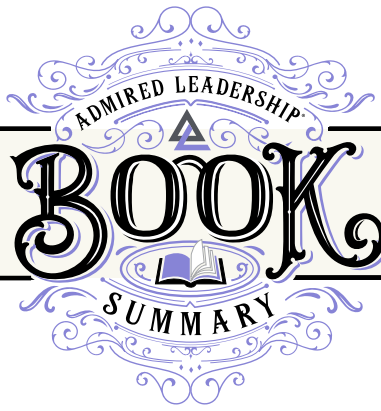




Eight Minutes, Not Eight Hours



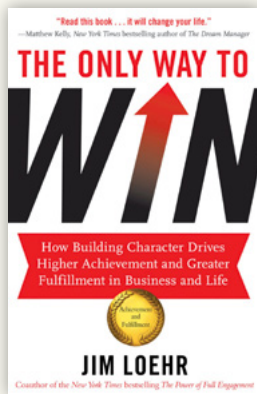
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The Only Way to Win

How Building Character Drives Higher Achievement and Greater Fulfillment in Business and Life

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As co-founder of the Human Performance Institute, Jim Loehr has spent more than three decades studying, observing, and dissecting the concept of achievement and the way in which our understanding and pursuit of shapes our goals, character, and selves.

In *The Only Way to Win*, Loehr examines achievement shaped by purpose, values, and connection with others as the vehicle for character development. He redefines the “scoreboard” by which success is measured and provides the reader with the tools, awareness, and training necessary to “win with character.”

Key Quote

“As you’ve learned from these pages, the only enduring path to achieve fulfillment at work and in life is making sure character trumps all other considerations. It is truly the only way to win” (p. 223).

— Jim Loehr

Key Concepts

A Parade of Failed Promises. Visible achievement for achievement’s sake is not what yields lasting happiness or fulfillment.

How Did We Get Here? We are programmed by society to value external markers of success over internal markers of character.

The Cry for a New Scorecard. Studies show that the traits that are good indicators of happiness are very different from the ones society often craves and promotes.

Character Comes in Two Types. A person’s “ethical/moral character strengths” (honesty, truthfulness, humility, gratitude, etc.) must undergird their “performance character strengths” (positive attitude, critical thinking, courage) to produce genuine success in life (pp. 71-72).

It's Never Just a Job. Soaring success at work is not a stand-in for fulfillment. Character must inform your life at work, and a company's mission and code of conduct should be bigger than merely making a profit.

What Business Leaders Can Learn from Sport. "Sports is a living lab for witnessing the role that character plays in achievement, personal fulfillment, and life satisfaction" (p. 135).


Building Moral Character in Others: For Business Leaders, Parents, Teachers, and Coaches.

Business leaders can nurture character development by highlighting personal and corporate mission statements and encouraging personal goals. Leaders such as parents and coaches need to question and examine their own values first, then define, practice, and praise core values in an age-appropriate way (and stop finding their own personal value in their children's or players' external successes).

Getting Your Story Straight About Achievement.


Switch the order. Put all your goals and activities to work to help you grow in character, which is something that develops in a variety of conditions – in hard times, in introspection and reflection, in all of our pursuits – and the results are more fulfilling and often lead to external success.

Winning with Your New Scorecard. Having a personal scorecard will often lead to excellent external results, but it will do more than that. It can bring new purpose, fulfillment, and focus to the present moment you are in, no matter what is happening in your life.



Studies show that the traits that are good indicators of happiness are very different from the ones society often craves and promotes. Soaring success at work is not a stand-in for fulfillment.

ACHIEVEMENT: PITFALLS AND TRAPS



So much of the desire for and pursuit of achievement stems from wanting to achieve the visible societal markers of success (acclaim, prestige, fame, wealth, power, etc.). Yet, oftentimes, the purpose and consequences of the pursuit are not fully realized (p. 15). Too often, we postpone joy until external markers of success and achievement are met. Happiness is not the end of achievement, but a product of the pursuit's intrinsic internal value (p. 20).

In the pursuit of external goals deemed "worthy" by society, there is always a gap between where you are and where you want to go. Without purpose and inherent joy in the pursuit, the achievement itself will never be enough. We have to reevaluate what we are chasing and why (p. 24). Without a strong foundation of character, societal pressures to succeed at all costs can influence individuals into a "cheating culture" or to suffer from "motivated blindness" – the mentality of doing whatever is necessary to achieve, succeed, and win (pp. 25-27).

The achievement of external rewards, promulgated and enforced by society, is as meaningless and inconsequential as the failure to achieve them. As a result, character building is the only way to truly win. "What matters is the person you are becoming as a consequence of the pursuit, and character must be at the heart of everything you do and are." Every achievement goal, regardless of success or failure, has the potential to be repurposed into an opportunity to grow strengths of character (pp. 29-30).

SOCIETY'S SCORECARD: OUR DE FACTO MEASURE OF ACHIEVEMENT

"Society, thus, has established an invisible but nonetheless very present 'scorecard,' one in which Money, Status, Power, and Beauty are the bold-faced rubrics" (p. 33). In our desire to achieve, we become transfixed by goals that are not our own and fall prey to "identity theft." Society, enabled by those closest to us, overrules the value proposition we use to judge the success of our lives and, in doing so, steals our time and energy with no hope for compensation (pp. 33-34).

"Any self-esteem, high or low, that is contingent on something beyond one's control breaks easily."

When the measure of self-esteem is external and purely achievement-based, winning does little to build self-esteem, while failure seems to confirm ineptitude and devastates one's sense of value (pp. 37-39).

"Stable, healthy self-esteem is contingent, first, on the energy and time that one expends to build specific character strengths, such as kindness, gratefulness, persistence – and second, on the alignment of one's energy and behavior with highly specific, enduring personal values" (p. 40).

ACHIEVING PURPOSE

To create happiness, value, and live a life of meaning and significance, we need purpose. Purpose, or the "Ultimate Mission," is created, not uncovered, and stems from each individual's life, experiences, and passions. Purpose provides context to our achievements. In doing so, it allows us not only to focus and achieve with greater energy but also to become the agents of our own happiness by harvesting joy in both the pursuit of and the achievement itself (pp. 52-55).


Questions you can use to inform your own Ultimate Mission include:

- "What kind of person did I want to be when I grew up?"
- What is something that I would be proud to accomplish that doesn't have a shelf life or expiration date?"
- Would that accomplishment improve my well-being and/or the well-being of others?"
- Which character strengths would I like to develop in my life?"
- What would I like to do with the strengths I develop?"
- Will these capacities be in the service of myself or others?" (pp. 58-59)


SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Created by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is "a theory of human motivation that focuses on the degree to which behavior is self-initiated and self-motivated" (p. 62). It consists of two main components (extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation) and three major sources of intrinsic motivation (autonomy, mastery, and relatedness) (p. 64).

Extrinsic motivation drives one to engage in an activity to achieve the desired outcome separate from that activity itself. Meanwhile, intrinsic motivation drives one to engage in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction of the activity itself (p. 64).



"What matters is the person you are becoming as a consequence of the pursuit, and character must be at the heart of everything you do and are." Every achievement goal, regardless of success or failure, has the potential to be repurposed into an opportunity to grow strengths of character.



Autonomy is the feeling that “I want to decide what to do with my life.” Our psychological need to feel that our behavior is self-initiated and self-endorsed. Intrinsic goals inherently fulfill our desire for autonomy because they are self-chosen and are satisfying in the pursuit (p. 65).

Mastery is the desire to be really good at something for its own sake. Mastery is the ability to feel competent in our abilities and to do things well that are important to us. Goals relating to attaining mastery tend to be intrinsic in nature because we inherently take joy and derive self-worth from learning, growing, and improving (pp. 65-66).

Relatedness is the inherent desire to feel connected to and experience care for others. This human need to connect and care for others in ways that extend beyond self-interest is intrinsic to human existence and provides an affirmed sense of self. As an inherently spiritual need and a key component of purpose, relatedness is the highest priority in achieving a life of deep personal fulfillment and happiness (pp. 66-67).

Whether in life or the workplace, if these three fundamental needs (autonomy, mastery, and relatedness) are not met, the respective task will be reduced to an extrinsic transaction (p. 124). “Doing something for solely extrinsic purposes drains you of energy. Doing it for intrinsic purposes energizes you” (p. 123).

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY


Positive psychology is a reinvention of how we view human functioning. It is characterized by a shift in viewpoint from that of deficiency, and the eradication of dysfunction and unhappiness, towards a focus on human strength and “flourishing” (p. 68). In exploring what is right about people rather than what is wrong, Martin Seligman (founder of positive psychology) concluded that there are five main factors that contribute to “flourishing.” These five factors include positive emotions (the most important of which is optimism), engagement, positive relationships, meaning (connecting one’s life to a purpose bigger than oneself), and accomplishment (pp. 69-70). The pursuit of positive character traits and values foster purpose, meaningful achievement, and true happiness (p. 70).

CREATING OUR OWN SCORECARD


Our personal scorecard is the measure of who you are becoming as it relates to the meaningful activities that you invest in (p. 84). It is critical to understand that our own scorecard does not reject achievement. It gives achievement and winning a new context as the vehicle for intrinsic and character-based growth (p. 95).

We can create our personal Character Scorecard by answering these fundamental questions:

- “What legacy do you want to leave behind?”
- How do you want to be remembered?
- How do you want people to describe you?
- Who do you want to be in life - who is your best self?
- Who and what matters most to you?



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- What are your deepest values?
- How would you define true success for your life?
- What makes your life really worth living?" (p. 87).

Practice writing about our "best self." Describe the character strengths and traits (both performance and moral) that you are most proud of and believe currently represent your greatest assets as a person (p. 89).

Create a "Character Scorecard" by prioritizing a list of 8-10 character strengths represented in your Ultimate Mission and rank them from most important to least important. Half or more of these character strengths should be moral. Grade yourself on the relative strengths of your character "muscles" and the quantity, quality, and focus of energy invested in each one. Prioritize and rank, #1-10, the character strengths you most want and need to grow currently. Select character strengths #1-5 and grade them using the same grading scale (pp. 88-89).


To grow our character strengths, select one character trait from the prioritized list to grow over the next two weeks. Create a log to record training "deposits" you make in the targeted character strength "bank" during the fourteen days. Put prompts and notes everywhere to remind you to build the targeted character strength. At the end of two weeks, choose another character trait to grow (pp. 89, 94).

TRAINING


Train your "Inner Coach" by intentionally investing energy through the lens of your Ultimate Mission and Character Scorecard. You train your "inner coach" not only to become more ethical, compassionate, wise, and confident but also to demand consistency in actions and behavior (pp. 100, 140).

Just as the muscles in the body must be regularly exercised to maintain or grow physical strength, the muscles of integrity, honesty, gratitude, humility, and respect for others must be exercised to maintain and grow character strength (p. 101). Character muscles are built on repetition, adaptation, and experience, including the mistakes and lessons we learn from them (p. 102). Building character muscles is meaningfully accomplished by investing one's best energy in the character strength to be expanded (p. 111). There are eight primary ways energy can be meaningfully invested to stimulate character growth such as modeling, talking, writing, reading, storytelling, debating moral dilemmas, role-playing, and doing (pp. 102-107).

Corporate success is dependent on more than just profit. It is reliant upon creating an atmosphere where the importance of embodying the company's value-based mission statement is as critical as the mission statement itself (p. 131). When ethical and intrinsic values are removed from the corporate playing field, the consequences can damage not only the organization and the industry but also ourselves (p. 134).



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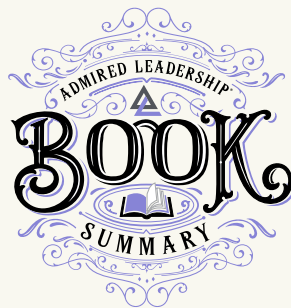


Unlike tournament wins (in any sport) “character wins” are never at the expense of someone else. Win with character. When we judge ourselves by our own intrinsic achievement and scorecard, victory is boundless (p. 206).

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