



Leadership Kryptonite

Paul writes, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7, ESV).

We took the kids to see Inside Out 2 this past weekend. It was a great movie that brought both tears and laughter. I felt like I was reliving the first year of my children’s adolescence, but from inside their minds. The main character, Riley, is suddenly thrust into puberty, and new emotions move in overnight and take over. In the first movie, “Joy” was Riley’s primary driving emotion, but now, “Anxiety” tries to take the helm. When Anxiety is left unchallenged, it leads Riley into a state of panic that causes her to make a series of unhealthy choices.

Jenna and I both began doing a praise break in the theater when Joy stepped back in and said to Anxiety, “You have to let her go!”

A healthy dose of fear or anxiety keeps us from running off in dangerous directions, but when fear or anxiety dominate a team, it always leads to a dead end of productivity.

Leadership Kryptonite #2: Fear & Anxiety

When fear and anxiety drive a team, they stifle creativity and innovation. They inhibit open communication, preventing honest dialogue. Together, they create misunderstandings and leave unresolved conflicts in their wake. They work against collaboration, create a culture of finger-pointing and blame-shifting, and bring down morale. Ultimately, fear and anxiety lead to indecisiveness and a reluctance to make bold choices that challenge the status quo.

This leadership kryptonite, left unchecked on your team, is like trying to drive with the emergency brake on full time.

Here's the deal—these are basic human emotions, which means they are always present. The question is: are they in a healthy or unhealthy space?

Ask Yourself:

- Are you reluctant to take the lead on new projects?
- Is the atmosphere around you stressful and anxious?
- Is there a big elephant in the room no one is willing to address?
- Are you resistant to change and new ideas?
- Are you disengaging in meetings or distancing yourself from other team members?
- Is there a tendency to point the finger and shift blame?
- Are you suspicious of the motives of others?
- Have you recently tried something new and failed?

- Do you value and welcome honest feedback?
- Is there an artificial harmony on the team?

The Cycle of Fear and Anxiety on a Team:

1. Avoidance:

- The natural response when fear or anxiety is present is to avoid the situation rather than face it.

2. Erosion:

- When situations are avoided, they do not just go away or work themselves out. They begin to slowly erode and deteriorate.

3. Destruction:

- No foundation can withstand constant erosion; eventually, it gives way and the structure collapses.

Overcoming Fear and Anxiety:

1. Put Fear In Its Place:

- **Fear God, Not Man:** Proverbs 29:25 states, “The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.” Shifting focus from seeking human approval to seeking God’s approval can free leaders from the trap of fear.
- **Talk to God, Not Your Anxious Thoughts:** Paul said to make your requests known to God, who brings peace. If you haven’t prayed about it, you’ll never properly address it.

2. Put Fear On The Table:

- **Encourage Vulnerability:** Foster an environment where leaders and members feel safe to share their struggles and

weaknesses. James 5:16 encourages believers to “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”

- **Welcome Constructive Feedback:** Embrace feedback from trusted individuals who can provide honest perspectives. Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.” This mutual accountability helps leaders stay true to their mission.

3. **Put Fear To Work:**

- **Fear Missing Out:** When you fear the right things, you align your focus correctly. For instance, I fear missing an opportunity to win souls. I fear missing a future harvest because we did not build well today. Fear is not the absence of faith; it’s just faith pointed in the wrong direction. So when we turn our fears around, we create an environment for the miraculous.

Questions:

- 1) Look back at the list of questions. Which one rings the most true for you?
- 2) What big elephant is not being addressed right now?
- 3) What conversations are you avoiding?
- 4) What opportunities are you afraid you’re missing out on?