



Human Optimization

Pod Club Discussion Questions



E64: Building trust: A powerful performance multiplier

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The three big questions explored in the podcast:

Question 1

What is trust? And why is it crucial for high performance teams?

Question 2

Why is trust so hard to build and maintain?

Question 3

How do we move from being "suspicious by default" to "trusting by design" while still maintaining healthy boundaries?

Discussion Questions:

1. Dr. Mellum likes Charles Feltman's definition of trust: "Choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person's actions". Thinking about a trust-based relationship in your life, what is the "thing you value" and in what way is it vulnerable?
2. Thinking about the elements of the trust equation (credibility, reliability, intimacy, self-orientation), how do you rate yourself in each area? What element has the most room for improvement?
3. What would be your version of "scrubbing in" to build trust within your specific team, profession, or family?
4. If you could implement just one change to elevate the level of trust in your current workplace or home, what would it be?
5. Have you ever successfully rebuilt trust after a betrayal? If so, what did the repair process look like? If you didn't rebuild trust, why not?
6. During periods of high organizational stress or change (like the pandemic), Dr. Mellum advises leaders to actively regulate their stress response because they set the emotional tone for the team. What are your personal practices for pausing and resetting so you don't ripple your stress out to others?
7. How do you personally strike a balance between remaining open and choosing to trust others, while still maintaining healthy boundaries to protect yourself?
8. Based on this episode, what is one small change you are going to make to help improve in this area. How are you going to keep yourself accountable to that and measure your success? (Be sure to keep it simple, start small, and make it very clear).