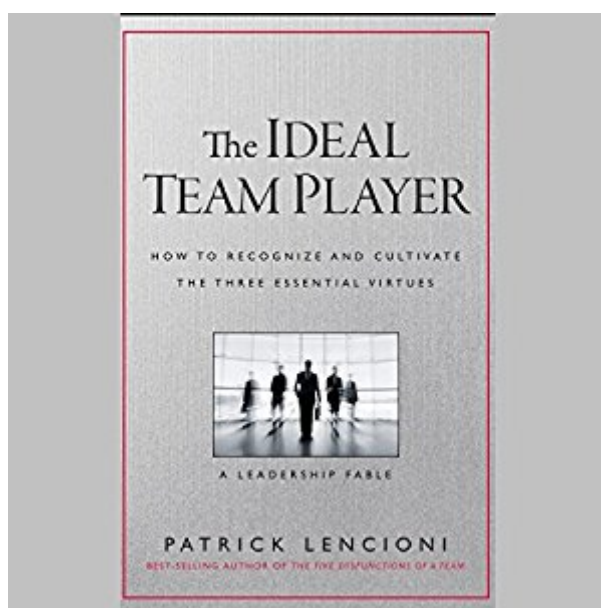


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# The Ideal Team Player: How To Recognize And Cultivate The Three Essential Virtues: A Leadership Fable



## 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

If I were still a CEO, here's *The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results* 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 week and read this important book. It's likely the most team-transforming exercise we'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 Virtues" (the book'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 in *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: *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 player" qualities. (Can you?) Half of the people they hire either quit or are terminated. Finally, 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 Charmer What About 2 Out of 3? "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. "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. Caution #2: Don't use the following labels at work 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 Politician Watch 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): "Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure."

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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