

Liebfrog's summary of The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

by Patrick Lencioni, published by WILEY



Everything about this book is brilliant, so if you are leading a team and you've yet to read it, it's worth your time.

It's an easy read because it's mainly presented in the form of a fictional story. Plus you can easily read it from cover to cover in an afternoon.

It's been over two decades since Lencioni first penned the FIVE dysfunctions. But anyone working in a team today has likely seen them and observed how they paralyse effectiveness and productivity. In the book Lencioni visualises the five dysfunctions in Maslow's hierarchy pyramid form.

And while everything stems from an absence of trust, which Lencioni presents at the base of the pyramid and on which everything else rests upon, we think there is a more helpful visualisation.

It shows the interconnectedness between the issues Lencioni so brilliantly describes and how they bleed together to result in a dysfunctional team. All must be dealt with for a successful team to emerge.



But Lencioni does more than merely describing the five dysfunctions. He also gives us an effective unlock for each. Each unlock rids the team of a dysfunction by getting to its cause (shown in our diagram in the outer ring).

It's something Lencioni makes simple, clear, and quick to understand, though the implementation is anything but easy. It takes time, commitment, and plenty of courage.

Building a high performing team isn't a one and done thing. In Lencioni's fable, much of what the team accomplishes is the result of a new CEO called Kathryn.

As the story unfolds, we discover Kathryn's biggest challenge is getting her top team to effectively work together. It's something she's gradually able to do by stepping them through and addressing the five dysfunctions, one by one, over time.

But most teams don't have a Kathryn. Even when an organisation brings in a new leader from outside, offering the chance of an outside-in perspective, many miss it. Newly appointed leaders often find they lack the time, capabilities, candour, support, or self-awareness to share or act upon such insights. Transforming a dysfunctional team into an effective one requires a leader to confront tough choices and actions. It's uncomfortable. Which is why an external team coach can be of great help.

You can get Patrick Lencioni's 'The Five Dysfunctions of a Team' [here](#).

