



STUFF YOU CAN USE

Hi saoumyaa!

In case you don't know me, I'm Yulee—Chief Operating Officer here at Stuff You Can Use, leadership coach, author, and ministry leader.

I'm passionate about helping leaders step into leadership that isn't toxic (because the church has enough of that!) but is **courageous, compassionate, and whole**. So every other Friday, I'm going to be sending you some free leadership training, right here in your inbox.

Oh, and I'll be hosting a live workshop on Zoom next week about today's topic! If you want to join us to learn, discuss, and grow together, then [sign up here](#) for \$9.97!

Ready? :)

4 Mistakes Great Leaders Refuse to Make

Most leadership mistakes don't happen because leaders don't care.

They happen because leaders stop paying attention to what actually matters.

Not in dramatic ways.

In practical, understandable ones.

Many leadership failures don't start with incompetence - they start when capable leaders stop paying attention to the things that matter most. Under sustained pressure, leaders narrow their focus to what feels urgent and measurable, while slowly overlooking what's formative, relational, and human.

Ministry environments accelerate this drift.

The calendar fills. Expectations rise. Problems repeat. And leadership quietly shifts from intentional to reactive; from discerning to just getting

through the week.

That's usually when leadership mistakes start compounding.

Here are four we see over and over again in church ministry - not as obvious breakdowns, but as warning signs leaders often miss until the cost is high.

Mistake #1: Confusing Activity with Awareness

Most ministry leaders are doing more than ever.

But leadership research is clear: sustained busyness reduces self-awareness, and reduced self-awareness increases poor decision-making, emotional reactivity, and relational strain.

When leaders stop paying attention to their own energy levels, stress responses, and emotional triggers, leadership doesn't stop - it just becomes less thoughtful.

You may notice:

- Decisions feel rushed but necessary
- Patience wears thin faster than it used to
- You react before you reflect

Nothing looks broken yet.

But leadership is being shaped by pressure instead of purpose.

The most dangerous season for a leader isn't inactivity. It's unexamined momentum.

Mistake #2: Using Communication to Control Instead of Connect

Under stress, leaders default to efficiency.

Emails get longer. Meetings get tighter.

And yet trust declines.

Organizational psychology consistently shows that people don't disengage because they lack information.

They disengage because they feel unseen, unheard, or misunderstood.

When leaders stop paying attention to the relational climate, communication becomes transactional. Necessary conversations happen, but meaningful connection doesn't.

And when that happens, influence weakens not because leaders stop talking, but because they stop listening and loving.

Leadership isn't built on saying the right thing quickly.

It's built on saying things with intention, timing, and relational intelligence.

Mistake #3: Protecting Output Instead of Developing A Team

Many ministries are both productive and fragile at the same time.

They rely on a few dependable volunteers. They run smoothly. They get results.

And they quietly exhaust their people.

Research on team health shows that sustainability depends less on talent and more on clarity, shared ownership, and psychological safety. But when attention stays fixed on only getting things done, teams don't develop - they just function.

Roles blur. Ownership stalls.

Strong teams don't emerge by accident.

They require leaders who consistently pay attention to people development and not just task completion.

Mistake #4: Advancing Vision Without Managing Pace

Vision-driven leadership is celebrated but often misunderstood.

Leaders cast vision, introduce change, and move forward, assuming people will follow.

But research tells a different story: people resist moving forward with leaders less because of *what* is changing and more because of how fast it's happening and how little voice they feel they have.

When leaders stop paying attention to trust, timing, and shared meaning, resistance shows up as disengagement.

Why This Matters for Ministry Leaders

Ministries don't break down because leaders lack faith or passion.

It breaks down when leaders are stretched thin and no longer paying attention to:

- Their own formation and limits
- The relational temperature of their ministry
- The health and development of their team
- The human cost of outpacing their people

Leadership formation isn't optional in ministry - it's foundational.

That's why we created Leadership Labs.

Not to give leaders more content to consume, but to help them practice the kind of attention that prevents these mistakes before they become crises.

Go Deeper in Leadership Labs!

If you want the full framework behind these leadership mistakes and practical ways to strengthen awareness, communication, team health, and visionary leadership, Leadership Labs is where that work happens.

👉 **Sign up for our next Leadership Labs live workshop [here!](#)** These workshops are designed to help you **learn, experiment, and grow your leadership skills**. With Leadership Labs, you'll get...

- Live 60-minute Leadership Labs with me (Yulee!) and some special guests
- Live group discussion
- Note sheets for each session
- A practical leadership "experiment" to help you apply what you've learned in your ministry
- A replay video of each workshop!

And it's only \$9.97 for each workshop! Sound like something you could use? Then **sign up [here](#)** and let's grow our leadership skills together!

👉 **Sign Up Here**

Yulee Lee, PhD

Chief Operating Officer



✉ yulee@stuffyoucanuse.org
🌐 growcurriculum.org & stuffyoucanuse.org

P.S. Love this leadership content? You can find more of Yulee's leadership gems at dryuleelee.com, [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Substack](#).



Sent to: saoumyaa@stuffyoucanuse.org

[No longer want to receive these emails? Unsubscribe Now.](#)

Stuff You Can Use, 19825-B North Cove Rd. #1015, Cornelius, NC 28031, United States