionary dream of building the perfect superhuman. Instead, the Creature confronts Victor with the existence of goals not entirely devoted to him. In the Creature's reunion with Victor, he confirms this misalignment by citing Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which he compares himself to Adam and Lucifer stating, "Remember, that I am thy creature: I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel..." (Shelley, 2022, p. 89). Both of Milton's characters

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accuse God of ignorance of their unique desires separate from His. The Creature's goals are seen in his expression of loneliness and request for a mate. These two features of his conversation with Victor suggest that his goal was not to bring Victor godly recognition but to live what he considers a fulfilling life.

Avoidance of Accountability

Victor and the Creature never come to a consensus about any purpose for their relationship. Victor very plainly avoids accountability. He abandons the Creature he just created because it does not match his dream; he leaves Justine to be executed for a crime he knows she did not commit to save face; he goes back on his deal with the Creature when he realizes there might be repercussions; and he never answers letters from his concerned loved ones because he is too focused on personal matters (Shelley, 2022, pp. 51-149). The Creature, while often confused for an innocent victim, is also at fault for the murders and the property destruction that he never repents. As Victor states, "my tale was not one to announce publicly; its astounding horror would be looked upon as madness by the vulgar" (Shelley, 2022, p. 72). Victor will not risk his reputation. The Creature will not risk proving Victor sane. Every scene where Victor and the Creature interact bursts with dramatic conflict. They shout, name call, accuse each other, and pass blame. Victor's first reaction to seeing the Creature again is: "Begone! I will not hear you. There can be no community between you and me; we are enemies. Begone, or let us try our strength in a fight, in which one must fall" (Shelley, 2022, p. 89). Victor never even names the Creature, opting to call him "demon" and "wretch" for his appearance and later actions (Shelley, 2022, pp. 86-91). This messy dynamic stems from Lencioni's fourth dysfunction because there are "low standards" for the leader and the team members (Lencioni, 2002, p. 174). Victor and the Creature begin to expect the worst from each other. This top-down, one-way approach to criticism causes their explosiveness; Victor initiates the fights to avoid the Creature's criticism. Additionally, their interactions reflect Avoidance of Accountability, through their disregard for each other's personal goals and removal of themselves from the cause of not meeting those goals.

Lack of Commitment

Lencioni suggests that avoidance of accountability is due to a lack of commitment, the third dysfunction. "Without having aired their opinions in the course of passionate and open debate,

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team members rarely, if ever, buy-in and commit to decisions” and, therefore, will not defend the so-called “team decisions” (Lencioni, 2002, p. 189). Because Victor and the Creature had no prior discussion of what the Creature’s purpose for creation would be, they never formed a plan under consensus. Victor never considered an alternate purpose for the Creature other than to serve his mechanical purpose. He recalls that “unable to endure the aspect of the being [he] had created, [he] rushed out of the room and continued a long-time traversing [his] bed-chamber,” (Shelley, 2022, p. 51). When Victor sees that the Creature was not his ideal creation, he flees. He stops being committed to him. Alternatively, the Creature promises to be benevolent so long as Victor constructs his bride. Victor agreed to the goal of ending the Creature’s loneliness through her creation. When he quits the deal and destroys her, the Creature is not committed to their plan and returns to his punishing murder spree. They rarely converse following the initial reunion, eroding the commitment they might have had. More interaction might have reinforced a purpose for reaching their very few shared goals.

Fear of Conflict

Alas, a fear of conflict prevents Victor and the Creature from enough interaction to develop fully sound, mutually beneficial plans. “I had been the author of unalterable evils, and I lived in daily fear lest the monster whom I had created should perpetrate some new wickedness;” Victor admits to spending his time avoiding the Creature for fear of having another altercation with him (Shelley, 2022, p. 81). The Creature is confrontational, and Victor does not enjoy being accused. Vice Versa, after the murder of Elizabeth, Victor takes off hunting the Creature (Shelley, 2022, p. 175). He evades Victor in hopes of infuriating and exhausting him. Considering the Creature admits to Captain Walton that “[he is] a wretch. [He has] murdered the lovely and the helpless,” he feels remorse for the murders. It is assumed that he partially avoided Victor for fear of being reminded how wickedly he behaved (Shelley, 2022, p. 196). It would not be so enjoyable on the receiving end of another’s rightful fury. The Creature’s rhetorical question to the captain, “Do you think that I was then dead to agony and remorse?” confirms his haunting guilt, another reason why he would avoid Victor in the latter half of the tale (Shelley, 2022, p. 194). While teams do not face this same level of deadly chaos, they do avoid conflict to keep the peace or ignore their mistakes. A Fear of Conflict, the second

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dysfunction, causes teams to “resort to veiled discussions and guarded comments,” creating “artificial harmony” and driving mistrust and misinformation (Lencioni, 2002, p. 188).

Absence of Trust

Finally, the root problem for Victor and the Creature’s dysfunctional relationship is the complete Absence of Trust. Before the creation of the Creature, Victor never stopped to consider the future of his creation. Even once the Creature is alive, Victor does not attempt to understand him. Trust between them shatters the moment Victor runs from that makeshift laboratory. As the two continue to attack and betray each other, the hope for any trust-building between them dwindles rapidly. An Absence of Trust, the first dysfunction, “stems from their unwillingness to be vulnerable” with each other (Lencioni, 2002, p. 188). Victor refuses to be seen as imperfect when his goal is god-like status. The Creature wants Victor to think he is a powerful monster to have his way. Trust builds over time with repeated interaction and every interaction is full of opportunities to start anew. Unfortunately, Victor and the Creature avoid interaction out of a fear of their perceived differences and fabricated, exponential hatred. Lencioni lists behaviors such as concealing one’s weaknesses or mistakes, jumping to conclusions, holding grudges, and finding reasons to avoid spending time together as all signs of missing trust (Lencioni, 2002, p. 197). Something so little as misrepresentation destroyed what could have brought them both fulfilling lives of warm companionship and an unbelievable legacy.

PARENTING STYLES IN LEADERSHIP

A study of the four parenting styles recognizes that while the world may be cruel, the one to place a creation into it can soften the blow -- or worsen it. Team managers have a similar role in guiding their teams as parents in raising their children. The four parenting styles defined by child psychologist Diana Baumrind include Uninvolved, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Authoritative (Pham TM et al., 2019, p. 3). These four were decided by evaluating parents on a scale of the parent’s responsiveness to the child’s physical and emotional needs and the parent’s demandingness on the child (see Appendix B). By using these parenting styles as a lens for management case studies, the importance of becoming a strong, nurturing leader heightens. Aspiring parents go through the same process of self-assessment that team

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managers do prior to project initiation. This assessment should cause the leader to self-identify with a style.

To bridge between parenting and management, the introduction of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) reveals an alignment in the quadrants (see Appendix C). Alluding to Machiavelli's infamous question of "whether it is better to be loved or feared," the SCM displays public reaction to a person based on his/her perceived warmth and perceived competence (Cuddy et al., 2013, p. 2). The discovery that low warmth and low competence breeds contempt is no surprise (see Appendix C). As seen in Frankenstein, Victor's low warmth and low competence toward the Creature cause his hatred for Victor. On the opposite quadrant, high warmth and high competence produce admiration. With the right style, the changes and challenges of growth can be overcome.

Uninvolved Leader

The uninvolved parent, also known as the neglectful parent, has low responsiveness/emotional involvement and low expectations/demands for his/her child (Pham TM et al., 2019, p. 3). This parent is absent, disconnected, and indifferent about the child's needs. Victor Frankenstein is the poster child of the uninvolved parent. He abandons his creation from the very start; worst of all, the Creature knows it. Teams left completely alone are time bombs waiting to blow, even those with the best members.

"The Nut Island Effect: When Good Teams Go Wrong" describes a dream team of hardworking, highly skilled people who not only failed to reach their goal but contributed to the opposite (Levy, 2001, p. 51). In the case of Nut Island Sewage Treatment Facility in Massachusetts, a team designed to keep Boston Harbor pollution-free, released 3.7 million gallons of raw sewage and chemicals into it over 6 months in 1982 (Levy, 2001, p. 52).

The "Nut Island Effect" is a phenomenon that occurs when good teams are left alone because management thinks they can handle anything. When the first sign of trouble comes, they ignore the team and question the team's effectiveness. Over time the team learns to fend for itself, to find its own way of doing things, and becomes cold and bitter towards management and outsiders. Eventually, all those shortcuts and patches fall apart in an unstoppable and

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usually very public way. It leaves the managers and the teams accusing each other. Levy comments that before he wrote this case there was no name for what he would call the Nut Island Effect. “Perhaps the lack of a name [for the effect] indicates just what a subtle and insidious thing it is” because, at its core, this management failure is about never even knowing it happened (Levy, 2001, p. 59). “The Nut Island Effect,” is a scenario often forgotten in management. Just like Victor Frankenstein, leaders focus so intently on putting the right pieces together that they neglect the very thing itself that they have created. Of course, what the team is made of matters, but it is not all that matters. A “good” team can get torn apart by a bad system, but even a “bad” team can succeed in a good system. It is up to the manager to create the environment for the team, the creator to guide his creation.

Authoritarian Leader

The authoritarian parent has low emotional involvement, but high expectations (Baumrind, 1966, p. 890). These parents can be more militant in child-rearing. Communication is one-way, parent to child, and strict rules are enforced by the threat of punishments. In the second act of Frankenstein, Victor attempts to take back control over the Creature by calling on his role as the creator as a reason to be obeyed. His increased interest in the Creature comes from a selfish source. Victor engages with the Creature, not because he cares about him, but because he wants him to obey his wishes.

The authoritarian leader is best demonstrated in the Mount Everest - 1996 case study on the 1996 climb tragedy (Roberto, 2003, p. 1). A team of twenty-three climbers led by Rob Hall and Scott Fischer reached the top of Mount Everest, but not all returned. Five climbers, including Hall and Fischer, perished on the descent. The climbers broke into two groups, one led by Hall and the other led by Fischer.

Hall was described as overconfident and infallible (Roberto, 2003, p. 6). His team learned not to contradict him and avoided notifying him of issues. Inability to continue climbing was not seen as a safety concern but as a sign of weakness. His team had a tight plan to follow, and he would not stray from it for anything. Hall adopted this style of leadership because he did not trust his team to think or act for themselves. He believed that by enforcing strict rules, he was protecting his less experienced climbers and ensuring a successful climb for all. In doing so

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he placed all of the pressure on himself to succeed, instead of empowering his team to help him and each other. Unfortunately, Hall's cold exterior caused high importance issues to go unsaid or ignored. When the storm came, and he mistook their timing to set up a proper camp, it overwhelmed him and his team. He was unable to adapt to the challenges Everest posed for him. Frostbite at nightfall with an incoming storm and without a proper camp defeated them in the end. Hall was one of five victims that night.

The story of his tragedy warns leaders against becoming a micromanager. The leader does not trust the team to make good decisions and the team does not trust the leader to be open to questions. Although, openness and warmth are not the only means to achieving great team function.

Permissive Leader

The permissive parent has high emotional involvement but does not demand much of his/her child. (Baumrind, 1966, p. 889). This may have been the style overindulging senior Frankenstein's raised Victor under, devoid of troubles and responsibilities. Leaders that display permissive behavior may desire to befriend or please members at the cost of losing control over the team. Permissiveness can be seen in groups with too much in common among the members. They may fall to groupthink or confirmation bias as they seek to connect socially, rather than confront flaws in their plans. Low demandingness poses a threat that dishonest teammates may take advantage of friendships for personal gain or avoid responsibilities without fear of facing consequences.

In "The Case of Missing Time," the character of manager Chet Craig is overworked, yet never sees results (McNichols, 1973, p. 1). His efforts to fill in for his absent team members take up his day and leave him wondering where all of his time went. They abuse his kindness because he has never directly enforced accountability on them. In the end, he decides that he should create more structure in his workplace to ensure team members equally contribute. Chet's scenario teaches that a leader's warmth without proper demandingness invites others to take advantage of him/her at the cost of his/her wellbeing.

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Authoritative Leader

The optimal parent-leader style is the authoritative parent. A balance of responsiveness and demandingness allows this parent to know his/her child's physical, emotional, or developmental needs while providing the right structure and expectations to stimulate the personal growth of the child (Baumrind, 1966, p. 891). Leaders like Brigadier General Rebecca Halstead of the United States military apply authoritative leadership and gain the greatest admiration (Groysberg, B. et al., 2011, p. 1). Her time training in the U.S. Military Academy at West Point gave her a sense of perseverance through being doubted and belittled. Being singled out was a frequent occurrence. In one instance she ate the raw heart of a chicken to prove herself among her male peers, lest she "lose any possible chance to earn their trust and respect" (Groysberg, B. et al., 2011, p. 3). She was one of the first women to graduate from West Point and had experienced additional obstacles because of it. The adversary she overcame led her to practice greater empathy and treat others with the warmth she was denied. Halstead is remembered for exceeding expectations in terms of positivity and compassion. One of the majors operating under her recalls her distributing over 2,000 "of her handwritten notes and these mints for every Soldier" at Christmastime showing that "she truly cared about every person in her charge" (Groysberg, B. et al., 2011, p. 10). Her military background provided her with the habit of enforcing rigid structure and high demands on her teams, but her personality kept her aware of their needs. This perfect balance of demandingness and responsiveness rewarded her with a swift rise through the ranks (Groysberg, B. et al., 2011, p. 13). Although Halstead relied on her unique experiences to shape her leadership style naturally, experience is not a requirement for impactful leadership.

AUTHORITATIVE LEADERSHIP

Overcoming the Dysfunctions

Although Lencioni's pyramid describes the path to ruin, it can be reversed to provide a framework for functional team building (Lencioni, 2002, p. 195). Beginning with a foundation of trust then learning to handle conflict effectively will set up teams to ascend to the pyramid's top.

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Building a Foundation of Trust

Trust must always come first, and it is the most difficult. Trust takes time and energy to genuinely develop. Trust, or lack thereof, is the basis of all human interaction. It “lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team” (Lencioni, 2002, p. 195). Trust must be in place for the rest of the team functions pyramid to work. It is in this phase of the process that the leader must be an example. To initiate a positive relationship with his/her team the leader must make an impression that highlights his/her warmth.

When choosing between displaying warmth or competence, the leader should always strive to lead with warmth (Cuddy et al., 2013, p. 5). Like trust, competence takes time to prove. Warmth will be instant because "before people decide what they think of your message, they decide what they think of you" (Cuddy et al., 2013, p. 8). Humans can perceive warmth faster than they perceive the leader as a good manager. When a leader projects warmth, team members will be more comfortable engaging with him/her. Psychological safety occurs when team members feel comfortable sharing thoughts, criticism, and concerns without the fear of judgment or offense. Following trust-building, the leader's perceived competence increases quickly. However, both warmth and competence require repeated, personal interaction between parties.

When seeking to build trust Lencioni recommends that “a leader must demonstrate vulnerability first” by speaking to his/her strengths and weaknesses (Lencioni, 2002, p. 201). By revealing his/her weaknesses, he/she displays vulnerability and humanizes himself/herself. Suddenly, the team does not see a hierarchy, but a person. Then, by listing his/her strengths, the leader brings back his/her self-confidence and lets the team know his/her value (Lencioni, 2002, p. 189). Inviting the team members to do the same, the leader should actively listen to others, demonstrating the expected behavior. As time passes, sharing stories between team members may become more natural. By placing importance on the stories of others, trust flourishes, and team members will be more likely to share their ideas and concerns.

The skills of storytelling and listening are powerful tools in overcoming this dysfunction because they display strength through vulnerability, and care through genuine curiosity about the other person. Philosopher Hannah Arendt argues that storytelling is how people bridge the

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gaps between themselves and others. Storytelling shares interests and “these interests constitute, in the word’s most literal significance, something which inter-est which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together” (Arendt, 2018, p. 182). She describes a collective, global story that all living things contribute to telling. She imagines “the realm of human affairs, strictly speaking, consists of the web of human relationships which exists wherever men live together (Arendt, 2018, p. 182). Should one person or thing be removed from existence, the entire story alters. Even the smallest thing is connected to this story and cannot be disconnected from it.

This impossibility of disconnection from the world story appears in philosopher Jean Luc Nancy’s essay, *The Singular Plural* when he states that “we are now others, the we, first person plural, which makes meaning in the world as spacing (l’espacement) and entrelacing of so any worlds, lands, skies, histories- a taking place of sense” (Nancy, 2000, p. 23). He argues that existence is co-existence, that “the singularity of each is indissociable from its being-with many...is indissociable from a plurality” (Nancy, 2000, p. 32). There is no such thing as avoiding the variety of others in the world. Even if one were to isolate himself/herself completely, there are still internal fragments of the singular consciousness in opposition to each other grown from different interactions, histories, and unique combination of likes and dislikes because “‘We’ always expresses a plurality, ‘our’ being divided and entangled” (Nancy, 2000, p. 65). This inescapable opposition between varying internal and external pieces can lead to fear of conflict unless trust-centered respect for all pieces exists. At the very least, leaders should recognize the influences plurality has over the physical and metaphysical world.

Embracing Conflict

Conflict can only truly thrive as positive conflict when trust has supported it. Working with conflict effectively relies on an understanding of power dynamics’ purpose and properties. Michel Foucault presents the properties of power dynamics in three ways: unstoppable, defining, and impermanent.

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His first statement that “the relationship of power can be the result of a prior or permanent consent, but it is not by nature the manifestation of a consensus” refers to the impossible abstinence from power dynamics (Foucault, 1982, p. 788). Because humanity faces the paradox that existence is coexistence and every human is uniquely individual, any consensus is purely for the sake of maintaining order. An agreement requires that someone is always giving something and taking something else simultaneously. Consensus is a collective decision to be content, not to be fully compensated in every possible way. The existence of diverse perspectives prevents total equality as much as it preserves individuality.

Individuality often rightfully receives praise as a virtue that expands team knowledge of alternative possible solutions. Foucault argues that when people join, they do not aim to morph their individuality to the other's individuality: “Every power relation implies, at least in potencia, a strategy of struggle, in which the two forces are not superimposed, do not lose their specific nature, and do not finally become confused” (Foucault, 1982, p. 794). Instead, they allow qualities of themselves to clash. Conflict does not naturally instill binaries but instead contrasts specific traits enough to further clarify perceptions of a singular identity. These clashes generate increased individuality.

Once clashes create nuanced differences, power structures start to develop out of the chaos. However, like time, power structures are social constructs designed to comfort humanity and simplify a universe of uncertainty. Foucault uses government as an example stating that “the forms and the specific situations of the government of men by one another in a given society are multiple; they are superimposed, they cross, impose their own limits, sometimes cancel one another out, sometimes reinforce one another” (Foucault, 1982, p. 793). Leaders must always recognize that their powers come from their team’s allowance of it. A sobering understanding of how easily power dynamics flip should encourage team leaders to treat teams well and spend the additional effort on building mutual trust.

Constituting Community

Once a foundation of trust has been laid and teams are empowered to engage in constructive conflict, the rest of Lencioni’s pyramid stacks up. Commitment grows out of conflict as teams find involvement among each other. Accountability exists through conversation. Power

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dynamics break down and criticism moves between levels of a superimposed hierarchy. The individual feels more empowered to speak up and generate change. Clashes caused by difference of perspective clarify details on issues and therefore produce more complete solutions. Individual goals blend with team goals so the team succeeds only when its members work together. Healthy conflict is supportive, stimulating, and creative. The frightening monster of management was never conflict itself, but the leaders who denied it the possibility of becoming something truly “beautiful. Beautiful” (Shelley, 2022, p. 51)!

APPENDICES

Appendix A – (The Five Dysfunctions of a Team)

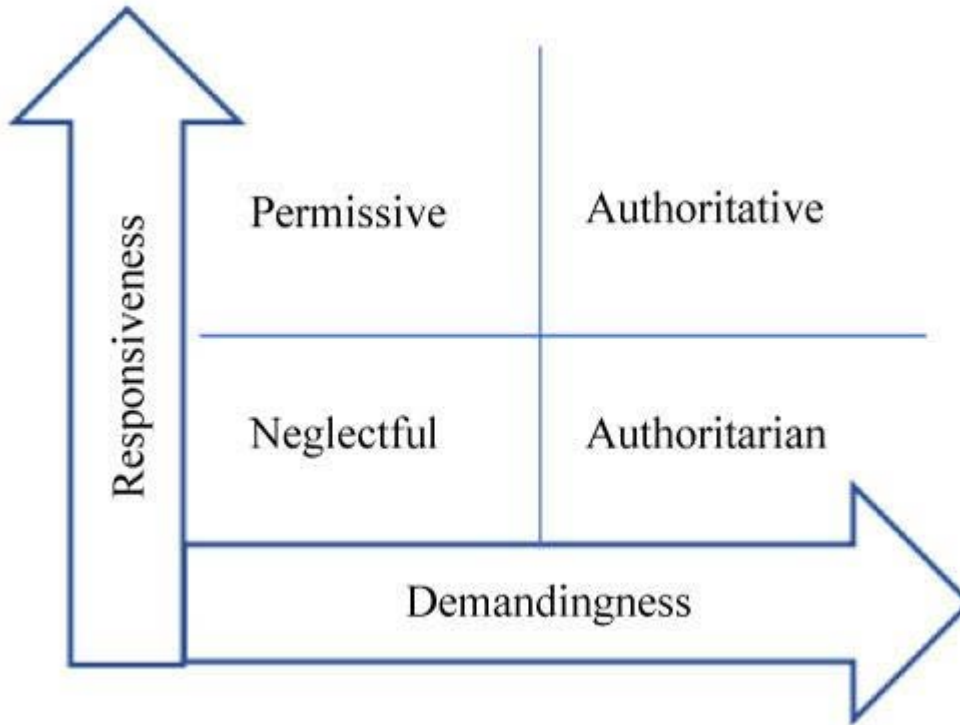
THE FIVE DYSFUNCTIONS OF A TEAM



Patrick Lencioni

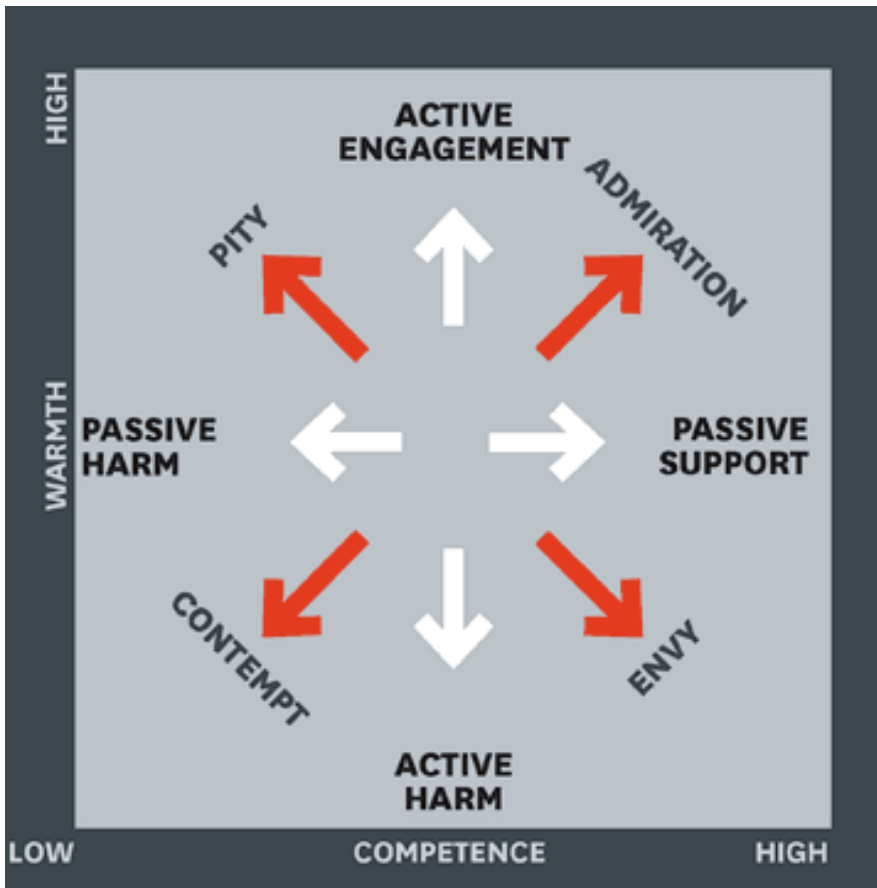
(Lencioni, 2002, p. 188)

Appendix B – (Diana Baumrind’s Parenting Styles)



(Pham TM et al., 2019, p. 3)

Appendix C – (Stereotype Content Model)



(Cuddy et al., 2013, p. 5)

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