

## Episode 034

# Passing It On Effectively

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## Importance of Passing It On

As leaders it is crucial to learn how to pass on what is essential to our team and followers. To build a group that can move together, it is crucial that the essentials are passed on appropriately to every person in the most appropriate way at the most appropriate times. You are part of the chain to ensure this occurs effectively and efficiently. Whether because you are the top leader or part of the leadership.

Consider an army of soldiers on the battlefield. The army commander needs to be able to communicate effectively to all his forces on the ground about the tactical steps they are taking as the battle progresses. Those variety of units need to understand what appropriate actions they should be taking continually, sometimes instantly. In a way that synergizes with the entire army. You don't want a unit to launch an attack while the other units are still getting into place. You want units to be inter-operable. That is, they can switch soldiers around and still be able to work together. They can share weapons, support, communicate etc tightly.

If you are a key senior leader, it is even more crucial that you work through how this can be effectively developed and maintained. The bigger the group you lead the more crucial this becomes. When the group is small everyone can hear and see you regularly. As a result, you need not be too concerned about passing things on. But the larger the group, the more crucial this becomes. Because there are more obstacles in the way.



## What To Pass On

What are some of those key elements that ought to be passed on?

### 1. Vision

It is a clear mental image of a preferred future, imparted by God. Vision concentrates on the future. It is not about having more of the past or maintaining the status quo. It is about creating a better tomorrow in which the purposes of God are brought to pass, through God's empowerment and guidance.

Vision is needed because it gives direction that is infused with faith and hope. Without vision the group begins to fragment as people go off into different directions. Without vision the group may not move forward strongly, nor together.

While the group as a whole needs to have clear vision, it is equally important that sub-groups have appropriate sub-visions. The sub-vision should align with and complement the main vision. For example, in Hope Church we have a community arm called Hands of Hope. We had to make sure that its vision complements our church vision. That is does not run counter or separate to the church.

### 2. Values

Values articulate what really matters to us. Our values make us what we are and help us grow into what we aspire to be. It is usually our true values that undergird the type of decisions we make. We should note that there can be a big difference between the values we say we have and the values we actually have.

Amos 3:3 (NIV84) "Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?" However, we can agree at different levels. When we agree at the values level it is at the most fundamental level of agreement. When we share the same values, then together we can unite together and move together powerfully. We can achieve greater things in God. The heartbeat of a movement is contained in its core values. That is why we made clear our 10 values.



When there are different values in a group, eventually it will come out. If those values are fundamental, it can create discord. 2 persons can have different values but go in the same direction. But when a major problem or crisis occurs, these differences in value often come to the fore and can split the partnership. This happens in marriage, in business partners, in churches, etc.

Eg: 2 men agree to establish a start-up for a cyber-business that empower other businesses. They agree on the product, the marketing approach, the product development and the type of staff. But one values making as much money as possible while to the other, he values helping others succeed in business. Do you think they will succeed together over the long haul?

For a group to journey together over the long-haul it is critical to share the same values. Otherwise, we are kidding ourselves. Whenever there are tough times, a crisis, instead of sticking together, it often begins to fragment.

### 3. Culture

It is the observed values and behaviours common to a group of people. It is not what they say but what they do. Such cultures come about because it reflects values, attitudes and philosophies within the group. It has been modelled to the extent it has become the norm. Because we normally interact at the level of behaviours, this is a crucial element. Some of us interact at the level of ideas, or interests at some times. But mostly we interact at the level of behaviours.

So when cultures match, align or fit in with one another – it is smooth sailing. Because a lot of the frictions that come from interactions are reduced. If we can nurture a similar culture, then you will have teams and groups that can work well together. If you have good healthy cultures, then often the groups will thrive. Because by their behaviours, they are doing the healthy things for the group.

Cultures are also powerful because it is often the first things that people pick up on and follow. For most people naturally want to fit in socially. So if they gain the healthy culture, they are already behaving in ways that is good for them and the group.



#### 4. Doctrines

Doctrines are a set of beliefs or principles taught by a group such as the church. It is the basis to understand various truths. Doctrines are important because it can become a framework within which we develop our values and our practices. For example, we hold to the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a distinct experience from salvation. That is why we encourage and help people to be baptised in the Holy Spirit.

Depending on how fundamental specific doctrines are and how important they may be to an individual, it can have a significant impact on how some work together. Some people are adaptable enough. Others are not. Usually, it is easier for a group to work together if they hold similar doctrines in key areas. Otherwise, it can cause uneasiness and frustrations that can build up.

#### 5. Communications

What is most crucial on a daily for a group to function well together is good communication. Communication is needed to pass on directions, policies, ideas, events, changes, etc. Communication is effective when it is relevant, appropriate and timely.

Communication breakdown can occur when any of those ingredients are not met. One major contributor is the failure to pass on the right information to the right people in the right way. Have you heard of Chinese whispers? Information gets garbled after passing on many hands. Poor communication can cause a lot of issues in the group. Frustrations, misunderstandings can develop. It can weaken motivations and timeliness of actions. The bigger the group the more crucial effective communication becomes.



## How To Effectively Pass It On?

There are a variety of avenues available for you to pass on the above. You must identify the most appropriate avenues to impart. Each avenue has its strengths and weaknesses. So you should be strategic in how you utilise those avenues to communicate.

### 1. Teaching & preaching

When teaching/preaching is done well it is good for making clear concepts and even to impart some convictions. It is great for telling but weak for demonstrating. It is great for imparting vision when there is a good communicator. It is good for imparting knowledge and doctrines with good teachers. It is weak for cultures because culture is more effectively experienced. When you are not the top leaders, your personal challenge is to capture the vision and make it your own. Then to pass it on to your groups.

### 2. Exemplifying

Our examples are great for showing but weaker for breadth and depth. Because people often see the external but may not understand the reasons why, the values behind it. Unless we are intentional to also teach about it to complement the example.

Our examples can be powerful means to impart values. While values can be taught, it is best caught. Mentoring is a powerful way to impart values. Because there is close proximity and opportunity to explain the whys. It is also a great way to impart culture. Although culture comes into its own once a majority of the group functions with the same culture. The key is how well we internalize it and model it!

### 3. Documenting

Media can be effective means to communicate when used appropriately and strategically. Written is best for precision because words best capture the thoughts. It can encompass graphs and pictures as well. That is why scientific research, and such are still written. The discipline of writing also brings out greater clarity in thinking.



Audio-video is better for moving people's hearts. Because emotion, energy, intensity is better captured. Convictions, urgency, passion are more vividly conveyed.

Documenting has also the benefit for longevity and reproducibility. To ensure a given standard in quality that is passed on through the generations, documenting is the critical approach. It minimizes dilution. This is one reason we are documenting a lot of our teaching now in our church and movement.

#### 4. Communication channels

There are numerous tools for communication today. Different types for different purposes. We must wisely pick the most appropriate means.

- In-person.
- Social media for general quick bits of mass communication like Facebook, Insta, etc.
- Messaging tools such as Whatsapp for targeted quick bits of communication.
- Emails for bigger documents
- Team tools for collaboration such as Slack, Teams, etc.
- Teleconferencing tools such as Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, etc.

If we can use digital means effectively, we can reduce the load for our leaders to pass things on as well as minimise distortions. By minimising the mundane announcements, instead they can focus on more important things.

#### Some challenges in passing it on

##### 1. The challenges of keeping in front of mind.

When we pass something on, we cannot assume that it will remain in the front of people's minds. There are so much communication happening and live and ministry can occur at a fast pace today. People forget or are distracted, etc. Hence, we cannot simply pass on and forget. We need to be aware of what is important to keep front of mind. Especially vision, values, culture.



When we know it well it is easier to detect when people veer off. We need to have our ears close to the ground to help us detect when these have cooled down. Then we can heat up those aspects by putting emphasis on it again.

## 2. The challenge of sub-groups

Every sub-group such as at the organisational departments or demographic groups, it may be appropriate to have a sub-group vision. Such that it captures a focus or direction that is relevant to the group. But we must be very careful that the vision is aligned to the overall vision and complements it. Sometimes we can become too focussed on our sub-group vision, etc that we neglect the larger vision. Even more so, the values and culture in a sub-group can take its own life because of the key leaders.

Recommendations:

- Leaders should invite senior leaders to come in and feel the group culture and values. Or to help bring in values and culture.
- Leaders should move around to visit some other groups. To experience their values and culture. It can inspire us. It can provide a check as perhaps we may have gone a bit off.
- Can be intentional to let our leaders be inspired by select groups which may have some strong good cultures.

## 3. The challenge of longevity

We should desire for longevity of our vision, values and culture in particular. We should regularly think through how to build for longevity. Any aspect that gets lukewarm, we should strategically heat it up again. That is also why documenting is a crucial part of the overall strategy. It helps set a certain benchmark. That is why we need repetition, but in creative ways, in our sermons, teaching etc. That is why in Hope Church we have some Next Steps Academy in-house equipping classes like Core Values and Doctrines. We tried to reinforce certain values in other subjects such as through Knowing God's Will and The Heart of Mentoring.

We should consider building into the calendar and life of the church regular avenues for imparting vision, values, culture and doctrines. That way it is not forgotten but built into the overall life of the church.





## Conclusion

Passing on vision, culture, values, doctrines and key communication is crucial for a larger and growing group. We should learn how to do it effectively and strategically through appropriate channels. We should be aware of the range of challenges and be intentional in minimising those issues. Let's pass on what matters effectively.





## Discussion Questions

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These questions could be done personally or as part of a group discussion.

1. 5 key elements were identified as critical to pass on within a group. What is one element that is poorly passed on in your group? Discuss why this element is important and why it needs to improve.
2. 4 key avenues were highlighted as important for effective passing on. Which element is a major weakness in your group? Discuss why is it so and what can be done about it.
3. Some major obstacles to effective passing on were identified. What are some of the key obstacles to effective passing on in your context? Discuss.

## Actionable Steps

Following questions are to prompt us on suitable actions. Importantly, come up with steps you will take to make progress. Give them datelines and priority.

1. Identify one element that is not well pass on in your group? Work out what needs to improve in that element and how to better pass it on. Develop an action plan to implement it.
2. Which avenue for effective passing on can be improved in your group? Work out what steps needs to be taken to improve it. Develop an action plan for improvement.





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