



(LEADER GUIDE) **ONE BAD APPLE**

DR. JOE HILL
higherperformancegroup.com

LEADER {CORE} Guide: One Bad Apple

How a Single Leader Can Sink Your Team (and How One Good One Can Save It)

Duration: 30 Minutes

Purpose: To facilitate meaningful dialogue about recognizing and addressing negative infection patterns in leadership teams, helping participants explore how to transform resistance into constructive engagement while building collective intelligence.

Pre-Session Preparation

- Send the article to participants 24-48 hours before the session
- Request that they bring one example of a challenging team dynamic they currently face
- Set up a comfortable meeting space that encourages psychological safety
- Prepare materials for the Belonging Cues exercise
- Consider your own example of transforming team resistance to model the process

Session Flow with CORE Process Opening (5 minutes)

- Welcome participants
- Briefly explain the CORE process (Call It, Own It, Response, Execute)
- Share a personal example of when addressing negative team dynamics led to breakthrough results
- Establish relevance: "Today we're exploring how one person's energy can sink or save our leadership effectiveness"

C: Call It - Questions of Clarity (7 minutes)

Group Discussion:

- "Based on the article, what are the four primary infection types that educational leaders must recognize?"
- "How does emotional contagion spread in leadership teams according to MIT's research?"
- "What's the difference between individual competence and collective intelligence?"

Facilitation Notes:

- Capture key insights on shared space
- Clarify any misconceptions about addressing resistance vs. eliminating it
- Reference key concepts from the article: "One person can reduce team performance by 30-40%"

O: Own It - Questions of Meaning (7 minutes)

Individual Reflection:

- "Which of the four infection types have you observed in your own leadership team?"
- "Where do you see yourself caught in the 'hiring the best individuals' trap?"
- "What team dynamic challenge are you currently facing where belonging cues might transform the situation?"

Paired Discussion:

- Have participants share their reflections with a partner
- Partners ask: "How is this pattern affecting your team's strategic effectiveness?"

R: Response - Options for Practice (8 minutes)

Application Exercise:

- Working in pairs, participants select one challenging team dynamic
- Using the Leadership Infection framework, develop a response strategy:
 - o Recognition: Identify the specific negative pattern
 - o Response: Practice addressing resistance with curiosity
 - o Redirection: Transform opposition into problem-solving
 - o Resilience: Build belonging cues that prevent future infection
 - o Results: Define what breakthrough performance would look like
- Partners provide feedback using the prompt: "How does this approach transform resistance into strategic information?"

Group Sharing:

- Invite 2-3 volunteers to share their response strategies
- Facilitate peer feedback on belonging cue effectiveness

E: Execute - Commitment to Practice (5 minutes)

Individual Commitment:

- Each participant completes the statement: "In my next leadership team meeting, I will create belonging cues by..."
- Participants identify one specific resistance pattern to address with curiosity
- Each person names an accountability partner who will check in on their progress

Closing (3 minutes)

- Round-robin: Each person shares one word describing their key insight about team dynamics
- Remind participants of the article's challenge question: "What's stopping you from addressing emotional contagion patterns?"
- Leader closes with commitment to model belonging cues in upcoming team interactions

Key Concepts for Reference

- "One person's energy patterns determine your entire team's performance"
- The four infection types: Skeptic, Withdrawer, Pessimist, Spreader
- "Breakthrough results depend more on collective intelligence than individual talent"
- The Competence Paradox: "advanced degrees create individual capability, not effective teams"
- Leadership Infection framework: Recognition, Response, Redirection, Resilience, Results

Remember: Your role is to facilitate discovery about team dynamics, not direct conclusions. Model the very principle you're discussing by creating belonging cues that transform any resistance in the room into valuable strategic information.