

Belonging to a Close-Knit Team: A Powerful Remedy for Burnout

Description

In a recent presentation for the Gratitude Symposium, Dr. Stephen Beeson explained that a sense of collegiality, community, and belonging is the most powerful countermeasure to burnout.
While Dr. Beesonâ??s work was focused on healthcare (you can find his session here), this is something everyone can relate to. He clearly explained how the best antidote to the exhaustion, cynicism, and disconnection that come with burnout is being part of a strong, collaborative team.
I thought Dr. Beeson did a beautiful job of describing what he called the â??camaraderie and sense of esprit de corpsâ?• that honors and values each and every team member. He used simple language and a lot of specificity to show the kind of team that helps remedy burnout, the kind that feels good to be a part of. The thing I liked most about his presentation is that he decoded the very specific behaviors that make a team collegial and create a sense of belonging.
Here are a few of the particular behaviors that the best teams exhibit:
They often describe their team as their family, their tribe.
They look out for each other and check in on each other.
They have fun together. They pick on each other, they have March Madness competitions, they have Fitbit competitions.
They ask things like â??What did you do over the weekend?â?•
They lift each other up. We all have hard days and hard moments and hard circumstances in our lives, but when we have a team to rely on, we can get through them.
These teams purposely operate with low authority gradients. This means people arenâ??t afraid to speak up if they suspect someone above them is making a mistake.
They freely share and harvest ideas from one another. Thereâ??s this sense of wanting to tap into the best ideas of the people on the team.
They recognize and appreciate and have gratitude for one another.
They position each other well, to patients and to colleagues.
They bring hope and belief to one another.
They create a real sense of belonging, which is a fundamental human need. It means more than just having other people around you. Thereâ??s a lot of loneliness in healthcare especially where people have traditionally been trained to be self-reliant and go it alone.
Everyone feels valued and appreciated and challenged and coached and mentored as part of the team theyâ??re in.
It would be great if this kind of team happened naturally, but it doesnâ??t. It has to be deliberately shaped. The right leader behaviors need to be consistently in place. (Dr. Beeson notes that â??bullhorn

and mandateâ?• wonâ??t cut it.) From my own experience, it may help to show employees what right looks like by capturing behaviors like the ones above in a Standards of Behavior document that everyone signs off on.

As Dr. Beeson notes, when you successfully cultivate and nurture this kind of connection among employees they will say â??I love coming to work. I love my team. I love my family, I love my tribe, and Iâ??m super proud of them. I love those people. I couldnâ??t imagine going anywhere else.â?•

Also, he made a great point about how all of this creates *intrinsic accountability* inside your culture. This a more powerful driver than external accountability which is driven by outside forces. Intrinsic accountability boils down to â??you can count on me.â?•

When we can create strong, connected, collaborative teams where people feel they belong, we find employees are willing to do a lot for their coworkers. Even in the toughest circumstances they will keep pressing forward. They will find a way. Once that kind of culture is in place it can change everything for your organization.

To hear great speakers like Dr. Beeson, please visit the Gratitude Symposium, which is a series of free virtual presentations meant to thank, teach, and inspire those in healthcare.

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