Ashley Shaw
EADM 826
September 16th, 2019

Executive Book Summary

The Culture Code

Book Summary

Points of Interest:

- Tips to create a safe place
- Questions for leaders
- Real world situations
- Examples of highly efficient groups
- Reasons why groups fail
- Inspiring quotes
- Leadership qualities
- Advice for creating cooperation

Using examples from the real world situations and groups, Daniel Coyle writes a guide to understand how groups become successful and effective. The examples serve as a guide to the creation of highly successful groups. Daniel brings together examples from profitable companies, winning professional sports teams and a productive Navy SEAL team. He analyses their tactic's, and relationships within the groups. The Culture Code provides a how-to-guide to developing a cooperative and high functioning group. The book is organized by three different skills; building safety, sharing vulnerability and establishing purpose as components to highly successful groups.

The book shares the skills and mindset needed for team building. It is an excellent resource for various types of groups. This book would be valuable to a school staff, a cohort of students or anyone who is in a leadership role. It allows the reader to reflect on their own values and perspectives within the three skill sets mentioned in the book. Not only is it a chance to reflect but an opportunity to develop leadership skills using practical examples to build competencies within the various leadership skills.

The Culture Code is an informative and helpful guide for leaders within various different disciplines. It will challenge the way you lead your groups and give insight into some of the most highly successful groups.

About the Author

The author, Daniel Coyle, is a well-known, award winning author of various titles related to harnessing talent, winning and examining efficient groups. His book titled "The Secret Race: Inside the Hidden World of the Tour de France: Doping, Cover-ups, and Winning at All Costs" was New York Times bestseller.

Besides being an author to 6 titles, Daniel Coyle has also worked as a contributing editor for Outside magazine, an adventure and travel magazine.

Daniel Coyle has also worked as a talent development advisor for the Cleveland Indians. His work as an advisor and writer has expanded to different fields from outdoor adventure articles to team development within companies.

Sept.5th,2019.Retrieved from

www.danielcoyle.com

Skill #1— Build Safety

A defining characteristic of a highly efficient group is their sense of safety. A safe space allows for the team to bond and creates a sense of belonging among the group. It is in our human nature to always be assessing our environment for dangers, so creating a safe space allows people to relax their worries and feel supported.

Coyle examines the concept of safety in the first section of the book. He uses examples of how we can recognize safety such as the Christmas Truce of World War 1, and a defining day for Google. The real world situations allow the reader to connect and have a better understanding of the concept of safety.

The Christmas Truce

Sept. 5, 2019, www.cultureliverpool.co.uk/news/christmas-truce-unveiling/

During World War 1, Allies and the Germans spent weeks on the battle field killing each other day after day. As the Christmas holiday was approaching the troops on both sides of the battlefield along the front lines did the unthinkable. It began with Christmas carols that were heard back and forth. Then as the soldiers became more comfortable and felt safe, they began to emerge from the trenches and interacted with each other in an unforeseen way. This truce that was building among them was a nature and raw occurrence. It was not initiated by the commanding officers.

During the Christmas truce, "tens of thousands of men" along the front lines put down their weapons and celebrated the holiday together. The celebrations included "eating, drinking, cooking, singing, playing soccer matches, exchanging photos, bartering and burying the dead".

Even though the two sides opposed each other and had spent weeks killing each other, they shared a connection and shared experience which brought them together during the Christmas truce.

The Good Apples

"You are safe here"

- Daniel Coyle, p.11

Will Frelps is a behavior specialist from the university of South Wales who studies group dynamics. His social experiment involved placing an individual within the teams to see how the group production was affected by the members involved and their personalities. The experime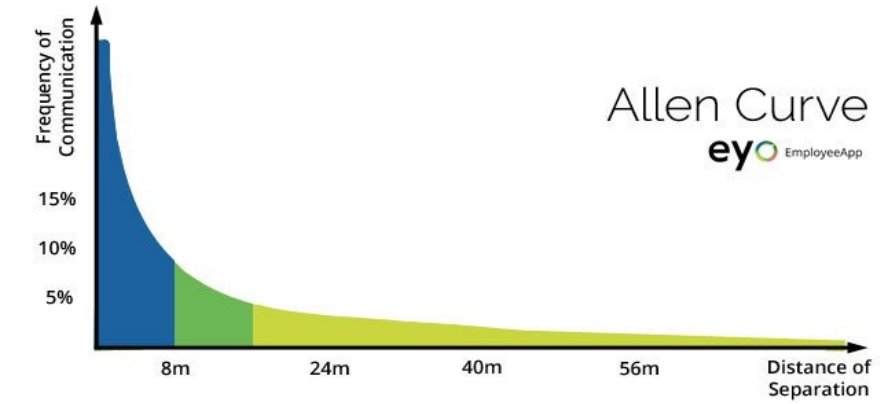nt subject, Nick, played the role of "a jerk", "a slacker", and "a downer". The study found that in almost all groups, Nick's behavior reduced the teams production and quality of work. There was an exception to one particular group who had an individual that was able to react to Nick's antics with "warmth" and didn't let Nick get into the heads of the other team members. He was able to defect Nick's behavior and sends the message that the team is solid. He's tactics were examined by Will Frelps who describes him as "a good apple". One of the qualities of highly effective groups is having a "good apple' to help keep the team focused, energized and create a safe place.

(Coyle, p.3-74, 2018)

Belonging, Relationships, and Connection

The group chemistry affects their sense of belonging and connection to each other. MIT professor, Thomas Allen, studied group chemistry and its affects on productivity. Through his research he discovered that the proximity of the team had a great impact of their performance. If you remove the distance and barriers between office space, people are able to communicate more which transmitted into a stronger connection and relationship building. The study showed evidence of the team being separated by a different floor in the same building and how damaging it was to their progression. The increased proximity and communication data is displayed on a chart known as the Allen Curve. (Coyle, p. 69-71, 2018)

Allen Curve [online image] Retrieved Sept.5th, 2019 from staffbase.com/blog/why-we-created-the-eyo-employeeapp/

Over communicate your listening
Spotlight your fallibility early on
Embrace the messenger
Preview future connection
Overdo thank-yous
Be painstaking in the hiring process
Eliminate bad apples
Create safe and collision-rich spaces
Make sure everyone has a voice
Pick up trash
Capitalize on threshold moments
Avoid giving sandwich feedback
Embrace fun   (Coyle, p.74-88, 2018)

Skill #2— Share Vulnerability

Sharing your vulnerabilities is knowing when to ask for support and yet remain persistent. Highly efficient groups rely on each other for their expertise and advice. Vulnerability creates a trusting culture within teams. Being vulnerable is owning your mistakes and not trying to hide behind a perfect persona. Leaders who show their vulnerability remove the barrier for their team to do the same.

Being vulnerable also includes having the ability to deal with difficult situations up front and face-to-face.

(Coyle, P. 171-188, 2018)

Brene Brown [online photo] Sept.5th, 2019, Retrieved from www.tacresults.com/article/leading-change-requires-vulnerability/

Examples of vulnerability

- United Airlines Flight 232
- Pixar, BrainTrust
- Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, The Red Balloon Challenge

"Tell me what you want, and I'll help you"
- Daniel Coyle, p.97

Ideas for Action

Make sure the leader is vulnerable first and often; when the leader asks for feedback it allows others to feel comfortable to do the same.

Overcommunicate expectations; don't presume things will happen, communicate those expectations.

Deliver the negative stuff in person; deal with the discomfort through face-to-face interactions.

When forming new groups, focus on two critical moments; "the first vulnerability and the first disagreement".

Listen like a trampoline; be an active responder and not just a passive listener.

In conversation, resist the temptation to reflexively add value; "not what you say but what you do".

Use candor-generating practices like AARs, BrainTrusts, and Red Teaming; these tools help to facilitate habits.

Build a wall between performance review and professional development; do not link these under one category.

Use flash mentoring; condensed form of mentoring that is quick and simple.

Make the leader occasionally disappear; leave the team during important situations to see how they handle it without your leadership.

Align language with action; the common language can have a small impact on the team.

Embrace the discomfort; understand that the discomfort will lead to team gain.

Aim candor; avoid brutal honesty; "less judgemental" and more focused feedback.

(Coyle, p.158-168, 2018)

Microsoft Publisher, Clip Art

"They were the structure, and if any of them failed, the group would fail."

- Daniel Coyle, p.133

Skill #3— Establish Purpose

Establishing a purpose guides the work of the team and what they stand for. A purpose is most commonly viewed as a mission statement and a set of values that are reinforced.

The example that Coyle using for establishing purpose comes from the company Johnson & Johnson. The president of the company, James Burke, asked for the team to help adapt the credo and make sure it was reflective of the values they hold. The credo not only describes their values but also details the relationship with

Plan, Action & Success [online photo] Retrieved Sept.5th, 2019 from www.thebalancesmb.com/how-to-write-a-mission-statement-2948001

stakeholders and the community. The credo changed the way the team operated and reinforced their philosophy (Coyle, p.171, 2018).

Johnson & Johnson Crisis, 1982

On September 30,1982, the successful company, Johnson and Johnson, were facing a public relations nightmare when tainted Tylenol capsules were replaced with cyanide, killing 5 people in Chicago and creating panic. It generated enough fear and pandemic to be the end of the company. The medical company had lost the trust of the public and was seen as doomed.

The president, James Burket, was quickly collaborating with his staff to examine a direction for the company to deal with the situation.

After thinking about a solution through the lens of their company philosophy and values, they decided on a national recall of all Tylenol, "31 million pills in all" at a substantial cost of "$100 million".

Burke responded with his reason for choosing a national recall by stating, "we believe our first responsibility is to doctors, nurses, and patients; to mothers and fathers and all others who use our products and services" (Coyle, p.176, 2018).

Tylenol News [online photo] Sept. 5th, 2019 retrieved from mallenbaker.net/article/clear-reflection/johnson-johnson-and-tylenol-crisis-management-case-study

How to Lead...

Lead for Creativity	Lead for Proficiency
Allow the team to fail and learn from their mistakes.	Priorities should be clearly defined and affirmed
Ask questions is facilitate inquiry among the group.	Behavioral expectations are communicated to the team
Step back from the creative decision making and process. Try not to interfere.	The work environment has examples displayed for the team to be immersed.

As recommended by Laszlo Bock, former leader at Google, these are three essential questions for a leader to ask:

1. What is one thing that I currently do that you'd like me to continuing doing?

2. What is one thing that I currently do frequently enough that you think I should do more often?

3. What can I do to make you more effective?

(Coyle, p.159, 2018)

Google Head Office [online photo] Sept.5th, 2019,Retrieved from www.theregister.co.uk/2013/06/20/google_hiring_procedures

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Name and rank your priorities	Groups need to be able to compose a small list of priorities and recognise how these tasks are going to affect their relationship with each other to make sure the expectations are clear.
Be ten times as clear about your priorities as you think you should be	Although a large percentage of leaders were able to identify the groups top 3 priorities, when the group was asked, a very low percentage of groups were able to name the priorities. The group's mandate and values needed to be reinforced.
Figure out where your group aims for proficiency and where it aims for creativity	Being proficient is having a consistent and uniform approach to tasks. Being creative is providing "support, fuel, and tools" to inspire and energize the team (Coyle, p.230, 2018).
Embrace the use of catchphrases	Often viewed as "corny", catchphrases are a concise reminder of the groups objectives. They act as a quick and simple reminder to support and encourage the team (Coyle, p.231, 2018).
Measure what really matters	The behavior of the team needs to be reflected by the mission statement. If costumer service is valued, is the team supporting this value.
Use artifacts	Artifacts are a visual symbol of what the team stands for and what matters most.
Focus on bar-setting behaviors	The small efforts have a defining factor to the team. Often, little reward, the commitment to small efforts impact the "attention and excellence" of the team (Coyle, p.233, 2018).

Coyle, p.225-235, 2018

Conclusion

Daniel Coyle's book *The Culture Code* is an excellent read for organizations to learn how to build their team culture and increase their success. The book is essentially a how-to-guide for creating highly efficient teams. The three skills offer insight into ways to implement them into practice which is a practical feature. The real world narratives are helpful to connect to the concepts, but also provide proof that the skills are productive.

"...these small efforts are powerful because they transmit, amplify, and celebrate the purpose of the whole group."
(Coyle, p.235, 2018)

Reference

Coyle, D. (2018). *The culture code: the secrets of highly successful groups.* First edition. New York: Bantam Books.