

THE 17 ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF A TEAM PLAYER

BECOMING THE KIND OF PERSON EVERY TEAM WANTS

by John C. Maxwell. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002.

Here is a clear character profile of the ideal **Team Player**. Maxwell stresses some main qualities of a good team player: intentional, or he is focused on the big picture, relational, focused on others, selfless, willing to take a backseat for the good of the team, and tenacious - works hard to overcome obstacles, no matter what.

1. Adaptable: If you won't change for the team, the team may change you. Team players who are most likely to become adaptable possess the following characteristics:

- a) they are highly teachable;
- b) they are emotionally secure;
- c) they are creative; and,
- d) they are service-minded individuals.

To achieve such characteristic, the following are recommended:

- a) get into the habit of learning;
- b) reevaluate your role on the team; and,
- c) think outside the lines.

2. Collaborative: Working together precedes winning together. Collaboration is the key word when it comes to meeting challenges as a team. Cooperation is merely working together agreeably, but collaborating means working together more aggressively. Every team player must bring something more to the table, and not just put in his minimum required work.

A collaborative team player needs to change in four key areas:

- 1) Perception; 2) Attitude; 3) Focus; and, 4) Results

3. Committed: There are no halfhearted champions. Commitment usually is discovered in the midst of adversity. Committed people don't surrender easily. It does not depend on gifts or abilities. Rather, it is the result of choice. Commitment lasts when it's based on values. If it's something you believe in, it's easier to keep.

To improve the level of commitment, one must:

- Tie commitments to values.
- Take a risk.
- Evaluate teammates' commitment.

4. Communicative: A team is many voices with a single heart. Communicative team players do not isolate themselves from others; make it easy for teammates to communicate with them; follow the twenty-four hour rule; give attention to potentially difficult relationships; and, follow up important communication in writing. To improve communication one is expected to: a) be candid; b) be quick; and, c) be inclusive.

5. Competent: If you can't, your team won't. Competent does not mean simply having adequate skills to perform a job. It means the individual must be highly qualified to do the job well. To improve the level of competence, one must: a) focus yourself professionally; b) sweat the small stuff; c) give more attention to implementation.

6. Dependable: Teams go to Go-To players

The essence of dependability:

- Pure motives. If there are no hidden agendas the team will make progress.
- The ability to take on responsibility. The team player must want the ball and be able to sink it in the basket and score.
- Sound thinking and good judgment, when it counts.
- Consistent contribution, no matter how tired, overwhelmed or distracted, you must be able to deliver.

To improve dependability one must: a) check your motives; b) discover what your word is worth.; and, c) find someone to hold you accountable.

7. Disciplined: Where there's a will, there's a win Discipline is doing what you really don't want to do, so that you can do what you really want to do. It means paying the price so you can have the reward later. To become the kind of players teams want, people must develop discipline in three areas.

- Disciplined thinking. Keep your mind active, and always think about the right things.
- Disciplined emotions. Either you master your emotions, or be mastered by them.
- Disciplined actions. Action separates the winners from the losers. When people act on what they must do, it is for the benefit of all those on the team.

8. Enlarging : Adding value to teammates is invaluable

Team members love a player who is able to inspire them to become more successful. Team players who enlarge their teammates share common characteristics:

- Enlargers value their teammates.
- Enlargers value what their teammate's value.
- Enlargers add value to their teammates.
- Enlargers make themselves more valuable.

How do we become Enlargers?

- Believe in others before they believe in you.
- Serve others before they serve you.
- Add value to others before they add value to you. Point out your teammates' strengths, encourage and motivate them out of their comfort zone, but within their gift zone.

9. Enthusiastic: Your heart is the source of energy for the team People who bring an enthusiastic attitude to teamwork often.

- Take responsibility for their own enthusiasm.
- Act their way into feeling. The only way to begin is simply to begin!
- Believe in what they are doing.
- Spend time with enthusiastic people. Enthusiasm is contagious.

To improve enthusiasm, one must:

- Show a sense of urgency.
- Be willing to do more.
- Strive for excellence.

10. Intentional: Make every action count Being intentional means working with a strong sense of purpose. Successful individuals are never scattered and haphazard. They have a clear reason why they are doing what they are doing. For a team to be successful, it needs intentional people who are focused and productive, the kind of people who can make every action count.

11. Mission conscious: The Big Picture is coming in loud and clear. The four qualities of mission-conscious team players are:

- 1) They know where the team is going.
- 2) They let the leader of the team lead.
- 3) They place team accomplishment ahead of their own.
- 4) They do whatever is necessary to achieve the mission.

To improve mission consciousness you must:

- Check to see if your team focuses on its mission.
- Find ways to keep the mission in mind.
- Contribute your best as a team member.

12. Prepared: Preparation can mean the difference between winning and losing

To be a more prepared team, think about the following:

a) assessment; b) alignment; c) attitude; and, d) action.

To improve preparedness you must:

a) become a process thinker; b) do more research; and,

c) learn from your mistakes.

13. Relational: If you get along, others will go along Teams want people who are relational. Look for the following in your team relationships:

a) respect; b) Shared experiences; c) Trust; d) Reciprocity; and, e) mutual enjoyment.

To better relate to your teammates you must: a) focus on others instead of yourself; b) ask the right questions; c) share common experiences; and, d) make others feel special.

14. Self-improving: To improve the team, improve yourself People who are constantly improving themselves make three processes an ongoing cycle in their lives: Preparation, Contemplation, and Application.

To become self-improving you must: a) become highly teachable; b) plan your progress; c) value self-improvement above self-promotion.

15. Selfless: There is no "I" in team As a team member, how do you cultivate an attitude of selflessness?

- Be generous. - Avoid internal politics. - Display loyalty. - Value interdependence over independence.

To become more selfless.

- Promote someone other than yourself. - Take a subordinate role. - Give secretly, without the other team members knowing.

16. Solution-oriented: Make a resolution to find the solution Your personality type, upbringing and personal history affect how solution-oriented you are naturally. Anyone can become solution-oriented. Solution oriented people recognize these truths:

- Problems are a matter of perspective.
- All problems are solvable.
- Problems either stop us or stretch us.

To make yourself a solution-oriented team player, you must: a) refuse to give up; b) refocus your thinking; c) rethink your strategy; and, d) repeat the process.

17. Tenacious: Never, never, never quit Being tenacious means giving all that you've got, 100% not more than you have. It has something to do with working with determination, not waiting on destiny. Tenacious people do not rely on luck, fate, or destiny for their success. When conditions become difficult, they keep working. Quitting when the job is done, not when you're tired. Push yourself beyond what you think you are capable of.

To improve your tenacity, you must:

- a) work harder or smarter; b) stand for something c) make your work a game.

Key thoughts:

"Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are." - John Wooden, college basketball coach

"Although they only give gold medals in the field of athletics, I encourage everyone to look into themselves and find their own personal dream, whatever that may be - sports, medicine, law, business, music, writing, whatever. The same principles apply. Turn your dream into a goal and learn how to attack that goal systematically. Break it into bite-size chunks that seem possible, and then don't give up. Just keep plugging away." - John Naber, swimmer, four-time Olympic Gold Medallist