In this lesson, you'll take what you've learned throughout the course about building stronger systems and use it to help your teams stay committed to the systems you operate together.

And to do that, we need to achieve three things. We need to understand how teams are motivated. We need to understand why team systems break down. And we need to learn what things we can do to avoid those breakdowns.

So, how exactly is a team motivated to work together? It's one thing to understand yourself and what *you* need to be motivated and hold yourself accountable. It's another to understand what *other* people need in order to do the same thing when they're all working together.

Or is it?

A few of the things a team needs to really succeed when they're operating a shared system are the same as any other system.

First, you need a clear and understandable end goal. Everyone involved might have their own benchmarks and metrics for measuring success on the individual pieces of the system they use, but it's also critical that everyone understands and agrees on what the whole team is working towards.

For example, if you think of a business as one giant system, then you could say that the overall purpose is to make money. Everyone working there probably understands that. Even if Ted in human resources never meets a customer for his whole career, he knows that his work supports the overall mission of the business.

Or if a doctor's office has the primary goal to provide excellent patient care, then everyone—no matter what their job is, has the ultimate goal of creating a really great experience for the patients that come to their clinic.

But a shared goal is not enough. That will get everyone on the same page. But to make a team system work smoothly, everyone also needs to feel a sense of shared contribution. They need to feel like they're contributing in some tangible way to that ultimate goal.

They need to know that if they work their part of the system successfully, then it will make a difference, and it will help the rest of their team.

But, just as important as that feeling of contribution is, a sense of responsibility has to be there too. Each player in a team system needs to also understand that if they

don't do their best work in their part of the system, then the end result will suffer and so will their team. Each person needs to feel individually responsible for their contribution to the ultimate outcome.

But how do you measure that?

Well, that brings us to the third motivating factor in a team system: clear expectations.

When you have a group of people all working together towards a shared goal, it's critical that everyone knows what their personal goal posts are. There's a sense of collective responsibility to make the whole thing great. But the only way to actually do that is to make sure each player understands exactly what outcomes *they* are personally responsible for.

So, let's look at the business example again. And let's think about a construction company. Their shared goal is to build stuff and make money doing it. It needs to be really clear to each person inside that company what they're individually responsible for in order to make that outcome happen.

The receptionist should understand exactly how to greet and route communication to the right people within the company. The estimator should know that their job is to perfectly guess how much it will cost to build something so that the company's proposals are accurate. The tradespeople need to know exactly how their skills should be used to construct each piece of a project. The project manager should feel personally responsible for making sure everything happens on time and under budget. So on and so forth.

When everyone knows exactly what metrics they need to be watching and working on, that's when the construction company will be the most successful.

And so it is with any business or any system within a business or at home or at church or wherever. It doesn't matter where it is or how big it is. If a team of people are working together, those are the three aspects that you need to control in order to keep everyone motivated and hold them accountable.

So then, why do team systems break down? The answer is pretty simple: because one or more of those three team motivators is either never addressed in the first place, or they are addressed but they're done poorly or they get abandoned.

As a result, the system slowly deteriorates until it fails completely.

If you want your team systems to have the best chance of long-term survival, the way to achieve that is by holding everyone involved accountable to it.

So how do you do it? You need to find ways to reinforce those three team motivators. When you do a great job of incorporating the three team motivators into your system, your work actually gets easier over time because the system becomes a sort of self-perpetuating machine.

If the team is all on board, they feel responsible for it, and they know what's expected of them, they will naturally take care of the system because that's a desirable and stable situation to be in and it's naturally advantageous for them to maintain it and protect it.

So let's talk about how to actually get there. What do you need to do to better incorporate those three motivators into your team systems.

First, let's look at building a shared goal.

The examples we used earlier were a construction company and a doctor's office. But, really, this applies to any business. And not just any business, but any team system.

When everyone agrees what the end result of using a system is supposed to be, everyone will take more confident action to achieve that goal. And there are two things you can do to foster that agreement.

First is to involve everyone who will use the system in the process of actually creating it. When your team or your family or whoever gets to be a part of the discussion and help craft the goal they'll be working towards, it's a lot easier to get them to buy into it.

Of course, this step often gets skipped because we're used to working in a more top-down sort of structure. Someone at the top of the "org chart" decides "this is what we're trying to achieve" and then designs a system for a bunch of other people to follow in order to achieve it.

Now, if that's you, you might be able to make it work because you have some authority over the people working your system and you can force them to use it. In that case, you'll probably get compliance at first, but it will be harder and harder to maintain it over time.

Eventually, everyone cracks. And if someone sees the end goal differently than you do, they're going to do what they think they need to do to achieve the goal that *they* see.

Or you might get lucky and everyone will naturally align with the goal. That's always nice, but you certainly can't count on it.

So, wherever you can, you need to include the people who will be involved in operating the system from the very beginning. You need to sell the vision. And until you've successfully sold the vision, you should hold off on figuring out how to achieve it.

Of course, that's not always practical. Sometimes, you need to involve way too many people. In that case, relying on some hierarchy is okay. You sell the vision to a small group of people, and then they're responsible to sell it to the others.

But the end result is still the same in that you should be spending a lot of time up front getting buy in before creating whatever system you'll need to bring the vision to life.

Other times, you have a system running already and you need to insert new people into it. In these cases, you'll want to make sure you take the time to bring those people up to speed and that they understand and buy into what you're trying to achieve before setting them loose.

And you should take care not to introduce or replace too many people in the system at the same time. You want to maintain continuity. If for instance, in a business, you have a lot of turnover, you could find yourself in a place where everyone in one part of the system isn't close to someone who's been involved long enough to understand and buy into the vision. When that happens, the vision gets foggy and you're going to run into trouble.

And what about shared responsibility. Like we've learned, it's critically important to a team system that everyone feels bought into and responsible for the outcome that the system is designed for.

If even a small portion of the people involved don't feel that responsibility, it can lead to consistent and frustrating breakdowns and poor performance.

So what do you do?

This is another problem that can be solved by early involvement of all the key players. Even if you're an expert at all the functions that will need to be covered to operate your team system, you'll be shooting yourself in the foot if you try to create it by yourself without any input.

When you include key players in the creation process, it fosters a sense of ownership. And it gets easier to hold everyone involved accountable because they had a say in how the system actually works.

But when you exclude your team from the creation process, that bond of ownership won't be there. They won't feel attached to your system because they did not have a personal hand in creating it. And it makes it more difficult to hold everyone accountable to it.

If you remember from the very beginning of the course, one of the things that might have made you hesitant to embrace systems in your life is that the ones you were used to were forced on you by an authority figure.

If you create a system on your own and pass it off to your team, you'll be perpetuating that problem and making *them* feel the same way. And that's beside the fact that, even though you likely know a lot, the people who will be operating the system probably have some very specialized knowledge that can help you make your system much stronger from the very beginning.

So, even though it takes a lot more time and patience to involve others in the creation process, it's worth the effort—and the occasional frustration—because the end result of what you get is fundamentally stronger and will require less upkeep on your part because everyone will feel that responsibility to maintain what they had a hand in creating.

If you get people on board from the beginning and foster an understanding of the bigger picture, you're going to be well on your way to creating a really great team system that everyone is motivated to use and, more importantly, take care of.

But you can still run into issues during the day-to-day operation of these systems. Especially when a lot of people are involved.

The final piece of the puzzle, then, is holding your team accountable to the everyday outcomes that need to happen in order to make that big picture possible. And to do that, everyone involved needs to know exactly what is expected of them and what they can expect from others.

Setting clear expectations is critical to running a successful shared system. When everyone knows exactly what they're required to produce, it removes uncertainty about their performance and that clarity makes them more productive.

And when everyone knows what they can expect from everyone else, it makes it much easier for the whole team to hold each other accountable for the outcomes that are expected of them.

This is a really big benefit to you because you no longer have to be an authoritarian trying to personally hold everyone accountable. When everyone knows what everyone else is supposed to be doing and feels responsible for the success of the whole system, they'll notice problems faster and be more motivated to do something about them.

And here's another big benefit to setting extremely clear expectations. It helps to remove feelings of animosity and character judgment when things break down. Problem solving starts to naturally focus more on improving the system and the skills of the people operating it than on the people themselves.

In my own businesses and projects, there's one rule I always try to follow when I have a team operating a system, and that is no one gets in trouble for following the system.

If something goes wrong, we don't point fingers at the person who dropped the ball and try to figure out what's wrong with them or what they did wrong. Instead, we ask, "is there a system or a process in place?" If there isn't, then we create one so that specific problem doesn't happen again.

If there *is* a system, we ask, "Did you know about it and did you know how to operate it?" If the answer is no, then there's a training problem, and we didn't prepare that person to be successful.

And if they did know there was a system and they did know how to use it, then we ask, "Did you follow it?"

If they followed it and something still went wrong, then the problem isn't the person. It's the system. And that reveals that the system has a weakness that needs to be improved. You make an update and you move on.

Now, does this solve every problem? No, of course not. You're still going to run into situations where someone knew exactly what to do, but didn't do it. Those are the

times when you'll have to step up and be a leader to figure out *why* they didn't do what they knew they were supposed to do?

Do they not agree with the end goal of the system? Do they not believe that what they're supposed to do works and they want to do it differently? Were they overwhelmed and skipped steps? Did they get lazy or complacent?

When you set incredibly clear expectations and get everyone on board from the beginning, you almost never get to this point. Problems solve themselves long before you ever have to get involved and have those tough conversations.

So, if you're working with a team and you want to see them be successful, then those are the three best ways to hold everyone accountable and give your system the best shot at succeeding over the long-term.

First, you need to make sure that you have the right people involved from the beginning. Does everyone agree on what the ultimate goal is? If not, you're going to run into problems fast. Once everyone agrees on the ultimate goal, you need to involve your team in creating the system that will help you all achieve it. When everyone feels like they built it, everyone will want to take care of it. And after those foundations are set, everyone needs to know exactly what is expected of them as well as what they can expect from everyone else. When expectations are crystal clear, the fear and uncertainty that causes personality conflicts or makes people shy away from responsibility starts to melt away. When something goes wrong, it's much easier to fix.

Take a look at one of the team systems you're invested in right now. Ask yourself if you have these three bases covered. If you don't, what steps can you take to start shoring up the missing pieces?

And when you're through with that…