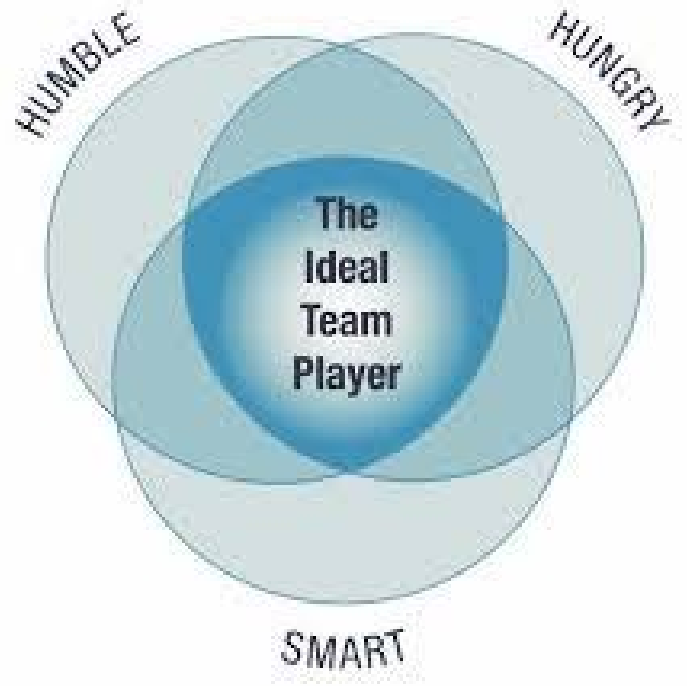
The Ideal Team Player

A Leadership Fable

By Patrick Lencioni



The Story of Valley Builders

Key Players

- Jeff Shanley: Successful Silicon Valley start up owner, takes over Valley Builders
- Bob Shanley: Founder and long-time CEO, Valley Builders. Retires at beginning of fable
- Clare Massick: Valley Builders HR, finance and legal operations
- Bobby Brady: Field operations manager, Valley Builders
- Ted Marchbanks: Retired manger from competitor, North Bay Construction. Being considered as VP of Field Operations, Valley Builders
- Nancy Morris: Project manager, Valley Builders (Oak Ridge Shopping Center)

Three Indispensable Virtues

- ***HUMBLE***. Ideal team players are humble. They lack excessive ego or concerns about status. Humble people are quick to point out the contributions of others and slow to seek attention of their own. They share credit, emphasize team over self and define success collectively rather than individually.
- ***HUNGRY***. Ideal team players are hungry. They are always looking for more. More things to do. More to learn. More responsibility to take on. Hungry people almost never have to be pushed by a manager to work harder because they are self motivated and diligent. They are constantly thinking about the next step and the next opportunity.
- ***SMART***. Ideal team players are smart. They have common sense about people. Smart people tend to know what is happening in a group situation and how to deal with others in the most effective way. They have good judgement and intuition around the subtleties of group dynamics and the impact of their words and actions.

The Three Virtues Combined

Humble, Hungry and Smart

What makes humble, hungry and smart powerful and unique is not the individual attributes themselves, but rather the required combination of all three. If even one is missing in a team member, teamwork becomes significantly more difficult, and sometimes not possible

The Needed Mind Shift

- We need to transition from this . . .

The Needed Mind Shift

- To this . . .

Aptitude *and* Attitude

Ap-ti-tude

noun

1. a natural ability to do something.

   "he had a remarkable aptitude for learning words"

2. suitability or fitness.

   "aptitude of expression"

At-ti-tude

noun

1. a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.

   "she took a tough attitude toward other people's indulgences

   synonyms: view, viewpoint, outlook, perspective, stance, standpoint, position, inclination, temper, orientation, approach, reaction

HUMBLE

- Lack ego
- Team focused
- Praises team
- Listener
- Shares
- Self Aware
- Silent yet strong
- Confident
- Pitches in

SMART

- Relationships
- Group dynamics
- Strong people skills
- Self aware
- Motivates others
- Self regulator
- Thoughtful
- Patient
- Gets people invested

HUNGRY

- Going above and beyond
- Internally driven
- Self starter
- Seeking more
- Striving for excellence
- Improvement
- Not satisfied
- Passionate
- Change agent
- Innovative
- Creative

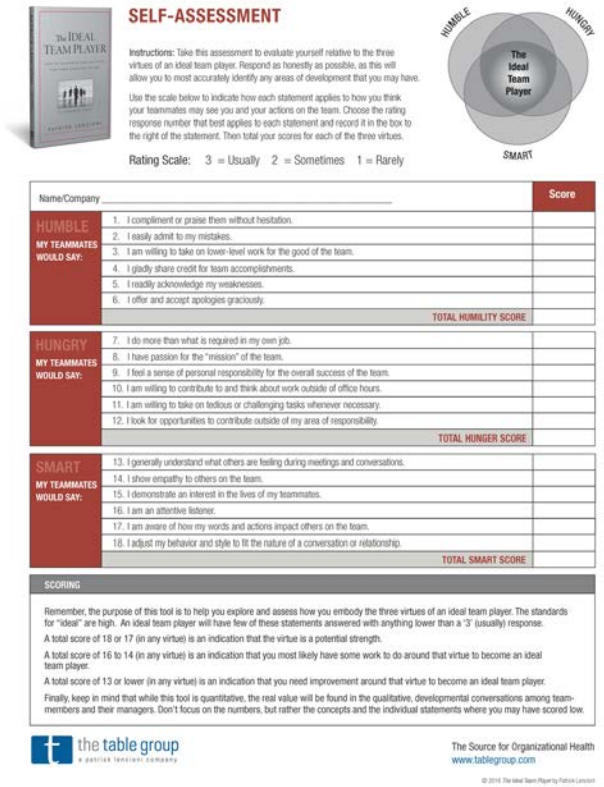
Let's Take the Self Assessment

Scoring

- 17-18 in any virtue - potential strength
- 14-16 in any virtue – some work to do
- ≤ 13 in any virtue – needs improvement

Categories

- 0/3
- 1/3
- 2/3
- **3/3 ideal team player**



SELF-ASSESSMENT

HUMBLE HUNGRY SMART — The Ideal Team Player

Instructions: Take this assessment to evaluate yourself relative to the three virtues of an ideal team player. Respond as honestly as possible, as this will allow you to most accurately identify any areas of development that you may have.

Use the scale below to indicate how each statement applies to how you think your teammates may see you and your actions on the team. Choose the rating response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of the statement. Then total your scores for each of the three virtues.

Rating Scale: 3 = Usually 2 = Sometimes 1 = Rarely

Name/Company _____

		Score
HUMBLE — MY TEAMMATES WOULD SAY:	1. I compliment or praise them without hesitation.	
	2. I easily admit to my mistakes.	
	3. I am willing to take on lower-level work for the good of the team.	
	4. I gladly share credit for team accomplishments.	
	5. I readily acknowledge my weaknesses.	
	6. I offer and accept apologies graciously.	
	TOTAL HUMILITY SCORE	
HUNGRY — MY TEAMMATES WOULD SAY:	7. I do more than what is required in my own job.	
	8. I have passion for the "mission" of the team.	
	9. I feel a sense of personal responsibility for the overall success of the team.	
	10. I am willing to contribute to and think about work outside of office hours.	
	11. I am willing to take on tedious or challenging tasks whenever necessary.	
	12. I look for opportunities to contribute outside of my area of responsibility.	
	TOTAL HUNGER SCORE	
SMART — MY TEAMMATES WOULD SAY:	13. I generally understand what others are feeling during meetings and conversations.	
	14. I show empathy to others on the team.	
	15. I demonstrate an interest in the lives of my teammates.	
	16. I am an attentive listener.	
	17. I am aware of how my words and actions impact others on the team.	
	18. I adjust my behavior and style to fit the nature of a conversation or relationship.	
	TOTAL SMART SCORE	

SCORING

Remember, the purpose of this tool is to help you explore and assess how you embody the three virtues of an ideal team player. The standards for "ideal" are high. An ideal team player will have few of these statements answered with anything lower than a "3" (usually) response.

A total score of 18 or 17 (in any virtue) is an indication that the virtue is a potential strength.

A total score of 16 to 14 (in any virtue) is an indication that you most likely have some work to do around that virtue to become an ideal team player.

A total score of 13 or lower (in any virtue) is an indication that you need improvement around that virtue to become an ideal team player.

Finally, keep in mind that while this tool is quantitative, the real value will be found in the qualitative, developmental conversations among team-members and their managers. Don't focus on the numbers, but rather the concepts and the individual statements where you may have scored low.

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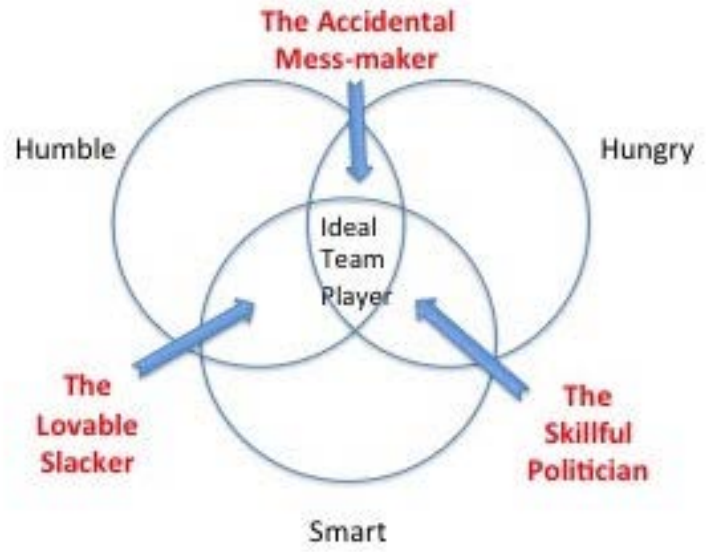
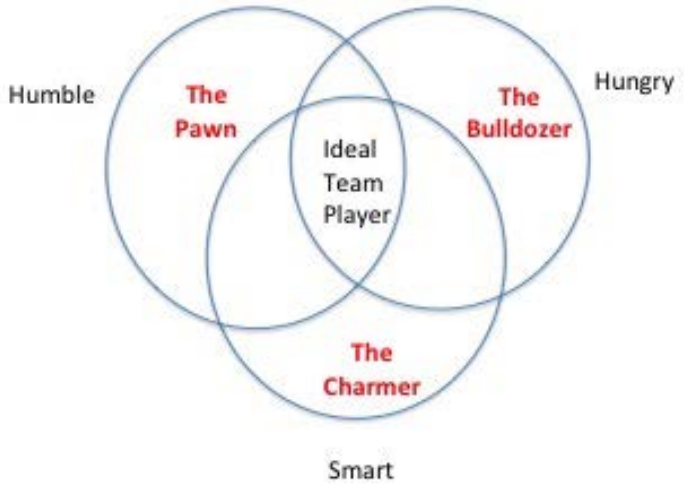
Two of Three Virtues



Lacks One Virtue

- Accidental Mess-maker (humble and hungry)
- The Skillful Politician (smart and hungry)
- The Lovable Slacker (humble and smart)

One of Three Virtues



Lacks Two Virtues

- Pawn (humble)
- Bulldozer (hungry)
- Charmer (smart)

A Lencioni Warning . . .

- Accurate identification is not easy
- Incorrectly labeling a coworker is damaging
- Do not refer to people as “lovable slackers, bulldozers, etc.”
- The intent of the tool is to build self awareness but be careful about too much self reflection
- Managers: be smart about how you use this with your teams, divisions, etc.