

WINNING IN YOUR

NEW SENIOR LEADERSHIP ROLE

THE FIRST 100 DAYS

THE UNSTUCK GROUP®

— WE HELP CHURCHES GET UNSTUCK. —

We have a frequently-used saying here at The Unstuck Group: “No church drifts into health.”

The same is true for our relationships, our finances, and our work, too.

If we want to win in any area of life, we need a plan.

When you enter a new leadership role, it’s easy to be reactive to the opportunities and challenges that come with it.

But if you want to experience success sooner rather than later, you need to be proactive and intentional about developing a strategy.

As you develop a plan for winning in your new church senior leadership role, consider establishing these priorities for your first 100 days. The resources and reflection questions provided will help you as you make a plan.

PRIORITY 1: DEVELOP KEY RELATIONSHIPS AND ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY.

It's critical to approach each new role with an open heart and mind. Demonstrating humility and a willingness to learn from the current staff and key players is key to building goodwill and relationships.

On the other hand, approaching a new leadership position with the attitude that you already know it all will build walls and barriers that are difficult to undo. So, as you step into the first 100 days of your new role, commit first to curiosity, listening, and learning.

RESOURCES:

- Book: [*The Self-Aware Leader*](#) by Terry Linhart
- Book: [*Becoming a Person of Influence*](#) by John Maxwell
- Book: [*For a New Generation*](#) by Lee Kricher

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What questions about the church's history are already on your mind?

Have you identified members of the congregation that, while not formally on staff, hold influence in the church?

What areas of the ministry are you most curious to learn more about in the first 100 days?

PRIORITY 2: MODEL THE DISTINCTIVE CULTURE YOU WISH TO SEE.

The culture of a church is often dictated by the senior pastor. If you have never done so before, set aside time to reflect and identify your own behaviors and values, then be intentional about living out those culture-shaping behaviors.

There is a big difference between nurturing culture and mandating it. People have to believe it, see it, feel it, hear stories about it, and be inspired by it before they will own it. So as you model the culture, be sure to identify and celebrate early cultural wins when you see them in others.

RESOURCES:

- Podcast: [How to Build a Healthy Organizational Culture](#)
- Podcast: [Culture Champion](#)
- Blog: [What Are You Doing to Shape the Culture of Your Team?](#)
- Blog: [Discovering the Leadership Culture at Your Church](#)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Have you noticed any cultural values or behaviors that seem to already exist in the staff or congregation?

What are your own positive behaviors that you'd like to model to set the tone for the culture throughout the organization?

How do you intend to communicate these values, both directly and indirectly?

PRIORITY 3: CONTEXTUALIZE YOUR LEADERSHIP AND MAKE A PLAN TO DEVELOP WHAT'S MISSING.

Job transitions provide many opportunities for personal leadership development. In fact, sometimes what has made you successful in one leadership role will not be what's needed from you in a new job.

It's important to recognize potential areas for growth and create a personal development plan to strengthen the unique leadership skills needed for your new context.

RESOURCES:

- Podcast: [How to Determine Your Span-of-Care](#)
- Blog: [Leading the Most Difficult Person You Know](#)
- Book: [High-Impact Teams](#) by Lance Witt

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What are some key leadership skills you need to learn for success in this new role?

What are some ways you can commit to learning in those areas?

Who can you trust to hold you accountable for weaknesses and blind spots in your leadership?

PRIORITY 4: ESTABLISH THE WINS AND EXPECTATIONS.

To be effective, team members need clarity around what success looks like for their positions. It's important that these wins and expectations for each role are communicated early on and that regular follow-ups and check-ins are established.

As the leader, you communicate priorities in two ways: what you say and what you measure. So giving focus and clarity on the wins for each role, then providing benchmarks for progress toward those goals, is key for early success.

RESOURCES:

- Blog: [Why More Clarity is Usually the Answer to Your Staffing Issues](#)
- Blog: [How to Successfully Execute Your Strategic Plan](#)
- Blog: [Do You Empower Your Team or Just Delegate Tasks?](#)
- Resource: [How to Lead An Effective 1-on-1](#)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Do you have clarity on the wins for each of the roles on your new team?

What questions do you need to ask to get up to speed?

How will you give clarity on a recurring basis? And how will you measure progress?

PRIORITY 5: SET BOUNDARIES TO PROTECT YOUR HEALTH AND WORK/LIFE BALANCE.

It's all too easy to dive headfirst into a new role and let all other priorities slip away. But as the leader of your church and staff, it's also your responsibility to model a healthy work/life balance.

Don't buy into the lie that "things will slow down soon." From day one, establish Sabbath and, if applicable, your role as a spouse and parent as priorities. After all, the greatest gift you can give those that you lead is your own healthy soul.

RESOURCES:

- Podcast: [Prioritizing Your Own Health While Leading Change](#)
- Blog: [Four Myths of Being A Healthy Leader](#)
- Blog: [The Leader Vitality Wheel](#)
- Blog: [The Art of Doing Nothing](#)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How will you protect margin in your life?

How will you establish your priorities and create accountability?

What are your weekly, monthly, and yearly non-negotiables for personal health?

PRIORITY 6: CLARIFY THE FUTURE VISION AND DIRECTION OF THE MINISTRY.

While the senior pastor does not have to develop the vision on their own, the senior pastor must be the lead communicator of this vision.

You are the main voice and advocate for the future of where God is calling the church, so this should be an especially important focus in the first few months of your new leadership role.

RESOURCES:

- Podcast: [Leading with a Fresh Sense of Vision](#)
- Podcast: [Vision-Casting](#)
- Blog: [4 Roles a Senior Pastor Can't Delegate](#)
- Blog: [3 Reasons Pastors Fail to Cast Vision Effectively—and How to Overcome Them](#)
- Blog: [3 Steps Towards a Refreshed Vision](#)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Do you have a clear sense of the vision God has for this ministry?

How will you seek out greater clarity?

How will you communicate the vision of the church to the staff and congregation, both directly and indirectly?

You'll never drift into health in a new role.

Success comes when you plan your work then work your plan.

We've heard from many new leaders that it's been helpful to engage our [Unstuck Process](#) when in transition, shaping fresh direction, or clarifying ministry priorities. Over the last 10 years, we've helped 500+ churches clarify the vision (where they believe God's called them to go) and their strategies (how they are going to get there).

Our team would love to help you navigate your next steps. [Let's talk.](#)

ABOUT TONY MORGAN:



Tony is the Founder and Lead Strategist of The Unstuck Group. Started in 2009, The Unstuck Group has served 500 churches throughout the United States and several countries around the world. Previously, Tony served on the senior leadership teams of three rapidly growing churches including NewSpring Church in South Carolina. He has five published books including, *The Unstuck Church*, and, with Amy Anderson, he hosts the The Unstuck Church Podcast which has thousands of listeners each month.

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