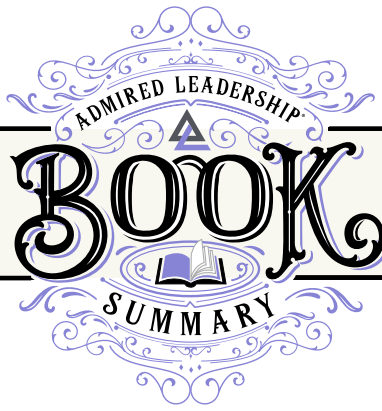




Eight Minutes, Not Eight Hours



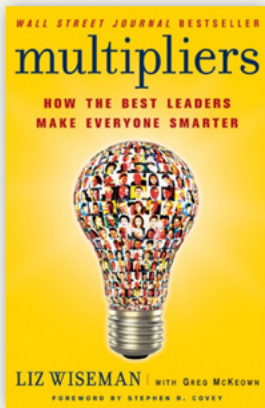
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Multipliers

How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter

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Liz Wiseman is the CEO of The Wiseman Group, a talent development firm that has served clients such as AT&T, Microsoft, Nike, and Tesla. Her research has led her to the conclusion that the world consists of leaders who are either “Multipliers” or “Diminishers.” Wiseman defines a Multiplier as a leader who inspires and empowers people to reach their fullest capacity, and, in doing so, makes effective use of the resources many corporations already have within their ranks. On the other hand, she defines a Diminisher as a leader who, often unintentionally, drains their company’s energy through practices such as micromanagement and condescension.

Key Quote

“Multipliers are genius makers. What we mean by that is that they make everyone around them smarter and more capable” (p. 10). — *Liz Wiseman*

Key Points

The Multiplier Effect. Multipliers get “vastly” better results from their people, improving how they leverage the resources they already have. Wiseman describes Multipliers as **Talent Magnets, Liberators, Challengers, Debate Makers, and Investors** (p. 33).

The Talent Magnet. Talent Magnets “attract talented people and then use them to their fullest capacity” whereas “Empire Builders” “hoard resources and underutilize talent” (p. 36). Talent magnets identify and appreciate and name all kinds of genius, then they get out of the way (p. 55).

The Liberator. Liberators “free people to think, to speak, and to act with reason. They create an environment where the best ideas surface and where people can do their best work” (p. 67). Liberators “create space” for people’s ideas, listen, defend standards, focus on work vs. outcomes, and “generate rapid learning cycles” by discussing and “learning from mistakes” (p. 95).

The Challenger. Challengers “raise the bar,” setting bigger goals, asking bigger questions, and opening the floor to big ideas and solutions (p. 98). But “Know-It-Alls” stifle people, shutting down progress and showing off their own expertise. This encourages the people around them to spend their time navigating the boss rather than a new challenge!

The Debate Maker. Multipliers “make decisions by first engaging people in debate” and in doing this, they “develop collective intelligence.” Diminishers either “make decisions solo or within a small inner circle” (p. 129).

The Investor. Multipliers invest in their teams, enabling them to “operate independently by giving other people ownership of results and investing in their success” (p. 159). Diminishers micromanage.

The Accidental Diminisher. Many Diminishers are not intentionally so – they are people with good intentions. Purposing to start by “doing less” – “less talking, less responding, less convincing, less rescuing” – can start you on the way to becoming a Multiplier (p. 207).

Dealing With Diminishers. If you are a person working for a Diminishing boss, you can spiral into negative thoughts and behaviors easily. It’s important to know that a boss’s Diminishing behaviors are “not necessarily about you.” With skill and nuance, you can even “lead your leader” and become your own Multiplier (pp. 219, 221).

Becoming a Multiplier. “Multiplier practices can be learned and developed” (p. 248). The progress can be accelerated, starting with self-awareness and continuing with intentional strategies.

Key Concepts:

THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

After studying and speaking with over 200 leaders from middle school history teachers to executives of Fortune 500 companies, Wiseman discovered five key characteristics of Multipliers. They are Talent Magnets, Liberators, Challengers, Debate Makers, and Investors.

Multipliers bring out the intelligence in others, but Diminishers focus on their own intelligence, thus inhibiting the capability of others.

“Latent talent exists everywhere” (p. 27). Multiplying is not a function of having more resources at a leader’s disposal. Studies show that Multipliers can extract two times more from their teams than Diminishers (p. 11).

Noteworthy case study: Derek Jones entered the U.S. Navy in 1994 and experienced two vastly different leadership styles between Commander Officer (CO) Fredricks, a Diminisher, and CO Abbot, a Multiplier. Under Fredricks, Jones – who was originally known for his aptitude and high performance– suffered micromanagement, condescension, and tense working conditions. However, Jones’ performance transformed under CO Abbot, who instilled confidence in his team. Abbot’s Multiplier leadership style and guidance is a reason for Jones’s continued success in the ranks of the Navy (pp. 1-4).



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THE TALENT MAGNET

Multipliers are “Talent Magnets” who attract and develop valuable talent, and Diminishers are “Empire Builders” who hoard and underutilize talent (p. 36).

Talent Magnets (p. 43):

Look for talent everywhere: Talent Magnets are not restrained by organizational boundaries.

Find people’s native genius: Talent Magnets find what people are naturally good at and label their genius.

Utilize people to their fullest: Once Talent Magnets discover talent, they engage their genius.

Remove the blockers: Talent Magnets remove the impediments that keep people from growing.

In contrast, Empire Builders “are owners of talent, not developers” (p. 56).

Although both attract talent, Talent Magnets retain and develop them, while Empire Builders preside over high turnover rates because of their employees’ disillusionment and/or development stagnation (p. 63).

Noteworthy case study: During his tenure at Bain & Company, Mitt Romney attracted talent. He engaged his team through relational questions and one-on-ones, cultivating their strengths and pushing their growth. His ability to unleash the genius of those around him not only opened doors for current employees but also attracted new talent, like Meg Whitman, CEO of eBay, who yearned to receive the same guidance (pp. 33-35).

NO. 2: THE LIBERATOR

Multipliers are “Liberators” who “create an intense environment that requires people’s best thinking and work,” while Diminishers are “Tyrants” who “create tense environments that suppress people’s thinking and capability (p. 95).

Liberator leaders “create space,” “demand people’s best work,” and “generate rapid learning cycles” (p. 77).

You become a Liberator by playing with a few chips but making them count, labeling your opinions, talking up your mistakes, and making space for mistakes (p. 95).

One of the key differences that distinguishes Liberators from Tyrants is the ability to be intense without stress or tension, ultimately giving people the freedom to choose for themselves while asking for their best work (p. 87).

Noteworthy case study: Robert Enslin, president of Global Customer Operations for SAP AG, is “known for his collegial approach” which was tested during the 2008 recession. In the high-stakes situation with company executives, Enslin remained composed and dissipated the tension of the situation to replace it with an “intense environment that requires concentration, diligence, and energy.” With his leadership, the team felt “safe within their sphere of expertise and control” and ultimately produced solutions to tackle the crisis (pp. 70-72).



Talent Magnets:

Look for talent everywhere:

Talent Magnets are not restrained by organizational boundaries.

Find people’s native genius:

Talent Magnets find what people are naturally good at and label their genius.



NO. 3: THE CHALLENGER

Multipliers are “Challengers” who identify and define challenges for their team to accomplish, while Diminishers are “Know-It-Alls” who only work within their own knowledge framework, limiting the organization to their capability (p. 102).

Challengers seed opportunities to spark processes of discovery, lay down challenges to draw people in, and generate belief in what is possible (p. 107).

To become a Challenger, Wiseman encourages the “extreme questions challenge” (where one holds a conversation only speaking in questions), a “stretch challenge” (where a team is given a very difficult puzzle or situation to see how far they can be stretched), taking an off-site trip together, and taking on a small challenge collectively (pp. 122-126).

Noteworthy case study: When Matt McCauley became the CEO of Gymboree, he challenged and exceeded expectations. He began with casting a “Mission Impossible” goal of raising shares from \$0.69 to \$1.00 after one year, which he accomplished by using his sales expertise and igniting the organization with a united goal. Within less than five years, McCauley increased the share value to \$3.21. McCauley challenged the company to join the seemingly impossible goal and “gave people permission to try without fear of failure” (pp. 97-99).

NO. 4: THE DEBATE MAKER

Multipliers are “Debate Makers” who engage with issues up front to develop understandable and sound solutions. Diminishers are “Decision Makers” who decide efficiently alone or in inner circles, ultimately leaving the broader organization in the dark (p. 132).

Debate Makers frame the issue through bold questions, spark the debate in a safe yet rigorous manner, and drive sound decisions to land a clear solution (p. 155).


To become a Debate Maker, you must hold a debate to ask hard questions, ask for evidence, involve everyone, and ask people to switch positions (p. 152).

Debate Makers are capable of decision-making, but are conscious that healthy debate builds and fortifies the team (p. 156).


Noteworthy case study: Lutz Ziob, an executive at Microsoft in the company’s education business, effectively creates safe spaces for collegial, yet effective, debate surrounding key decisions. When drawing up innovative solutions for the outdated model of Microsoft’s education strategy, Lutz and his team met in an off-site environment, where he emboldened the team to stretch their critical thinking and problem-solving capabilities within a closed arena. The team ended their retreat with a clear path, pivoting towards the academic market and expanding their reach threefold in two years (pp. 135-138).

NO. 5: THE INVESTOR

Multipliers are “Investors” who help people find ownership in their work, while Diminishers are “Micromanagers” who manage details to centralize team dependence on them (p. 159).



One of the key differences that distinguishes Liberators from Tyrants is the ability to be intense without stress or tension, ultimately giving people the freedom to choose for themselves while asking for their best work.



Investors invest by “infusing knowledge and resources” into people, and holding people accountable (p. 171). To become an Investor, you must give “51% of the vote” to your team, “let nature take its course” at instructional moments, ask for complete solutions rather than just problem identification, and return the investment to avoid overshadowing the voices of the team (pp. 185-188).

Noteworthy case study: Ela Bhatt founded the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) in India in 1972 as a move towards economic independence from British colonial rule. Though she could’ve remained as SEWA’s general secretary, Ela insisted on investing in younger generations of women leaders to lead the organization as it grew “to become a significant union in the region.” Ela went on to found dozens of other related organizations, and a common denominator in all of their executives is Ela’s guiding hand and resource investment to ensure their success in the role (pp. 163-164).

THE ACCIDENTAL DIMINISHER

Leaders can become Accidental Diminishers, despite good intentions. Wiseman’s “Accidental Diminisher” profiles include the following (p. 210):

“Idea Fountain” – A leader who cannot prioritize, leading to limited team progress on multiple fronts (p. 193).

“Always On” – A leader with a big, suffocating personality, who “can’t turn on the dimmer switch” and who eventually becomes white noise to the team (p. 194).

“Rescuer” – A leader who swoops in to solve problems and “starve people of the vital learning they need to be successful” (p. 195).

“Pacesetter” – A leader who works without being mindful of the pace of the team, resulting in the team assuming the role of the spectator (p. 196).

“Rapid Responder” – A leader whose rapid response results in team members growing apathetic and sluggish (p. 198).

“Optimist” – A leader who isn’t realistic about pitfalls and therefore harms the team’s morale and output (p. 199)

“Protector” – A leader who protects members to the extent that they lose accountability and responsibility (p. 200).

“Strategist” – A leader who focuses solely on vision without leaving room for the team to “generate the intellectual muscle needed to make a vision a reality” (p. 201).

“Perfectionist” – A leader who asks for perfection without recognizing that their expectations could result in team disengagement (p. 202).

Noteworthy case study: John C. Maxwell, a well-known name in the leadership and coaching industry, is an avid learner. When introduced to the notion of Multipliers and Diminishers, he recognized in himself several Diminisher tendencies. He then set out to be intentional, and he systematically approached things by seeking feedback from Mark Cole, the CEO who runs his five companies. Their conversations manifested into a turning point when John was challenged with discrepancies in business style and vision, and thus tempted to micromanage. However, recognizing his Diminisher tendencies, John stepped aside and let Mark handle the issues, which were successfully and appropriately addressed in a timely way (pp. 205-206).



Debate Makers are capable of decision-making, but are conscious that healthy debate builds and fortifies the team.



DEALING WITH DIMINISHERS

“You can be a Multiplier while working for a Diminisher” (p. 240).

When working under or with Diminishers, “you can multiply your way out” by reinforcing all Multiplier initiatives in your vicinity, exhibiting Multiplier tendencies in your work, and breaking the Diminishing “death spiral” through your actions and reactions (pp. 213-215).

To break the cycle of Diminishing, it is imperative to know that it isn’t necessarily about you, diminishing “isn’t inevitable,” and there are productive ways to “lead your leader” (pp. 219, 240).

Strategies for Dealing With a Diminisher:

Level 1: Defending yourself from bosses who are Diminishers.

“Turn down the volume” of the Diminisher (p. 221). Don’t listen or react to every single negative incident.

“Strengthen other connections” by building trust and creating connections within your own and other circles at work (p. 223).

“Retreat and regroup,” giving space rather than escalating and coming back with fresh perspectives (p. 224).

“Send the right signals” to bosses and peers and “assure delivery” to help relieve their micromanaging tendencies (pp. 225-226).

“Assert your capability” with bosses who need to be reminded of it (pp. 226-227).

Seek information on broader goals and targets when you are dealing with overly prescriptive leaders (pp. 227-228).

However, sometimes you have to find a place that is a better fit and “shop for a new boss” (p. 221).

Level 2: “Multiplying Up.”

“Exploit your boss’s strengths,” seeking out and making the most of what they do have to offer (p. 231).


“Give them a user’s guide” through your actions – name what you are truly good at and discuss it with your boss (pp. 231-232).

“Listen to learn” from your boss and don’t immediately discount their criticism (pp. 232-234).


“Admit your mistakes” and share what you have learned, helping your boss see that you understand the process (pp. 234-235).

“Sign up for a stretch” to show that you are motivated and growth-oriented (pp. 235-236).

“Invite them to the party” by bringing your boss in rather than holding them at bay (p. 236-237).



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Level 3: Inspiring Multiplier Leadership in Others.

“Assume positive intent” on the part of others. Use their good intentions as “common ground” to move forward (pp. 237-238).

“Address one issue at a time,” so as not to burden Diminishers with a crushing weight of critique (p. 238).

“Celebrate progress” made collectively, and recognize all behavior, however small, in the right direction (p. 237).


BECOMING A MULTIPLIER

Starting the journey to become a Multiplier consists of three steps: “resonance, realization, and resolve” (p. 247).


Resonance involves seeing the Multiplier and Diminisher characteristics in your world (p. 247).

Realization acknowledges the ways you might be an accidental Diminisher – and virtually every leader is in some way (p. 247).

Resolve to be a Multiplier. Though the task may seem immense, take action to build step-by-step on what you have learned (p. 248).



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There are four steps to accelerating your journey as a Multiplier.

Start by investigating the internal and external assumptions already in place about Multipliers and Diminishers.

Next, “begin by assessing your leadership practices and then work the two extremes: 1) neutralize your weakness; 2) top off a strength” (p. 251).

Third, “run an experiment” on Multiplying, testing your new behaviors and approaches, and then seeking feedback from colleagues (p. 253).

Fourth, be prepared for inevitable setbacks. Becoming a Multiplier is a process that is “neither automatic nor immediate” (p. 257).

To cultivate and build a Multiplier culture, the following should be considered:

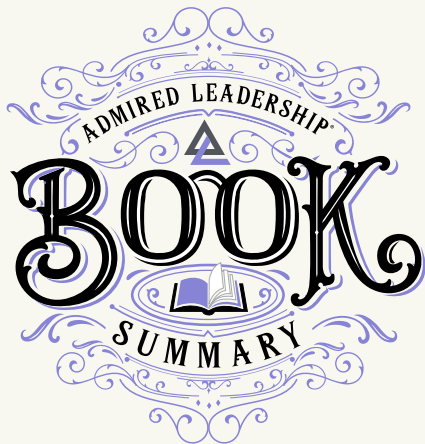
“Common Language” – “Spark discussion” around Multiplying and Accidental Diminishers (p. 269).

“Learned Behaviors” – Set standards of practice to calibrate and align actions with a Multiplying mindset (p. 270).

“Shared Beliefs” – “Codify” the working values of organizations towards an appropriate Multiplier ethic of leadership. An example of this is Nike’s “Manager Manifesto” (pp. 273-274).

“Heroes and Legends” – Spotlight and amplify voices, attitudes, and moments that exemplify Multiplier tendencies (pp. 274-276).

“Rituals and Norms” – Cement sustainable best practices to ensure the resiliency of the Multiplier mindset (pp. 276-277).



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The Latest and Greatest Books for Leaders

We work hard to stay abreast of the current writings on leadership, especially those books our clients are reading or have been recommended to read. As a benefit to our clients and to facilitate our own learning, the Admired Leadership team has long maintained a tradition of summarizing the newest books of interest to leaders. Better to read a summary for eight minutes before investing eight hours in the entire book.

After reading a good summary, we believe leaders are able to make better choices as to what to ignore, what to peruse and what to make the time to read closely.