

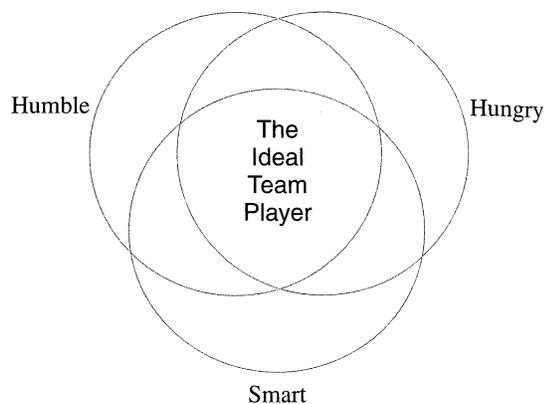
The Ideal Team Player

Patrick Lencioni

Summary by Mark R. Elliott*

This latest Lencioni book on Teamwork is a quick and easy read. However, if a leader is willing to grasp the meaning and implication of the three virtues he outlines; is willing to accept the reality that everyone on the team could benefit from a better self-awareness of which virtues need personal attention; is willing to use some of the simple application tools Lencioni includes in the last chapter; and is willing to hold individuals accountable for their failure to live up to all three of the virtues, then significant change can take place for the good of the team and the advancement of the purpose of the organization.

Ideal Team Members will have a healthy balance of three critical virtues:



Humble: “Great team players lack excessive ego or concerns about status. They are quick to point out the contributions of others and slow to seek attention for their own. They share credit, emphasize team over self, and define success collectively rather than individually. “ (page 157) From a biblical perspective, they are people who have a genuine servant’s heart.

Hungry: Hungry people are always looking for more: to do and to learn. They do not have to be pushed because they are self-motivated and diligent. They are constantly thinking about the next step and the next opportunity. They loathe the idea that they might be perceived as slackers. (page 159) From a biblical perspective these are people with a passion to pursue excellence as good stewards of everything God has given them.

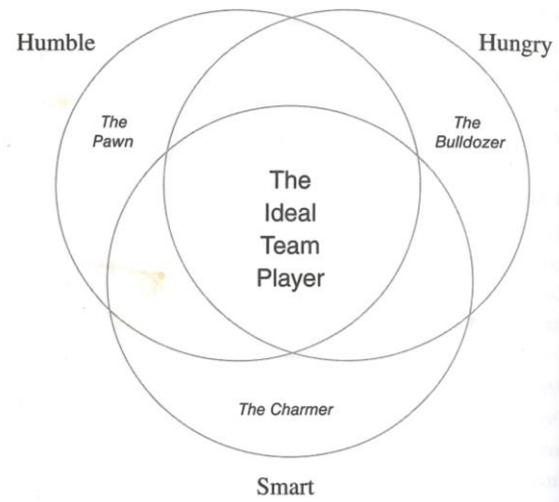
Smart: “Smart simply refers to a person’s common sense about people. It has everything to do with the ability to be interpersonally appropriate and aware. Smart people tend to know what is happening in a group situation and how to deal with others in the most effective way. They ask good questions, listen to what others are saying, and stay engaged in conversations intently. Some might refer to this as emotional intelligence.” [EQ] (page 160) Often times people with very high IQs struggle in this area. From a biblical perspective smart people are those who genuinely love one another and strive to model Christ-like empathy.

Team Members with only one of the three virtues will look like...

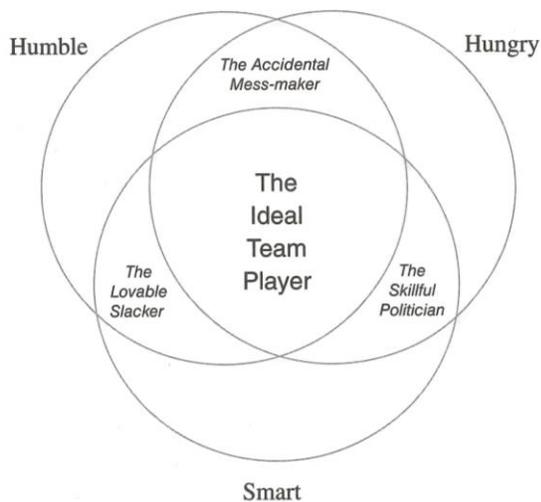
A Pawn: These are pleasant, kind-hearted unassuming people who just don't feel a great need to get things done and don't have the ability to build effective relationships with colleagues. (page 167)

A Bulldozer: 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. (page 167)

Or A Charmer: 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. (page 168)



Team Members with two of the three virtues will look like...



The Accidental Mess-maker: 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. Colleagues can get tired of having to clean up the emotional and interpersonal problems that accidental mess-makers so often leave behind. (page 169)

The Lovable Slacker: They aren't looking for undeserved attention, and they are adept at working with and caring about colleagues. Unfortunately, they tend to do only as much as they are asked, and

rarely seek to take on more work or volunteer for extra assignments. Because they are generally charming and positive, it's easy for leaders to shy away from confronting or removing lovable slackers. (page 170)

Or The Skillful Politician: 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. (page 171)

*Mark R. Elliott served as a Director of Missions (Associational Mission Strategist) in western Iowa and eastern Nebraska for almost three decades. He is a strong advocate for obedience and Biblically based disciple making. As such, he knows that making healthy disciples requires Christian leaders to be constantly pursuing spiritual maturity—be lifelong learners. Because of the time constraints of ministry, most pastors focus their reading list on resources that assist them in teaching and preaching the Word of God. As such, books focusing on church health, leadership development, and church growth tend to find their way to the bottom of the stack. With that reality in mind, Mark has written discussion summaries on several books that have helped him to personally grow in Christ and that tend to find themselves on the bottom of most pastor's stack. Many pastors have found them helpful as they are able to more quickly process great insights from other pastors and authors.