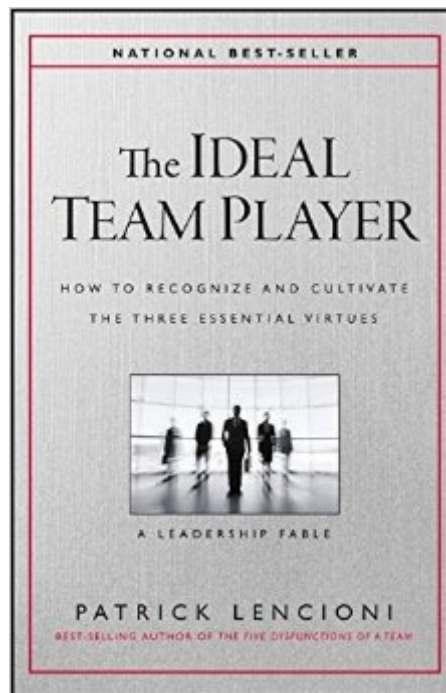


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# The Ideal Team Player: How To Recognize And Cultivate The Three Essential Virtues



## 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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Effective organizations—whether they're multinational corporations, professional sports franchises, or local churches—practice teamwork. When people work together on a common goal, they achieve more than they could do individually and experience a measure of personal satisfaction. When people work against one another, however, the result is organizational ineffectiveness and personal frustration. In his 2002 bestseller, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Patrick Lencioni outlined five ways teamwork goes awry: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results. While that book identified the

interpersonal dynamics of effective teams, it did not identify the personal qualities of effective team members. Lencioni's new book, *The Ideal Team Member*, picks up where *Five Dysfunctions* left off and outlines three essential virtues: An ideal team member is humble, hungry, and smart. Humility comes first because it is the single greatest and most indispensable attribute of being a team player. Humble team players are not overtly arrogant, of course, but they do not lack self-confidence either. Rather, quoting C. S. Lewis, Lencioni writes, "Humility isn't thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less." Humility makes collective action possible. Without it, teams don't work effectively, because each member is either out for themselves (due to overt arrogance) or unable to propose solutions (because of lack of self-confidence). "Hungry people are always looking for more," writes Lencioni. They are self-motivated and diligent. For a team to work effectively, each team member must proactively contribute to the overall effort. No slackers are allowed.

My favorite "business" book is *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni and a close second is his *The Advantage*. I put business in quotes because I have found the principles from *Five Dysfunctions* to be helpful on any team, be it in business, sports, a nonprofit or ministry. This new book picks up where *The Five Dysfunctions* left off. Lencioni states that if someone were to ask him to make a list of the most valuable qualities a person should develop in order to thrive in the world of work—and for that matter, life—he would put being a team player at the top. In *The Five Dysfunctions* he explained that real teamwork requires tangible, specific behaviors: vulnerability-based trust, healthy conflict, active commitment, peer-to-peer accountability, and a focus on results. Here he indicates that the three underlying virtues that enable them to be ideal team players are that they are humble, hungry, and smart. He states that when a team member lacks one or more of these three virtues, the process of building a cohesive team is much more difficult than it should be, and in some cases, impossible. He writes that leaders who can identify, hire, and cultivate employees who are humble, hungry, and smart will have a serious advantage over those who cannot. He states that the purpose of the book is to help the reader understand how the elusive combination of these three simple attributes can accelerate the process of making teamwork a reality in your organization or in your life so you can more effectively achieve the extraordinary benefits that it brings. As is his usual approach (*The Advantage* was the exception), Lencioni illustrates his points in a leadership fable and then wraps up his points in a model at the end of the book.

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