

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

The First Step Toward Healthy Growth – Episode 347

How Healthy Churches Grow

Attendance growth isn't always a sign of health. After all, both healthy and unhealthy things can grow. In the first episode of our new series, Tony and Amy unpack the first principle of healthy growth based on our work with 650+ churches: objective assessment.

The Challenges of Assessment

- Leaders' gut instincts can be flawed. Our gut instincts are influenced by relationships, personal experiences, and limited data.
- Pastors may not always have (or make) time to regularly assess their church's health.
- When you don't assess effectively, you start to do things without knowing whether or not you're getting results. Sometimes the fix isn't addressing the real underlying issue.

KEY QUOTE: "Do we trust our gut, or could it be that our gut is lying to us?"

Benefits of Objective Assessment

- Provides clear data and helps us avoid misdiagnosing problems.
- External perspectives help provide objectivity.
- Every church is unique, so copying other churches isn't the best strategy for health/growth.

KEY QUOTE: "We want to help churches avoid running after and fixing a symptom or a problem that really isn't the problem."

Tips for Better Objective Assessment

- Track reach metrics (e.g., attendance, first-time guests, giving).

- Track spiritual formation metrics (e.g., engagement in groups, serving, leadership development).
- Keep your emphasis on holistic health indicators, objectivity, and unbiased assessment.
- Avoid falling into the trap of copying other churches.

KEY QUOTE: "We want to make sure that we're pursuing solutions to things that are really impacting the overall health of the church."

Reflection Questions

1. How do we currently assess the health of our church? Is it more subjective or objective?
2. Have we encountered situations where our gut instinct as leaders were wrong? How did we respond?
3. What are some signs that our church might need an objective assessment?
4. What unique factors about our church might require a customized strategy?
5. How can our church celebrate its successes now and use them to build momentum for future growth?

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