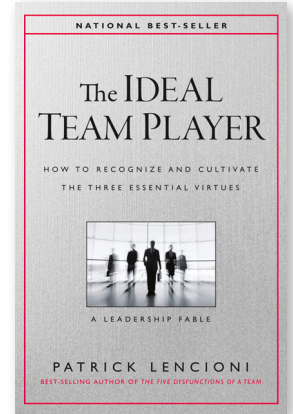


The Ideal Team Player

How to Recognize and Cultivate the Three Essential Virtues

by **Patrick Lencioni**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

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.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- An entertaining story of how leaders discover and embrace the three virtues of the ideal team player.
- The distinct, surprising features of the three virtues and how to recognize those features.
- How people behave when they possess only one or two of the virtues.
- Principles and tips for hiring, assessing and developing people according to the three virtues.
- Tips for embedding the virtues in your organization.

THE FABLE

The Situation

After 20 years, Jeff Shanley had experienced more than his fair share of the Silicon Valley. The hours. The traffic. The pretentiousness. It was time to make a change. Where he would go and what he would do next was a mystery to him. He certainly didn't expect the answer to come via a phone call from his uncle Bob.

Robert Shanley had been the most prominent and diversified building contractor in the Napa Valley for three decades. Unfortunately for Bob, none of his kids was interested in taking over the family business. And that's why Bob called his nephew to see if he knew anyone who might be interested in running the company in a couple of years when Bob retired.

Bob thought so much of Jeff that he had absolutely no expectation that his ambitious nephew in the exciting world of high tech would ever be interested in working in construction. Which is why he was so stunned when Jeff asked, "Would you consider hiring someone without industry experience? Someone like me?"

Within the month, Jeff and Maurine Shanley had sold their tiny home in San Mateo and moved their two children and one dog to the northern end of Napa — the town, not the valley.

After eight weeks of observation and learning, Jeff came to the conclusion that the move to Napa was the right one and that the stress of his previous life in the Silicon Valley was over.

He was wrong.

Diagnosis

Sitting down for lunch at an upscale BBQ restaurant near the Napa River, Bob got right to the point. "Here's the deal. I am ridiculously happy that I hired you. You've already been a blessing to me and the company."

Jeff felt as gratified by this feedback as any he had heard in his career, probably because it came from a family member. But he could tell his uncle had more to say.

"In fact, I'm not going to wait a year to put you in charge. We're going to do it right away."

Caught completely off guard by the announcement, Jeff pushed back. "Whoa. I don't think we should get ahead of —"

Smiling, Bob waved his hand and interrupted. "Don't start telling me you're not ready, because I already know that."

He paused and struggled to get out the next sentence.

"Jeff, my doctor says I have a serious heart condition. The kind you don't recover from. I don't understand half the words the doctor uses. Something about ischemia and angina. All I know is that he says I need surgery and that my life needs to change. Immediately. If surgery goes well and I do what the doctor tells me, I should be fine. But it's going to be hard for me. Which is why I have to step away from the business. Honestly, Jeff, I don't know what we'd do if we hadn't hired you."

Jeff nodded, glad for the confidence but not loving the context of it all. That context was about to get much worse.

Jeff decided to dive into the details. "Well, I hate to do this, but I think it's time we talked about the balance sheet and the longer-term financials of the company."

Bob looked Jeff in the eye with a bizarre mix of excitement and worry.

"Jeff, we just landed two great projects. It's very exciting. The Queen of the Valley Hospital project, which I mentioned to you a few weeks ago, came through on Monday. And I signed the papers yesterday morning for the new hotel project in St. Helena."

He paused and seemed to force a big smile. "We're going to build both of them."

Jeff was confused. "That's good news, right?"

"It's fantastic news," Bob answered, in a tone that was something less than fantastic.

"When was the last time we had two projects like that on the books at the same time?" Jeff was more than a little curious to know.

Bob hesitated, looking down at his glass of water for a moment and back up at Jeff.

"That's the thing. We've never had two major projects like this at the same time." He paused. "In fact, both of these are as big as anything we've ever done."

First Meeting

Sitting down at a big table in the back of Maria's Mexican Restaurant a few blocks from the office, Jeff and his new di-

rect reports, Clare Massick, head of administration and HR, and Bobby Brady, head of all field operations, moved aside their plates and silverware to make room for paperwork.

“Okay, let’s just identify the biggest levers that we’re going to need to pull to make this work.”

Clare explained. “We need 60 more people to staff the project. To do that we’ll have to hire at least 80.”

“Why?”

“We’ll lose at least 20 of them along the way.”

Jeff was shocked. “That’s 33 percent turnover.”

The Hammer

“Okay, I’m going to get pretty direct here, if that’s alright.” Jeff was trying hard to be polite.

Bobby and Clare looked at each other with a little concern on their faces, and then they nodded.

“You guys don’t seem to know what you mean when you talk about team players. And so you can’t possibly know who needs to change, who should stay and who should go.”

“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. After a moment, Bobby said something surprising.

“Actually, that’s probably about right. Call them jerks or SOBs. Whatever the case, that’s how I think about it.”

Jeff smiled. “Let’s stick with jackasses for right now. So, how do you know if a person is a jackass? And how do you avoid hiring them?”

Clare answered first. “I guess you know one after you’ve worked with one for a while.”

Jeff shook his head. “Yeah, but by then it’s too late. And you know what happens when you keep a jackass longer than you should?” They didn’t respond, so he answered the question for them. “The non-jackasses start to leave.”

Clare seemed to have a revelation.

“You know, we always just relied on Bob for knowing who fit and who didn’t. He had a way with sizing people up. But

even he couldn’t get everyone right. And he couldn’t interview and decide on every candidate at every level. I guess it just broke down.”

Jeff seemed suddenly energized. “Well, I think it’s time we figured this out. We have to stop hiring people who aren’t team players. And we have to find out how many non-team players are still working here, and then get them to change or move them out.”

He paused and looked at his notes. “Because if we can’t do that, I don’t see how we’re going to build a hotel and new wing on a hospital in the next 18 months.” He paused, and took a breath. “And as much as I hate to say it, if we can’t do that, then I really don’t know how we’re going to keep VB in business.”

Discovery

Jeff asked Clare to put together a list of all the former employees that VB had let go over the past few years and any current ones whom she had doubts about.

When Bobby and Clare arrived at his office the next afternoon, Jeff had written 23 names from Clare’s list on the whiteboard.

“Let’s go through these names one by one, trying to figure out any common denominators that might help us figure out what red flags we should be looking for.”

As always, Bobby joked. “You mean jackass indicators?”

Clare countered. “Hey, remember that some of these employees still work here. We might want to be a little more careful about how we refer to them.”

Jeff reinforced her point. “She’s right. We need to remember that these aren’t bad people. They just might not be right for a culture built around teamwork.”

“Okay. So far, after all of our conversations and the analysis of the 23 people, it seems to me that there are two qualities, maybe three.”

Jeff took his pen and wrote three phrases on the paper placemat so that everyone could see them: ego, hard work and people.

Clare frowned. “Don’t use the word ego. Find a positive word.”

“Oh, right.” He scratched out ego and wrote unpretentious in its place.

The three teammates sat looking at the words Jeff had written.

“Again, this seems too simple,” Jeff apologized.

Clare jumped in. “No, I think we may be on to something here, even if it’s obvious. Let’s go back to our list of difficult people and see if it explains their issues.”

Implementation

Bobby kept the conversation going at their next meeting. “I’ve got another employee for us to analyze: Tommy Burleson.”

Clare winced. “Oh, I’d almost forgotten about him.”

“Was he a jackass?” Jeff asked.

Clare looked at Bobby. “What do you think?”

He thought about it. “I don’t know. He wasn’t a jerk, that’s for sure. Which is probably why we kept him here for two years before we asked him to leave. But he certainly wasn’t a good guy to have on your team.”

“Why not?” Jeff asked.

“Tommy was one of the most frustrating people I’ve ever had to deal with,” Clare announced. “The guy was funny. Charming. Bright. But as wonderful a guy as he was, we just couldn’t get him to step up.”

“You mean he wasn’t hardworking? He was lazy?”

Bobby smiled and winced at the same time. “That’s what was so hard about Tommy. You wouldn’t say he was your classic lazy person. He would do what you asked him to do.”

Clare finished, “And nothing else.”

Bobby agreed. “He’d do just enough to stay out of trouble, but he’d never really tackle a project or a problem with a sense of urgency. Or passion.”

“So he was lacking passion?” Jeff prodded, seeking closure around the right word.

Clare tried to capture it. “He just wasn’t hungry.”

Jeff wrote something in his notebook and then asked Clare, “What do you mean by that?”

“I mean, he wasn’t the kind of guy who had a sense of personal motivation or a desire to do something big. Maybe it’s because he came from a pretty comfortable background

and just didn’t have anything to prove. Or to accomplish. I don’t know.”

Bobby added, “He’s the kind of guy who would be the best next-door neighbor in the world but not someone you’d want to depend on. Or go into business with.”

Jeff was nodding and looking at his notebook. “Hungry. I like that.”

“So do I,” said Clare. “That’s better than hardworking.”

Jeff went to the whiteboard and wrote hungry.

“Okay,” he announced, “I think that’s the right word. We need to hire people who are hungry. They go beyond what is required. Passionate about the work they’re doing. Hungry.”

They all nodded, and Jeff continued. “And then there was the other concept we talked about.”

Clare nodded. “People. It had to do with being smart about people.”

Jeff wrote smart on the board.

“That doesn’t sound right,” Bobby objected. “It sounds like you mean intelligent.”

“I think that’s why I like it,” Clare said. “It’s not your typical ‘nice guy’ description. It’s like emotional intelligence but simpler. It just means a person has to know how to act and what to say and what not to say. People smart. Which is a lot more than being nice.”

“And I think calling it smart will make people think about it in a different way,” Jeff agreed. “They won’t write it off as something soft or easy.”

Bobby wasn’t sold. “But you can’t be a jackass if you’re smart about people. This sounds like it should be the only thing that matters.”

Jeff thought about it and pushed back. “I disagree. A smart person could be a jackass. In fact, that would be the worst kind of jackass.”

“Explain that,” Clare asked.

“Well, you could be really good about knowing what to say and how to say it and how to charm everyone you deal with,” Jeff said. “But if deep down inside you were doing it for yourself, for your own ambitions, that would make you a duplicitous jackass.”

“Use words I can spell, smart man,” Bobby joked.

Jeff smiled. “Two-faced. Deceitful. Dishonest.”

A light seemed to go on above Clare’s head. “Maybe that’s where the next idea comes into play.”

“What idea?” Bobby asked.

Clare looked at the placemat. “Well, the word you wrote here was unpretentious.”

Jeff nodded. “Right. That came from our discussion about Bob. People at VB don’t fit in if they’re pretentious.”

“I think pretentiousness isn’t the right concept.” Surprisingly, it was Bobby who was pushing on this one. “Or maybe I’m wrong. I mean, pretentious people are definitely jackasses, but there’s more to it than that. What makes someone stand out here, in a bad way, is when they’re . . . arrogant.”

He seemed confident that was the right word. “What’s the opposite of arrogant?”

“Humility,” Clare responded enthusiastically. “Jackasses aren’t humble.”

“That’s it,” Bobby said. “And that’s Bob for sure.”

Jeff drew three circles on the board, creating a Venn diagram of sorts. He then wrote the words humble, hungry and smart next to the circles.

For the next hour, they chose employee after employee, some who were difficult, others who were all-stars and others who fell somewhere in between. They evaluated them against the three new words, placing them in the circles where they belonged.

Every all-star easily met a pretty high standard for being humble, hungry and smart, and they were placed in the middle segment. Some barely failed to meet the standard in just one area and were close to the middle of the chart, while others struggled with more than one of the qualities and were further out from the middle.

Jeff insisted that the leadership team be evaluated the same way, and though each person made it into the middle segment, what was interesting is that they landed in different locations.

But Jeff was still uncertain. “It still sounds too simple to me.” He kept looking at the three words. “And yet, I don’t see anything missing. I guess it’s just the combination of the three.”

“That’s it,” Clare announced, walking to the whiteboard

and circling the middle segment in bright red. “The magic here is just that if even one of the qualities is missing in a big way, you’ve got yourself a jackass.”

They decided they should start using the model right away in the hiring process, which Bobby suggested they call the “no jackass test.”

Indicators

Less than 30 days after everyone committing fully to the new hiring model, everything at VB had changed completely. All open positions had been hired with ideal team players, and the projects were both way ahead of schedule. And every single employee who lacked humility, hunger and smarts had chosen to leave the company on their own, with no animosity.

About a year later, the biggest change that the humble, hungry and smart model had made could be seen most starkly in human resources — not the department but the function. Though Clare and her small staff were certainly involved in maintaining the culture, Jeff had made it clear that his leadership team, and their direct reports, were responsible for ensuring that VB stayed humble, hungry and smart.

He also constantly reminded them that there was nothing theoretical or touchy-feely about it. From interviews and orientation to performance reviews and compensation decisions, “the three virtues,” as they came to be known, were to be regular topics of conversation.

From a practical standpoint, there were a few indicators that VB’s business had changed as a result of the clarity around teamwork. First, recruiting had shifted largely away from headhunters and outside agencies as more and more employees, from contractors to foremen, sought out jobs at VB through friends and references.

Second, morale at the company was undeniably higher, and turnover had dropped markedly. But Jeff was adamant that it shouldn’t go away completely: “If no one is leaving or being asked to leave, then we’re probably not truly living these values.”

Finally, and most importantly from the standpoint of proof that the model worked, client satisfaction at the hospital and the hotel were better than Jeff and his team could have expected. Though fires had to be fought and unexpected challenges surfaced at inopportune times, the way the company rallied and addressed those issues no longer inspired panic and heroism. A new confidence,

even in the messiest situations, permeated the offices and worksites of Valley Builders.

THE MODEL

When team members possess significant humility, hunger and people smarts — they'll be more likely to be vulnerable and build trust, engage in productive but uncomfortable conflict with team members, commit to group decisions even if they initially disagree, hold their peers accountable when they see performance gaps that can be addressed, and put the results of the team ahead of their own needs.

Only humble, hungry and smart people can do those things without a great deal of coaching. Those who don't have all three virtues are going to require significantly more time, attention and patience from their managers.

The Categories

Let's take a look at the various categories of people, starting with those who have none of the required qualities and moving to the ideal team players who have all three.

Those who lack all three qualities, who are markedly deficient in humility, hunger and people smarts, have little chance of being valuable team members. It would take great effort over a long period of time for them to develop the capacity for all three, let alone two or even one. Fortunately for managers, these people are very easy to identify and rarely slip through interviews and make it onto teams.

For those who lack two of the three in a big way, it's also going to be an uphill battle — not impossible, but not easy.

Humble only: the Pawn. People who are only humble but not at all hungry or smart are the “pawns” on a team. They are pleasant, kind-hearted, unassuming people who just don't feel a great need to get things done and don't have the ability to build effective relationships with colleagues. They often get left out of conversations and activities and have little impact on the performance of a team. Pawns don't make waves, so they can survive for quite a long time on teams that value harmony and don't demand performance.

Hungry only: the Bulldozer. People who are hungry but not at all humble or smart can be thought of as “bulldozers.” These people will be determined to get things done, but with a focus on their own interests and with no understanding or concern for how their actions impact others. Bulldoz-

ers are quick destroyers of teams. Fortunately, unlike pawns, they stand out and can be easily identified and removed by leaders who truly value teamwork. However, in organizations that place a premium on production alone, bulldozers can thrive and go uncorrected for long periods of time.

Smart only: the Charmer. People who are smart but sorely lacking in humility and hunger are “charm-ers.” They can be entertaining and even likeable for a while but have little interest in the long-term well-being of the team or their colleagues. Their social skills can sometimes help them survive longer than bulldozers or pawns, but because their contributions to the team are negligible, they often wear out their welcome quickly.

Team members who lack only one of the three traits 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 teambuilding process.

Humble and hungry but not smart: the Accidental Mess-Maker. People who are humble and hungry but decidedly not smart are the “accidental mess-makers.” They genuinely want to serve the team and are not interested in getting a disproportionate amount of attention and credit. However, their lack of understanding of how their words and actions are received by others will lead them to inadvertently create interpersonal problems on the team. While colleagues will respect their work ethic and sincere desire to be helpful, those colleagues can get tired of having to clean up the emotional and interpersonal problems that accidental mess-makers so often leave behind.

Hungry and smart but not humble: the Skillful Politician. People who are hungry and smart but lack humility are the “skillful politicians.” These people are cleverly ambitious and willing to work extremely hard, but only in as much as it will benefit them personally. 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. By the time the leader sees what's going on, the politician may have already created a trail of destruction among their more humble colleagues who have been manipulated, discouraged and scarred. Most of us have worked with plenty of skillful politicians, as they tend to rise in the ranks of companies where leaders reward individual performance over teamwork.

Managers will need to be “smart” about how to use the terms with their employees. And remember, the real purpose of identifying these types is not to pigeonhole people

but to better understand what constitutes ideal team players so we can recognize or develop them on our teams.

Humble, hungry, smart: the Ideal Team Player. Ideal team players possess adequate measures of humility, hunger and people smarts. They have little ego when it comes to needing attention or credit for their contributions, and they are comfortable sharing their accolades or even occasionally missing out on them. Ideal team players work with a sense of energy, passion and personal responsibility, taking on whatever they possibly can for the good of the team. Finally, they say and do the right things to help teammates feel appreciated, understood and included, even when difficult situations arise that require tough love. Most of us can recall having managed or worked with ideal team players in our careers, as they are quite appealing and memorable.

Now that we understand each of the three virtues and how they fit together, we can look at how the model can be applied.

Application

There are four primary applications of the ideal team player model within an organization: (1) hiring, (2) assessing current employees, (3) developing employees who are lacking in one or more of the virtues and (4) embedding the model into an organization's culture.

Hiring

Though it would be nice to have a perfectly reliable, diagnostic tool for accurately identifying and selecting people who are humble, hungry and smart, no such tool currently exists. However, by doing thorough interviewing and selective reference checking, a manager can hire people with a high degree of confidence that they'll be ideal team players. The key is sticking to a few concepts, all of which may seem obvious but are too often overlooked.

Don't be generic. Too many interviews leave interviewers with extremely general assessments of candidates. "She seems like a nice person. I like her." That would be fine if you were looking for someone to mow your lawn once a week. If you're looking for a team player who is humble, hungry and smart, being specific about targeted behaviors and attributes is critical.

Debrief each interview as a team. Interviewers should debrief quickly after each interview, specifically around observations related to humility, hunger and people smarts. For instance, if the first two interviewers agree

that the candidate is hungry and smart, the third can focus on humility, taking more time and probing more directly for the unknown piece.

Make interviews nontraditional. Interviews should incorporate interaction with diverse groups of people in everyday situations, and they should be longer than 45 minutes. Get out of the office with a candidate and see him deal with people in an unstructured environment. Running an errand at the grocery store or the mall is not a bad idea. Spending time in a car and seeing how he behaves when he's not answering a question helps to understand him better. Whatever you're doing with that candidate, look specifically for signs that he is humble, hungry and smart.

Ask what others would say. Instead of asking candidates to self-assess a given behavior or characteristic related to humility, hunger or people smarts, ask them what others would say about them. There is just something about having to answer on behalf of another person that makes a candidate more honest.

Ask candidates to do some real work. The point is not to get free work but rather to see how people perform in real-world situations so you can discern whether they are humble, hungry and smart.

Don't ignore hunches. If you have a doubt about a person's humility, hunger or smarts, don't ignore it. Keep probing. More often than not, there is something causing that doubt.

Assessing Current Employees

How exactly should a leader go about evaluating people for humility, hunger and smarts? There is no easy, quantitative diagnostic, but there are reliable, qualitative approaches that can work very well.

There are a number of questions managers can ask themselves about a given employee to determine whether he or she is humble, hungry or smart.

Humble. Does he genuinely compliment or praise teammates without hesitation? Does she easily admit when she makes a mistake? Is he willing to take on lower-level work for the good of the team? Does she gladly share credit for team accomplishments? Does he readily acknowledge his weaknesses? Does she offer and receive apologies graciously?

Hungry. Does he do more than what is required in his own job? Does she have passion for the "mission" of the team? Does he feel a sense of personal responsibility for the

overall success of the team? Is she willing to contribute to and think about work outside of office hours? Is he willing and eager to take on tedious and challenging tasks whenever necessary? Does she look for opportunities to contribute outside of her area of responsibility?

Smart. Does he seem to know what teammates are feeling during meetings and interactions? Does she show empathy to others on the team? Does he demonstrate an interest in the lives of teammates? Is she an attentive listener? Is he aware of how his words and actions impact others on the team? Is she good at adjusting her behavior and style to fit the nature of a conversation or relationship?

Developing Employees

Once a leader (or employee) has established a clear sense of his employees' (or his own) relative strengths and weaknesses related to the three virtues, the process of improvement can begin. The most important part of the development process, and the part that is so often missing, is the leader's commitment to constantly "reminding" an employee if she is not yet doing what is needed. Without this, improvement will not occur.

Humility. The source of a lack of humility is always related in some way to insecurity, and for most people, insecurity is rooted in childhood and family issues that go way back beyond their first day on the job or the team. Without getting too deep into psychological analysis or therapy, a manager or coach can experience significant relief simply by identifying the general cause of insecurity.

People who lack humility need behavioral training in an exposure therapy kind of way. Don't be put off by the clinical sound of this. Employees can make progress simply by acting like they are humble. By intentionally forcing themselves to compliment others, admit their mistakes and weaknesses and take an interest in colleagues, employees can begin to experience the liberation of humility. This happens because they suddenly realize that focusing on others does not detract from their own happiness but rather adds to it. After all, humility is the most attractive and central of all virtues. But the best way of all is to have teammates coach the employee, providing encouragement and immediate feedback when the desired virtues are demonstrated or lacking.

Hunger. All too often, employees struggle to become hungry because they don't understand the connection between what they do and the impact it has on others. When a slightly non-hungry employee hears his colleagues describe their mo-

tivation and connection to the mission, he may get "infected" by his teammates' passion. Set clear behavioral expectations for employees, and then hold them accountable. When a non-hungry employee starts to exhibit signs of hunger, praise her publicly and have teammates do the same.

Smarts. Employees who lack people smarts have no desire to create interpersonal problems with their teammates. They just don't understand the nuances of interpersonal situations, and they don't seem to realize how their words and actions impact others. A person who has trouble being smart with people can be likened to a pet. Like a puppy being trained, he needs to be quickly and lovingly rapped on the nose with a newspaper whenever he does something non-smart. So, in the middle of a meeting, stop and say, "Hey, Bob, this is the part of the meeting where you should thank her for what she did." If this sounds rudimentary or even juvenile, that's okay. It won't be once you establish the real nature of the help your employee needs. And if he is sincerely interested in getting better, he'll thank you for it.

Embedding the Model into an Organization's Culture

Teamwork is not a virtue but rather a choice. For those organizations that are sincere about humility, hunger and smarts, here are a few simple ideas for embedding those virtues into your culture.

- Be explicit and bold. Leaders who believe teamwork is important and expect their people to be humble, hungry and smart should come right out and say so. They should tell everyone. Employees. Vendors. Partners. Customers. It's not marketing but rather expectation-setting.
- Catch and revere. Leaders should be constantly on the lookout for any displays of the virtues. And when they see those displays, they should hold them up as examples for everyone to see. Great team leaders will acknowledge an act of humility, hunger or people smarts not because they want to be seen as sophisticated or clever managers but because they want everyone to know exactly what kinds of behavior they expect and appreciate.
- Detect and address. Whenever you see a behavior that violates one of the values, take the time to let the violator know that his behavior is out of line. And don't just do it in egregious situations. Often, the smaller offenses are the ones that are harder for employees to see and the ones they learn from the most. Of course,

doing this well requires tact and good judgment. The key is that leaders and, eventually, teammates don't squander opportunities for constructive learning.

Great cultures tend to be appropriately intolerant of certain behaviors, and great teams should be quick and tactful in addressing any lack of humility, hunger and people smarts.



Patrick Lencioni is founder and president of The Table Group, a firm dedicated to helping leaders improve their organizations' health since 1997. Lencioni is the author of 10 business books, with nearly 5 million copies sold worldwide. His work has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Fortune*, *Bloomberg Businessweek* and *USA Today*, among other publications.

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