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DR. KEITH WALKER  
EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY  
JILLIAN TENASKI

# ***THE BOYS IN THE BOAT***

*Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics*



**WRITTEN BY DANIEL  
JAMES BROWN**

The Boys in the Boat shows how evenly distributed leadership can lead to great success through teamwork, collaboration and understanding those you are working with. In this book, rowing symbolizes coming together and working towards a common goal. Think of the traits you look for in a leader; dedication, determination, trust and commitment. These might be a few words you would use to characterise someone in a leadership position. Through rowing the boys in the story would not have been successful together as a team without these common shared traits.

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# DANIEL JAMES BROWN



Daniel James grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and attended Diablo Valley College in California at Berkley.

Brown has taught writing at both San Jose and Stanford University.

He now lives in Redmond, Washington on the country side with his family. When not writing he enjoys spending time with his wife and two daughters.

Brown currently dedicates his time to writing inspiring nonfiction books about evoking historical events.



# OVERVIEW

## THE TALE OF TRUE GRIT

Throughout the hard times during the Depression in the 1930's emerges a capturing story following the life of Joe Rantz and nine other working-class boys living in America. The book captures the hard times as American's fought to survive during the Great Depression and the rise of Hitler in Berlin.

The Boys in The Boat follows the life of Joe Rantz, a young man at the time growing up abandoned from his family, poor and trying to survive on his own perservering through setback after setback.

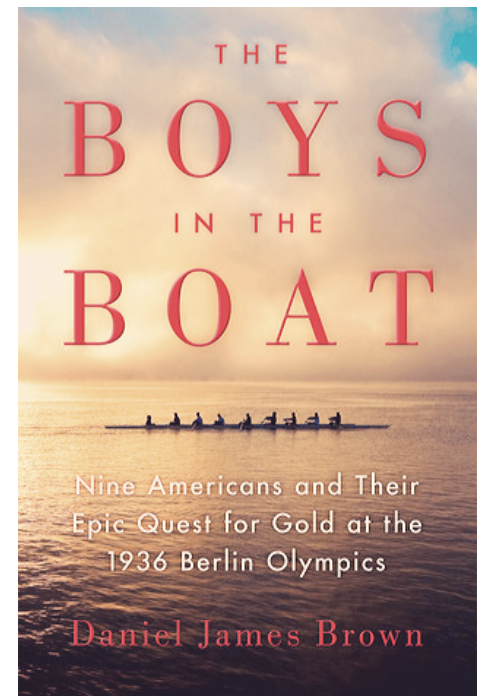
The nine boys were a part of what was arguably one of the greatest rowing crews of all time rowing for the University of of Washington. The book follows their story of determination working towards being number one and going to row in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.

Daniel James Brown paints an emotional and inspirational memoir through the crew members journey and their devotion to one another. The Boys in The Boat speaks to the utmost task of teamwork and determination.

Using quotations from George Yeoman Pocock, who was a leading rowing shell designer in the 20th century helps shed light on how rowing can be linked to leadership roles and expectations of team members.



Joe Rantz





# Lesson One

I believe I can speak authoritatively on what we may call the unseen values of rowing- the social, moral and spiritual values of this oldest of chronicled sports in the world. No didactic teaching will place these values in a young man's soul. He has to get them by his own observation and lessons. -George Yeoman Pocock



## YOU LEARN THROUGH WHAT YOU GO THROUGH

**Our experiences shape our behaviours..**

"The hurting was taking its toll, and that was just fine with Joe. Hurting was nothing new to him."

Joe Rantz was a boy who grew up in the country with his Mom, Dad and older brother. At a young age his mother passed away leaving Joe, his brother and father to start a new life. Not long after his father had found a new wife. At a young age Joe was abandoned by his father and step mother due to his step mother not wanting a part of his father's past life to be associated with her.

Throughout his life he had to fend for himself. He worked incredibly hard trying to provide for himself. Eventually he was accepted into college. Once in college he decided to try out for the school's rowing team. On the first few days of tryouts there were over a hundred young men there. Many of them came from wealthy, prestigious families and felt they deserved to be on the team because of their high status. Slowly as the tryouts became more grueling, one by one many young men began to drop out. Joe felt he was able to endure the difficult practices and tryouts because of his upbringing. As a young boy he did not have the option to give up and accept defeat.

No great success happens without overcoming challenges.



# Lesson Two

**Every good rowing coach, in his own way, imparts to his men the kind of self-discipline required to achieve the ultimate from mind, heart, and body. Which is why most ex-oarsman will tell you they learned fundamentally important lessons in the racing shell than in the classroom. -George Yeoman Pocock**



**Al Ulbrickson - University of Washington's Head Rowing Coach**

## SITUATIONAL LEARNING

**Learning naturally through experiences..**

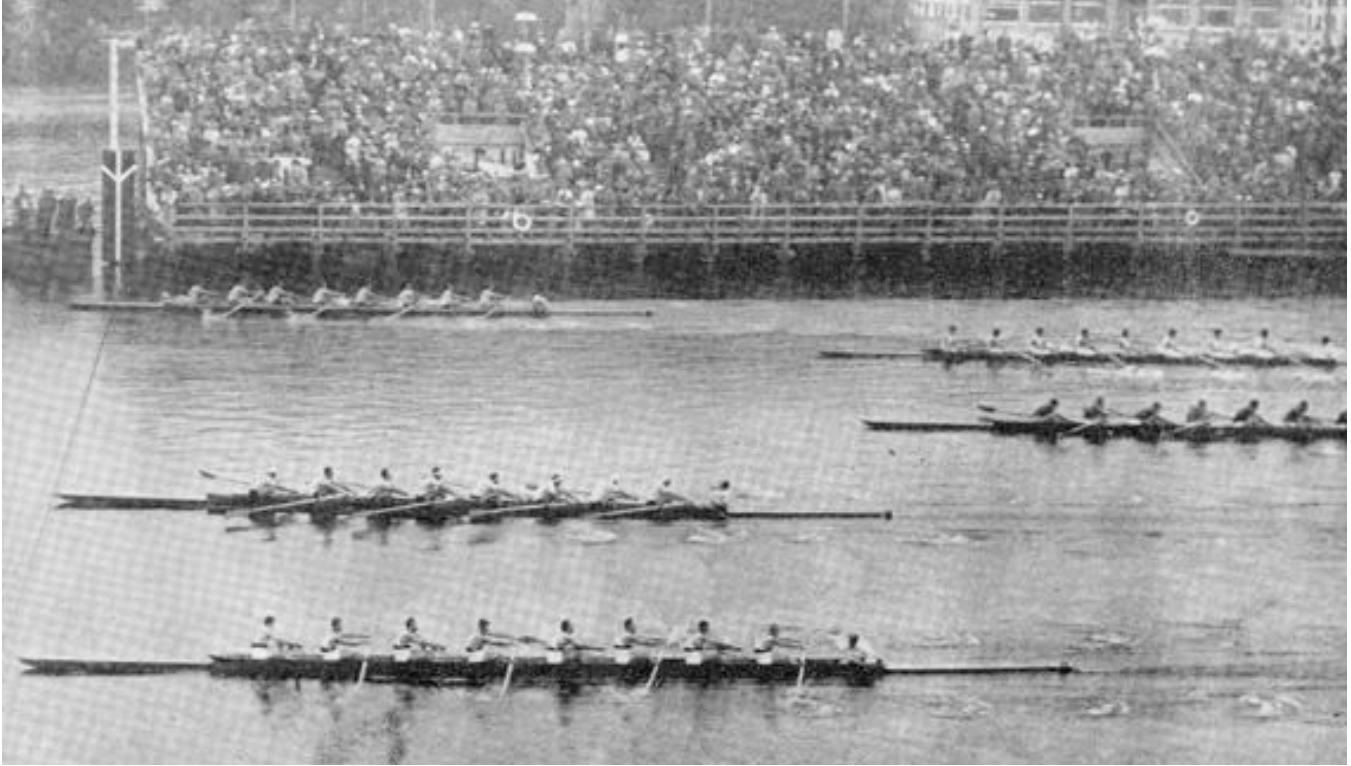
“The brutal afternoon workouts left him exhausted and sore but feeling cleansed, as if someone had scrubbed out his soul with a stiff wire brush.”

Many of the boys who were apart of the rowing team were also devoted to their studies. However each team member came to practice ready to learn not from a professor but rather from each other. However their coach Al Ulbrickson often gave orders and tips on how the boys can shorten their times. He would move the boys around, take boys out, sub in others but the boat never worked quit as well as the initial boat of young men including Joe Rantz he started with.

What it really came down to was the boys and their communication together in the boat. In order for their boat to be successful they had to get to know eachother, build relationships and figure out how they can work together as a team. So often we can read or study on how to be successful leaders or team members from theorists or informational books. Yet so often, the real learning takes place in the natural setting and working in the real life environment.

# Lesson Three

Rowing a race is an art, not a frantic scramble. It must be rowed with head power as well as hand power. From the first stroke all thoughts of the other crew must be blocked out. Your thoughts must be directed to you and your own boat, always positive, never negative. -George Yeoman Pocock



1936 Olympic Race in Berlin

## POWER OF POSITIVITY

### Our thoughts and their influence..

Just like any other athletic race, as soon as you look at your opponent behind you, you will lose speed. When focusing on anyone other than yourself often comes comparisons that do not always make you feel worthy. Our thoughts, affect our actions and our actions affect our outcomes. Negative thoughts will influence our actions and performances. When one of the boys in the shell thought that they did not deserve to be on the team it affected their team as a whole. If they were worried about another team that had practiced more or were talked about more in the paper, it also impacted the boys and how they felt.

"It takes energy to get angry. It eats you up inside. I can't waste my energy like that and expect to get ahead." -Joe Rantz



# Lesson Four

**One of the first admonitions of a good rowing coach, after the fundamentals are over, is "pull your own weight," and the young oarsman does just that when he finds out that the boat goes better when he does. There is certainly a social implication here. -George Yeoman Pocock**

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Hold members accountable for their actions..**

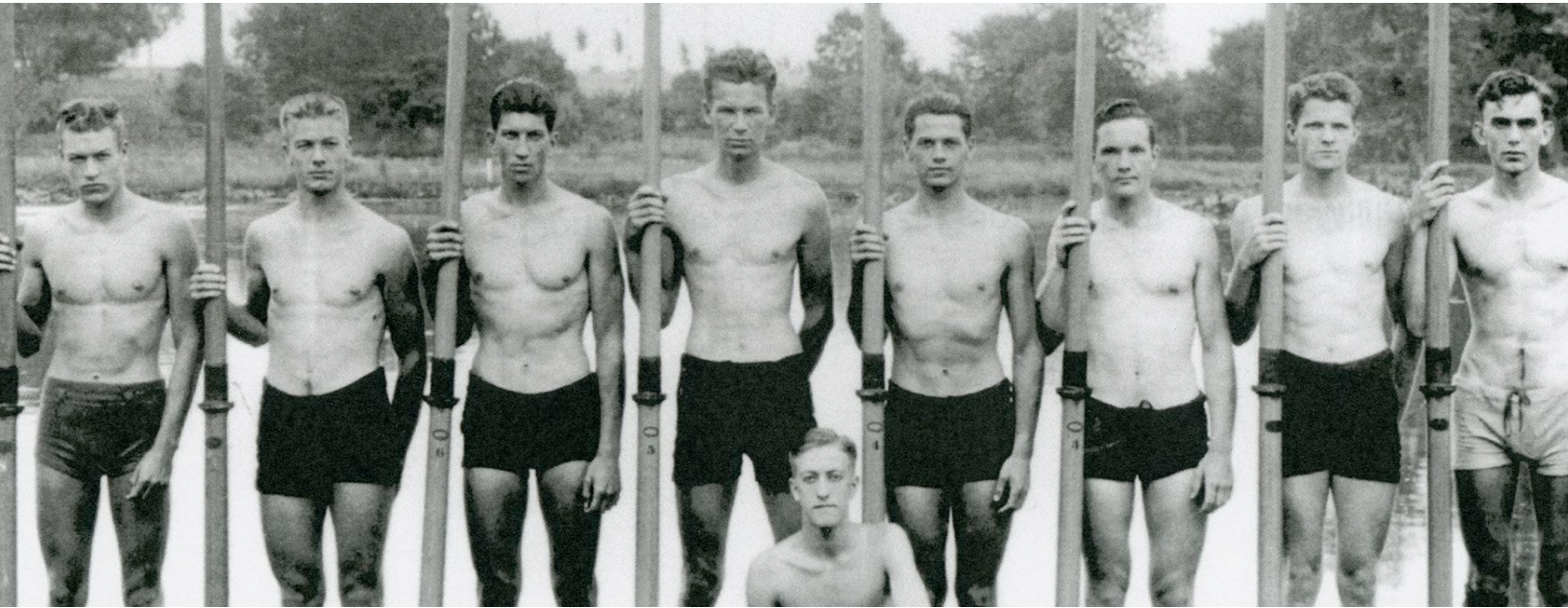
When coach Ulbrickson noticed that some team members were not putting in their maximum effort he began to hold crew races. He would race two boats against each other and see which members may have to be replaced. If rowers were delivering and showing hard work they were rewarded, if they were slacking they got moved to a slower boat. This showed that each crew member needed to be held responsible and accountable for the effort they were putting in. Often throughout training coach Ulbrickson had to pull boys into his office to remind them that they needed to refocus and align what they were doing with the team.

"He reminded them that there were at least four boys vying for each seat in the first varsity boat."



# Lesson Five

**Just as a skilled rider is said to become part of his horse, the skilled oarsman must become part of his boat. -George Yeoman Pocock**



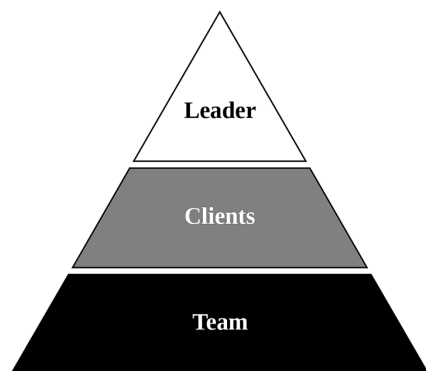
## SERVING YOUR TEAM

### Servant-Leader Model...

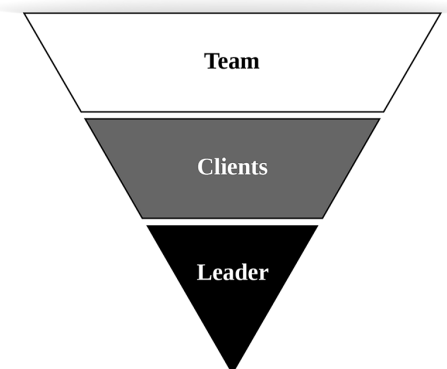
As a leader you must serve on your team. Each boy within the winning shell is a leader in their own way. Together the boat will not row as fast, if they are not rowing for each other. If one boy on the team rows however and whichever way he would like, the shell as a whole will not be successful or in unison. Each team must share the same goal. If it is not supported by one another the team can be let down. When all members are aligned and working together it will bring the best out in each member.

"But it's not just about me. It has to be about the boat."

TRADITIONAL MODEL



SERVANT-LEADER MODEL





George Yeoman Pocock

# Final Thoughts

To be of championship caliber, a crew must have total confidence in each other, able to drive with abandon, confident that no man will get the full weight of the pull..... The 1936 crew, with Hume at stroke, rowed with abandon, beautifully timed. Having complete confidence in one another they would bound on the stroke with one powerful cut; then ghost forward to the next stroke with the boat running true and ardly a perceptible slowdown. They were a classic example of eight-oar rowing at its very best.

-George Yeoman Pocock

Total confidence in Joe's 1936 Olympic gold medal team did not happen over night. As the book traces the trials and triumphs the team had gone through it can be easily depicted through Patrick Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions of a Team pyramid. These different levels were evident throughout the book as the boys and their team worked towards getting to the olympics. In order to row their very best and to become a team in harmony they had to work through each one of the depicted tears.





# *CONCLUSION*

*Teamwork Teamwork Teamwork*



Without harmonized dedication, determination, trust and commitment it is very hard to be successful. The Boys in the Boat shares the inspirational and true story of perseverance from a team and the road that led them to be Olympic gold medalists. This true story can help shed light on how teachers, students, parents and community members must row together in order to achieve success in their schools.

Schools need organizational strategies that will help ensure teachers, students, parents and community members are all working towards a common goal in the most productive way possible.

Professionals and leaders can use this book to understand just how important it is to inspire and motivate team members to perform at their best ability. When a shared motivator is created, a common goal is formed for all to follow.