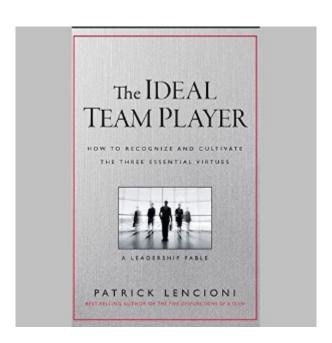# The Ideal Team Player: How To Recognize And Cultivate The Three Essential Virtues: A Leadership Fable

Synopsis

In his classic book The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, Patrick Lencioni laid out a groundbreaking approach for tackling the perilous group behaviors that destroy teamwork. Here he turns his focus to the individual, revealing the three indispensable virtues of an ideal team player. In The Ideal Team Player, Lencioni tells the story of Jeff Shanley, a leader desperate to save his uncle's company by restoring its cultural commitment to teamwork. Jeff must crack the code on the virtues that real team players possess and then build a culture of hiring and development around those virtues. Beyond the fable, Lencioni presents a practical framework and actionable tools for identifying, hiring, and developing ideal team players. Whether you're a leader trying to create a culture around teamwork, a staffing professional looking to hire real team players, or a team player wanting to improve yourself, this book will prove to be as useful as it is compelling.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Effective organizationsÃ¢Â Â"whether theyÃ¢Â Â™re multinational corporations, professional sports franchises, or local churchesÃ¢Â Â"practice teamwork. When people work together on a common goal, they achieve more than they could do individually and experience a measure of personal satisfaction. When people work against one another, however, the result is organizational ineffectiveness and personal frustration.In his 2002 bestseller, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, Patrick Lencioni outlined five ways teamwork goes awry: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of

commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results. While that book identified the interpersonal dynamics of effective teams, it did not identify the personal qualities of effective team members. Lencioni's new book, The Ideal Team Member, picks up where Five Dysfunctions left off and outlines three essential "virtues": An ideal team member is humble, hungry, and smart.

Humility comes first because it is "the single greatest and most indispensable attribute of being a team player." Humble team players are not "overtly arrogant," of course, but they do not "lack self-confidence" either. Rather, quoting C. S. Lewis, Lencioni writes, "Humility isn't thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less." Humility makes collective action possible. Without it, teams don't work effectively, because each member is either out for themselves (due to overt arrogance) or unable to propose solutions (because of lack of self-confidence).

"Hungry people are always looking for more," writes Lencioni. They are "self-motivated and diligent." For a team to work effectively, each team member must proactively contribute to the overall effort. No slackers are allowed.

Smart doesn't pertain to "intellectual capacity," though it's similar to emotional intelligence. Lencioni defines it as "a person's common sense about people…the ability to be interpersonally appropriate and aware." Ideal team members are people-smart.

After defining these three virtues, Lencioni outlines why and how they must work together. "If even one is missing in a team member, teamwork becomes significantly more difficult and sometimes not possible." A team member who is only humble and hungry, for example, becomes an "accidental mess-maker" because they are constantly—albeit unintentionally—stepping on others' toes. One who is only humble and smart is a "lovable slacker," liked by all, but only willing to exert minimum necessary effort. Someone who is only hungry and smart is a "skillful politician," which Lencioni describes as being "cleverly ambitious and willing to work extremely hard, but only in as much as it will benefit them personally."

Although Lencioni wrote The Ideal Team Member for the secular business world, my description of its contents should convince ministers that it has application to the work of local churches as well. (Indeed, Lencioni—a devout Catholic—notes that Jesus Christ is the "most compelling example of humility in the history of mankind.") The humble-hungry-smart model gives senior pastors and ministers who lead volunteers valuable insights into who to hire, how to assess their performance, what can be done to develop them when they lack one or more of the virtues, and how to embed those virtues in a church's organizational culture. Consequently, I highly recommend this book to ministers and ministry leaders.

One final note: As with The Five

Dysfunctions of a Team, The Ideal Team Player begins with what Lencioni calls "a leadership fable." He tells the story of the CEO of a family-owned building company who discovers these three virtues in the course of taking over the reins of the company from his uncle. Only after telling the fable does Lencioni describe the humble-hungry-smart model in propositional terms. This narrative way of approaching the subject shows before it tells. This makes Lencioni's points concrete and easy to understand. The show-then-tell approach is also, it seems to me, a great way to preach…though that is a subject for another time.

My favorite "business" book is The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni and a close second is his The Advantage. I put business in quotes because I have found the principles from Five Dysfunctions to be helpful on any team, be it in business, sports, a nonprofit or ministry. This new book picks up where The Five Dysfunctions left off.Lencioni states that if someone were to ask him to make a list of the most valuable qualities a person should develop in order to thrive in the world of work—and for that matter, life—he would put being a team player at the top. In The Five Dysfunctions he explained that real teamwork requires tangible, specific behaviors: vulnerability-based trust, healthy conflict, active commitment, peer-to-peer accountability, and a focus on results. Here indicates that the three underlying virtues that enable them to be ideal team players are that they are humble, hungry, and smart.He states that when a team member lacks one or more of these three virtues, the process of building a cohesive team is much more difficult than it should be, and in some cases, impossible. He writes that leaders who can identify, hire, and cultivate employees who are humble, hungry, and smart will have a serious advantage over those who cannot.He states that the purpose of the book is to help the reader understand how the elusive combination of these three simple attributes can accelerate the process of making teamwork a reality in your organization or in your life so you can more effectively achieve the extraordinary benefits that it brings.As is his usual approach (The Advantage was the exception), Lencioni illustrates his points in a leadership fable and then wraps up his points in a model at the end of the book. In this fable, we meet Jeff Shanley who lives and works in the Silicon Valley. After a few jobs in high-tech marketing, at age thirty-five he cofounded a technology start-up. Two years later, he was fortunate enough to get demoted when the board of directors hired what they called a grown-up CEO. During the next four years, that CEO, Kathryn Petersen, taught Jeff more about leadership, teamwork, and business than he could have learned in a decade of business school. When Kathryn retired, Jeff left the company and spent the next few years working at a small consulting firm in Half Moon Bay, over the hills from the Silicon Valley. As the book opens he is ready for a change. But it

turns out to be a change that he didn't see coming.Jeff receives a phone call from his Uncle Bob, who owns Valley Builders, a successful building contractor in Napa Valley. Eventually, due to his uncle's health problems, Jeff will take over the company from his uncle at a critical time for the organization, a time of both challenges and opportunities. Valley Builders has just landed two large projects. The company has never had two major projects like this at the same time, both of which are as big as they've ever done. They will need to add a net sixty people in the next two months, with five critical hires that will need to be made first – a project manager, three foremen, and a senior engineer. On top of that, they will need about a half dozen supervisors and about fifty contractors of all kinds.Jeff and his leadership team at Valley Builders will need to look at their hiring process to assure that they hire true team players, the kind of person who can easily build trust, engage in healthy conflict, make real commitments, hold people accountable, and focus on the team's results. The life of their company will depend on it.After the fable, the author covers the ideal team player model, what it means, where it comes from, and how it can be put to practical use. He states that "For organizations seriously committed to making teamwork a cultural reality, I'm convinced that "the right people" are the ones who have those three virtues in common"humility, hunger, and people smarts." Included in this section is a helpful Manager Assessment. He also discusses peer evaluations versus peer discussion, stating that he believes "the most powerful activity that occurs around any assessment is peer discussion."I found his section connecting The Ideal Team Player Model with The Five Dysfunctions of A Team to be particularly helpful. He states that the ideal team player is all about the makeup of individual team members, while the five dysfunctions are about the dynamics of teams getting things done.He ends the book by stating that over the past twenty years, it has become apparent to him that humility, hunger, and people smarts have relevance outside of the workplace, and that apart from the other two virtues, humility stands alone.There is some profanity included in the leadership fable portion of the book. I found it of interest that two of the three virtues included here were included in Brad Lomenick's excellent 2015 book H3 Leadership: Be Humble. Stay Hungry. Always Hustle.Lencioni points the reader to his website for additional resources about The Ideal Team Player.

Lencioni once again uses a fable to effectively and convincingly communicate a concept that businesses of all sizes struggle with. Any company that incorporates The Ideal Team Player's truths into in their hiring, personnel assessment, and review process will be much more functional than those who don't. The book helped me identify some personal areas that need improvement and

encouraged me to be more cognizant of my strengths and weaknesses, how they affect others and the team. I'd call it a must read if you're serious about organizational health and team building. Easy to read, practical, impactful, and fun...that's how I'd describe this book. Like Lencioni's other books, this one will be a resource for me for many years to come.

The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate the Three Essential Virtues: A Leadership Fable The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate The Three Essential Virtues Management: Take Charge of Your Team: Communication, Leadership, Coaching and Conflict Resolution (Team Management, Conflict Management, Team Building, ... Team Motivation, Employee E) Summary: The Ideal Team Player by Patrick Lencioni The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable (J-B Lencioni Series) The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable, by Patrick Lencioni: Key Takeaways, Analysis & Review Premier League Club Logos: Coloring book on the premier league club logos with information on each team. Great for kids and adults and makes an ideal gift. The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive: A Leadership Fable Death by Meeting: A Leadership Fable...About Solving the Most Painful Problem in Business Death by Meeting: A Leadership Fable...About Solving the Most Painful Problem in Business (J-B Lencioni Series) Guided Meditation: Six Essential Practices to Cultivate Love, Awareness, and Wisdom The Leadership Pipeline: How to Build the Leadership Powered Company (J-B US non-Franchise Leadership) The Truth About Employee Engagement: A Fable About Addressing the Three Root Causes of Job Misery Getting Naked: A Business Fable About Shedding The Three Fears That Sabotage Client Loyalty The Truth About Employee Engagement: A Fable About Addressing the Three Root Causes of Job Misery (J-B Lencioni Series) Sesame Street Music Player/40th Anniversary Collector's Edition (Music Player Storybook) Neymar: The Path to Becoming the Best Soccer Player in the World: Easy to read with great graphic illustrations. All you need to know about the next greatest soccer player / footballer in the World. The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management (Essential Texts for Nonprofit and Public Leadership and Management) The Ultimate Player's Guide to Skylanders Trap Team (Unofficial Guide)