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Winning Well

A Manager's Guide to Getting Results — Without Losing Your Soul

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

It can feel like a rigged game. Executives set aggressive goals, so managers drive their teams to burnout trying to deliver. Or, employees seek connection and support, so managers focus on relationships . . . and fail to make the numbers. The fallout is stress, frustration and disengagement, and not just among team members — two-thirds of managers report being disengaged.

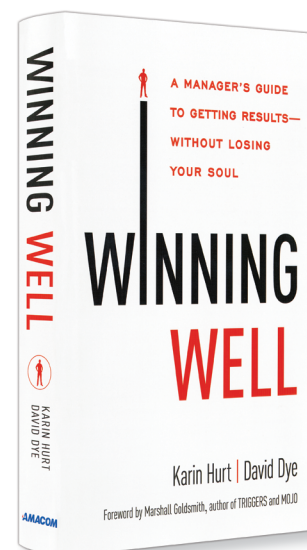
To succeed, managers cannot choose between results and relationships. They need both: They must get people to achieve while creating an environment that makes them truly want to.

Winning Well offers managers a quick, practical action plan. They will learn how to stamp out the corrosive win-at-all-costs mentality; focus on the game, not just the score; reinforce behaviors that produce results; sustain energy and momentum; correct poor performance without drama; build productive relationships; and be the leader people want to work for.

Today's hypercompetitive economy has created tense, overextended workplaces. Keep it productive, rewarding and even fun with this one-stop success kit.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why Winning Well doesn't mean perfection.
- Why you should emphasize behaviors, not the metrics scorecard.
- The four principles of managers who win well.
- How to lead meetings and make decisions that inspire your team.
- To help your team solve problems, double productivity and own their results.



by Karin Hurt
and David Dye

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: WINNING WELL

by Karin Hurt and David Dye

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The World of Winning Well

The hypercompetitive postrecession global economy puts frontline and middle-level managers in a difficult position — expected to win, to “move the needle,” to get the highest ratings, rankings and results. Many managers become hell-bent on winning no matter what it takes, and they treat people like objects — in short, they lose their soul.

This exacts a high price from managers as they work longer hours to try to keep up. Those unwilling to make this trade-off either leave for a less competitive environment or try to stave off the performance demands by “being nice” to their team. After years of trying to win while sandwiched between the employees who do the heavy lifting and leaders above them piling on more, they give up and try to get along. Inevitably, after prolonged stress and declining performance, they surrender to apathy, disengage or get fired.

Winning doesn't mean you reach some imaginary state of perfection. Winning means that you and your people succeed at doing what you're there to do. The real competition isn't the department across the building or the organization across town. Your competition is mediocrity.

Winning Well means that you sustain excellent performance over time, because you refuse to succumb to harsh, stress-inducing shortcuts that temporarily scare people into “performing.” You need energized, motivated people all working together. Your strategy is only as strong as the ability of your people to execute at the front line, and if they're too scared or tired to think, they won't. You can have all the great plans, six-sigma quality programs and brilliant competitive positioning in the universe, but if the human beings doing the real work lack the competence, confidence and creativity to pull it off, you're finished.

In fact, in today's connected world, people increasingly expect a positive work environment. When you don't provide it, they can easily go across the street to your competitor or go into business for themselves as freelancers or independent contractors. Now everyone else but you benefits from the time and training you invested.

Winning Well doesn't mean you'll be a pushover. It means you'll be a manager known for getting results, whom people respect and whom people want to work with. You can win — and you can win without losing your soul.

How to Win Well in Every Situation

Managers who sustain results over time operate from four principles. Internally, they value confidence and humility. Externally, they build on this strong internal foundation with a combined focus on relationships and results. Let's start with confidence, because yours will inspire others' and make the other three principles easier to enact.

Confidence. Know your strengths, own them and use them. You don't need to manage exactly like anyone else, but you do need to be confident in who you are and what you bring to the table. If you don't believe in yourself, your employees won't either. Stand up for what matters, and speak the truth.

Humility. As an internal management value, humility means that you have an accurate self-image. You know your strengths and you know your challenges. You recognize your internal worth and you also recognize and respect the dignity and worth of every human being. Have an accurate self-image, admit mistakes and invite challengers.

Results. There are three keys to staying focused on results: clarify, plan and do. Your people need to



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understand why your group exists, what results you are accountable to produce, the impact of your work and what success looks like. With the purpose and results clear to everyone, managers who win well work hard to create tight plans that will make these results happen. And without intentional action there are no results.

Relationships. Winning means you achieve results, but those results don't become sustainable until you add the second external focus of relationships. This includes three key activities: connect, invest and collaborate. You treat everyone with respect and dignity, not as a number, object or problem. You build trust with, and between, your people; you listen to their values, needs and insights; and you encourage their success. You recognize and value that each of your employees has unique strengths and perspectives. You draw out the strengths, talents and skills from people while helping them minimize their liabilities. Collaboration is more than simply working together. It's an attitude that communicates you are in it with your people, not apart from them.

Master the Metrics Maze

Your customer doesn't care what you received on your internal scorecard. No employee can concentrate on 27 metrics at a time. Managers who win well pick a few meaningful measurements that encourage the right behaviors and make it tough to manipulate the stats just to get a short-term lift with no real improvement. They understand that the score is not the game.

There are four ways you can use data effectively:

- 1. Know what matters.** Your scores don't really matter. They are there to help you and your supervisors make decisions, but the scores ... don't ... matter. What is truly significant? There is one surefire way to find out. Ask, What does your customer or client care about? The results — what you do for your customers or clients — that's what matters.
- 2. Know the key behaviors that produce real results.** Whatever your business, there are always key behaviors that drive your meaningful results. Do you know yours? This is a critical step; you can't win, much less win well, if you don't know what drives your success.
- 3. Emphasize key behaviors (not the score).** Consistently emphasize the key behaviors. "This is how we succeed: We do A, B and C." All your communication — in team meetings, in one-on-ones, in email — everything must emphasize these core practices. When you do discuss metrics, put

them in terms of the key behaviors. For example, "When we do A, B and C every day, we will be in the top 10 percent of the stack rank. We will get the revenue we need to serve our clients. We will maintain 80-percent-plus repeat visits."

4. Check the score at appropriate intervals.

How often should you check your metrics? The answer is: as often as necessary to keep you on track and no more than that. ●

Winning — Achieve Results, Get Things Done and Move to the Top

There are specific techniques to increase your team's focus on what matters most, to recover from distractions and to hold your team accountable.

To keep your people focused on results, start with your own mindset. Managers who win well understand that people will be distracted. You can help reduce distractions and build a foundation for consistent results and healthy relationships by following these four steps.

Step 1: Set clear expectations. Roughly 90 percent of the problems managers have with poor performance result from deficiencies with this first step. No matter how clear your expectations are to you, it's likely they're not as clear to your people. When you finish a discussion or share instructions, don't leave the conversation until you check for understanding. Here are several questions you can use: "Before we go, Joe, will you share what you understand the expectations to be?" "Joe, can you tell me what you heard?" "Let's review what we're doing next."

Step 2: Train and equip people to meet the expectations. After unclear expectations, the next pitfall is to assume that everyone has the knowledge or skills to meet those expectations. Ensure that your team members are set up for success. Be sure to train and equip people to meet expectations.

Step 3: Reinforce expectations. Your mind receives 11 million bits of information every second you are awake. With that much information coming at your people, it can't hurt to say things twice. Your major strategic themes, objectives and key priorities warrant repetition at least once every 28 days.

Step 4: Close the loop with celebration and accountability. You can easily demotivate your team when you fail to celebrate success or practice accountability. Think of celebration and accountability as the final part of the expectation circle, the feedback that closes

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the loop and makes it likely your team will stay focused on what matters most. Celebration can be as simple as gathering your people and privately acknowledging that they did it.

Lead Meetings That Get Results and That People Want to Attend

Horrible meetings are a cliché of the business world, and with good reason. Many meetings are a waste of time and don't accomplish anything. The minutes creep along while the meeting leader fritters away everyone's time, people have meaningless conversations that don't solve problems, and everyone is frustrated that they could be doing something more productive with their time. When you don't run meetings well, not only do your results suffer, so does your credibility.

Think about meetings as commitment creators. In other words, the outcome for every decision-making or problem-solving meeting you ever have is to create commitment. You get the right people together to discuss the problem, you make a decision and people commit to do something. The product of a good meeting is a commitment to activity. You build this commitment with three questions:

Commitment 1: Who will do what? Until someone actually does something, nothing has changed from before you made the decision. Until then, it is just a nice idea. There are actually two questions here: What is to be done? Who will do it?

Commitment 2: By when? This one is straightforward. What is the finish line for the tasks people have agreed to complete? When these deadlines are shared and publicly available, everyone is more likely to meet them.

Commitment 3: How will we know? "How will we know?" is the magic question that moves your meeting from good intentions to real-world impact. It closes the loop from intention to action and creates momentum without you having to spend hours every day tracking down action steps.

Here's how it works: When someone completes a task, what does he do next? Does he need to pass the results to another person or group? Should he update the team? Should he make a presentation of his findings? The specific answers depend on the task and project. What matters is that the accountability and next step are baked into the decision. Everyone knows what they are accountable to do, the team knows if it's been completed and no one is left waiting around for information. Combine these commitments into one sentence — Who does what, by when, and how will we know? — and you have the Winning

Well Meeting Formula to get clarity, accountability and results in just five minutes at the end of every meeting.

How to Make Business Decisions Your People Get Behind

Winning Well managers are clear on how the decision will be made and who is involved, erring on the side of inclusion whenever possible. The truth is that most people will work with a decision when they are clear about what is required, why the decision was made and if they had input into the decision. It doesn't mean they have to love it. They're adults and don't expect that every single decision will go their way. They do want to know that their information, values and perspective were taken into consideration.

One of the most common types of meetings you hold is the meeting to make a decision. If you want your team to win, you've got to build their decision-making expertise. There are just two critical pieces of information you need to introduce at the start of your discussion: 1. What kind of decision is this? 2. Who owns the decision?

The first step to making decisions that everyone gets behind is to make just one decision at a time and limit discussion to that single decision. The good news here is that there are only two types of business decisions to make. The first type is a decision about goals: Where are we going? The question can take many forms, but it's always about your group's goal, destination or outcome. Other ways to ask this question are, "What is the outcome we need to achieve?" or, "What does success look like?" You can't talk about how you're going to do those things until you've first clearly decided what success looks like. Know where you are going before you discuss how to get there.

The second type of decision is, How will we get there? This is a discussion about methods. Separate discussions about where you are going from how you will get there.

The second decision-making mistake managers commit: lack of clarity around decision ownership. When you are clear about who owns the decision and how it will be made, people will readily contribute and are far more likely to own the outcome. This isn't difficult, because there are only four ways to make a decision:

- A single person makes the decision.
- A group makes the decision through a vote.
- A team makes the decision through consensus.
- Fate decides.

Before discussion begins, state how the decision will be made. You get yourself in trouble if you suggest a vote and then change back to "I'll decide" when you think the vote won't go your way.

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How to Hold Your People Accountable Without Losing Your Soul

The definition of accountability is not beating someone up for poor performance, but keeping your mutual commitments to one another. This goes both ways: Managers who win well encourage their employees to hold them accountable for their commitments. A Winning Well accountability mindset brings results and relationships into laser-like focus.

Winning Well managers approach accountability conversations with a clear plan that will build relationships and achieve results. Your overall goals in these conversations are to 1. Draw attention to the performance issues. 2. Have a mutual discussion. 3. Confirm commitment to new behavior. Use the INSPIRE method to achieve these goals with a short, to-the-point, specific conversation about what must change.

I — Initiate. Initiate the conversation in a respectful manner. Feedback is best received when you've been welcomed to provide it. Sometimes, though, the conversation isn't optional. You may need to be more direct. Initiate accountability conversations as close to the moment of concern as possible. Don't wait three days to address something that happened this morning. Take care of it at the first opportunity.

N — Notice. Share your concern or observation. "I've noticed there are paint drips on the floor when you leave a job." "In listening to your calls, I've noticed you don't connect with the customer." "I noticed that you arrived late this morning."

S — Specific Support. Provide specific, supporting evidence you can see. "When the customer told you he was calling to disconnect his line because his spouse had died, you didn't express any empathy. You said you would be happy to disconnect the line." "The meeting was scheduled for 9:00, and you arrived at 9:30."

P — Probe. After you present the situation, the employee needs a chance to talk. Ask a question in a neutral, curious tone to allow her to share any relevant information. Generally, "What happened?" is adequate and allows the person to share information or to own the situation. "What happened on that call?" "What happened that you were late?"

I — Invite. Once he's had a chance to share his thoughts, invite him to solve the problem. Start with a review of the expectations, then ask for his thoughts on how to resolve the issue. Usually, this will be straightforward. If he can't come up with an effective solution, you can provide specific suggestions on how the employee

could improve. Sometimes you may discover that the employee needs more training.

R — Review. Ask one or two open-ended questions to check for understanding and one closed-ended question to secure commitment. "What concerns do you have about this approach?" "Is this your commitment going forward?" Ask the employee to review her specific commitment: "Would you please recap what you will do next time?"

E — Enforce. Enforce the behavior and why it's important while reinforcing your confidence that the employee can do this.

Get More Done in Less Time

When you care about winning, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. There's always more that you feel you should do, and there never seems to be time to get to all the tasks that matter. Winning Well managers recognize they can't do it all and have a system to identify what matters most and know what to let go.

First, you must acknowledge that you cannot do everything. This is called the Winning Well approach to time: "infinite need, finite me." At any moment in time there are literally thousands of things you could be doing, but you get to do only one. That's it. One. Before you can focus your time and energy for results, you have to reach an understanding with yourself that you can do only one thing at any given moment.

Once you've made peace with the reality of infinite need, finite me, it's time to get crystal clear about WMM: what matters most. In your work, what are the two or three most important organizational values, and what are the most important outcomes that move your relationships and results forward?

Now you're ready to organize your day around your MIT—the most important thing. Your MIT is the single most important task you can do that day. At the start of each day, look over your projects, tasks and to-dos and select the one item that is the MIT for that day. Hint: It should align with your WMM values and activities.

Do your MIT first. You will be distracted. Real issues will come up, you'll face a change of direction, your boss will need something — life happens. Be clear about your MIT and do it first — before email, before voice mail, before checking in with your boss or your team. Whether it takes 30, 60 or 90 minutes, you'll be done and ready to deal with everything else.

Focus your time and energy with the Rule of One. When you work on your MIT, turn off your phone, your email, your Facebook and Twitter notifications (unless like

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in some social media companies, your MIT really is to check Twitter), and focus on that MIT. ●

Winning Well — Motivate, Inspire and Energize Your Team

You can't motivate your employees. By definition, motivation comes from inside a person. It's not something you can provide externally. If you could, the Gallup Polls wouldn't consistently be showing that 68 to 70 percent of American workers are disengaged (with similar statistics around the world).

That's why most employee-engagement programs don't work. You can, however, cultivate motivation by uncovering it, tapping into it and inspiring lasting change. But you can't just dive into a discussion like that. It begins when you create the space to know your employees for who they truly are.

As a manager, your values and your vision are also important. You shouldn't set them aside. However, if you want people to walk with you, you must first walk with them. Discover what's important to them.

- Why are they a part of the organization?
- What do they value?
- What do they dream of for their future?

Hold deeper developmental discussions, let your employees outgrow their past and give your employees new challenges. When you walk beside them and support them in that purpose, those values and their dreams, while also sharing your own, then, and only then, you will see true motivation. Walk with them and they'll walk with you.

Build a Loyal Team of Problem Solvers

Do you ever wish your people took more responsibility for problems, came up with ideas on their own and solved problems without always involving you? When people don't solve problems, there's a good chance the management culture is part of the problem.

To build a culture that nurtures innovation and problem solving, practice these steps:

- 1. Make it safe to try.** When someone brings you an idea that you've tried before, don't send him away with a terse, "We tried that. It didn't work." Try this invitation instead: "Thanks for thinking about this with us. We tried a similar idea last year and we found an issue with ... Would you be willing to think about that issue and see if you

come up with any ways to make this idea work? I'd love to hear them."

- 2. Start small.** The technology sector is well known for its minimum viable product practice. What is the smallest way you can test an idea and learn how to improve it? Get moving, get feedback and get better.
- 3. Reward behavior, not just success.** This is important. When you ask people to solve problems, you are actually asking them to take a risk. Their solution might not work. How do you respond? Are you grateful they tried, or do you get upset at the failed effort? To build a culture that nurtures innovation and problem solving, reward effort.

Inspire Your Team to Double Productivity

Communicating the big picture is a skill that's often lost in management-development programs. After all, big-picture thinking is for execs, right? No. Everyone needs to know how the pieces fit together, where they fit in and why their work makes a difference.

Winning Well does not require you to be a cheerleader in business clothes, full of rah-rah with a fake smile. That's not what inspiration looks like for anyone paying attention. Inspiration comes from connecting people to meaning, purpose and their own ability to succeed.

Try these three steps to improve your ability to connect people to the bigger picture:

Magnify the meaning — Talk to your team about the impact their work has on the greater good: the customer, the world and others they serve. Engage in dialogue and ask them to identify what makes them most proud about the work they do.

Clarify priorities — It's vital that the work you ask people to perform doesn't feel like a random list of unrelated tasks. Bundle the work into meaningful chunks that link back to the bigger picture.

Simplify the message — If you can't explain your team's mission in one sentence, you don't fully understand it. If you're really struggling, ask a few strong team members to give it a shot. Everyone on your team should be able to describe your team's mission in a similar way.

Energize Your Team and Ensure That They Own the Results

Breakthrough results require every heart and brain working together to achieve results. Change requires confidence and inclusion, not selling. When you can take

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your audacious vision and make it feel real, practical and achievable, your team will sail along with you.

Establish a clear vision. Be crystal clear about what you want to accomplish. Communicate and reinforce your vision through every medium possible. When you're sure everyone's got it, communicate even more. It's important to explain the reasons behind a change as well as to identify the specific behaviors you need from employees in each role.

Be honest about the benefits. The notion that all that employees care about is WIIFM — what's in it for me? — is BS. Sure, employees want to know what's in it for them. They equally want to know what's in it for you and for their customers.

Start small. Don't advocate for an idea or change that's half-baked or full of flaws. Test it first with a small group, take their feedback seriously and get it right. Even if it looks great on paper, your boss is sold and it worked well in the IT war room, field test the change first. Go slow to go fast.

Establish easy-to-access listening posts. This is perhaps the most important part. Really listen to what your people tell you. Most important, respond to feedback with solutions, not selling.

Leverage reluctant testimony. Share as many testimonials as you can, especially from people who were doubtful at first. Get your most excited employees showing how your new idea, system or process changed their world.

Involve the team in key decisions. No one wants stuff done to them or even for them. *With* them goes a lot further. Ask employees, "What's working well, and how do we leverage it? What enhancements do we need? Where should we head next?" All these questions go a long way. Include employees by involving them in your change efforts.

Sustain Your Team's Energy and Momentum

Human beings need encouragement. It's a fact of life. You get more of what you encourage or celebrate and less of what you criticize or ignore. If you want a team that doesn't need to be encouraged, get a cat. Otherwise, if you're working with people, they need encouragement.

Remember, Winning Well management is a relationship, and the quality of your relationships depends on what you invest in them. As with most of the Winning Well practices, once is never enough.

In order to provide healthy encouragement that fuels performance, focus on three traits. Make sure the encouragement is relevant, specific and meaningful.

Relevant. The first key to make encouragement work for you and your team — to be the real fuel of Winning Well — is to ensure that your encouragement is relevant to the work. Encourage what you want. What are the specific things people do that contribute to healthy relationships and meaningful results? Encourage those things that are relevant to the relationships and results you want to achieve.

Specific. You've taken the time to identify your team's relevant behaviors. Now, when you acknowledge them, be specific about what you encourage. Describe what actually happened and why it was important. Ineffective: "Hey, Bob, great work!" Effective: "Hey, Bob, I really appreciate the extra hours you put in on that project last week. The customer was happy with the results and renewed his account. Thanks again for the extra effort!" When you take the time to get specific, people know you understand their work, and you reinforce positive contributions.

Meaningful. Effective leaders know that people are different. They want encouragement in different areas, and they receive encouragement in different ways. Meaningful encouragement is relevant to the work and to the person. Here are six ways to make recognition more meaningful:

- Customize it. Find out what is meaningful to each member of your team before the time comes to recognize them.
- Personalize it. Some people like time off. Some people like a chocolate bar. Some people like public recognition.
- Make it timely. When someone does something awesome, she knows it. There's no better time to show that you know it, too, than when the endorphins are still flying high.
- Encourage strengths. Acknowledge the work they did in the area that is meaningful to them.
- Align it. Make sure words and actions align with organizational behaviors.
- Make it meaningful for the team. When you acknowledge individuals in front of the team, talk about how their actions contributed to the team and helped everyone to win. ●

It's Time to Win Well

Confidence and humility are cornerstones of Winning Well. They're also vital in maintaining an effective relationship with your boss. Remember some of the confidence-leveraging behaviors: know, own and use your strengths; stand up for what matters; and speak the truth.

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Be brave enough to have and share your opinions, even if they differ from those of your boss.

Of course, every boss is different. Understand and play to their style.

How to Inspire and Motivate Yourself

You cannot hope to take your people someplace you cannot go yourself. This becomes more difficult when you don't have a Winning Well manager yourself.

Fortunately, you can inspire and motivate yourself when you take responsibility for yourself first, empower yourself with a simple question, find confidence even when you don't feel it and learn how to thrive even in a negative workplace.

When things get bad, start with three words: "How can I...?" With those three words you return focus to your own power and ability to act, tap into the energy of your prefrontal cortex, the part of your brain that problem solves and plans, and vastly increase the odds of finding a solution. Take responsibility and ownership for the one thing you can control: yourself.

For example, ask, "How can I get more input and feedback from my team?" "How can I set clearer expectations?" "How can I build better understanding with my boss?" Or maybe even, "How can I find a job that doesn't make me so frustrated?"

Many managers say the hardest part to master is confidence. Impostor syndrome describes that feeling of strong self-doubt that you're a fake, that your success is due more to luck or your ability to fool people than it is due to your work, and it often comes along with the fear of being found out.

The brutal truth is that you can't be the manager you need to be when you're tied up in knots like that. You'll try to overcompensate, or you'll stay silent when you should speak. Either one will kill your credibility and end your influence.

There are tools you can use to overcome self-sabotage:

Honor your past and present. Your experiences in childhood and earlier life can serve you, help you make good decisions, give you an appreciation for people from all walks of life and keep you from being judgmental. But it would be foolhardy not to also acknowledge today's circumstances.

Use your people. It's nearly impossible to trip over your own insecurities when you focus on serving others.

Your Winning Well Legacy

How do you know that you're Winning Well? As you assess your impact, revisit the Winning Well model. First,

start with your values and how you feel on the inside — how's your confidence-humility balance?

Are you able to manage your team according to the values you hold most deeply? Do you stand up for what you believe and speak the truth, even when it's hard?

How do you feel on the humility front? Do you have a realistic view of where you need to improve? Do you surround yourself with people who will tell you the truth? Are you listening well? The truth is, you can't win well on the outside if you're not Winning Well on the inside.

On the people front, do you build healthy relationships, investing in people and seeing people grow? At the end of every day, can you look back and find at least one place you invested in another person? Did you hold someone accountable? Are the employees you work with better because of their time with you? That's a simple but powerful test of your leadership, and it's all about the health of your relationships.

The next benchmark is results. At the end of every day, can you look back and find at least one place or that one most important thing that contributes to the results you're responsible for achieving?

How will your winning ways survive you? Long after you finish your reports, spreadsheets, fund-raising, meetings; long after the organization you started or work for has closed, or been sold or you have left it; long after your daily work is forgotten — what will survive you?

It isn't the "stuff" — the products, the sales or the decisions. Many times, it's not even the organization. These things are no guarantee of a legacy. It's the people. People are your legacy. The people you helped to win well, who now lead others — others who, in turn, win well themselves.

Long after everything else fades away, it is your influence, your relationships and how you impact the people around you — these things endure. That's a Winning Well legacy. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Winning Well*, you'll also like:

1. ***Driven by Difference* by David Livermore.** David Livermore identifies management practices that can be used to guide multicultural teams to innovation.
2. ***The Learned Disciplines of Management* by Jim Burkett.** Burkett presents a framework of individual disciplines that form a self-reinforcing management system for making the right things happen.
3. ***The Invisible Spotlight* by Doug Katz and Craig Wasserman.** The authors tell illuminating stories about management successes and misadventures that offer a fresh perspective on building sound management relationships.