

**FREE GUIDE**

# **BUILDING HEALTHY TEAMS**

**BRYAN D. SIMS, Ph.D.**

# BUILDING HEALTHY TEAMS

Building a healthy team is a critical practice for creating environments that foster transformation. There is a clear assumption throughout this book that a team is necessary to overcome adaptive challenges and more effectively and fruitfully fulfill the purpose to which God has called us.

## So how is a healthy team built?

- Begin with a clear purpose
- Select the right leader
- Recruit the right team members
- Build in healthy DNA
- Establish clarity

### **Building a team begins with a *clear purpose*.**

It's important to have clarity around the team's "why." While people may initially commit to a leader, without a clear shared purpose, they are unlikely to stay.

### **Along with clear purpose, a team must have the *right leader*.**

Who fills this spot may be assumed because of a person's position or role, but it is key to find a person with deep passion and a calling for the mission with the gifts, skills, maturity, and experience to lead.

### **With clarity of purpose and the right leader, it is now critical to recruit the *right team members*.**

Jesus spent the night in prayer prior to recruiting his own team,<sup>1</sup> and prayer should be the starting point for us, too. Next, assuming shared purpose (which is essential), identify what gifts, perspectives, strengths, and skills most complement the leader of the team.<sup>2</sup> Only once those complimentary gifts, perspectives, and skills have been considered can you begin to think who might be suitable. And don't forget that diversity on a team will lead to greater impact and effectiveness.

Now the team leader needs a script for recruiting team members, which should include the team purpose and commitment expectations, along with the reason each person is being invited. Too many leaders apologize when asking for a team commitment because they know people are busy. (As we discussed throughout the book, this is often actually more about our own insecurities than our concern for people.) Rather than apologizing, invite people into something with great value that connects with their passions and sense of purpose.

**Once team members are recruited, it is critical for the team to be built on *healthy DNA*.**

For SLI, this means requiring a commitment to practicing Loving, Learning, and Leading (L3) as a way of life, creating and adhering to a team covenant (see Appendix B), establishing practices that help us grow as spiritual leaders (see Appendix C), and discerning how the Holy Spirit will lead us through our greatest adaptive challenges toward the purpose and vision of the team.

**Finally, it is important for the team to *function with clarity*.**

Establishing clarity begins with being specific about meeting schedules and regularity. SLI insists that teams meet for at least eight hours per month for a minimum of a year. This allows the time to practice L3 without rushing the formational, relational, or missional priorities. (Your time frame may be different.)

For individuals to be committed, they must put the team meetings on their calendars. We encourage teams to set the meeting schedule for the entire year. If adjustments are needed along the way, the team can discuss this and make modifications. Planning the opening meeting is also essential for establishing clarity and starting strong. Whenever possible, we encourage retreats for opening sessions, which allows people to get away and enjoy building relationship with one another, worshiping together, and beginning their team process with high commitment.

<sup>1</sup> See Luke 6:12–13.

<sup>2</sup> There are a variety of tools for discovering one's own gifts, perspectives, and strengths. These could include doing an APEST assessment (see <https://5qcentral.com/tests/>), a StrengthsFinder assessment (see <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253868/popular-cliftonstrengths-assessment-products.aspx>), discovering your Enneagram number (see <https://www.enneagraminstitute.com/>), taking a personality assessment (for an example see <https://www.myersbriggs.org/>), or any number of spiritual gifts surveys. The self-awareness that comes from these discoveries highlight not only strengths but also areas where other strengths are needed to complement one another in a team.

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Bryan D. Sims is a pioneer, coach, writer, and professor and is the author of *Leading Together: The Holy Possibility of Harmony and Synergy in the Face of Change* (100Movements Publishing, 2022). For more than two decades, he has been a Leadership and Change Coach with Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (SLI) where he has walked with leaders, teams, churches, and organizations to bring spiritual awakening and missional effectiveness. He also serves in leadership with the Movement Leaders Collective and is a professor of Leadership at Asbury Theological Seminary. He and his wife MyLinda have been happily married since 1997 and have four children: Isaiah, Luke, Silas, and Lydia.

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