

4 'Poisons' That Can Ruin Your Team

The leaders on your team may be gifted and high capacity people, but no amount of talent can prevent teamwork poison from taking its toll.

I've been asked many times, "Would you *really* let someone go for a bad attitude?" My response is always the same, "Would you *really* pay someone for a bad attitude?"

Yes I would let them go. I'm not willing to pay anyone for a lousy attitude. I can get that for free!

There are "Four Poisons" that will ruin your team.

- Excuse makers
- Complaint givers
- Negative thinkers
- Entitlement believers

Notice that all four are attitudes, not skills. That's a significant insight. It is also telling that I don't need to write a paragraph about each one. I could, but you already know exactly what each one means and you can name people you know that fit in each category. The question is, *will you allow that on your team?*

How do you get the poison out?

Clearly establish your team culture. The only way your team knows what is unacceptable is if you tell them, and back up what you say. Don't assume this is common knowledge.

We are all human, and under pressure, we can quickly slide into an unhealthy attitude. It's always best to emphasize and focus on the positive traits of a team, but on occasion, it's essential to communicate what is unacceptable. Remember, it's

important that you never declare something unacceptable that you are not willing to take action upon.

Confront quickly. There is no need for public confrontation unless it's a flagrant and repeated demonstration of a bad attitude. Take the person aside and engage them in a very clear and candid conversation. Let them know that a poor attitude will not be tolerated, and if it continues they will lose their spot on the team. Make sure the understanding is clear.

Coach for improvement. Redemption should always be the first goal, but unlike coaching someone to improve a skill, you don't have much time when coaching an attitude. Attitude is a choice. They will either choose to make a change or not. Nonetheless, coach for improvement first by encouraging them, letting them know you care and you want them on the team.

Maybe something is troubling them personally, ask. Give them a week or two to demonstrate the change.

Make the tough call. If the person makes the attitude adjustment, great! Let them know they are doing great and press on! If they don't turn the corner quickly, have one more meeting. Ask if they understood the expectation and ramifications for no change. Give grace with another short amount of time. If no change is made, they made their choice, and you must be prepared to make the tough call.

Let's be candid, it's challenging enough to coach skills, develop leadership and achieve the desired goals with good attitudes! So don't let poison ruin your teamwork and diminish your results. Set the bar high and enjoy both the relationships and the results!

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