

Removing the Invisible Walls in Your Leadership Team

Last week I was completing the Vision Frame with a church in California. They could feel the removal of what one pastor called their “invisible walls.” It’s an interesting comment given the fact that it’s a very effective church.

What is an invisible wall? **It’s something your eyes can’t see that keeps your team from working better together.**

- Mistrust
- Missed time
- Misalignment
- Misunderstanding

Every week brings a fresh truckload of glass bricks for your team to stack. Busy week after busy week leads to busy semester after busy semester. No one has ill motives. No one intends to build a wall. But the walls go up without conscious notice.

The good news is that it’s NOT rocket science to take down a wall. **Haven’t you noticed it’s easy (and usually fun) to tear stuff down anyway?** What we need are some sledge hammers to take down this hard-to-see barriers.

Weekly, I watch leadership teams tear down their invisible walls. Keep in mind, I am talking about effective teams, not broken ones. In Auxano’s clarity process, teams feel like a team at a whole new level. Even though the meeting room looks the same, the real albeit unseen barriers have been removed.

How do you demolish those walls? Try these five things.

- **Give permission to identify walls.**
- **Beyond permission, shape a culture of authentic dialogue by how you give and receive feedback.** Telling people that you are open to honesty and “push-back” isn’t enough. Permission has not truly been given until it you have done. Keep in mind if you don’t receive it well, you’ll shut down the sharing next time around.
- **Schedule time dedicated to strategic conversations.** Most teams don’t create enough space for important, non-urgent dialogue and decision-making. At Faithbridge over the years, the team has regularly “parked” (sometimes monthly) conversation topics for scheduled “strategic-stuff-only” meetings.
- **Schedule margin in the calendar for “drop in” conversations.** With the speed of ministry, it goes a long way to touch base for no “necessary” reason. It says you care. It says you are available to listen. It provides an **opportunity to remove a glass brick, instead of adding one.** Yesterday, I challenged a staff member pretty hard in a consulting meeting. Today I stuck my head in her office to check in and mentioned, *“Hey, I pushed you pretty hard yesterday and I just wanted to acknowledge that it might have been a little too hard.”*

- **Make one bold feedback question a standard part of your team culture-** “Have I done anything lately that has diminished the trust in our relationship?”

What other actions would you add to demolish invisible walls?