

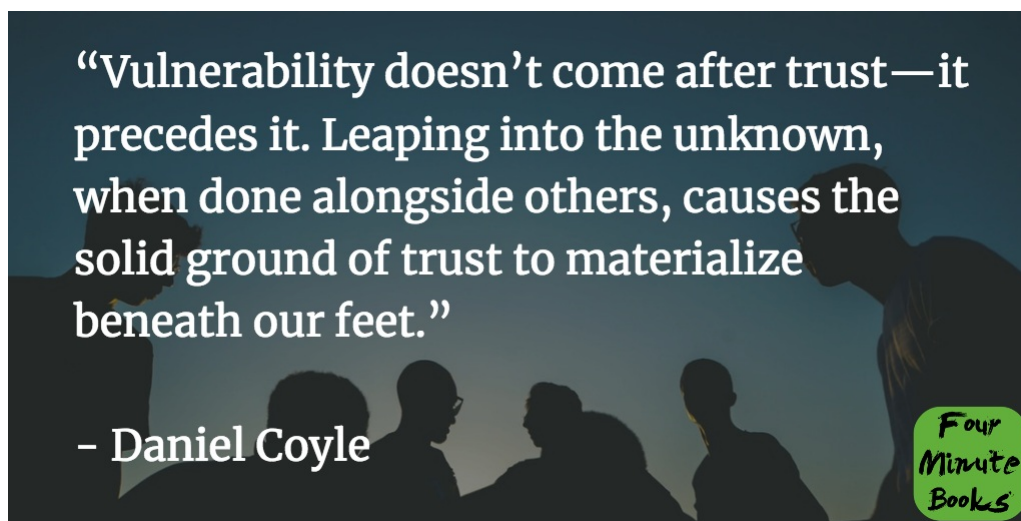
The Culture Code Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Culture Code* examines the dynamics of groups, large and small, formal and informal, to help you understand how great teams work and what you can do improve your relationships wherever you cooperate with others.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



What's your take on talent? Do you think it doesn't exist and that everything can be learned? Or believe it's binary, that if you're not born with it, you can never get it? I think it's a great example to show we want to judge life in extremes, when often, the truth is somewhere in the middle. A great movie about this issue with talent is *The Gambler*. Mark Wahlberg portrays a gambling-addicted English literature professor, who divides the world into geniuses and idiots, but ultimately, he learns we do have a choice more often than we think.

In his previous book, *The Talent Code*, author Daniel Coyle broke down the matter for the real world. Now, having examined the components of great performance on an individual level, he turns to groups and teams. *The Culture Code* is a thorough analysis of how humans work together and how they might keep each other from doing so.

From his research, he sees 3 skills at the heart of great teamwork:

1. Build safety to make everyone feel comfortable in working together.
2. Share vulnerability to show no one needs to be perfect.
3. Establish purpose through a common goal and a clear path to get

there.

We're all part of countless groups, so let's crack *The Culture Code* and make sure we do our best in each of them!

Lesson 1: Form a safe environment so everyone will let their guard down and cooperate.

Remote work is on the rise. Already half of all Americans do at least part of their work from home. And while that wouldn't be possible without modern technology, it's still remarkable how many people jump on the opportunity if it presents itself. According to Daniel Coyle, it's simple: our homes are the safest places we know.

Safety is an important enabler that allows us to do great work. For example, keeping our day job can help us practice our creativity freely in a side hustle. Similarly, **a work environment in which you feel safe in acting as you naturally would and speaking your mind is very conducive to group work**. It's only natural: you don't want to keep looking over your back all the time, because if you need to, you can never really focus on the task at hand.

Professor Alex Pentland at MIT's media lab found that if he observed people's body language, he could predict the outcomes of negotiations within five minutes of starting a session. That's because how close we are to our co-workers, whether we mimic their behavior, and look into their eyes, are instant tells of how safe we feel. One good way to make others feel safer is to confirm you understand what they're telling you by occasionally interjecting affirmations like "uh-huh," "yes," "got it," and so on. Just don't interrupt them.

Instead, when it's your turn, share one of your flaws.

Lesson 2: Share your own shortcomings to show people it's okay to make mistakes.

Another researcher, Jeff Polzer, who researches organizational behavior at Harvard, found that when we share our own flaws with others, something amazing happens. **He calls it a vulnerability loop, in which other people detect when we signal vulnerability, thus signal vulnerability too, and thus both parties become closer and trust each other more.**

Other scientists, like Brené Brown, have shown that vulnerability itself is a sign of strength, not weakness. However, because workplaces are usually seen as competitive, especially in the Western world, we think we need to look confident and powerful all the time. But that's not true. It's usually the person who takes the first step in admitting they're not perfect, who's perceived as a leader, not the one who berates others for being weak.

Vulnerability not just increases trust, it's also a way to show acceptance: if you admit no one's perfect, people will feel okay even after making mistakes, which are inevitable in accomplishing a shared goal.

Speaking of which...

Lesson 3: Build a sense of purpose through a shared goal and a simple way towards it.

The last component Coyle ascribes to well-functioning groups is purpose. Put simply, purpose is a set of reasons for doing what you do.

In the case of a group, it's the sum of all beliefs and values among your team, as they relate to achieving your common goal. That goal might be something straightforward, like selling the most phones any company has ever sold, but ideally, it's about something bigger, like making phone users feel special and that they have good taste. Which one do you think Apple's built on?

Since the goal is in the future, but your group lives in the now, your purpose should be like a bridge between the two. Thus, if you can come up with a simple narrative as to how your purpose will help you go from today to tomorrow and reach your goal, you'll be able to activate those around you.

A useful tool to accomplish this is a short, catchy, maybe even cheesy slogan. Think of Nike's "just do it." It's kinda cliché, but it works, because it's easy to remember, and easy to repeat until it sinks in. With safety, vulnerability, and purpose all in one place, it'll be almost impossible to stop you and your team from accomplishing whatever you set out to do!

The Culture Code Review

The Culture Code brings some fresh perspective to a topic that's often overcomplicated: how humans can function in groups. You don't need tons of exercises, motivators, or annual team-building events. Coyle explains why our most basic psychological needs are all we need to address, and he does so with colorful examples from all walks of life. Good one!

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why kindergarteners are better at building spaghetti towers than lawyers

- What happens if a bad apple tries to ruin a group's motivation
- Why the best salespeople don't talk all that much
- How vulnerability saved 200 people in a plane crash
- The best thing you can say at the beginning of a group assignment

Who would I recommend The Culture Code summary to?

The 16 year old athlete, who's got trouble fitting in with his soccer team, the 22 year old student, whose grades depend a lot on her performance in group assignments, and anyone who's leading a group of people at work.