

Episode 308: 3 Cs to Building a Winning Team with James Scouller

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00:00

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

What does it take to bring folks together and transform them from a group of people into a winning team? Today's guest is going to unpack what makes a team and how to build a strong one. A warm welcome to Melissa S. To the modern manager community. Today's guest is James Scouller. James is an executive coach, thought leader, former CEO, and expert in building teams. He's also the author of the trilogy how to build winning teams again and again, the first series of handbooks to explain the psychology, principles and roadmaps behind team success. Now here's our conversation.

00:37

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Are you a manager, boss, or team leader who aspires to level up and unleash your team's full potential? You're listening to The Modern Manager podcast, and I'm your host, Mamie Kanfer Stewart. Each week, I explore effective strategies and provide actionable insights that supercharge your management abilities, optimize team performance, and foster a healthy workplace culture. Become a rockstar manager and help your team thrive at themodernmanager.com/more.

01:00

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Thank you so much for joining me today, James. I'm really excited to dive into this topic around teams. The framework that you have around how teams form and different types of teams is totally new to me, and so I just, I learned so much from reading your book, and I cannot wait for you to share this with the listeners today.

01:22

James Scouller

Well, thank you for inviting me. I'm really looking forward to it.

01:26

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

So maybe let's just start with this idea of, like, what is a team? Because you have a very particular definition. So what for you makes a team?

01:34

James Scouller

A team is a special kind of workgroup that faces a performance challenge that absolutely demands that they blend their skills and their know how and their time to produce a collective result, like designing a new car or creating a Disney cartoon. That's the distinguishing feature. They are forced to combine their efforts. So they've usually got a very clear goal. They've usually got a blend of skills and know how. But above all, they've got to produce a collective result. They've got to solve a problem together or create something together or execute together. That's what defines a team rather than any other small workgroup.

02:19

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Can you give a quick example of maybe some of the teams that you see in the workplace that aren't actually functioning as teams?

02:26

James Scouller

Yes, very easily. I just have to not names. Let's get a bit controversial from the off. Most I do a lot of coaching at senior level. Most senior groups are not senior teams. They're often called the senior team but they are not. So you can generally say that the vast majority, like over 90% in my experience of the top teams are in fact what I call performance groups. They're hub and spokes models. The hub is the leader, the spokes are the different members. And most of the

work is really done with the leader and the individual here and here and here. And they get together. Sure. And they'll compare notes, they'll update each other, they'll make decisions together. But they're not actually doing creative or problem solving or executional work together. That's done singly and you've got one person in the middle.

03:21

James Scouller

So the vast majority of senior teams are examples of non teams, they're examples of performance groups and then you have a particular kind of workgroup and I use the term pseudo team, but I must confess I did not invent that. I must give credit to John Katzenbach and Douglas Smith. 30, 35 years ago they first created this term. This is the workgroup that calls itself a team because it's the 21st century, because it's the modern way, it's what you do. But they haven't actually figured out that there's something collective they must deliver together. They just think that being a team is about being nice to each other, being civil, being friendly, getting along, supporting each other emotionally. Now all those things are important, they really are. But they don't make a team. A team has a clear goal. It applies certain disciplines and they get results together. So those are two examples of groups that might be called teams but they're not teams at work. Performance groups and pseudo teams with something.

04:23

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Like a pseudo team. Is that like maybe people who are in a customer service team where like each person's kind of doing their thing and maybe they have a shared goal of not having more than 5% customer complaints kind of thing but they're not really working together to meet the goal. Or is that more like a performance team where. Yeah, help me make sure I'm understanding this exactly.

04:51

James Scouller

You were right, that's more of a performance group. So where the work is being done sort of singly and you could say pairs between the leader and that person. So you are getting the hub and spot model there where most of the work is done like that. And that's by the way, enough to achieve the objective. Then that's a perfectly valid structure. Let me give an example of a pseudo team to bring that to life. This is a real example and I'm going to shroud it in a bit of mystery. So hopefully the clients listening won't identify this. So this is a senior team, fairly new, it's running a \$1 billion business, as this is pretty serious. And they asked me to do some work

with them and I met them, and as I usually do, I interviewed each of them, and the thing they were all saying, there were eleven of them. How friendly they were to each other, how civil they were, how nice their meetings were, how good humored their meetings were. As I probed further, what became clear was how frustrated they were about the lack of strong decisions. Either decisions didn't emerge, they would go around the houses for months, or a decision would apparently emerge, but they didn't act on it. So they were describing how friendly and great, what great fun it was together. And yet below the surface, they were grumbling.

06:16

James Scouller

Now, when I talked to a selection of these people's direct reports, the direct reports would say, yeah, they were quite good on this, that and the other. But in the main, they had huge complaints because the senior group wasn't getting things done. I tried to help them figure out their number one goal, but I quickly had to back off because they hadn't even figured out why they existed as a unit. We had to go back to that first principle. This took too long, and gradually results, which had been fine at first because the previous business momentum was great. Gradually engagement started to slide. This was a very high performing company. And then in the last nine, last three months of the year that I was associated with them, the financial numbers started to slide. Result, around half of them left. Most of them were pushed out and the whole thing had to start again. They were pretending to be a suit team. They thought it was all about teamwork, but they hadn't figured out the collective challenge. They had to deliver and realize that they needed to impose certain disciplines on each other. They thought it was just about being friendly.

07:27

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Oh, I feel like there are so many teams that get together to have meetings where they don't actually do anything and there's lots of conversations and nothing goes anywhere. And that symptom of, but we had meetings and we like each other and we're doing work. I can see how that is not actually functioning as a team.

07:47

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit about the appropriateness of, like, when is a performance team the right type of team? Because you said it's not necessarily bad to have this hub and spoke model, but maybe actually first, can you introduce the other type of team or kind of give us an example of a type of team that is the real team with all of that collaboration that's needed.

Because we talked about examples of pseudo teams, now we have examples of performance teams.

08:15

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

What about an example of a real team? What's the kind of context where a real team is needed?

08:19

James Scouller

Imagine Disney, the whole unit making animations, a team working on, say the storyboard. You know, the first thing they figure out the basic here's the beginning, here's the middle, here's the end. They might have 8910 people working together and their goal is to produce the storyboard, to produce the thread for the film by the end of October or something. They're all quite clear, we've got to get this done and it's important by then. And they might have been given certain other criteria. So they've got a very clear goal, they've got a very clear collective output, and then they will have certain roles within that. Now this is where the analogy with sports teams does sometimes work. Now unfortunately I'm speaking to an American and I don't know American football so well, but if you know what we call football or you call soccer, you will know that you don't want eleven goalkeepers or eleven central defenders because you're going to have huge gaps or you're going to have people all wanting to do the same thing. So they will have a clear goal, but they will also agree clear complementary roles. They won't be trying to do the same thing. Now you may be thinking, well, James, that's obvious, isn't it? Any fool would know that. Yes, you'd like to think so, but when it comes to business we tend to pick people based on job titles, particularly at senior level. So you have the finance director, you have the manufacturing director, the sales director, etcetera. But it is entirely possible to have eight people with these different titles and different know how in certain departments, and six people who are behaviorally and mindset wise pretty much the same when it comes to group endeavors. Consequently, you are running into real trouble. So a real team would have a clear goal. They would be having, they have complementary roles that apply certain disciplines and they'd have a sense of urgency. This has got to get done by certain periods. So a Disney team would be an example, a special air service, which is our special forces unit of eight people, the equivalent in your country will be the Delta force unit. They're working together, they've got a clear objective, they've got defined roles and also they would share leadership. This may surprise you. They won't leave it all up to the leader of the unit to issue commands. I interviewed somebody in the special forces in Vietnam, and I've spoken to people in the SAS, our special air services specialist regiment, and they say the same thing. Hierarchy doesn't matter if you're the captain and you've got a rubbish plan, they'll tell you, rip it up and ignore it, and they'll let the person with the best knowledge lead. So you will see these features like shared leadership,

complementary roles, clear goals, and it's a collective result. They need to pool their efforts. So fire crews would be examples. In emergency surgical crews, a project team, like, got to design a new car or a new something or a new product. Those would all be examples of genuine teams.

11:24

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

So I'm thinking as a manager, right, it's almost like we all are aspiring to build this, you know, real team with high collaboration and specialty knowledge and complementary skill sets and sense of urgency to do big things together. But I think what I heard you say before is like, that's not always necessary. And how do we distinguish or determine what kind of team we really need to be building, or what kind of team environment or teamwork is really necessary? So we're not over building, right. And putting all this effort into something that's not necessary, but also not underbuilding, where we're kind of letting things flounder because we aren't moving our team into something that is more collaborative.

12:09

James Scouller

The key to your answer is to help them figure out what it is they've got to get done. The number one thing they've got to get done in the next six to twelve months. And once they've defined that, then they have to ask, the simple version of it is, will we have to create something together or solve problems together, or execute together, or all three? Simply put, if the answer is yes, yes. You need to adopt a real team approach. If you've got a task that doesn't require those, then a performance group may be enough. Can I give you an example, please?

12:50

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Yes.

12:50

James Scouller

Okay, so this was a very big company. This is an \$8 billion operation. And I met the chief executive and were talking about this very subject. They were a bit of a conglomerate. He said there weren't strong product or market linkages between the businesses. So he had about seven CEO's and about four or five staff people. You know, finance, digital tech, you know, this HR, that sort of stuff. So he said, I don't see that we're trying to achieve something. We achieve

a collective financial result, but the activity behind that's not so much collective. So he said, we have a meeting once a month, and his people were around the world, some people in the room with him, some people on video. We do a quick roundup of certain issues. We have a half hour conversation about something that matters to all of us, like improving customer on time delivery, and then we depart. And he said, after that, all the work is me and the CEO here and me and the HR director there. And that was a perfectly valid way of getting things done. He was really sensitive to the risk of wasting his CEO's time having to phone in or video in or come to the headquarters. He was very sensitive to that. So in that circumstance, that was a perfectly valid solution and would stay a valid solution until they had to embark on a culture change program. Then they had to switch disciplines.

14:15

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Interesting. I mean, I love this example of being really thoughtful about what's needed. And I feel like this is something that I hear managers kind of get frustrated with, is they need to know a bunch of information, and they want their team to feel like a collective group. And so they bring everyone together and they do these round robin sharings, and they talk about different topics. But really, at the end of the day, it's just for the manager to have the information they need to feel like they have this collective. But it's such a waste of time for all of those individuals who don't really need to be part of a conversation group. So I love this. It's such a great model of share at the high level, find things you have in common that you can all benefit from a conversation for, and then let the work happen in one ones instead of collectively and wasting people's time that way. Such a great example.

15:05

James Scouller

Well, yeah. So you start with the. What is it we've got to get done as a unit and then take a look at the work that will be involved. But it comes down to, do we have to solve problems together or create something together or execute together or all three? And if the answer's coming in a yes, yes, it's that points you towards a team. I will give one other bit of advice, actually, because I have met leaders who desperately want their group to be a team, because that's what they love. They like the camaraderie, they like the closeness, they like the emotional energy. And I get that because that would be my bias as well, maybe yours. But the tip is this. The leader can. The team leader can absolutely say no to a team. He or she can absolutely stop a team from. If they don't like the democratic approach, they don't like being challenged and pushed. But what they can't do, paradoxically, is say yes. They cannot force a team to appear if the objective doesn't absolutely require it. And that gets truer and truer the more senior you go, because the more senior you go, the more people jealously guard their autonomy and their sense of power and freedom. So they will only at senior level buy into being a team if they can see that what

they've got to get done absolutely demands it. So then they're saying, okay, this makes sense, but if they haven't got to the point where they're saying this goal makes sense, you tend to see pushback. That's what I found in my coaching experience.

16:36

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Yeah, and makes a lot of sense that you can't make people work together and you can't, especially if there isn't work to be done. So that makes perfect sense.

16:44

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

I wonder if you can talk a little bit about the process of forming a real team and the CCC model that you describe in your book. So how can we. How can we know if we say, okay, I've assessed my situation? Oh, actually, one sub quick, one quick derail here with the yes, yes. Obviously, if it's a yes, yes, then great, we need to be real team. What if it's like a yes no or a yes no yes?

17:09

James Scouller

If any of those are true, you will probably have to operate as a team for that objective. If it's yes, yes. It's like three green lights. This is now obvious. So any one of those yeses is enough. Now, bear in mind you can get sophisticated once you've learned certain team disciplines. You can switch back to a performance group approach on the tasks that don't need a team approach. But that's getting a little bit more advanced.

17:37

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

All right, well, maybe we'll come back to that in a minute, but let's talk about the process of forming a team. If you've decided that's what's required in our situation and we're going to go for it, what do we need to do?

17:48

James Scouller

You mentioned the CCC model. This is commit combust combine. One of the things that we're

not taught well in business is that there are psychological issues underpinning the formation and the breakup of every team, no exceptions. So simply put, if you're going to build a team and salvage a team, if it goes wrong, you've got to address the commitment and combine issues. No, ifs no buts. You have to. So then the question is, well, what are those issues? Commit is the first issue you come across. This is the question of whether we're going to engage in the group. Now, when I was a child, my mother would try to get me to go to Beavers and scouts and cubs, and I absolutely wouldn't. So I was saying, I will not commit. I will not join, I will not engage. Okay? It's not the same in business because very often we're told to be in a team. We report to the CEO, therefore we're in the team. It's often not our choice, but it absolutely is our choice whether we psychologically engage. So the commitment decision is, am I going to be wholeheartedly in this group? So am I psychologically in or am I not? So if you think about it, if you or your listeners are joining a new group, or if the whole group is new, you'll be asking yourself questions like, is this going to be a good group? What's our aim here? Do I feel included? Do I feel they're taking notice of me? Can I sense an added value role for myself? You may not have realized those are the questions you're asking, but if you think back, those have been the question, and they're all around the question of, am I psychologically in, or am I just going to stand on the sidelines and go through the motions and note that comes before any issues around trust and psychological safety? That is not the first issue. The first is, you know, am I really going to throw my hat in the ring? So that's the commitment issue.

19:49

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Are there things that we can do as managers to help people get to that place where they say, yes, I am in, I'm choosing to be in that way, or is it really just beyond our control and people have to kind of meander their way in because they've just decided that's what they're going to do or they're not going to do?

20:11

James Scouller

There absolutely are things the leader can do. One make sure that the basic purpose, this unit, this group is clear. Sometimes that's not a problem. For one particular group I coached, it absolutely was a problem. Were they there to dictate to the subsidiary companies, or were they there to provide added value to the companies and create abilities that the individual business units didn't have the time or the money to do? So sometimes it can be a big problem. So assuming that's not the problem, the number one thing that the team leader can do to start to get people through the commitment issue is to figure out that number one goal and use that goal as a unifying, galvanizing device that makes people say, this is important, this is worthwhile. I want to be part of this. I can contribute to this.

21:03

James Scouller

So that's the number one thing they can do. The other thing they can do is make each person feel noticed. So if they've got a quieter person in the group, say to that person, you know, Jack, you haven't spoken for half an hour. What are you thinking? What are you know, what's your view on this subject? You bring them in. So you make people feel included, and you do it by paying attention, and you do it genuinely. It's got to be for real. But the number one big thing is to get that number one goal clear. So everybody's saying, oh, this is what I'm committing to.

21:36

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Awesome. All right, what's the next phase? Combust.

21:39

James Scouller

Right. Okay, so let's assume that enough people have said, because there's more complexity of this than we can probably discuss here, but let's assume most people have said, okay, I mean, at least for now, that's when combust starts. Now, the choice of the word combust is deliberate because this is essentially around power. What is my power around the decisions in the team and the follow through on those decisions? And am I happy with that power? That's really what it is. Now, not everybody wants the same power. Some people want to be obviously powerful. Some people want to be subtly powerful, you know, the power behind the thrones person. And some people don't want to be powerful. They'd rather just follow and fit in. It doesn't really matter whether you've got high power needs or low power needs. We have power needs and we want to satisfy them. So this is where you'll find there's a very old model, 50 years old, called forming and storming and norming and performing. Have you ever heard of that model? This is the same as the storming, but it's now got psychological depth to it. It's explaining, this is getting comfortable with power, particularly around decisions. So this is where we are wrestling with, am I going to play a high power role which is very visible, or a high power role which is more subtle, or a low power role? And it's going to revolve around decisions. So when we're in this phase, when we're facing this issue subconsciously, we're asking ourselves questions like, how do we get things done around here? How do we reach decisions here? What's my part in those decisions? What are the rules here? Can I make the rules? Can I adapt the rules? Can I break the rules? Do I have to fight anyone here for me to be happy about my position? What is my role here? And am I okay with that? You can see it's all to do with our creativity, our power, and whether we're sort of doing ourselves justice. Does that make sense?

23:40

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Yeah. I'm wondering if you could give an example of a conversation or what that feels like to be in that stage as a team.

23:51

James Scouller

Well, it varies. You can have raging arguments. This is what everybody assumes, conflict. And I know you've had other guests in talking about conflict. In my experience, most conflict is more silent, passive aggressive. So it will probably show as awkward silences, obviously half hearted agreement to decisions. Do you know the term elephants in the room? Is that an american?

24:18

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Yes.

24:18

James Scouller

Yeah. These unnamed elephants in the room where the atmosphere is crackling with energy, but there's no raging argument. But if you're paying attention, you can realize this. Yes, it's a jockeying for position.

24:32

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

I'm wondering now, as a manager, is there something we can do to help our team individually figure out their role with power or collectively get past the turbulence that sounds like happening in this phase.

24:49

James Scouller

Yeah. I think there are two things above all. One, when you're selecting people, select them for

diversity of mindset and behavior. So I'll give you examples. So you know what I mean? Have you got somebody who's really good at thinking up fresh solutions to complex problems, who can go outside the box? Have you got someone who's very good at turning ideas into solutions with a planning schedule? You do this, you do this, and this person does this, and you need to do it by when? Have you got someone who's really good at spotting the risks and the potential pitfalls of a decision and saying, just hold on a minute. What about XYZ? Have you got someone who's really good at connecting with the outside audience, might be customers, might be suppliers, might be fellow employees and bringing back information? Have you got someone who's really good at keeping an eye on the big picture and the original objective and bringing everybody back to that? That's what I mean by different mindsets. And there's some brilliant research done by a guy called Meredith Belbin, who's in his early nineties now, which describes those roles. And I have described those nine roles in the book that you've read, book one of the trilogy, by the way. So that's the first thing. And the second thing is something that most people miss. It is to make a decision about how we're going to make decisions. Every team I've coached has never actually had a conversation about how are we going to make decisions here. Are we going to have a conversation? And then Fred, the leader, decides, are we going to have majority voting? Are we going to have majority voting? And if the leaders in the minority, the majority, still win it? Are we going to give the decision to outside experts? Are we going to go for consensus where we appear to agree on the face of it because nobody disagrees? Or are we going to get real and say what's really on our mind and get it all out? Whatever. There are various possibilities. So actually try to agree how you're going to reach decisions and have an approach for emergency decisions. Because if you and I are on a fire crew and we rush to a building and it's on fire and there's a woman on the tent story and she's hanging out there with a baby crying for help, it would be ridiculous if you turn to me as the fire crew chief and saying, James, how was your weekend? Which process do you think we should follow here? It's perfectly okay for you to yell at me to do x, y, z and for me to snap into action. So apart from emergency decisions, which are rare, how are we going to decide on emergency decisions? Those two things can make a big difference to getting through the combust phase.

27:31

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

I love this and I also teach that practice in my work and it makes such a difference for teams to know how decisions are made.

27:39

James Scouller

Wow.

27:40

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Makes everything so much smoother in their teamwork. Okay, let's get to the last one. Combine. Give us.

27:45

James Scouller

The last one is combine. Now, this is a bit more complex than the first two. So commit is really about am I psychologically in or out? Am I engaged? Combust is am I happy with my power? And the team, particularly about decisions and the follow through combine has two aspects to it. The first is around trust and intimacy. This is where the famous psychological safety comes in. Trust is a bit more subtle than some people think. Trust is really about motives. Do I trust. This is the famous psychological safety thing that if I ask a naive question or make a proposal or admit that I don't know or have made a mistake, will you expose that? Will you ridicule me? Will you somehow punish me and make me feel terrible? That's part of trust. So what's your motives in relation to me? But also trust is when somebody says x, do they actually mean x. If they say they're going to do x, are they going to do it and are they going to do it well? Or have they got another agenda? Have they got another motive? So it's a. There's a couple of aspects to trust. So the first aspect of combine is, do I trust these people? And therefore, is it safe for me to say what's really on my mind? So we're asking ourselves questions like, are we telling the truth round here? Who do I trust? Who don't I trust? What, is it too risky to say? Those are the kind of. Those are the kind of questions. So we start to get through combine when we decide that it is safe enough to say what we're genuinely thinking of feeling about a plan or a goal or something. But that isn't the whole thing. The second part is where we are placing our focus. Am I placing my focus on my needs or the team needs? So throughout commit and combust, it's all about my feelings and my concerns and my priorities, and that's inevitable. And even the first half of combine is about my safety, psychological safety. But the second half of combine is, what does the team need from me? And am I prepared to put the team's objective ahead of my own? Can I find a win in this? Can I grow in the way I want to grow while meeting the team's objective? Will I put that first? So the first part is it safe to open up, or should I be guarded? And the second half, is it me or is it we? Am I now putting the team first? And when you've gone through the two halves of combine, you are really climbing the curve.

30:16

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

So, given how we don't have a lot of time left, can you share one or two tips for how managers can support that second part with focus? Meaning, is there something that we can do to help people put the team first and kind of make that. That mental shift to the team as the priority, and what the team needs is the priority and over my own personal needs in this moment?

30:38

James Scouller

Well, the good news is, in the model I've described in the second book in the trilogy, these are a bit like multiple warhead weapons. So the good news is, if you get the number one goal right, the very thing that helps you through commit is also the very thing that can help you through combine. Because if you've got an attractive goal that people want to be part of, they're more likely to say, you know what? That really does matter. I will subordinate my aims and ambitions to that. So get that right and you will find it'll work here. There is stuff you can do around the psychological safety aspect, and some people have written whole books on this. In my experience, nothing matters more on the psychological safety side and therefore the building of trust. Trust that you can say what you're really thinking and feeling than the leader's own example, the leader's own behavior. The leader has to be a good listener, but the leader has to make a. She has to be prepared to make a fool of herself sometimes and offer a crazy suggestion just to show that off the wall ideas are okay. So if you're the leader, be prepared to accept that people will follow your lead. You can't demand that everybody trust each other. That will not work. You have to show in your own behavior that it is safe to take a risk with saying, I don't know the answer, or, here's a silly idea, and people, you start to normalize that. And what was previously risky is no longer risky.

32:12

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

All right, well, we are running out of time, and so we need to wrap up. So, James, can you tell us about a great manager that you worked for and what made this person such a fabulous boss?

32:21

James Scouller

Yes, this takes me back to when I'm about 26 or 27. This was a very powerful man. He was running a region of businesses. He had managing directors with subsidiaries. And the thing that was extraordinary about this man was that he was dedicated to growing his people. He was dedicated to spotting really top talent and then growing them. And, yes, you did the usual stuff of setting me personal development objectives and giving me bags of positive feedback. Boy, he could punch you verbally on the chin if he didn't like what you'd done or didn't feel it was good enough. He really could give you the tough feedback. The funny thing is, though, Mamie, it was tough, but there was love behind it. It was the love of helping not just me and others, but others grow and fulfill the highest potential. So can I give you an example of something he did? Captures it. Do we have time? Yeah. We had a licensed manufacturer and distributor in

Scandinavia, and they were making and selling coppertone, which at that time was the biggest suntanning brand in the world. It's probably still a big brand in the USA now, I think. Anyway, he said to me, they want to relaunch the brand. They want us to give them a quarter of a million pounds towards the marketing relaunch. Okay, says I. He said, so I want you to go to Scandinavia, to go to Finland, talk to them all, study their plan. Make a decision and come back and tell me what you've decided. Well, I was terrified. I told him I wasn't ready. I didn't feel ready. Please, could you. No. He said, get your backside over to Finland. You're leaving in three weeks time. I told my wife I was terrified and I was. I prepared lots of lists of questions. I finally fly over to Helsinki, take a little plane to Turku. I'm with the salesforce for two days and with their senior managers, I'm interviewing them and I make a decision. Their plans were really good, by the way, really good. And I decide, no, let's not give them a quarter of a million. Let's. Which is now about \$800,000. Let's forego royalties. So I came back, said, here's the plan. Here's what I suggest we do. He said, fine. He knew better than me what I was capable of. I thought this was impossible. This man had an insight into the growth potential of people, in this case, me, and a determination to push people like me into our discomfort zones in the interest of growth. This man died three years ago, I'm afraid to say, and I couldn't go to his funeral. And I feel a bit sad even telling you now because I had a light to say thank you.

35:00

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

What an incredible human it sounds like. And I love when managers can see something in their people and help them realize that potential. So beautiful.

35:09

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

And where can people learn more about you and keep up with your work and get copies of your books?

35:13

James Scouller

Well, they can get copies of the book, certainly on [Amazon](#), but all of the online bookstores, book one, book two and book three. The best place to contact me is my website, leadershipmasterysuite.com. Leadershipmasterysuite.com suite spelled s u i t e. So leadershipmasterysuite.com. Everything is there.

35:34

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

And what's the title of the series?

35:36

James Scouller

This latest it is How to Build Winning Teams Again and Again.

35:40

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

Well, thank you so much for joining me today. Really enjoyed our conversation.

35:45

James Scouller

Thank you. I really enjoyed it, too. And if the listeners found it useful, please go to that. They will find useful stuff.

35:51

Mamie Kanfer Stewart

James is providing three amazing bonuses to members of Podcast Plus the first is a PDF download of his "Rapid Team Rater" tool which lets you assess your team within 10 to 15 minutes using a framework based on the seven principles team building model. The second is a download of an entire folder consisting of James sophisticated suite of tools called "Team Fixer". The tools help you figure out your team's top psychological issue and then zero in on the actions that you need to apply. The third is a free hour of consultation with James where you can use the rapid team rater tool to discuss the specifics of your team. To get these amazing guest bonuses and many more, and the extended episode where James and I talk about the unseen forces that can interfere with your team and what to do about them, become a member of Podcast Plus at themodernmanager.com/more. All the links are in the show notes, and they can be delivered to your inbox. When you subscribe to my newsletter. Find that at themodernmanager.com. Thanks again for listening. Until next time.