The Five Dysfunctions of a Team – Patrick Lencioni

1) **Lack of Trust** - unwilling to be vulnerable within the group. "Invulnerability" is the enemy.
   - Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team.
   - Confident that respective vulnerabilities will not be used against them.
   - Indicators: dread team meetings, reluctant to take risks.
   - Tools to overcome:
     - Personal History Exercise: answer questions about themselves (number of siblings, hometown, unique challenges of childhood, favorite hobbies, first job, worst job).
     - Team Effectiveness Exercise: identify the single most important contribution that each team member makes to the team and one thing they must improve on or eliminate for the good of the team.
     - Personality and Behavioral Preference Profiles: Myers-Briggs, DISC.
     - 360 Degree Feedback: use as developmental tool and not compensation based.
     - Experiential Team Exercises: rigorous and creative outdoor activities.
   - Role of Leader: demonstrate vulnerability first.

2) **Fear of Conflict** – incapable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of an idea. "Artificial harmony" is the enemy.
   - All great relationships, those that last over time, require productive conflict in order to grow.
   - When conflict avoided upfront, often turns to back channel personal attacks.
   - Healthy conflict is actually a time saver. Most people avoid conflict.
   - Tools to overcome:
     - Mining: have courage to call out sensitive issues and force team to discuss.
     - Real Time Permission: team members coach each other not to retreat from healthy debate while it is happening.
   - Role of Leader: when healthy debate is occurring, do not protect members from harm, let resolution occur naturally.

3) **Lack of Commitment** – rarely, if ever, buy-in and commit to decisions. "Ambiguity" is the enemy.
   - Commitment is the function of clarity and buy-in.
   - Two causes of lack of commitment are desire for consensus and the need for certainty.
     - Consensus: reasonable people understand that don't need to get their way to support a decision, just need to know they were heard and considered.
     - Certainty: A decision is better than no decision versus delaying important decisions until all data is gathered. Without clear commitment unresolved discord will occur.
   - Tools to overcome:
     - Cascading Messaging: Review key decisions made and agree on what needs to be communicated to others.
     - Deadlines: have clear deadlines when decisions need to be made.
     - Contingency and Worst Case Scenario: discuss contingency plan and clarify worst case scenario upfront.
     - Low Risk Exposure Therapy: demonstrate decisiveness in low risk situations.
   - Role of Leader: must be comfortable with making a decision that may be wrong.

4) **Avoidance of Accountability** – hesitate to call out their peers on actions and behaviors that hurt the team. "Low standards" is the enemy.
   - Team members who are close to each other have a hard time because they are afraid of losing friendship.
   - Great teams improve team member relationships through accountability.
   - The team is peer pressure.
   - Tools to overcome:
     - Publication of Goals and Standards: what needs to be achieved and progress to goals.
     - Simple and Regular Progress Reviews: a little structure helps, people do what you check.
     - Team Rewards: shift away from individual rewards to team rewards.
   - Role of Leader: allow the team to serve as the first and primary accountability mechanism, not the leader.

5) **Inattention to Details** – individual needs are put ahead of the collective team goals. "Status and ego" are the enemy.
   - Focus on other things like team or individual status.
   - Tools to overcome:
     - Public Declaration of Results: made by the team, not by an individual.
     - Results-Based Rewards: tie achievement to compensation.
   - Role of the Leader: set the tone for focus on results.

Success is not a matter of mastering subtle, sophisticated theory, but rather embracing common sense with uncommon levels of discipline and persistence. Ironically, teams succeed because they are exceedingly human.

Teamwork is the ultimate competitive advantage because it is so powerful and so rare.