

There is an I in Team

**What Elite Athletes and Coaches really
know about high performance.**

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This book is about talented individuals and the challenge of fashioning them into a high performance team. However well intended your colleagues at work, natural team players they are not !

This book tackles the leadership challenges of harnessing and optimizing the influence of individuals on teams.

Questions????

Why there is an I in team and why it matters? Why conflict happens even as intentions are perfectly aligned? Why the best team rarely ever comprises the best individual performers?

The I in the team is about individual qualities while mitigating the risks these same qualities entail.

Team decisions require individuals to commit to those around them and to be accountable for their performance to the team.

Teams thrive on individual choice and commitment... the most powerful teams are made up of individuals who have chosen to work as a team.

When teams work it is because and not in spite of individual differences. These differences are a source of brilliance and tension, entropy and synergy, tension and collective genius.

Perfectionism should not be triggered by worries of getting things wrong, rather than making sure that the next thing is better than the previous attempt.

High performers ambition and intensity occasionally can be explosive to those around them. Despite deep seated insecurities, hi performers are prone to overestimate the extent to which they are unique and contribute to team performance.

The ego side of hi performers can wreck a team. Ego many times leads to insensitivity in word and deed.

Self delusion is not limited to sports. British men are overtly optimistic on their waist size. In a recent survey, the average British man thinks he measure 35.8 inches around the waist , when the average waist size is actually 38 inches. (Any waist above 37 inches is prone to heart disease, diabetes and cancer)

Self belief can lead people to be more decisive, equally they risk being seen as domineering.

Restlessness fuels productivity, it can also be seen as impatient.

On an average employees spend 10 hours or more per month complaining about their bosses while a third of employees spend more than 20 hours doing so.

Teams on the factory floor do not do off sites, they just work together.

In sport touching , high fives, chest bumps, hugs, half hugs, communicate co operation and commitment, and that helps reduce anxieties in the team

Teams do not usually create value by getting the best resources their money can buy but, rather by *combining* resources into something of which the value exceeds the economic cost.

**Sir Alex Ferguson of man united : “
togetherness is important for
teams. Selfishness, factionalism,
clique-ishness are all death to a
football team”**

“Talent on the field without unity of purpose is a hopelessly devalued currency” - Sir Alex Ferguson.

Antoine de saint Exupery ; “ If you want to build a ship, don’t teach the workers to find the wood and saw it, nail it, etc., teach them how to love the sea”

If someone is liked , then colleagues will seek them out and juice every bit of their competence, meaning that at work likeability is far more important than competence in making someone a desirable team member.

A healthy level of internal competition in a team raises the performance bar, especially for high performers. Rivalries never disappear, in fact when bosses try to control the rivalries, they go underground and present themselves outside the meeting room

For hi performers, the need to compete is as innate as the need for nourishment.

A leader cant value harmonious relationships more than putting the conditions in place that will allow the team to do well.

Competition and cooperation are not the only sources of tension in high performance teams. Trust and vigilance, control and autonomy, confrontation and compromise, creativity and protocol, stability and change, democratic and autocratic, silos and teams, development of individuals, all add to the tension. A good leader is aware and balances these tensions in a group.

In NCAA basketball, team performance depends more on trust in coaches than trust amongst teammates.

This is something leaders in orgns should think about.

In the corporate world, preoccupied with change, it is easy to forget the merits of stability provided by individuals working together for prolonged periods of time in the company. The leader needs to strike the right balance between stability and change. This is a challenge.

**Competition weeds out
inefficiency in an otherwise sterile
collaborative environment.**

Giving, receiving and evaluating explanations are important features of the workplace. A boss who does that gets more cooperation in his team.

The earliest attempts to scientifically investigate team size and productivity was done by French engineer, Max Ringelmann.

Most people prefer team size of 4 to 6 people. In any core group, try and shoot for that size.

Ringelmann also observed that 2 out of the 5 invariably pulled in more than fair share of the workload in teams. This is known as the Ringelmann effect.

Asking people to form their own work team can help reduce complexity. In the late 1960s, United airlines wanted to put three people in a cockpit arguing that 3 is better than 2 in the cockpit to navigate. When asked the United airlines pilots actually came with just 2, and that's how it came to be just 2 on the 737 s.

What does a boss do about social loafing? Doing nothing is really not an option . Many employees loaf around socially. Hi performers find it difficult to accept that mediocre performance is tolerated within their own teams.

In a 1998 Mc Kinsey study on 'war for talent', 60 % of respondents said they would be happy if their organization got rid of underperformers faster. 71 % felt that candid feedback on performance was critical to improvement and success, only 32 % felt that they got effective feedback.

The Abilene effect.

In many a workplace, problems arise not because of conflict, but the opposite, the absence of conflict doesn't signal consent, it signals that the environment wasn't safe enough to voice disagreement. This is called the Abilene effect.

Tell tale signs of the Abilene effect are finger pointing, members are happy outside of their teams, and more private and back biting.

Peter Drucker : ‘ There is nothing quite so useless as doing with great efficiency what should not be done at all’

The margins in Formula one racing are notoriously small and shrinking: from 1950 to 1959, the average margin for the drivers championship was 1 minute, 4.3 seconds, from 1960 to 1969, it was 46.7 seconds, from 1970 to 1979 it was 18.4 seconds, from 1980 to 1989, it was 23.6 seconds, from 1990 to 1999 it was 18 seconds, and from 2000 to 2009, it was a mere 9.9 seconds.

Margins in sport can be uncomfortably narrow, meaning there is little to differentiate finalists physiologically.

Economists studied penalty shoot outs in football and found that of the 2820 penalty shot outs, the team that takes the first kick wins 60 % of the time.

So the toss of a coin has a 20 5 advantage.

**Superstition is rampant in sports.
Serena Williams doesn't change
her socks on a winning streak.
Superstition in sports helps reduce
performance anxiety and in doing
so, enhances focus and chances of
success.**

A tangible differentiator between elite and merely good performance is mental toughness. A lot of people in organizations don't have sufficient mental toughness.

Athletes fail to reach their true potential by holding back when facing the possibility of success. They worry more about not losing than winning. Employees fail to put themselves up for promotions, for new projects, etc. since they are unsure and don't want to risk their careers. Playing safe makes them lose.

Employees are worried about breaking their carefully constructed façade of competence. Good bosses see through it and destroy that with sharp questions and insightful analysis.

The Australian rugby international John Eales said that in team selection, he always chose the most distinguishing of his performers who showed restlessness and discontent.

Character always gets picked ahead of competence when people build great teams.

A team's humanity holds the key to its effectiveness, that having recognized the vulnerability of others, we may allow ourselves to be vulnerable.

A team leader should not only use the logical numbers but use tools to unlock a basic shared humanity for success.