

THE 17 INDISPUTABLE LAWS OF TEAMWORK

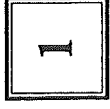
Embrace Them and Empower Your Team

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THE LAW OF SIGNIFICANCE

One Is Too Small a Number to Achieve Greatness

Who are your personal heroes? Okay, maybe you don't have heroes exactly. Then let me ask you this: Which people do you admire most? Who do you wish you were more like? Which people fire you up and get your juices flowing? Do you admire . . .

- Business innovators, such as Jeff Bezos, Fred Smith, or Bill Gates?
- Great athletes, such as Michael Jordan, Marion Jones, or Mark McGwire?
- Creative geniuses, such as Pablo Picasso, Buckminster Fuller, or Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart?
- Pop culture icons, such as Madonna, Andy Warhol, or Elvis Presley?

- Spiritual leaders, such as John Wesley, Billy Graham, or Mother Teresa?
- Political leaders, such as Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, or Winston Churchill?
- Film industry giants, such as D. W. Griffith, Charlie Chaplin, or Steven Spielberg?
- Architects and engineers, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, the Starrett brothers, or Joseph Strauss?
- Revolutionary thinkers, such as Marie Curie, Thomas Edison, or Albert Einstein?

Or maybe your list includes people in a field I didn't mention.

It's safe to say that we all admire achievers. And we Americans especially love pioneers and bold individualists, people who fight alone, despite the odds or opposition: the settler who carves a place for himself in the wilds of the frontier, the Old West sheriff who resolutely faces an enemy in a gunfight, the pilot who bravely flies solo across the Atlantic Ocean, and the scientist who changes the world through the power of his mind.

THE MYTH OF THE LONE RANGER

As much as we admire solo achievement, the truth is that no lone individual has done anything of value. The belief that one person can do something great is a myth. There are no real Ramboes who can take on a hostile army by themselves. Even the Lone Ranger wasn't really a loner. Everywhere he went he rode with Tonto!

Nothing of significance was ever achieved by an individual acting

alone. Look below the surface and you will find that all seemingly solo acts are really team efforts. Frontiersman Daniel Boone had companions from the Transylvania Company as he blazed the Wilderness Road. Sheriff Wyatt Earp had his two brothers and Doc Holliday looking out for him. Aviator Charles Lindbergh had the backing of nine businessmen from St. Louis and the services of the Ryan Aeronautical Company, which built his plane. Even Albert Einstein, the scientist who revolutionized the world with his theory of relativity, didn't work in a vacuum. Of the debt he owed to others for his work, Einstein once remarked, "Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellow men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received." It's true that the history of our country is marked by the accomplishments of many strong leaders and innovative individuals who took considerable risks. But those people always were part of teams.

Economist Lester C. Thurow commented on the subject:

There is nothing antithetical in American history, culture, or traditions to teamwork. Teams were important in America's history—wagon trains conquered the West, men working together on the assembly line in American industry conquered the world, a successful national strategy and a lot of teamwork put an American on the moon first (and thus far, last). But American mythology extols only the individual . . . In America, halls of fame exist for almost every conceivable activity, but nowhere do Americans raise monuments in praise of teamwork.

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I must say that I don't agree with all of Thurow's conclusions. After all, I've seen the U.S. Marine Corps war memorial in Washington, D.C., commemorating the raising of the flag on Iwo Jima. But he is right about something. Teamwork is and always has been essential to building this country. And that statement can be made about every country around the world.

THE VALUE OF TEAMWORK

A Chinese proverb states, "Behind an able man there are always other able men." The truth is that teamwork is at the heart of great achievement. The question isn't whether teams have value. The question is whether we acknowledge that fact and become better team players. That's why I assert that *one is too small a number to achieve greatness*. You cannot do anything of real value alone. That is the Law of Significance.

I challenge you to think of *one* act of genuine significance in the history of humankind that was performed by a lone human being. No matter what you name, you will find that a team of people was involved. That is why President Lyndon Johnson said, "There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves."

C. Gene Wilkes, in his book *Jesus on Leadership*, observed that the power of teams not only is evident in today's modern business world, but it also has a deep history that is evident even in biblical times. Wilkes asserts,

"There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few that we can solve by ourselves."

—LYNDON JOHNSON

- Teams involve more people, thus affording more resources, ideas, and energy than would an individual.
- Teams maximize a leader's potential and minimize her weaknesses. Strengths and weaknesses are more exposed in individuals.
- Teams provide multiple perspectives on how to meet a need or reach a goal, thus devising several alternatives for each situation. Individual insight is seldom as broad and deep as a group's when it takes on a problem.
- Teams share the credit for victories and the blame for losses. This fosters genuine humility and authentic community. Individuals take credit and blame alone. This fosters pride and sometimes a sense of failure.
- Teams keep leaders accountable for the goal. Individuals connected to no one can change the goal without accountability.
- Teams can simply do more than an individual.

If you want to reach your potential or strive for the seemingly impossible—such as communicating your message two thousand years after you are gone—you need to become a team player. It may be a cliché, but it is nonetheless true: Individuals play the game, but teams win championships.

WHY DO WE STAND ALONE?

Knowing all that we do about the potential of teams, why do some people still want to do things by themselves? I believe there are a number of reasons.

1. *Ego*

Few people are fond of admitting that they can't do everything, yet that is a reality of life. There are no supermen or superwomen. As Kerry Walls, one of the people on my INJOY Group team, says, "Spinning more plates doesn't increase your talent—it increases your likelihood of dropping a plate." So the question is not whether you can do everything by yourself; it's how soon you're going to realize that you can't.

Teamwork is birthed when you concentrate on "we" instead of "me."

Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie declared, "It marks a big step in your development when you come to realize that other people can help you do a better job than you could do alone."

To do something really big, let go of your ego, and get ready to be part of a team.

2. *Insecurity*

In my work with leaders, I've found that some individuals fail to promote teamwork because they feel threatened by other people. Sixteenth-century Florentine statesman Niccolo Machiavelli probably made similar observations, prompting him to write, "The first method for estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the men he has around him."

I believe that insecurity, rather than poor judgment or lack of intelligence, most often causes leaders to surround themselves with weak people. As I stated in *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, only secure leaders give power to others. That is the Law of Empowerment. On the other hand, insecure leaders usually fail to build teams because of one of two reasons: Either they want to maintain control over everything for which they are responsible, or they fear

being replaced by someone more capable. In either case, leaders who fail to promote teamwork undermine their own potential and erode the best efforts of the people with whom they work. They would benefit from the advice of President Woodrow Wilson: "We should not only use all the brains we have, but all that we can borrow."

"We should not only use all the brains we have, but all that we can borrow."

—WOODROW WILSON

3. *Naïveté*

Consultant John Ghegan keeps a sign on his desk that says, "If I had it to do all over again, I'd get help." That remark accurately represents the feelings of the third type of people who fail to become team builders. They naively underestimate the difficulty of achieving big things. As a result, they try to go it alone.

Some people who start out in this group turn out okay in the end. They discover that their dreams are bigger than their capabilities, they realize they won't accomplish their goals solo, and they adjust. They make team building their approach to achievement. But some others learn the truth too late, and as a result, they never accomplish their goals. And that's a shame.

4. *Temperament*

Some people aren't very outgoing and simply don't think in terms of team building and team participation. As they face challenges, it never occurs to them to enlist others to achieve something.

As a people person, I find that hard to relate to. Whenever I face any kind of challenge, the very first thing I do is to think about the people I want on the team to help with it. I've been that way since I was a kid. I've

always thought, *Why take the journey alone when you can invite others along with you?*

"People have been known to achieve more as a result of working with others than against them."

—DR. ALLAN FROMME

I understand that not everyone operates that way. But whether or not you are naturally inclined to be part of a team is really irrelevant. If you do everything alone and never partner with other people, you create huge barriers to your own potential. Dr. Allan Fromme quipped, "People have been known to achieve more

as a result of working with others than against them." What an understatement! It takes a team to do anything of lasting value. Besides, even the most introverted person in the world can learn to enjoy the benefits of being on a team. (That's true even if someone isn't trying to accomplish something great.)

A few years ago my friend Chuck Swindoll wrote a piece in *The Finishing Touch* that sums up the importance of teamwork. He said,

Nobody is a whole team . . . We need each other. You need someone and someone needs you. Isolated islands we're not. To make this thing called life work, we gotta lean and support. And relate and respond. And give and take. And confess and forgive. And reach out and embrace and rely . . . Since none of us is a whole, independent, self-sufficient, super-capable, all-powerful hotshot, let's quit acting like we are. Life's lonely enough without our playing that silly role. The game is over. Let's link up.

For the person trying to do everything alone, the game really is over. If you want to do something big, you must link up with others. *One is too small a number to achieve greatness.* That's the Law of Significance.

YOU CAN SEE THE DIFFERENCE

When you look at the way people conduct their lives, you can tell fairly quickly who recognizes and embraces the truth of the Law of Significance. That is certainly true of Lilly Tartikoff. I don't know whether Lilly always knew the value of teamwork, but I suspect she learned it early since she was once a professional ballet dancer. If dancers don't work together, then their performances never reach the caliber of Lilly's. Beginning at age seven, she spent ten hours a day, six days a week, practicing or performing ballet. As a result she became a member of the New York City Ballet Company and performed with them from 1971 to 1980.

At a tennis party in Los Angeles in 1980, Lilly met Brandon Tartikoff, the newly named president of entertainment for NBC. At that time he was the youngest network president in history at age thirty. They soon became friends. Then they began to see each other romantically. In 1982, they were married. And that started a whole new life for Lilly. She went from a nontelevision watcher to the spouse of a network executive immersed in the L.A. culture of the entertainment industry. But that adjustment was nothing compared to the other challenge she faced that year. For the second time in his life, Brandon was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease.

AMAZING SCIENCE

On the advice of a physician friend, Brandon went to see a young oncological researcher at UCLA named Denny Slamon. In August 1982, Dr. Slamon started Brandon on two kinds of treatment, one of which was experimental. Brandon would usually be treated on a

Friday, and afterward Lilly would drive him home and take care of him while he suffered from horrible side effects all weekend. They followed that pattern for a year, and all the while Brandon continued in his role of network president. It was a difficult time for them, but they chose to face the cancer as a team, and in time Brandon recovered.

Out of that ordeal came many things. For one, Brandon's network, NBC, went from worst to first in the ratings. In his autobiography he wrote, "Cancer helps you see things more clearly. The disease, I've found, can actually *help* you do your job, and there's a very simple reason why: There's nothing like cancer to keep you focused on what's important."¹ That focus enabled him to air some of the most popular and groundbreaking shows in television's history: *The Cosby Show*, *Cheers*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Miami Vice*, *The Golden Girls*, *The A-Team*, *St. Elsewhere*, and others.

For Lilly, though, there was a different outcome. Once Hodgkin's disease had been driven from her husband's body, she didn't simply move on.

"Brandon was at the receiving end of some pretty amazing science," she observed. The medical research that had extended Brandon's life intrigued her. So when she had an opportunity to help others benefit from that same science, she couldn't say no. That occurred in 1989 when Dr. Dennis Slamon, the UCLA scientist who had treated Brandon seven years before, asked Lilly for her help.

NOBODY CAN DO IT ALONE

For years Dr. Slamon had been studying breast cancer. He believed he was on the verge of developing a radical new treatment that

would not only be more effective in treating the disease than anything previously developed, but he could do it without all the usual side effects of chemotherapy. He had the expertise and skill necessary to do the work, but he couldn't do it alone. He needed someone to help with funding. He thought of Lilly. She was only too happy to agree to assist him.

The plan she developed showed keen insight into teamwork and strategic partnerships. Lilly had once worked as a beauty adviser for Max Factor, formerly connected to Revlon. She sought to get Ronald Perelman, the CEO of Revlon, together with Dr. Slamon. At first that wasn't easy, but once Perelman realized the potential of Slamon's research, he pledged \$2.4 million to the scientist's work with no restrictions. It was a partnership unlike anything that had been done before. What resulted was the creation of the Revlon/UCLA Women's Cancer Research Program—and a successful new treatment for cancer was soon saving women's lives.

A TASTE OF TEAMWORK

For Lilly, cofounding the research program was just a beginning. She had gotten a taste of what teamwork could do, and she was hungry to do much more. She quickly realized that she could enlist others to her cause. She would build a larger team, and she would use her show business connections to do it. That same year she established an annual Fire and Ice Ball in Hollywood to raise money. A few years later, she enlarged her circle and partnered with the Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF) and created the Revlon Run/Walk, first in Los Angeles, and then in New York. So far, those events have raised

more than \$18 million for cancer research. And in 1996, she helped create the National Women's Cancer Research Alliance.

In 1997, her husband Brandon's cancer recurred a third time, and it took his life. He was only forty-eight years old. Despite the personal setback, Lilly continues to build teams to fight cancer. When she met Katie Couric, who had lost her husband to colon cancer, Lilly was again inspired to action. With the help of Couric and the EIF, she formed the National Colorectal Cancer Research Alliance in 2000.

"When I sat down with Katie," said Lilly, "to hear that, with an early diagnosis, you could turn the cancer around, and literally, it's 90 percent curable and preventable. Well, this was like putting a steak in front of a hungry dog . . . I thought, we've got to do this. So I brought in all my partners: the Entertainment Industry Foundation and Dr. Slamon . . . and Dr. Slamon brought together an agenda and a mission . . . So we created the NCCRA [National Colorectal Cancer Research Alliance]. You have no idea how exciting and gratifying it is."²

An individual cannot do the incredible, significant task that Lilly Tartikoff and her partners are trying to accomplish. No single person can take on cancer. But that's true of anything worth doing. If it's significant, it takes a team. That's something Lilly realized, put into practice, and now lives by every day. *One is too small a number to achieve greatness.* That is the Law of Significance.



TEAMWORK THOUGHT

You may be good—but you're not *that* good!

BECOMING A BETTER TEAM MEMBER

What major goals are you working toward achieving right now? Write some of them here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now, reflect on how you are working toward these goals. What approach have you been taking to achieve them? Are you going it alone? Or are you building a team to accomplish them?

If you're not trying to be part of a team, figure out why. Is it a matter of ego? Are you insecure? Have you misjudged the size of the challenges? Or does your temperament incline you to work alone? If you answer yes to one of these questions, work to overcome the difficulty immediately. The sooner you become a team player, the sooner you will be able to achieve your dreams.

BECOMING A BETTER TEAM LEADER

Think about the greatest dream you have for your life. Now ask yourself,

- "Is it bigger than I am?"
- "Does it benefit others as well as myself?"
- "Is it worth dedicating part of my life to?"

THE 17 INDISPUTABLE LAWS OF TEAMWORK

If you answer yes to all of these questions, then think about what kinds of people should join you to achieve that dream. Make a list of the like-minded people you know who might want to join you in the process. Then invite them to take the journey with you. And be on the lookout for others who would benefit from being part of the team.