

FIVE BOOKS

Build a Top Performing Team

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Build a Top Performing Team

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Why Five Books?

I love learning about new ideas that help me develop into a more effective leader. A big part of why this is an enjoyable experience is it allows me the opportunity to share information and help others develop.

I'm often asked, "What is a book about leadership I should read?" This is such a tough question to answer because my recommendation is different depending on who is asking and what their strengths are. My response has always been, "What are you wanting to learn about?" Or, "What area of leadership are you hoping to improve?"

I've never taken a one-size-fits-all approach to development.

With that being said, this recurring question motivated me to locate the skill gaps most common with leaders and resources that help address them.

The ideas in each book will be most effective when a leader understands them well enough to teach their team how to execute them.

If you find value in this book, share it with a friend. I made it extremely condensed with the hopes it is able to be consumed by even the person with the busiest schedule.

Leadership is a mentality, not a position. You can have a positive impact and influence on the people around you if you choose to.

So what are the five books? Listed in suggested reading order:

- Growth Mindset by Carol Dweck
- Radical Candor by Kim Scott
- The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni
- Start With Why by Simon Sinek
- Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg

The following pages will provide you a few impactful quotes from each book, a description of why the book will help you, and actionable items to take away.

I hope this tool will help leaders understand a few necessary principles for developing a successful team and encourage a desire for additional development opportunities.

Cheers,

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Growth Mindset by Carol Dweck

Quotes:

“We like to think of our champions and idols as superheroes who were born different from us. We don’t like to think of them as relatively ordinary people who made themselves extraordinary.”

“No matter what your ability is, effort is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishment.”

Why Growth Mindset?

Growth Mindset is the start of everything! It is the belief in progress and personal development. Believing we can get better changes the way we approach the moment.

Carol Dweck breaks our mindset into two categories, fixed mindset and growth mindset. A person with a fixed mindset believes things are the way they are and people don’t have an opportunity to get better. Meanwhile, the growth mindset looks for opportunities to improve so they can perform at a high level.

Here are a few examples of how mindset impacts our perspective.

>On Challenges

Fixed: Avoids challenges because they are afraid how to fail.

Growth: Looks for challenges as a way to get better.

>On the Success of Others

Fixed: Feels threatened and becomes envious.

Growth: Feels inspired and looks for lessons in what they can learn from the success of others.

>On Feedback

Fixed: Takes it personally and becomes defensive

Growth: Proactively looks for feedback and embraces it as a way to learn

>On Hard work

Fixed: No reason to work hard because there is no way to get better

Growth: Hard work is the only way to get better!

Developing a growth mindset is necessary to get better. It keeps us focused on the progress instead of defending the present.

Action Item

Start a Growth Mindset Journal somewhere. It can be paper, using an app or even simply making mental notes. Whatever is clever.

Find five to ten minutes each day to sit by yourself and reflect on the day. Don't judge things as good or bad. Instead, focus on what you learned and how you can use each life lesson as a way to be better tomorrow.

Radical Candor by Kim Scott

Quotes:

"Make sure that you are seeing each person on your team with fresh eyes every day. People evolve, and so your relationships must evolve with them. Care personally; don't put people in boxes and leave them there."

"When bosses are too invested in everyone getting along they also fail to encourage the people on their team to criticize one another other for fear of sowing discord. They create the kind of work environment where being "nice" is prioritized at the expense of critiquing and therefore improving actual performance."

Why Radical Candor?

Simply put, Radical Candor is how to provide effective feedback. Giving people direct feedback can be challenging for leaders. If we are focused solely on building relationships with our team, we may fall into the trap of avoiding opportunities to provide direct feedback. This will thwart our team's ability to get better. If we are exclusively focused on being critical, we can have a negative impact on the culture and create an environment of disengaged employees.

Kim Scott's book gives us an easy-to-execute roadmap to feedback, helping us avoid both of these pitfalls.

Radical Candor tells us there are the two things we need to remember when providing feedback:

- 1. Care Personally
- 2. Challenge Directly

Radical Candor is not about defining people by their flaws. It is about being direct with people because we care about them enough to help them reach their potential.

Action Item:

Ask your teammates how well you execute Radical Candor. Draw up the quadrants below and ask the people around you to select where your last conversation with them landed.

How often are our conversations landing in the Radical Candor quadrant?

Ruinous Empathy
Care Personally
Don't Challenge Directly

Radical Candor
Care Personally
Challenge Directly

Manipulative Insincerity
Don't Care Personally
Don't Challenge Directly

Obnoxious Aggression
Don't Care Personally
Challenge Directly

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Patrick Lencioni

Quotes:

“Great teams do not hold back with one another. They are unafraid to air their dirty laundry. They admit their mistakes, their weaknesses, and their concerns without fear of reprisal.”

Why The Five Dysfunctions of a Team?

The lessons in Patrick Lencioni’s *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* are told through the story of a team learning to come together under the guidance of a new leader. The team learns that they must effectively work through each step, in order, if they are going to excel. The dysfunctions are:

1. The Absence of Trust

We know teams lack trust when they are not comfortable being vulnerable in front of each other. This leads to team members spending energy and resources defending themselves when they should be working together and getting better. Teams can overcome issues with trust by learning how they benefit using each other’s strengths.

2. Fear of Conflict

After a team develops trust, they must learn to work through conflict. High performing teams understand that conflict is a good thing and is required to be successful. Avoiding conflict leads to resentment and teams taking action without taking into account the value of all of the team's perspectives in strategy sessions.

3. Lack of Commitment

Without taking the step of working through conflict, a team won't have a commitment from their members. People are invested in things they help create. If a leader takes the time to include the members of their team in the decision-making process and is able to utilize the strengths of their members, they will establish a more invested and engaged team.

4. Avoidance of Accountability

If members don't first make commitments, it will be impossible to hold them accountable. Teams that are able to establish a "WE" culture are able to hold their peers accountable without requiring leadership involvement. Peer accountability is a direct reflection of a culture where members are fully utilizing their strengths and have established a culture of a growth mindset.

5. Inattention to Results

A results oriented team is defined by making the team's results a priority. Teams will DOMINATE when they overcome dysfunctions and reward those who make the goals of the team their focus.

Start With Why by Simon Sinek

Quotes

“There are only two ways to influence human behavior: you can manipulate it or you can inspire it.”

“Leading is not the same as being the leader... Leading means that others willingly follow you—not because they have to, not because they are paid to, but because they want to.”

Why Start With Why?

In order to Start With Why, you must define why your team exists. The fact is there are a lot of teams, and a lot of companies, who serve the same purpose and have the same goals. Some of these teams create change and are able to get quick, but short-lived, results through manipulation. Teams with sustained success create change through motivation.

Starting with Why is how teams motivate their people.

When talking to your team, first communicate the WHY behind what you are doing, then the HOW and lastly WHAT you are doing. People can get passionate about a cause greater than themselves.

This greater cause is the Why.

Team members who are most engaged are the members who share the same values as the company they work for. They will be more loyal and forgiving when mistakes happen.

Talking about the reasons your team makes the decisions will allow your team to connect at an emotional level. This emotional connection will inspire a culture of self-motivation where they commit to a cause instead of being inspired to contribute to earn a bonus or incentive.

Action Item

Find your Why! (This is adapted from an exercise from StartWithWhy.com)

Have individual conversations with three of your most engaged employees. Ask them why the team does what it does. If they give responses about KPIs or hitting sales goals, force them to dig deeper. Explain that performing is What they do, but ask Why do they do it? Don't let them off easy with surface-level answers. Force them to dig deep!

Look for similarities between the answers.

The common answers you find among each member are your Why.

The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg

Quotes

“The Golden Rule of Habit Change: You can't extinguish a bad habit, you can only change it.”

“If you believe you can change - if you make it a habit - the change becomes real.”

Why The Power of Habit?

There are many different variations of quotes connecting successful people to their good habits. And there is a reason for it, people who are intentional about forming habits get the results they are looking for.

The impact habits have on our lives makes it extremely important for leaders to understand how habits are formed. We need the ability to be intentional about developing good habits for themselves and assisting members of their team to do the same. Fun fact, habits are not formed in our memory. They actually are stored in an unconscious place in our mind as a way for our brain to save energy while operating.

Charles Duhigg breaks habits into three sections: **the cue, the routine, and the reward.**

Learning to look for cues and rewards can help replace old nasty habits with new productive habits. As leaders, this means that we need to be especially engaged in REWARDING behaviors when the desired change is brand new.

“We are what we repeatedly do.”

Action Item

Select a bad habit you have formed over the years. Break it down into the three sections (cue, routine, reward). Now select a NEW PRODUCTIVE HABIT to replace it with and find a reward that you know will motivate you to make the change. :)