

## **Are You an Ideal Team Player? – Patrick Lencioni**

### Transcript

Okay, so I'm very excited to be here. I'm also a little nervous. I speak for a living, so I shouldn't be nervous. There's a good chance my kids are going to see. In fact, my eighth grader said you're doing a TED Talk. I said Michael, I do a lot of talks. Yes, yeah, But this is big dad.

I'm excited to be here because I think it's time that we change the way we thought about success as a society, in fact, better yet I think it's time that we changed the way we prepare people for success at all levels of life. So I'm gonna be presenting you with three very simple, but I think powerful virtues, but I'm convinced can drastically change the success level in anyone's life. Whether they're a CEO or a middle manager, a middle school student or a high-schooler, or a recent college grad. Now I'm confident of this because I believe and all of this is based on the premise that life more than ever is a team sport.

My name is Pat Lynch, Tony, and I have been working with teams for the past 25 years in the corporate world and in other settings. I've also written two books about teamwork. The first one I wrote years ago, it's called The Five Dysfunctions of a Team. And then recently I wrote a sequel called the ideal team player, which is the basis of today's talk and where I explore those three virtues.

Now when I say that life is a team sport, I realized that could sound kinda like a cheesy cliché. Life is a team sport, but I really believe it's true. I mean, we take for granted the fact that in the workforce today, people can be on the same team as somebody that lives on the other side of the world, across continents and oceans and cultures and language. And that's largely because of technology. But when I started my career about 30 years ago, which isn't that long ago in the grand scheme of things, we couldn't even imagine doing this. But today, because of technology, people can work together in so many different ways. And as a result of that technology, people are developing an organization solutions that are amazing and complex, that are solving problems in business and medicine and communication on every kind of field. And those complex solutions demand that people collaborate and work as teams to implement them. Even within a company, you have to work across divisional or departmental lines or with people in other companies, even competitors today are having to work together to implement these important solutions. This really is the era of teamwork in business.

But even in our personal lives, teamwork has permeated everything. My wife and I have four sons at home. And we like to say that by the time that each of them was in middle school, they had played on more teams with more coaches in more sports and gone to more darn tournaments than we did in our entire lives combined. And that is to say nothing of all the other extra curricular activities that happen on teams, even in the classroom, teamwork is everywhere. My kids come home. I don't know how many times they've come home with an assignment and said those four dreaded words. It's a group project. And I asked them that dreaded forward question. Who's on your team? I'm not ashamed to say that more than once. I've said to my son's, if you wanna get a good grade, you might have to be prepared to do most of the work yourself.

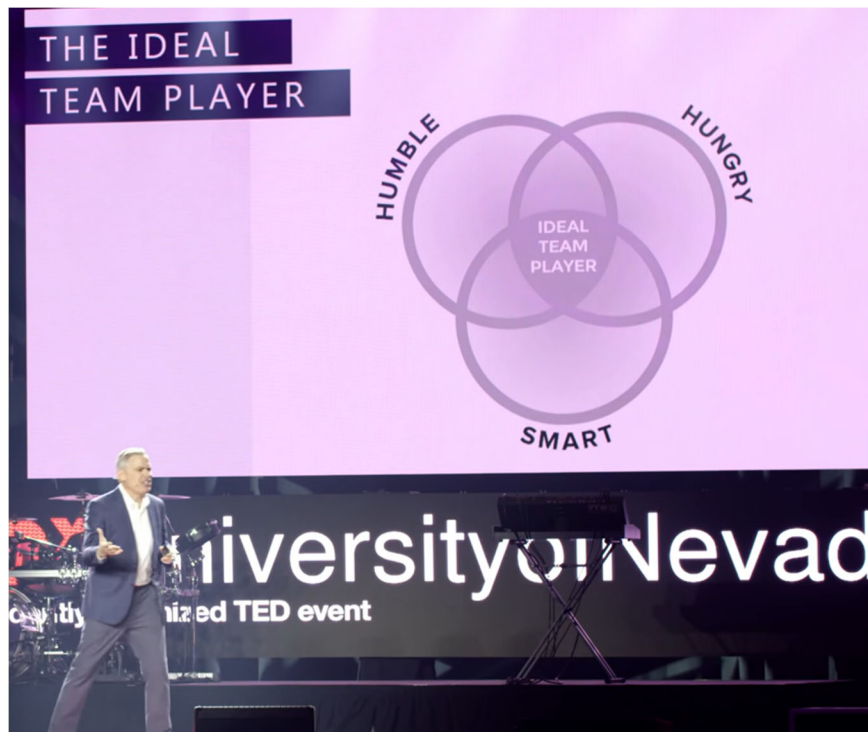
Teamwork is everywhere. And yet, we continue to train people in education and in the workforce for primarily individually and technical skills. And I think that needs to change. And that's why I'm going to present to you these three simple virtues.

Alright, so we're gonna go to the first slide in my book, the ideal team player, I explore these three simple virtues, but the power of those virtues is in the commonality of them all we have to have all three. If you play baseball and you're one for three hitter, that's pretty good. It's terrible in teamwork. If you're two for three is a quarterback in passing, That's pretty good. You gotta be three for three when it comes to teamwork. So let's talk about these three virtues. Let me introduce you to them and then talk about how we can identify and improve ourselves if we're lacking any.

So the first virtue of ideal team player is by far the most important. And it is humility. If you wanna be an ideal team player and if you want to be successful in life, you really need to be humbled more than ever. Now, this is the most important because as a follower of Jesus, the Bible says that the root of all sin is pride. And I believe that you look at all the problems we have. It's usually rooted in Pride. Well, the antidote to practice humility. So it stands to reason that this would be the most important and most of us know what humility is, right? It's not being ego centered or arrogant or self-centered, but being about others, putting others ahead of ourselves. It's such an attractive and powerful thing. But there's another side of humility we have to understand too. It's in the minority, but it's still important to understand sees some people will look at another person and say, she never talks about herself. She never demands that we listened to her. She never thinks she's has the right answer. She's really humble. And when somebody lacks confidence, it's actually not humility. You see, when we have an idea or a talent to deny our God-given talent has actually a violation of humility, just like it is to exaggerate them. Cs Lewis said it best. He said humility isn't thinking less of ourselves. It's thinking about ourselves less. But the most prominent kind of lack of humility we see in teams, in the workforce and in life is arrogance and ego centeredness. So this is the first and most important attribute.

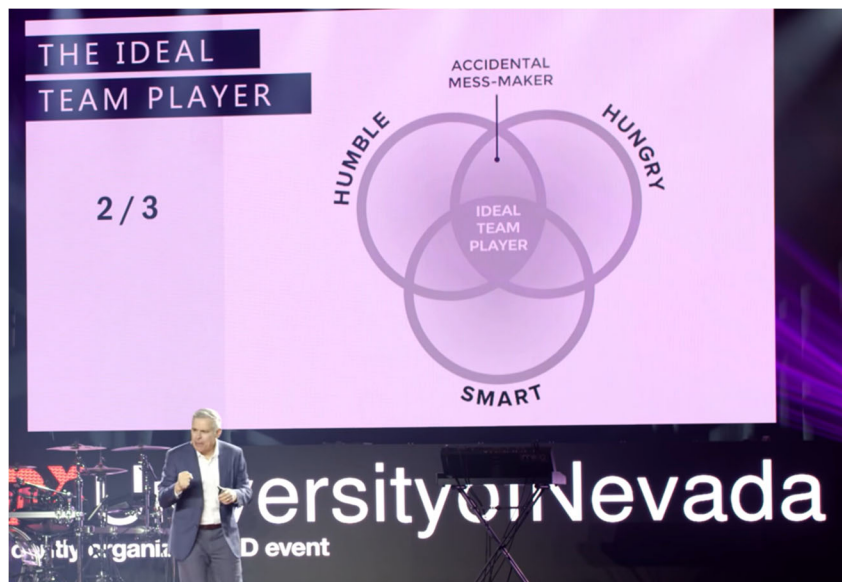
The second one is equally simple. And it is you have to be hunger. You have to be hungry. People who have an innate hunger about getting work done are much more successful on teams and in life. And this is simply just having a strong work ethic. And this is probably the easiest one to understand, but I'll say this to the young people out there. This is the one that you probably have to develop earliest in life. When I work with people later in life who never developed an innate sense of hunger. It's harder. I talk to kids in middle school and I say, do it now, work hard at everything you do. This is not about workaholism. Know, workaholics are people who get their entire identity from their work. And that's not what I'm saying here. People who are hungry just have, wanna go above and beyond, have a high standard for what they do and never do the minimum. They never do just the minimum.

Now the third attribute of an ideal team player is what I call being smart, but it's not about intellectual smarts. This is about emotional intelligence, common sense around how we understand people and how we use our words and actions to bring out the best possible impacted others. This is so important in the world. And it is, you can develop this in life. Being smart is one of those things that people can work on and get better at.

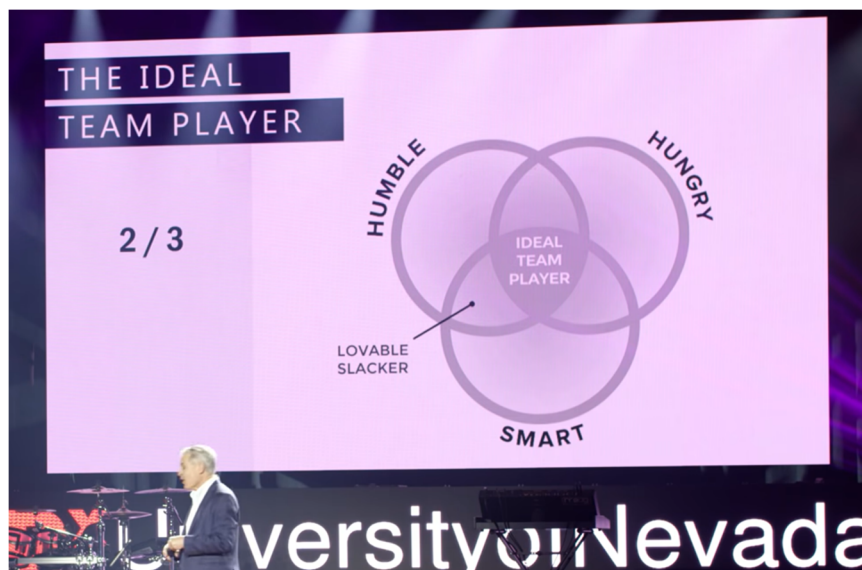


So humble, hungry, smart. These are the three simple virtues. But the key is that we have to have all three to be an ideal team players. So it's really important that we learn how to identify in ourselves and others when one is lacking. So what I'm gonna do now is come up with some labels, which I want you to use carefully for people that lack one of these in a very serious, egregious way. So let's take a look at those now.

A person who is humble, the most important one, they think about others ahead of themselves and they're hungry, they work really hard, but they lack Smarts. They're not emotionally intelligent. We call this the accidental mess maker. Now, I have a lot of time for accidental matchmakers. They're good people, they have really good intentions, but they create problems that they're not aware of there like that dog, that puppy, I have a puppy at home and they knock things over a lot, but they mean well and they [make a mess] on the carpet, you have to clean up after them. But because they mean, well, you can lock them on the nose with a newspaper and they come back for more. They have a great attitude. The problem with accidental miss makers is just you do have to clean up with them. They create a little bit extra work. And over time you kinda get tired of having to say, he's a really good guy. He didn't mean it that way. Nonetheless, of the three types that lack one of these virtues, I will take the accidental mess maker.

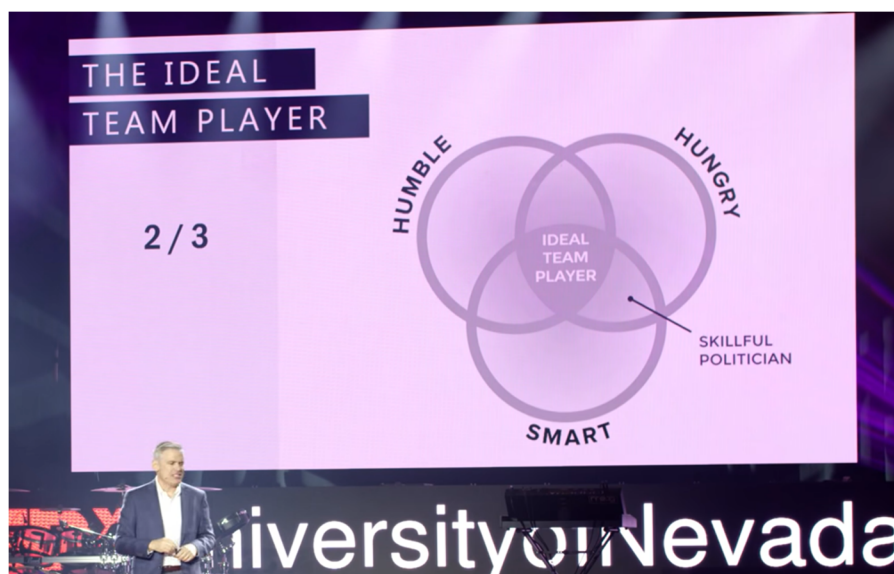


The second one is also a very good kind. That's somebody who's humble, the most important one. And they're smart, they're good at dealing with people, but they lack hunger. We call this kind the lovable slacker. Now, lovable slackers, the problem is their level. So they're really fun to be around and they're good people, they're nice people, but they just do the bare minimum. They don't go above and beyond and you have to constantly remind them to do more and you have to kinda pick up their slack in an organization. Now, I once worked with a lovable slacker, a good friend of mine still is. And every time I reminded him that he needed to do more, he would say you're right. And he was so passionate in life about everything besides work, right? But because he was lovable, he was so fun to be with. And I said to him, one day, I said, you know, you're going to have to leave this company when you're good and ready. And five years later he was out that door. The truth is, it's very easy to tolerate lovable slackers, but they do have a problem. They cause problems on a team.



Now the third type is the most difficult type. This is the person who is hungry. They really want to work hard. They're ambitious and they're smart. They're really good at dealing with people, but they're not

humble. And we call this the skillful politician. Skillful politicians are so smart that they know how to portray themselves as being humble, which is a very dangerous thing. Because what they do is they interview, well, they go to meetings and they and they say the right things. They don't have to kiss up to the boss or the coach or the teacher. The problem is deep down inside. It's about them, not about others. And by the time we figure it out, there's usually a trail of dead bodies hidden in closets around the organization. I once worked with a team, with this guy on the team that was a skillful politician. And he was so clever at hiding it. He was so clever that he was even Canadian. You see, you would never suspect to Canadian they're always so nice. You would never think they would be that way. And we would go to meetings. And this guy would be so good with people. And we thought he is the ultimate team player. He's wonderful. And then after a while we realized, man, his salary is tripled. Half of his colleagues are gone. He's been gaming this. The truth of the matter is when a person lacks humility, but they're good at presenting themselves, that can be a very dangerous thing on a team.



Okay, So what do you do with this? First of all, I don't want you to misuse these labels. Don't go back to work and say to your boss, hey, I think that you're a, an accidental matchmaker or tell your mom she's a lovable slacker. That's gonna get you into trouble and it should apply this first to yourself. But then I want you to do this. Here's a very simple activity. Go sit down with your team at work, or with your family, or with the Little League team you coach. And have everybody understand, humble, hungry, and smart. And then ask them to rank themselves in these three areas. Which one they're best at, second best and third, even if they're good at all of them, they're going to have a third. Even if they're not so good at all of them, one of them is gonna be third and have them just identify which one is their third. And then go around the table and ask people to explain their third and why that's theirs. And then talk as a team about how people can brainstorm, about how people can overcome this. Give each other advice. That humble person you might say, you know, maybe you shouldn't talk about yourself so much, but you should ask questions about others and take an interest in others lives. That a hungry person that's like maybe when you're about to leave work at 450, you should check in and see if there's more work that needs to be done. Or that smart person at the end of meetings, maybe you should ask people if you've upset anyone and learn about how you can avoid that, whatever the case is, what I want you to do is turn your colleagues, your team members, your family members, into your coaches. They are the best source of coaching and advice. Because the day you know that the people around you love you

enough to tell you when you're doing something that you need to improve in, everything changes. So I want you to go home, and I want you to do this in a very short period of time. You're going to see a difference.

Now let me leave you with this. At my company, the table group. We don't care when we hire people where they went to college. We really don't we don't care about their GPA or their ACT or their SAT. The only three-letter acronym we care about really is H, H, and S. And I think that's something that we need to do more of in our society, whether it's professional development and our organizations, or whether it's in our schools. I think as, as father of four boys, I think it's time we took a little bit of the pressure off kids from just memorizing the periodic table of the elements are iambic pentameter, whatever that is, I don't even remember or where the quadratic equation, I mean, we have to learn those things. I get this and kitchen work hard. But I think we should actually give them things that they can control in their lives that are really going to pay off in their future. We should teach them how to be other centered, not self-centred. We should teach them how to work hard at everything they do school and everything else, just because it's the right thing to do. And third, we should teach them how to be more adept interpersonally and emotionally with the people around them. See, I think that could make a huge difference in our corporations and in our schools and our families. And I really believe that the world would be a better place and that our companies would be better places. Our families would be better, and the individuals in society would be better if more of us were humble, hungry, and smart.

Thank you and God bless.