# Jeremiah's Guide to Team Leadership

### "Hi, I'm Jeremiah, and I'm a Peace First Fellow!"

**A team is only as strong as its organization. Finding the right balance in decision-making; the proper communication channels; the proper hierarchy of authority or whether there should be one at all, and an infinite amount of other variables can make or break a project. While that might seem daunting and scary at first, I encourage you to look at it as an opportunity instead. Piecing together the right framework can yield unprecedented success for your campaign.**

## 1 Story of Success

Peacemaking is challenging work, and no one does it alone. Without my team, I wouldn't have been able to make the difference that I have. When I started @WestHighBros to spread compliments at my school, I knew it wouldn't matter if the compliments weren't genuine — which means I coudn't be the only one writing the tweets. So I had to recruit a diverse team - many of whom I barely knew - and lead us to work together towards building a culture of kindness at our school. We were able to build a team that listened to one another, celebrated one another, and succeeded together.

## 2 Resources to Help You

### Resource #1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TC7A9PmMPwE This is Michael Nugent's Youtube series on Organizational Behavior. This is a fun Youtube series for people who want to learn about organizational behavior. You can learn on your own pace, rewatch videos if you want, or skip past the content you already know.

### Resource #2

https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/how-do-leaders-advance-sustainability-in-complex-organizations This is part of the Yale University School of Management's website. Yale University's credentials are well known but the School of Management's webpage is better than other top-ranking schools for young people because it has easy to read articles and studies that talk directly about how to build and foster healthy group dynamics.

## 3  Tips to Keep In Mind

### Tip #1
Give your team a stake in the organization's work. In my opinion the greatest incentive is knowing that you are part of the solution, and yes, I do think it is a better motivator than being a victim of the problem. Make sure you in everything you do you make it clear to your team that they are making a big difference in solving the problem.

### Tip #2
Constantly search for feedback. I am a huge proponent of obtaining as much information as possible. Feedback is important because it helps you tailor your project to the problem you are facing. The gross reality is that the injustice you are facing will probably morph quickly or you will encounter issues you hadn't considered before as you plod along. I would ask other people who were implementing the project what they were observing, what things we were doing that was working, and what actions were not as helpful.

### Tip #3
Build an organization that everyone wants to be a part of. Your team should be excited about the work as you are!  Here are some ways to make sure you do that.

A.  **Be flexible.** Make sure you are constantly evolving. Stick with your principles but always be innovating. My organization started out as a group of students giving compliments on social media...and it soon grew into a radio show, a suicide hotline, and info guides, because that was what people needed us to do, and our team was willing to try new things.

B.  **Work to build consensus when you're making big decisions  where you can.** You can do this by listening – really deeply – to what people are saying, and sharing what you heard that resonated with you. You'd be surprised how sharing a small bit of consensus can lead to fruitful partnerships, because it increases buy-in.

## 4  Strategies

### Strategy #1
**Medium of Communication:**

This is crucial. From the start, make sure you have an agreed-upon method of communicating with each other.

1.  **Standard.** Your mode of communication should be one of the standard communication applications or websites. When expanding your organization you'll find it easier to bring people on board when you have a popular application than if you had an obscure mode. Facebook, Groupme, Slack, and Whatsapp are the four of the most standard group messaging services. Phones and other standard methods of instant communication are fine as well.

2.  **Make sure everyone knows how to use it.** Some people are more familiar with certain methods of communication than others. Ensure everyone is operating on a level playing field – people who do not know how to use the technology may feel left out or become frustrated,

but taking the time to train everyone to use your communication system will make everyone feel included!

3. **Find the method people already use.** Beyond just standard modes of communication, find ways that people are already talking to each other. For example, if everyone in your organization already uses Whatsapp, then that would be an excellent platform for everyone to communicate with to each other.

## Strategy #2

Create a "line of communication" so that everyone knows who to go to for questions, and everyone has the information they need. For example, Mark talks to Katie who relays the info to Sarah and so on.  You can also decide whether a line of communication should exist. Make sure this is clear so that everyone knows who to talk to if any problems arise, if they need advice, or if they want to celebrate an achievement.

1. **If no lines of authority are created then make sure there is a central pool of information that everyone contributes to and uses.**

2. **Emulate successful groups you see.** Every organization is different, and the strategies that work for some teams may not work for others, but everyone can find something they want to copy from successful organizations.

3. **Even if there is an authority structure, make sure that even the lowest ranking people feel comfortable talking to the people on the top.** No one wants to feel less valued than someone else.

## Strategy #3
**Feedback.**

You don't know what's going right and what's going wrong until someone tells you. Develop a feedback system so you know what to fix, what to continue, and how to improve your group in an ever-changing world.

1. **Foster a safe environment.** Maybe not everyone will give you feedback, but make sure they feel comfortable doing so. Get to know the people around you: know what makes them uncomfortable and what facilitates dialogue. Some people might need some prodding before they tell you their opinions, but for some other people that would be a nightmare. Know how everyone operates.

2. **Always be open to feedback.** It's one thing for people to be comfortable providing feedback, it's a whole other thing for people to be open to feedback. Make sure you know that when people give you criticism that it comes from a place of love, just like when you ask for people's thoughts it is from a place of community.

3. **Keep asking for feedback and when you think about not asking anymore, ask again.** Please don't actually constantly ask people for their thoughts, but have a system in place where feedback is always coming in. I am a firm believer that stagnation holds us back. Injustices change quickly, so your response has to as well.

**Strategy #4**

Provide ownership. Like I said before, having stake in a solution is the most powerful incentive. Everyone wants to be able to look back and say "I was part of changing _____". Give people that sense of belonging because they in turn will give you their all.

1. **Find out why people are fighting alongside you, and feed their passions!** If you do this, your team will work even harder and become more committed to the work.

2. **Give people projects to lead.** Everyone is not a leader in everything, but everyone is a leader in something. Find that something for people in your group. These little projects that feed into the bigger picture make all the difference in terms of fighting an injustice and building community.

3. **Get feedback.** Need I say it again? Feedback is a big part in giving people ownership of the campaign.

## Conclusion

Trust me, it's much easier to fight an injustice with friends than by yourself. It might take some getting used to for the lone wolves out there, but a solid team is the cornerstone of great success. By making sure everyone is comfortable with the group in terms of communication, who to talk to, voicing their opinion, and being part of the solution there is very little a group cannot accomplish.