

- [Announcer] This is, the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast.

- Welcome to the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast. I'm so thankful that you join us again this month, thank you for being a part of our leadership community. We honestly believe that when the leader gets better everyone gets better. Maybe you're new with us, if you are we release a brand new teaching on the first Thursday of every single month. I would love to encourage you and invite you to subscribe. You can subscribe on iTunes or on YouTube. And I also want to say thank you to those of you that are rating or reviewing the podcast. It makes a big difference and if this is helpful to you and you can spare a minute or so to write a review or to share on social media invite others to be a part, that would mean the world to me. I do understand that a lot of you are going through this teaching with your teams. I want to encourage you on this particular one especially I think it could be incredibly helpful to gather your core leaders around you and talk about some of the issues. I think it can be really really really helpful. So let me tell you what we're gonna do today. I'm gonna answer a couple of questions. If you have any questions at all you can always email me at leadership@life.church. Maybe you have suggestions of, what you'd like to hear about, questions, comments or ideas email me anytime leadership@life.church. Also if you want the show notes, we'll be happy to send you those show notes every single month, just let us know that you'd like them. I'm going to answer two of your questions then we're gonna dive into some new content. At the end we're gonna review the content so it will hopefully stick better and then I want to bring some application questions. This is probably the most important thing that we do, is we take what we learn and then we try to apply it so, hang with me to the end, I'll try to work hard to keep the content impactful and also do it in 25 minutes or less. Let's dive into one of the questions that came in. This was from someone who's anonymous. Anonymous is also non-confrontational. Someone asked this question because, "I'm not a confrontational person, "I'm having to battle my desire "not to hurt anyone's feelings "and yet do what's best for the organization. "I realize that I'm being stretched in growing in this role "but it's hard for me to practice or grow "in my leadership on real people. "What are some steps that you would suggest "that can help me overcome this struggle." Well let me just say first of all, this is a very common struggle. Very few people are naturally confrontational. In fact, if you're naturally confrontational, you're probably not a very nice person so, let's just recognize this is a common issue. Part of the problem I believe is that, confrontation gets a bad rap. The word confrontation it just, it almost has a bad feel to it. Maybe if we rebrand the idea, it might be a little bit easier to get your mind around. Let's reframe the idea of confronting and let's consider it more coaching or simply telling the truth. If you follow my logic you'll see why confronting others is actually a really good thing to do. What is telling the truth? Telling the truth is one of the most loving things that you can do. If you don't tell the truth, that's not loving, telling the truth is loving. What is confronting? Well confronting is simply telling somebody the truth. Therefore confronting somebody with the right attitude or the right heart or the right motives, it's actually a very loving thing to do. In any organization if you care about somebody you're gonna care enough to tell them the truth. If you care about your organization, you're gonna care enough to confront. Now, knowing that might help give you the courage to do the right thing but it still may be difficult to do. How do we learn to confront people? What I would suggest is that you actually role play this. This is something I've done many times, is find somebody that I know and trust and actually talk it through. What are you gonna want to do? Well you're gonna want to start with one positive sentence and then you want to get into the meat of what you want to say. You don't want to shoot the breeze for 10 minutes or so that's not fair, you're gonna get right to the heart of it and say "What I'm about to tell you may not be easy to hear "but it's because I love you and value you." And then you tell them the truth and then you get into whatever the issue is. When you're late all the time it impacts, it looks bad on the organization, it shows people that you don't care. Maybe you're not performing with excellence and therefore it hurts team morale. Whatever it is you tell them. And then you

suggest the right behavior. Here's what you can do to improve and then you ask them, do they understand it? And it's really simple but it just takes practice. So sit down with a person and just walk through it and say "What I'm about to tell you may not be easy to hear "but I'm telling you this because I really care and value about you, I care about you." And then point out whatever the behavior is, bring a course of Correction in your explanation and then ask them do they understand and ask them to restate it. And if you practice doing that again and again and again on someone who is a real person but it's not a real game time confrontation, what you're gonna do is find yourself becoming much more comfortable in confronting and that will help you to strengthen your organization and help people get better. Let's deal with another question. Cindy asks, "What advice would you give to someone taking her first leadership role?" Well Cindy, if you just got promoted into a leadership role, congratulations. Three thoughts that come to mind, very simple. Number one, be a student, number two, love those you lead and number three, lead by example. My best advice would be this, be a student. Cindy, your ability to learn is one of your most important qualities that any leader will ever have. Leaders are learners. The fact that you're asking that question shows you want to learn. Even after you've been a leader for 40 years, what are you? You're still a student, always learning. Number two, love those that you lead. The good news is, you don't need a title, you don't need position, you don't need power, you don't need a degree in order to lead. What you need is you need trust, you need to care about people. I've said this before, people will follow a leader with a heart faster than a leader with a title. Care about the people that you lead. And number three, lead by example. In other words simply, be the type of leader that you would love to follow. I love what coach John Wooden says, he says, "The most powerful tool you have in leadership "is your own personal example." Be a student, love those that you lead and lead by example. Let's dive into new content today. The subject I want to talk about is this, I want to talk about strengthening a struggling team, strengthening a struggling team. Let's talk about teamwork for a moment and then we'll dive into the content. If you want to be incrementally better, be competitive. If you want to be exponentially better, be a team. Let me say it again. If you want to be incrementally better, be competitive, be all about you, try to win. If you want to be exponentially better, be a team. Because there's no limit to what can be accomplished when it doesn't matter who gets the credit. Let's be honest, there's nothing like playing on a winning team. If you've ever been in an organization where you're with very talented people, there's a clear vision and a defined strategy, people are passionate, everyone's using their gifts to make a difference, that's a place you're gonna love to work, you're gonna be energized and there a few things more fun than being on a passionate focused driven team. On the other hand, there are a few things more frustrating than being on an apathetic lazy and disengaged team. Unfortunately, the latter is much more common than the former. It's so common in our workplace today to be on teams that just kind of exist, where people are just doing their job but they're not doing their job with others toward a common vision. In fact, what do you see on a struggling team? You're gonna see a team that's lacking in vision, you're gonna see team members that are discouraged, you may see a culture that's unhealthy or perhaps even toxic. What happens? Problems go unaddressed. Everybody knows their problem but nobody does anything about them. You don't feel like you're winning or you don't even know how to measure success in the organization and it's no fun at all. Let's talk about teamwork, what is teamwork? Andrew Carnegie said, "Teamwork is the ability to work together "toward a common vision, "it's the fuel that enables common people "to achieve uncommon results." I love that definition. If you were gonna ask me to boil it down to its simplest form, what is a team? This would be my definition, very simple, a team is a group of people gathered to reach a common goal. That's what it is. We all agree this is what we're trying to do is a group of people gathered to reach a common goal. What do you see though in most workplaces today? You see a group of people in the same place doing their own thing, thinking about their own concerns. There's a big disconnect between what a team is and what people often do. And you'll hear it even in their language or what they think about.

For example, when they come to work, what do they think? If they're thinking like most people, their thought is, "What do I need to do today?" In other words, I have to go to meetings, do this project, respond to emails, what do I have to do today? A team member shows up and thinks intuitively, "What do I get to do today that moves the mission forward? "What do I get to do today that works toward a common goal?" Because the reality is, an unhealthy team is task driven, a healthy team is goal oriented. And this is really important. On an unhealthy team, they're task driven, they're just doing their job but on a healthy productive team, we're goal oriented, we're working in the same direction. And you'll see kind of the differences on an unhealthy team, management wants compliance, they don't want creativity. In fact, if you are innovative you tend to be punished. Who succeeds on an unhealthy team? Generally, mediocre people. It's safest not to take risks, it's safest to blend in, survival is supreme and it's every man for himself. If you're on a team like that right now chances are, you have a moderate to a high level of frustration because you know there's something so much better. As a leader what we need to do is, we need to be honest about the state of our team. And what I want to do is first of all, list five qualities of ineffective teams. Anytime you've got an ineffective or a struggling team, you very likely have one or more likely multiple of these qualities on a struggling team. Anytime there's a team that's not winning, what are you gonna see? You're gonna see one or more of these qualities, you'll have a team that is void of vision. We don't know what the win is, there's no clear and defined strategy, the team is void of vision. Number two is, you got leaders who deflect responsibility. "It's not my fault, it's their fault, somebody else's fault, "it's the markets fault, it's the economy's fault, "it's somebody else's fault." Number three, is you've got team members who resist accountability. "Don't tell me what to do." They'll resist accountability. Number four, is you got team members who avoid conflict and number five, there are leaders who withhold trust. On any struggling team, you'll see one or more of these issues. There's gonna be void of vision, those who deflect responsibility, those who resist accountability, those who avoid conflict or those who withhold trust. As a leader you may say, "Well we have these problems, "so what are we gonna do? "We've got to get the team healthy, "we've got to get everybody on a fun pace, "so what are we gonna do?" One of the most common things I've seen is that a leader says, "Let's go have a team development day." In other words, "Let's go ride go-karts, "let's go do trust falls, "let's go do some kind of adventure somewhere else." While there's nothing wrong with that, I need to be really clear that doesn't solve the root issues of struggling teams. What do we need to understand? Any time a team is struggling is because, there's an unhealthy cycle that's going on. There's always an unhealthy cycle and unproductive or unhealthy teams and as a leader what we need to do, is we have to break the cycle. In fact, let me show it to you. In fact, if you're listening I'll describe it as clearly as I can. On this little chart, this is the unhealthy cycle of unhealthy teams. What you've got is you've got wrong actions, people are doing the wrong thing and that's why we have an unhealthy team. When there's wrong actions, the cycle continues with no confrontation. People are avoiding conflict, they're not taking responsibility so the wrong actions are never confronted. Because they're not confronted, there's casting blame. "It's your fault, it's her fault, it's his fault, "it's their fault, it's somebody else's fault." That leads to negative assumptions well, "No one really cares, we can't really improve, "why are we doing this?" And that leads to more wrong actions and this is the negative cycle. In fact, some of you you may recognize at some point under your leadership, this is what was going on. The wrong actions, you as a leader weren't confronting, people are casting blame, their negative assumptions and the negative cycle continues. On the other hand what we need to do is we need to break the cycle. Anytime we've got a struggling or unhealthy team we need to break the cycle with productive confrontation and this is what the different graph looks like. There's wrong actions and so what do we do? Is we come in and we confront the wrong actions, we do it with the right attitude, the right spirit, we're gonna talk a little bit more about how to do that. Then, if we confront in the right attitude, our team's gonna start accepting responsibility. "Okay it is my fault, we can do better, there's an issue here." The

leaders recognize they haven't done everything, "We're on the same page now." Accepting responsibility moves to positive assumptions, "We're all telling the truth here, "we're getting things done, we're not casting blame, "we're recognizing what we need to do to bring improvement." That leads to productive actions and suddenly you've got a more positive cycle. Anytime there's a negative cycle, what we have to do as a leader is, we have to come in and interrupt the cycle, we do it with productive confrontation. It's our role as a leader, we cannot expect anyone else to do this. Productive confrontation, people start accepting responsibility, then there's positive assumptions and then there are productive actions. Let's talk about, how do we do this as a leader. If we assess our team is not quite as healthy as it should be and let me tell you right now, that's generally the way it is, teams do not drift toward health by accident, they are shaped towards strength on purpose. Teams never drift to health by accident, they're strengthened on purpose. And so over time the default is for a team to become less productive and more unhealthy if we don't bring consistent and constant correction. How do we strengthen a struggling team? The first thing is this, we're gonna diagnose the root of the dysfunction, this is really really important. We're gonna diagnose the of the dysfunction, why? Because you cannot change what you cannot define. As leaders, most of the time what we tend to do and I know I do this is, we tend to focus on the symptoms not on the root issue. For example you might say well "Our business isn't growing." Okay that isn't the problem, that's the symptom of the problem. There's a reason why your business isn't growing. We might say, "Our church is aging." The average age used to be 50 now it's 56. That's not the problem, that's the symptom of the problem, we have to get to the root of the problem. Our team is negative and critical. Why is the team negative and critical? We as a leader have to diagnose the root of the issue. I went through this kind of little exercise with 26 of the top leaders in our organization and this is what was really interesting. What I told them is, "Let's assume that we've got a few team members "that are checked out during meetings. "So maybe we've got eight people in a meeting "and we've got three team members that are checked out, "that's a problem. "What is the root cause of this problem?" And here's what happened, 26 of my top leaders gave me reason after reason after reason that all pointed to the people being the problem. There were eight different team members that responded, "The people are the problem," the ninth answer finally, one of my team members said, "Maybe we as the leader are the problem." And I want you to think about this because this is so true. Whenever there's a problem, we didn't point the finger somewhere else. As a leader we have to accept responsibility that generally speaking, to some degree often a large part, we are the root cause of the problem. For example, let's just walk through the exercise. Let's say we've got eight people on our team, three of the people are constantly checked out during meetings. What could be the problem? Well it could be that they're all three having personal problems, not likely but it could be. Do I have any part of that to own? Well if there's three team members of mine going through significant personal issues and I don't know, guess what? I'm actually a part of the problem, I should be engaged in the lives of my team members so ultimately the root issue points back to me. Let's say that those three team members don't understand the direction or they don't feel like they can succeed. Is it their fault or my fault? Well, maybe it's partially their fault but ultimately, maybe it's my fault for not clearly communicating the direction. Maybe, the meeting is unnecessary, unproductive or a waste of time. Maybe those three people are the sharpest people in the room the other five are just kind of the mediocre ones hanging on and the reality is, I'm boring them like crazy and ultimately it points back to me. I'm not creating an environment that's helpful or productive. Maybe those three team members have a bad attitude. That's partially their responsibility, it could be partially mine, why? Because I tolerated it and I didn't address it months and months ago. So often we need to recognize as the leader, the root cause of the problem more often than not points toward us. Diagnose the root cause of the problem and recognize, this is so difficult, as leaders we need to understand, more often than not, the root lies somewhere close to our own leadership. Diagnose the root cause of the problem. I'd love to talk more about how

to do that, we may in another episode but this is really important, don't just focus on the symptom, ask yourself, "Why is this occurring?" And more often than not, it's going to be a reflection of our own leadership. Then we recognize what the root issue is, we're gonna confront the root issue. You cannot correct what you won't confront. We're gonna confront. In fact, we answered a question about that earlier, it's the loving thing to confront, it's the right thing to confront, it's the healthy thing to confront. It's unhealthy to avoid behavior and you can never have a good team unless you're confronting wrong behaviors. So that's what we're gonna do, we're gonna point out the wrong behavior. Now this is important, we're not attacking people, we're talking about behavior. We have to be real clear on this. Where I'm not coming after you as a person, what I'm doing is we're addressing this behavior. Then we may correct the person privately or we may actually correct the behavior publicly and this matters a lot. There's a time to correct publicly because, it actually occasionally will do the offender a favor to let everyone else know that this behavior has been addressed publicly. No one is wondering and everyone understands that as a leader, we're not going to tolerate this on the team, we have higher standards. We're gonna offer the person a path to improvement and then when they improve, we're gonna celebrate. If they don't improve, guess what? We're gonna remove them because we're not going to tolerate under performers, bad attitudes or divisiveness on our team because our team is moving in a healthy direction. Let me review these big thoughts. If you've got an ineffective or struggling team, here's what you're gonna see. You're gonna see a team that is void of vision, you're gonna see team members that tend to deflect responsibility, you're gonna see team members who resist accountability, you're gonna see those who avoid conflict and you're gonna see leaders who withhold trust. What do we have? We've got a problem, we've got a destructive cycle. So we need to correct the destructive cycle. Whenever there's wrong actions, why are there wrong actions? Because there's no confrontation, because there's no confrontation there's casting blame, there's negative assumptions, there's more wrong actions. What we're gonna do is we're gonna interrupt the cycle. We're going to confront in a productive way and as we do so, suddenly we're all going to accept responsibility then there's going to be positive assumptions and then we're going to see productive actions. What do we do as a leader when we've got a struggling team? We diagnose the root of the dysfunction. Most leaders focus on symptoms, the great leaders are going to focus on the root of the problem. Then we're going to confront the root issue. You cannot correct what you're unwilling to confront. We're not attacking people, we're attacking the wrong type of behavior. Bottom line is let me just say this, as leaders we have to have the courage to admit that we're very likely a part of the root problem. I think it's John Maxwell who says, "Everything rises and falls on leadership." Whenever things are going well, it almost always is because there's a great leader. When things are struggling, we look to the leader. "Everything rises and falls on leadership." If there's a team that's not performing well, we own it. It could be that we've allowed the wrong team members to be on the team. It could be that we're not addressing the problems, it could be that we're not correcting the wrong type of behavior but we need to recognize, more often than not, we are the root cause. Diagnose the root and address the root. Three questions and these are really important. Question number one, on a scale of one to 10 how healthy and strong is your team and why? On a scale of one to 10 how healthy and strong is your team and why? Now here's the fun part, now ask your team and let them respond anonymously. How healthy is your team and why? You put your answer, now ask your team and let them respond anonymously. And here's my guess, more often than not, the leader tends to score the team higher than the rest of the team. If there's a significant disconnect, guess what? We have a problem, we need to get to the root of the problem and see why the team isn't as healthy in the eyes of our team members as it is in ours. And the reality is because we often don't have the clearest objective view of what's really going on in the organization. Scale of one to 10, how healthy is a team and why? Now ask your team. Number two, what quality is the weakest on your team? This is super important. On any struggling team, there's gonna be, they're void of

vision. If your team is not doing well, guess what? It could be because you're not pointing toward the win, "This is who we are, this is what we stand for. "Here's our vision and a clear and defined strategy "to get there." It could be that there's deflecting responsibility. "Not my fault everybody, it's everybody else's fault." It could be that you're resisting accountability. "Well it's their department "and you can't tell me what to do "and this is the way we do it here, "we've always done it this way." That could be the problem. It could be they're avoiding conflict. Everybody knows there's a problem going on and nobody's talking about the problem. That is a very big problem. It could be that there's withholding trust. We're not vulnerable with each other, we're not extending trust, we're not cooperating, we're competing with one another. This is really important, define of these five, which one or two is weakest on your team. Are you void of vision? Are you deflecting responsibility? Are you resisting accountability? Are you avoiding conflict or are you withholding trust? Number three, super important, once you've named a problem area or a symptom, what is the root cause of the problem? Once you've named the problem, what is the root cause of the problem? And here's where the rubber meets the road, what will you do to address the root? You may say, "Craig that's complicated." Leaders deal with complicated issues. "I'm not sure what to do." Well, you're the leader keep asking questions, keep pressing in, keep doing what leaders do. You are where you are because you have the gift of leadership. You're not perfect but you're getting better every single day. Diagnose the root and lead to where things are supposed to be, that's what great leaders do. When the leader gets better, everyone gets better. Thank you again for joining us, I'll be with you again this time next month. Thank you for sharing on social media. Leaders be yourself, why? Because people would rather follow a leader who's always real than one who's always right.

- Hey thanks again for joining us here at the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast. If you enjoyed this episode or want to find additional resources, show notes or maybe even a past episode, you can find all of that on our web site at Life.Church/leadershippodcast. There you can also sign up to have all of these resources sent directly to you via email. And one of the things you can do to help get the word out is by rate, review and subscribing to this podcast on iTunes. It's a great way for you to help actually build leaders around the world and get the word out. Thanks again for joining us here on the Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast, we'll see you next time.