

Today we are talking about, going from such great positive stuff, moving into negative things. Like negative team members and how to lead a negative team member. This is one of those things that a lot of people struggle with. I mean, come on, who hasn't experienced a negative team member somewhere where they worked before, or many negative team members. I can tell you there are places, and I hate to think back to those days. I hate to think back to those days where you have a bunch of negative people or a handful of negative people. I've had some of those team members and just hated being around it. You hear me say that champions don't want to be around negative junk because they don't. I don't, I can't stand it.

Whenever we have anything that comes up that might possibly be negative here, guess what we do? We hit it head on, we tackle it, we talk about it, we talk through it. I lead the team, I guide them, I direct them. We literally today had a fantastic conversation with the whole team about a situation and how people can perceive things and how some people might hear something one way and somebody's going to take it on another way and yada yada yada. All kinds of stuff leading the team into understanding our root systems and what happens to us when we are in and while we are fighting to change lives and help people, and just a powerful, powerful discussion, a powerful meeting about it that was one of those things that grew my team. It grows your team when you spend time focusing on this and solving stuff.

If you have people that are in it to win it, did I just say that? That are in it, that are going to take it seriously, that are focused on growth that are focused on bettering themselves. If you have people that are in it for that and you know how to lead them, then great. Fantastic. It's going to work. The struggle that I find all the time is that nobody has taught most leaders how to do just that.

Most leaders gain their leadership wisdom/knowledge/direction from the people who led them and if they did a bad job, then guess what? You're probably going to do a bad job. If that's your leadership before you ... I've had good leaders, I've had terrible leaders. I'm going to be talking about this very thing at the next level leadership live event. I discovered within months of being put in leadership, within months, how not to do it the way I had been taught.

I have been working since I was fourteen years old. Literally. I've literally been working since I was fourteen, and so I had been working for quite awhile, had a few leaders and I started doing the very things I'd been taught and I watched it not work. I watched it tank quickly and within a few months, probably about six months of my leadership, I was on the ground floor of Etrade back in the day, and I wasn't even in a supervisor role, I was an assistant supervisor back in those days, but assisting in leading the team and watching my leadership style just tank people, and it not work out. I had to make some very quick adjustments and started learning how to do it the right way and as I started learning and started trying and testing and seeing, does this work, does this work, does this work, at twenty one years old I was doing this. I started discovering what works best.

Most people don't do that. They don't spend time trying to figure out how to lead well. They spend time trying to convince other people that they are a leader, that they have a title, that you should listen to me, that I'm important. Forget that junk. That doesn't mean anything. That doesn't mean anything. It doesn't get you more loyalty, it doesn't get you more work. In fact it shuts your team members down more.

Instead, I wanted very productive team members, so I learned how to speak to them. I learned how to lead them. I learned that I needed to be the one out front in the process and when it comes to negative team members, that is something that I have struggled with throughout my career as in leadership, in entrepreneurship because there are some people out there that are just dang negative. They assume a ton of junk. They assume that there are all these bad things about the company, that there's bad things about the leadership. They've always got a reason; they've always got something going on. Nobody can ever do anything right, nobody can do anything good enough. There are always problems and they've always got to complain about it.

I can tell you that it is one of the most frustrating places to be for you as a leader if you are a champion and definitely your team members if they are champions. That type of person would not make it in my culture. Period, because my culture, my team would be like oh heck no, we are not letting this in. Everybody in my team has come from a place that has had bad culture. Everybody's experienced that. Everybody that is listening to this has experienced bad culture.

Just look at our societies culture today. There is this insane clash of hatred and negativity and junk and everybody wants to call everybody else out on their negativity, on their crap, on everything and tell everybody how wrong they are, and tell everybody how bad they are. It is just beyond annoying. While you are not going to do a whole heck of a lot about it out in society, you better do something about it when it comes to your team.

Listen leaders, you've got to take action. You have to do something about it, because I can promise you this...allowing one negative team member to chase off two champions, is going to implode your team. I don't care if you are the team leader, I don't care if you are the entrepreneur, some one has to jump on this. Somebody has got to do something about it, but I'm probably going to tell you some things that you're not expecting to hear from me.

When you are looking at that team member ... I've got seven things I just want to hit with you on. Hit with you on? I want to hit you on. I don't know. Being able to speak intelligently is one of those things 😊 so now I have eight things I want to teach you about. There are seven things I want to hit you with, how about that. Oh boy. The thing is you have to understand, when I'm talking about negativity, I'm not talking about somebody who just shoots holes in things because they can. I'm not talking about somebody who just sees problems in presentations and all that. I'm talking about somebody who is coming up with some crazy stuff, and I shouldn't even say crazy. Bad assumptions. Somebody with a broken belief system about you, about the team, about the company, whatever it is.

If you don't stop that right now, then what you are allowing to happen is you are allowing them to shape and mold your culture. They're literally forcing culture on you and the company, or at least that team. If you are a team leader, it is absolutely shaping your team's culture. Do not allow it. It is dangerous.

First thing you have to do, number one, you must desire to help the team member overall. This is the most important thing that you've got to set as a mindset. As you go into this thing, most people just want to shut the negativity down, they just want to shut the person down, they want to stop the junk, they don't want to hear in anymore. Listen, there's a reason why this person is being this way. You have to start off by caring more about them than yourself.

Chris, why would I even do that? This is somebody who's spreading poison, this is somebody who is forcing bad negative culture, you just said so. Why would I want to do that? Because you might find out some important stuff. You might find out some things that you need to hear about you, about the team, about the company. You don't know until you care more. You've got to care more about them. The moment a team member understands that you care more about them than solving them as a problem, that's the moment that they will open up to you. That's the moment that you will get good quality information from them.

What you might find out is there is somebody who doesn't belong at your business. What you might find out is there is somebody who does not belong on your team. You may find that out, but you also might find out that you've done a cruddy job as a leader. Who knows? You might find out that they are learning things on the front lines that nobody else is. You never know. You've got to start by caring more about them, desiring to help them overall. If you go in with that, understand this is one of god's kids, you know, think about it being one of your children sitting in that chair, how would you want them to be treated by their leadership?

Second thing is when you are tackling a very negative team member; take them out of the office. Don't do it there. Don't do it where you know it's going to get people talking. You know that people are going to see that there is this conversation going on, and by the way, it could get heated, they might blow up a little bit. Don't even set yourself up for that junk. Take them out of the office. Take them to go get coffee, take them somewhere close. It doesn't matter. Maybe go find a park or something like that, go find a bench and sit down and talk to them.

Get yourself out of the environment, because the environment is representing most likely a problem that they are having, so get them out of that. If they are struggling with the team, if they are struggling with the leadership, if they are struggling with the company as a whole, then go ahead and get them out of that place where they are not focused on that. I've taken the opportunity to take a team member to a park bench and just sit down and talk with them, and it was so easing to them, it was so calming to them, because it wasn't in the environment that they were struggling in so heavily. Get them away from the office; go spend some quality time with them.

Number three, explain why the meeting. You have to make a judgment on how important this meeting is. Is this a discussion or is this a nine-one-one emergency meeting. You have to discover what that is and then you have to set that tone. In other words, if it is a nine-one-one ... Hey listen, I wanted to talk to you, but before we get into everything, I need you to understand this is a nine-one-one meeting. This is something that you have to understand, if we don't fix this today, if we don't solve this in this meeting, it's an emergency. There's going to be repercussions, there's going to be consequences, so I need you to understand what this meeting is all about.

You have to say up front, so that they have an expectation of what's going on. If they're going into this meeting thinking that they are going to beat you up and be able to control and manipulate you, well then guess what? That's the tone they are going to take. If they understand that you may fire them after this meeting, they're going to understand that. They're going to know, okay this is very serious, I could lose my job right now.

If it's not that kind of meeting, then back it down. Hey, listen this isn't a nine-one-one meeting or hey listen, I'm seeing something that is starting to get out of hand or something that we need to hit on, so this isn't an emergency, I just wanted to touch on it. Wherever that range is, wherever that place is, whatever the importance of that meeting is, explain it, explain the why.

This is why we are doing this because it's just something that I see might get out of control. Whatever that is, make sure their expectation is set on the front side. Too many leaders, and I tell you, I have had leaders who I love to death, great people. People with the greatest hearts that I've watched have an emergency meeting with somebody and the person walked away having no clue. No idea that it was important, no idea that it was an emergency. No idea whatsoever, and that leader going I think it went well.

No, no it did not. They have no clue that you are about to fire them. Bring them back in and start all over again. They have got to understand how important this is or they have to understand how vital this is, because if they don't understand that, then they are probably not going to be as serious about it as they go about their daily walk.

Number four. You have to set ground rules. Listen, no being mad, no yelling, and this goes for both people, or everybody involved, whatever it is. There is no need. The moment people get emotionally out of control; you're losing the control of the conversation itself. Control, by the way, is an illusion. The concept is I'm going to shut you down with my threat of anger. That doesn't ... We're trying to have a conversation here, we're not trying to have a battle of who can control what.

Set the ground rules. Listen, no being mad, no yelling, no being personally offended if something does come up, then I need you to say something. If something comes across the wrong way, if I say something and it's offensive to you, then instead of being offended, do me this favor, ask this question, "Hey did you mean to say that this way?" Now, yes, I know that this is going to be difficult to do, but let's try it. Let's try and not get offended.

The moment you become personally attached to the conversation itself, it's over with. Somebody's going to try and stay in control. Somebody's going to try and be over the other person, but if you can stay from being mad, if you can stay from yelling, if you can stay from being offended or feeling the need to defend in the situation, then we can have an actual conversation.

It's something I work on with team members from time to time, is saying, hey listen, as we talk through this, if I see somebody that feels the need to be defensive in a situation, I will say why are you feeling the need to defend, and allow them the time to go huh, why do I feel ... Well I feel the need to defend because of this, this and this. Is that even something I'm asking about? Well no. Am I the kind of leader that rips your head off? Well of course not. What am I going to do next? You are going to ask how do we solve this. Great. Don't defend, no need to defend. I cannot stand the blame game. I hate the blame game. I don't care. I want to find out how did it happen, how do we solve it, how do we make sure it never happens again.

If it happens five times, not even five. If it happens three times, now we've got a different type of problem, but that usually does not happen in my culture, so I don't care about the blame game. How do we solve it, what do we do, how do we fix, how do we go forward, how do we make sure it never happens again.

Set those ground rules. Listen, no blaming, no need to blame anybody here. No need to...if you feel the need to defend, I want you to think about it, because we are talking about a conversation that may require them to defend themselves, so just tell them, if you start to feel that way, remember, I'm trying to have a conversation, I'm not trying to beat you up. I don't want you to feel that way, so put down as many ground rules as necessary, but understand that you better follow your own freaking ground rules.

Don't put ground in place and then you don't do anything about it. You only hold it against them. I've seen that as well. I've seen leaders that can yell or can prod somebody into a direction and then the moment they respond in a negative way, they shut them down. It's like you are the one who got them there, so don't do that either.

Number five, one of the most important. It's all about perspective. Listen, you've got to ask tons and tons of questions and plan on following up every question with a why. I had a client whose team member was just blowing up at leadership. He was so upset with how things were going, a sales person, and he literally was telling people, he literally believed that the company was trying to push their best sales people out. This is literally what he believed.

Now, I want to know why are you thinking that, so I want to find out how do you view the company. I want to know that. I want to know what they are thinking. I want to know what's in their mind. If they are thinking that the company is just a group of individuals that doesn't care about anybody else and all they care about ... I mean, listen to what is happening in society today, because of some idiots that made some really big mistakes, all business is bad. All corporate is bad. All leaders are bad. Anybody who is an entrepreneur is bad. It's just ridiculous how everybody in business is ... businesses are bad. No they're not. Businesses are who actually employ. Small businesses are who actually employ half of this country.

Listen. I want to know, what is your view of the company? If your view is this company only cares about money. This company only cares about taking care of themselves. This company only cares about building mansions and buying cars or whatever. I want to know that. Then I want to know why. Why is that true for you?

We had a fantastic team that came in a couple weeks ago and some of the old school people used to make this comment about well that just got the owner another swimming pool. It was like a huge order of something that netted a thousand dollars or fifteen hundred dollars, but for some reason, somebody put poison in the team members and said, oh look, all of our hard work just got the owner a swimming pool. Oh for the love! Does that even make sense? Do you even understand what it is you are talking about?

I want to know how do you view the company and why. If you believe that the owner, who is taking all the risk, who's put the money in place, is just getting rich off the sweat off your back and apparently you are walking home with peanuts, I'd like to know why. Why do you view it that way? How do you view your pay? I would love to hear you say if somebody is getting paid really well or ... you guys know me, you need to be paying market rate or better. If you are not then there's a problem.

If you are making what you should be making or better, then I want to know why you have a big problem with it. I want to understand why do you view it that way. How do you view the leadership? Why? How do you feel the company views you? Why? I want to know what the person thinks. Why? I might be able to answer some questions. I'm not going to swing in there and go ballistic on them. If somebody says I believe the owner is getting completely rich off of all of this junk over here. Why do you believe that?

Here's what you will find. Every single time. Every single time, you will find that the person doesn't have information. Well, he must be. Why? It's a whole truckload of stuff. What's the margin on that? I don't know. Well then how can you possibly assume? What you will find is, as you dig, dig, dig and you are not being a jerk, if you are being a jerk, you are just going to put them on the defensive, and that's not going to do anything, but what you will discover is that they will get themselves to a place where they go, well you know, I guess I don't know.

A reasonable person will. A reasonable person will get to a place where they go huh, I guess I don't have that information. Okay, well did somebody tell you that? Did somebody tell you that is what's happening? They may tell you, they may not, but the point is that they will walk themselves to a place where all you have to do is say why, and their inability to have an answer will get them to a place where they realize that oh, I guess I don't have good quality information on this. I'm making comments about it, but I don't have any good quality information.

Ask them questions. Find out what's going on. Find out why they feel that way. Find out how they feel about the leadership, how the company views them. How do you think we view you? This is a powerful piece because they may actually walk down a path of truth. I think you guys think that all I do is sit on my phone all day long and text my friends. Do you? Are you on Facebook all day long? The reason why I ask that question is because I've walked by your desk many times and seen that you had Facebook up, so help me to understand why you are on Facebook on company time. Well, I mean it was just a few minutes. Yeah, but are you being paid for that time? Well yeah. Isn't that stealing from the company? What are they going to say? Well no, of course not. Well why wouldn't it be? Okay, well if that's not stealing then let's go ahead and take that time and tack it on the end of the day. Let's work an extra half hour today, how's that sound? Well I don't want to do that. Well, okay, then stop stealing from the company.

As you see, you can help them to see that their thought processes, and maybe they're right. If they come along and say listen, all I get from leadership is shut down. Every time I give a great answer, all I get is shut down. Can you give me an example? Absolutely. The other day in the meeting with Frank, I know what's going on because I'm on the front lines. This thing over here is happening and guess what, I know how to solve that and every time I try to talk to Frank about it, he just shuts me down.

Guess what? You may have a problem with Frank, not allowing his team members to be great. Not wanting to hear a team member have a right or better answer than Frank has. You may discover this. Get the information. Dig in there, dig in there. Don't just assume that the person you are talking to is wrong. Again, if they are being negative, we'll get there, we still have to solve this part, but get the perspective. Until you have all of the quality perspective, you can't make a quality decision. Dig, dig, dig. Lots of why's. Why, why, why, dig, dig, dig.

Only give the information that you need to. Obviously you don't need to give them company private information, but give them as much as you can to help them to understand things and get them to a place of having quality knowledge. This may also help you to discover that we have a really bad communication problem on our team, in our company, about a certain product, whatever it is. Do as much perspective as you possibly can.

Number six. Focus on understanding. This is separate. Yes, you are doing all the perspective, perspective, perspective, but this is something specific when it comes to the company. Focus on understanding why they believe the company wouldn't want them to succeed. This is a separate piece. If it's not about this, then obviously you wouldn't go down this road, but just the belief alone that my company does not want me to succeed can be huge poison inside of your business. Can turn into tons of gossip. Can turn into a huge lack of productivity inside of your team.

If that is one of the pieces, then this is a must. Like I talked to you about the sales person saying this company wants to push their best sales people out. Hey, explain to me why the company would want to do that. Help me to understand why the company would want to push out their best sales person. What are they going to say? There is usually only one or two things. Well I don't know, or so they can bring in somebody who makes less money.

Let's think about this for a second. Let's think about this for a second. What you are saying is we want to push you out, who sells a ton ... We're not talking about highly paid poor sales people, people who don't sell well, but we still pay them a lot. That's not what we are saying. The concept is pushing out their best sales people. People who do the best amount of sales. People who feel that, that tend to believe you want to bring in people with less experience so you can pay them less. Let's think about that for a second. If we do that, that means we are going to bring in people who can't sell anywhere near what you can, so that we can pay them a little less than what we are paying you. You have the advantage. You are bringing in the sales. We are paying you great money, but you are bringing in great money. You're our best sales person, or one of our best sales people, but what you believe is the company wants to push you out so we can get a less experienced sales person and pay them less.

By how much, really? How much could it possibly be? If it was in half, could it possibly make up for the massive loss of the sales you are bringing in? We are talking about best salesperson. People can come up with these thoughts, and what happens is when they've got them, they spread them. They gossip. They poison other people with it and if you don't help them to see how the thought just is ridiculous in it's function. Obviously don't call them ridiculous, don't call them anything out like that. What I'm saying is help them to see. Explain to me why we would want to do that.

Let them give all the answers that they possibly can come up with. Why? Why would we do that? Why, why, why, then help them to see. We don't want to lose all the sales that you are making, so that we can drop a little bit of your salary to make way less sales. Why would we want to do that? Can I assure you

that that is the last thing we want to do. The only way you can assure them is to help them to see that it is not in the company's best interest to kick out their best sales people. Unless you just want to tank the company, and if you do, then you probably are not having this meeting because you probably don't care about this meeting. Focus on understanding why the belief system, the broken belief system that the company would not want them to succeed.

This is in any role. If you've got an admin who feels like you just don't want them to succeed. If you've got a leader who feels that way, and again, if you are trying to kick team members out of the company, you are probably not having this meeting. This is to the people who are not doing that. If you have a leader who feels that way. Why do you feel that way? Help me to understand why you believe that. Then fill in the information. The communication will help to remove the fear. It will help to get them feeling good about their position and it will help to have them not have the broken belief system. Make sure that you fill that in.

After all of that, number seven. We are going to wrap this bad boy up. After you help them to get perspective, after you've shown them that you care, after you set their expectations, after you've removed them from the area that's probably making them feel bad, after you've set all the ground rules, you've gotten all the perspective, you've helped them to see that the company does want them to succeed or at the very least the leadership over them wants them to succeed, that's when we wrap this thing up. After all this stuff, I need you to understand, we can't have the negativity. I'm assuming that you are on the same page. Hey I'm so glad we are on the same page. I do have to have you understand, I can't have the negativity. I can't have that as we go back. Do you see how destructive it is for the team? Do you see how destructive it is for the culture?

If you guys have had a phenomenal conversation, and you're on the same page, then that person is going to be like yeah I totally get it, I absolutely can see why that's happening. I can see how that's happening. They are going to understand you at least in this meeting they will. You are going to have to lead it when you get back and make sure and call them out when they do. Just make sure that if they are, they understand that you are watching it and if you have to have a follow up meeting, you have to have a follow up meeting, but if we are on the same page and they understand, by the way you can come to me anytime. If you start believing any of this stiff, come to me or send me an email or do something.

Here's the important thing. Going back, this affects our culture. This affects the way that other people feel. Other people don't like to be around this. Other people don't want to experience this. What they will probably do is tell you so and so doesn't mind. Good. Now I have another person I have to have a conversation with, but if they are really great people that just needed to be heard and just needed a conversation, then they absolutely will see it and they will go back and they will fight for that as well. They will make sure they are not doing that.

If they are not, and they are not somebody that we did not have a good conversation, they are just set in their ways, they can't get this, then it becomes a hey, listen. At the end of this meeting, I'm going to tell you from everything we discovered, I need to let you know how important going back is. If we don't stop the negativity going back, the next meeting is going to be a nine-one-one meeting. I need you to expect that going back, I need to make sure you are not doing this, you are not saying this, this isn't happening, all the stuff that you need. If it does, then I can guarantee you we are going to be sitting back here again and it's going to be a nine-one-one meeting. It's going to be an emergency meeting, so let's make sure,

let's make sure that doesn't happen. Does that make sense? Do you understand everything we talked about today? Is there any questions that you have? Is there anything you don't understand? Is there anything else that you need to share with me?

Okay, maybe I added a couple things to my list of seven. If you do all of that, and treat the team member with dignity, help them to see that you care, help them to see that the company wants them to succeed, then when they go back, here's what I can promise you. If it has been done well and they are on board, then they will go back and bust it. You'll have to say, let's work hard, again, it not being negative, but I can promise you their productivity will be up when they get back. Why? Because you just proved to them that you do care. That you're not trying to get rid of them, that there's nothing to be afraid of, and you've also shown them that this isn't the kind of meeting that it could be. You've gotten a little bit more trust, you've gotten a little bit more loyalty in the process. They will go back and bust it.

You still have to follow up. You still have to check on them, see how things are going, ask the questions. If they say something negative, if they start getting back into that negative pattern, then you've got to do something about it. You've got to pull them back out again and it's going to have to be a much more difficult meeting, and much more difficult focus. Especially, especially if it's over the same exact stuff. Otherwise, a good number of your people will be rocking at this point because, again, like I said, they see that you care.