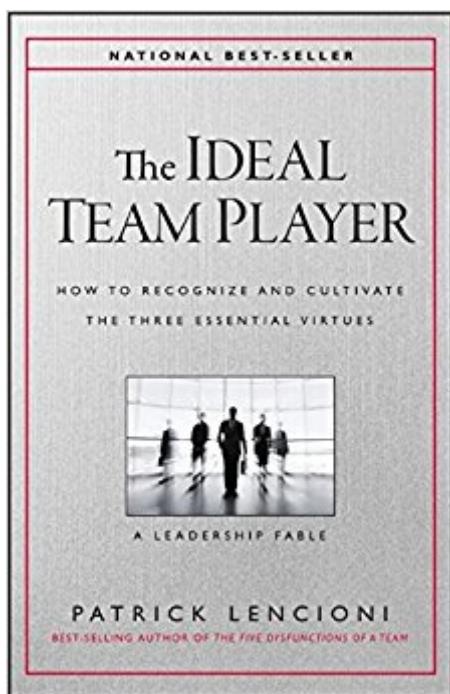


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# The Ideal Team Player: How To Recognize And Cultivate The Three Essential Virtues



## 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

[View larger](#) How To Develop An Employee (Or Yourself) Into An Ideal Team Player Ideal team players possess a harmonious blend of humility, hunger, and people smarts. Ideal, in this context however, does not mean perfect. Even people who aren't terribly deficient in any of these areas can benefit from finding ways to improve. As a manager, it can be awkward to point out flaws and areas for improvement in your employees. It's important to remember that development is a necessary and continual part of the managerial process. When these checkpoints become a seamless part of career development, they can be beneficial for

employees who are decidedly lacking in a particular virtue and positive for the team as a whole.

**How To Develop Humility** Humility is the most sensitive of the three virtues. It is rooted in one's sense of self, which is why the process of improving in this area is often the most nuanced. That's because the source of a lack of humility is always related in some way to insecurity. Managers can help cultivate an employee's capacity for humility by encouraging them to get to the root cause of insecurity and to play the part of a humble colleague. Get to the root cause Whether it's a setback in life or a troubled past, figuring out the general cause of someone's insecurity can help put her more at ease and open the door to future conversations. Personality profiles like Myers-Briggs or DISC can identify and even connect employees who are more prone to feeling insecure. The results of such profiles provide a rational, objective framework from which to build upon. Play the part When people simply act as if they are humble—asking questions, complimenting others, and being good listeners—they can experience the benefits of humility, including an uptick in their own happiness as a result of focusing on others. Ask your employee to make a list of desired behaviors related to this area of development and track his progress over time. You can act as a coach in this process, providing immediate feedback when humility is either demonstrated or lacking.

**How To Develop Hunger** Hunger is the least sensitive and nuanced of the three virtues, but it can also be the hardest to change. It's one thing to set goals and motivate employees to increase productivity, but it's quite another feat to change someone so that he embodies the self-motivation and desire to go the extra mile. Many people lacking in hunger actually do want to be more productive and engaged at work. Managers can cultivate that hunger by lighting a flame around the mission and setting clear expectations. Light a flame Employees who lack hunger may need help connecting their jobs to the overall mission of the team or organization. Managers can set an example by describing their personal motivation for their work and connection to the mission. Set expectations To develop hunger, it's important to establish performance targets and behavioral expectations. Managers must then hold their employees accountable to these targets, be unafraid to remind them of expectations, and acknowledge growth when they see it.

**How To Develop Smarts** Individuals who are deficient in people smarts don't

intentionally want to cause problems in the workplace. In fact, they are most likely oblivious to how they are perceived by their team. It's a manager's job to gently guide them on the path to greater self-awareness by getting the team involved and covering the basics of expected behavior. Get the team involved. It's best to make it clear to everyone on the team that a deficiency in this area is not about intention. Otherwise, people will start to believe that the offender is being difficult on purpose and resentment will build. A team member who lacks smarts may just need some additional support or coaching from teammates.

**Cover the basics** Those with insufficient people smarts need to be quickly redirected on the spot as soon as you notice areas for improvement. For example, you can remind this person to thank a colleague for help with a project—a social nicety she may not initiate without your cue. Regardless of which traits you want to help flourish in your employees, demonstrating these virtues yourself goes a long way. Managers who can admit their own shortcomings, model desired behavior, and show signs of professional growth over time encourage their team players to do the same.

"The author offers concrete tools to identify and engage ideal teammates who are capable of sustainably improving the performance of the company." (Business Digest, June 2017). The Ideal Team Player is a quick, engaging, and informative read great for the beach or your next trip. (Opensource, June 2016) A book Lencioni fans were waiting for (The Marketing Society, July 2016)

"You guys really dropped the ball on the teamwork project." They didn't say anything, so Jeff continued, focusing on Bobby. "You said it wasn't just posters and t-shirts, but what else was it?" Before they could answer, he went on. "Because you don't seem to know what you mean when you talk about team players." "We didn't say;" Clare wanted to explain, but Jeff wouldn't let her. "Oh wait. I forgot." Jeff was being sarcastic, but not rude. "You do have one clear definition. A person can't be a jackass." They laughed, but in a guilty sort of way. In his classic best-selling book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Patrick Lencioni laid out a groundbreaking, new approach for attacking the dangerous group behaviors that destroy teamwork. Here, he turns his focus to the individual member of a team, revealing the three indispensable virtues that make some people better team players than others. Lencioni's latest page-turning fable is the story of a leader desperate to save his company by cracking the code on the virtues that define a true team player. Jeff Shanley takes over his family's locally revered construction firm and realizes that the only way to deliver on the two biggest projects in the company's history is

to rapidly build a culture of hiring and development around those virtues. To do that, he'll have to confront and risk losing talented employees who don't know how to work on a team, and convince his fiery VP of operations not to lower the company's hiring standards in the face of short-term business pressure. Beyond the fable, Lencioni presents a powerful framework and easy-to-use tools for identifying, hiring, and developing ideal team players in any kind of organization. Whether you're a leader striving to create a culture of teamwork, a human resources professional looking to hire real team players, or an employee wanting to make yourself an invaluable team member, *The Ideal Team Player* will prove to be as practical as it is compelling.

If I were still a CEO, here's Â The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results Â I would do this week:STEP 1. Order four copies of Patrick Lencioni's new book, *The Ideal Team Player*.STEP 2. Hand-deliver the book, along with a Starbucks card, to each of my direct reports, with this assignment: "Invest up to four hours at Starbucks this weekÃ¢Â¢Â¢ and read this important book. It's likely the most team-transforming exercise weÃ¢Â¢Â¢ll do together this year."STEP 3. Schedule a half-day off-site team meeting (for next week) to discuss "How to Recognize and Cultivate the Three Essential VirtuesÃ¢Â¢Â¢ (the bookÃ¢Â¢Â¢s sub-title).STEP 4. Facilitate the senior team meeting (or invite a facilitator to do the honors) and get buy-in and commitment (a la Lencioni's pyramid inÃ¢Â The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else In Business). Assign next steps.[...]STEP 5. Step back and watch your culture transform as you articulate three virtues: Humble, Hungry, and People Smart. Wow! Patrick Lencioni has done it again! This is one powerful book--and maybe his funniest. In his classic "leadership fable" format (example:Ã¢Â Death by Meeting: A Leadership Fable...About Solving the Most Painful Problem in Business), Lencioni delivers a page-turning business story. New CEO. Two direct reports. Massive dysfunction. New hires needed yesterday. (Sound familiar?)[...]But there's another problem: the top three leaders cannot define the "ideal team playerÃ¢Â¢Â¢ qualities. (Can you?) Half of the people they hire either quit or are terminated. FinallyÃ¢Â¢Â¢finally, they agree on one virtue:"Maybe our new slogan should be'no jackasses allowed.'That would make a great poster."So, in search of more acceptable lingo and meaning, the leadership triad lands on Humble, Hungry, and Smart. Lencioni defines these virtues in the final 60 pages (The Model and application), worth the price of the book.HUMBLE: "Great team players lack excessive ego or concerns about status." He adds, "Humility is the single greatest and most indispensable attribute of being a team player."HUNGRY: "Hungry people almost never have to be pushed by a manager to work harder because they are self-motivated and

diligent."SMART: "Smart simply refers to a person's common sense about people."Caution #1: What if you settle for just one out of three? Or, if you're fortunate, two out of three virtues? After all, no one's perfect.Lencioni: "What makes humble, hungry, and smart powerful and unique is not the individual attributes themselves, but rather the required combination of all three."His memorable labels for the "one out of three" prospects are caution enough:--Humble Only: The Pawn--Hungry Only: The Bulldozer--Smart Only: The CharmerWhat About 2 Out of 3?â€“The next three categories that we'll explore represent people who are more difficult to identify because the strengths associated with them often camouflage their weaknesses.â€“Team members who fit into these categories lack only one of the three traits and thus have a little higher likelihood of overcoming their challenges and becoming ideal team players. Still, lacking even one in a serious way can impede the team building process.â€“Caution #2:

Don't use the following labels at workâ€“but they are perfect descriptors for your 2 out of 3 team members:--Hungry and Humble, but Not Smart: The Accidental Mess-Maker--Humble and Smart, but Not Hungry: The Lovable Slacker--Hungry and Smart, but Not Humble: The Skillful PoliticianWatch out for the banana peel when you're interviewing a candidate without humility. "Unfortunately, because they are so smart, Skillful Politicians are very adept at portraying themselves as being humble, making it hard for leaders to identify them and address their destructive behaviors."Lencioni urges: Don't hire unless you and your team members can positively affirm a three-for-three person. I know. It's not easy, but read the book, and you'll be absolutely convinced.Lencioni packs the last 60 pages with highly practical insights, warnings, and next steps. He lists very practical ways to assess your current team members and what to do with the 0-for-3, 1-for-3, and 2-for-3 people already on your team. He gives solutions, including a helpful self-assessment with 18 questions.See you at Starbucks!P.S. By the way, Andrew Murray's insights in *Humility* will whack you between your selfies (in just 59 pages):â€“Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure.â€“

I've enjoyed several of Lencioni's books such as *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* and *The Advantage* and was keen on reading this right when it came out.The fable was a quick read and had some memorable moments (like what Bobby and Clare did to Jeff). It had some very believable parts such as reflections on Bob's personality, the price of not addressing people issues, and the reference calls. That said, it's clearly a fable and not epic fiction writing. Some parts are predictable

and it sort of has a "and they lived happily ever after" feel towards the end. Even so, it's notably better than most manager training vignettes and it emphasizes the virtues of humble, hungry, and [people] smart. The primary value for me was "The Model" section after the fable. I liked the clarifications of each of the virtues and especially enjoyed the interview questions to help assess each of the three virtues in potential hires. I also appreciated the free resources on the book's website (such as a distilled version of the interview questions) I'm glad I read the book. Some people might want to jump straight to the model section and skip over the fable, but I found the fable to be a good memory aid that reinforced the concepts.

If you are interested in developing a highly effective leadership team, then drop everything that you are doing right now and read this book! Once again, Patrick Lencioni has clearly identified the essentials of what is required for a fully functioning team. His 2016 book, "The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate the Three Essential Virtues," utilizes his familiar fable format for the first portion of the book and then follows it with a more detailed discussion and explanation. The last chapter of the book (Don't skip ahead) offers some practical and extremely helpful advice regarding the hiring process, staff development, assessment, and accountability. I'm not going to tell you what the three essential virtues are or how Lencioni arrived at them. If you are serious about taking your organization's teamwork to the next level, you'll need to buy this book (No, I don't get a commission for saying this) and read it for yourself.

I have read all of Patrick Lencioni's books and am a fan as well as a believer in what his books advocate. The 3 attributes are so simple, seemingly obvious and yet compelling. As mentioned in the book, these 3 are also challenging to assess. I felt that the fable could have been more suspenseful in a way where it was not quite easy for hungry, humble and smart to be embedded. The construction business provided an ideal backdrop for a practical and perhaps unsophisticated workplace environment to the concepts, and as such could have been used more elaborately in 'operationalizing' the model as described later in the book. Maybe a higher level 'misfit' and a hiring mistake. Story seemed too 'easy' and too ideal to be realistic and believable. Of course, not many books can match the 5 dysfunctions as far as believability is concerned. Overall, the logic of the concept and the usability of the model is worth the read. Can't fault the example or illustration too much as a result. Highly recommended and enjoyable overall. Easy and simple read but profound and insightful nonetheless.

This book delivers on its title. Loved the narrative in the 1st half that set up the "take aways" in the 2nd half. I feel like I've been given a lens in which to examine others (and myself) clearly. I couldn't help but think about my colleagues, my direct reports and even my own son as I read through the book. Also enjoyed the practical tools for engaging behaviors that are lacking as well as encouraging the desired behaviors as you see them exemplified.

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