

How to be the MVP of your staff team

So you want to be the MVP of your staff team, eh? There are three relationships that factor into making that happen.

First, let's define what I'm referring to as the MVP.

My intention isn't to call you to self-promotion or self-recognition, to make much of yourself or desire praise. But rather, to encourage you to do all you can to cultivate a healthy team dynamic.

Your relationship with God

Your identity in Christ is who you are because of what was accomplished on the cross. To know and to be able to stand firm on what is true of us is key to a healthy team dynamic. Therefore, we have to impress on our hearts that we are:

Children of God
Loved unconditionally
Made new
Delighted in
Forgiven

The reality is, when we're unsure about our identity or when we look for our value and worth in our performance or the approval of others, we're creating space for fear to creep in—fear of failure, fear of not producing, fear of not being enough, etc.

1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.."

God's love is perfect and when we stand on the truths of His Word, of who He says He is, of who He says we are, we are able to understand our true value and we're freed up to love others well.

Lesson Learned

I have been in campus ministry for three years but my first year on a team I struggled with comparing myself to my teammates. I was a young gun working next to two veteran staff women who had more established ministries on our campus and who had been laboring for three to four years longer than me.

From an objective standpoint it seems silly that I would compare myself to two women in different seasons, but because I didn't know my value in the Lord I was walking on unsteady ground. I had the expectation that my team and the Lord expected me to come to campus and win hundreds of students. I believed that results would determine my value to the team and to the Lord. But what I learned was that God wasn't asking me to move mountains that semester, He was simply asking me to be faithful to Him each day and to trust Him with the results of my labor.

In the seasons of my ministry that I didn't get results or see fruit, I was forced to come back to the truth: my identity is in who Jesus is and what God says about me in His word, not what I produce as a laborer.

Discovery Questions

Do you believe your value comes from the Lord and not your performance?

Do you find yourself seeking after affirmation or praise from your boss or teammates or is your heart to press into God and His Word?

Your relationship with your boss

A healthy relationship with your boss is essential to healthy team dynamics. Some crucial components to this relationship are: clear expectations, open communication, and lots of grace!

Clear expectations are necessary for healthy relationships of any kind, including one with your boss. Ask him or her what they expect of you and share what you expect of them to make sure you're on the same page.

Open communication is crucial. Feel free to share your opinion, to disagree, to pursue conflict resolution, etc. Let me stress one thing; don't avoid conflict resolution. All that will do is cause you to become bitter and resentful, which is not good for your heart or honoring to the Lord. Get it in the light and pursue resolution with your boss. He or she will feel valued when you thought enough of them to be uncomfortable for the sake of your relationship and their growth.

Have lots of grace! Just like you, your boss isn't perfect.

There is a chance that he or she is spinning a lot of plates, so if they forget to respond to your text message concerning a minor detail, try not to take offense. One thing I've really enjoyed doing is seeking to be a blessing to my boss by asking him, "Is there anything I can take off your plate this week?" He feels valued and freed up to delegate undesirable tasks without feeling like he is burdening me.

Lesson Learned

Wrong expectations are killer! My first year on staff I expected my boss to lead me in a particular way and when he didn't, I was frustrated.

What I didn't realize is that we had different expectations and different leadership styles.

My boss didn't want to micromanage me, but I desperately needed clear direction and a defined "win" for my job.

Thankfully, not long after I recognized my frustration, we sat down to have an expectation exchange and that was the beginning of a healthy working relationship!

Discovery Questions

Do you give grace freely to your boss or do you hold their wrongs against them?

Do you volunteer to help bear the load of responsibilities or do you complain about the undesirable task delegated to you?

Do you trust your boss's lead or are you constantly questioning their decisions?

Do you have a realistic and healthy expectation of your boss or are you holding him or her to an impossible standard?

Your relationship with your teammates

A team is a group of people who work together to achieve a common goal.

A team is a group of individuals who have different skills, giftings, and responsibilities to cumulatively work towards the completion of a single mission. What's meant to be a well-oiled machine can become just a lump of metal, unable to produce because it can't function properly due to comparison, a competitive spirit, pride, bitterness, or jealousy. It all comes back to your security in the Lord and knowing your value so you are able to healthily relate to your team. If you know your value, you can affirm others, love them well, not feel threatened by them, celebrate with them when they have wins, and mourn with them when they experience disappointment or loss.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 says,

"If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."

If we are talented, skilled, gifted laborers for Christ that produce a fruitful ministry but do not love our staff team, it means nothing. If we only love well those who aren't a threat to our egos, it means nothing.

Jesus says in John 13:34-35,

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Lesson Learned

Rewind to the winter of 2013; it was a month before our winter conference and I was busy recruiting. I knew deep in my heart that recruiting the girls was key to them becoming more spiritually interested. I knew they would hear the gospel again, they'd be challenged in their faith, and they'd be confronted with the sin in their lives. I had good motives in recruiting. But, because of my tendency to compare, I wanted to recruit just as many girls as each of my other teammates. I felt that I'd be valuable to the team and they'd see I could produce. But when I didn't accomplish that goal, it was hard for me to celebrate the students registered for the conference. What I didn't understand is that because we are a team, their success is my success and their win is my win.

Discovery Questions

Are you someone who celebrates other's victories or do you secretly get jealous because it's not your own personal victory?

Are you someone who can give feedback and receive it well, or someone who is easily offended or easily offends?

Is everyone on your staff team convinced you want them to win?