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# MULTIPLIERS: HOW THE BEST LEADERS MAKE EVERYONE BETTER

By Liz Wiseman

## ACTION ITEMS

- Books
  - *The Extraordinary Leader* by Jack Zenger

## KEY CONCEPTS

1. People are often surprised when we have some system in place, like the management of our depositions, and they ask how did you find that person, and we tell them that was someone who was a student worker 6 months ago. We train them, we invest in them, we have confidence in them.
2. Do you have “franchise players” at your organization? They are key to success. They make everyone else around them better.

## FOREWORD

- Genius: Tries to be the smartest person in the room.
- Genius Maker: Use their gifts to multiply the genius in others.
- As leaders, as managers, the best thing we can do is increase the productivity and effectiveness of the knowledge workers in our companies. Make our leaders better.

## PREFACE

- The basic premise of the book: There is more intelligence in our organization than we are using.

## 1: THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

- “It was said that after meeting British Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, you left feeling like he was the smartest person in the world. When you left a meeting with his rival, Benjamin Disraeli, you left thinking that you were the smartest person.” --Bono

- Zero sum game leaders make everyone else around them worse. They feel like for them to be the smartest and best, everyone else has to be inferior. They are idea killers and energy destroyers. Great leaders use their skills as tools to train, not to pick apart others. Great leaders are intelligence amplifiers.
- Tale of two managers
  - 1: The Genius Maker
    - Doesn't dominate the dialogue
    - Coaches rather than criticizes
  - 2: The Genius
    - Dominates the conversation. Shuts everyone else down.
- The Multiplier Effect
  - Multipliers are Genius makers and they get 2x the productivity out of their team. They inspire those around them.
  - What could you accomplish if you could get 2x more out of everyone?
    - Stanford Dweck Test
      - Kids given a series of progressively harder puzzles.
      - Those praised for their intelligence stagnate. Fear reaching the limit of their intelligence.
      - Those praised for their effort, increased their ability to reason and solve problems.
    - Bad environments can suppress IQs.
- The diminisher believes that intelligence is a scarce resource. "It's so hard to find good people..." They believe that those who don't get it now will never get it. I will need to keep doing everything for everyone.
- Multipliers believe that intelligence can be cultivated through effort. There are smart people everywhere.
- Geniuses are trying to grow by addition, but genius makers are growing by multiplication.
- **Five Disciplines of a Multiplier**
  - #1: Attracting and optimizing talent.
    - They are talent magnets
    - Diminisher is an empire builder. Acquires resources and then wastes them.
  - #2: Creating intensity that requires best thinking
    - Create environments that are comfortable, but also intense.
    - Diminishers are tyrants. Create stressful environments.
  - #3: Extending challenges
    - They challenge themselves and others.
    - The diminisher is a know-it-all who gives directives. The multiplier is a challenger who defines opportunities.
  - #4: Debating Decisions
    - Multipliers encourage debate and dialogue.
    - Diminishers are decision makers who try to sell their decisions to others.

- #5: Instilling Ownership and Accountability
  - Ownership mentality, not micro managers.
- Surprising findings
  - They have a hard edge.
    - Beyond results driven, they are tough and exacting.
    - They are not “feel good” managers, but do try to coach and not criticize.
  - They don’t play small.
    - They play big and maximize the talent they possess and that talent of those around them.
  - They have a great sense of humor.
    - They can laugh at themselves.
    - Diminishers don’t have it.
- The Accidental Diminisher
  - Many diminishers are not self aware, they don’t know that they are suppressing the talent of those around them.

## 2: THE TALENT MAGNET

- Taking the time to get to know the people around you.
- Asking challenging questions
  - What would be the next challenge for you?
  - What would stretch your capabilities?
- Diminishers hoard resources and information and try to create an empire.
- A Cycle of Attraction
  - 1914 ad for Antarctica Trip: “Men wanted: For hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.
  - 100s of men applied.
  - Starts with the leader being comfortable around other top talent.
- Cycle of Decline
  - A players
    - Get boxed in and limited
  - Become A- players
    - Lose confidence and recede
  - Leads to decreased market value
    - Stay and quit
  - Reputation for “place to kill your career”
  - Repels A+ players
- **Four Practices of Talent Magnets**
  - #1: They look for talent everywhere
    - Appreciate all types of genius
    - They spot talent everywhere

- #2: Find people's native genius
  - The things that people excel at naturally.
  - What do they do better than anyone else? Without as much effort? Without consideration of pay?
- #3: Utilize people at their fullest
  - Connect people to opportunities
- #4: Remove the blockers
  - Get rid of prima donnas
  - Collective intelligence concept
    - Better with 5 people operating at 8 (40) versus one at 10, and everyone else at 6 (34)
  - Get out of the way
- Diminishers
  - They like silos, keeping everything flowing through them.
  - They like to put people in boxes. Famous for one on one meetings, rather than collaborative
  - They let talent languish
- Experiments to maximize talent
  - Name the genius
    - What is the native genius of everyone on your team?
  - Supersize that genius
  - Are there people that you are "caging in", not letting them use all their talent?

### 3: THE LIBERATOR

- Distinguish between hard opinions and soft opinions.
  - Soft opinions: here are some thoughts to consider in your decision making.
  - Hard opinions: very strong view.
  - Make sure you are clear what you are giving.
- Tyrants create tense environments that is full of stress and anxiety. Liberators are not soft. They give space but also hold a high standard for your best work.
- Liberator creates an environment where good things happen.
  - #1: Equity in the firm
  - #2: Close encounters
    - All good ideas typically start off as bad ideas.
  - #3: A master teacher
- Three practices of a liberator
  - #1: Create space
    - Release others by restraining yourself.
    - Shift the ratio of listening to talking
    - Define a space for discovery
    - Level the playing field. Don't quiet down the lower level crew.
  - #2: Demand people's best work.

- Defend the standard
  - Distinguish best work from outcomes
  - Generate rapid learning cycles
    - Admit and share mistakes
    - Insist on learning from mistakes
- #3: Generate rapid learning cycles.
  - Admit and share mistakes.
  - Insist on learning from mistakes.
- Diminisher's Approach to Environment
  - #1: Dominate the space
  - #2: Create anxiety
  - #3: Judge others
- Being a liberator
  - #1: Play fewer chips.
    - Don't butt in as much.
    - Give people room.
  - #2: Label your opinions
    - Soft opinions/hard opinions
  - #3: Talk up your mistakes
    - Get personal.
    - Get public.
  - #4: Make space for mistakes

## 4: THE CHALLENGER

- "The number one difference between a Nobel Prize winner and others is not IQ or work ethic, but that they ask bigger questions." --Peter Drucker
- Raise your standards. Mark what is possible and know where you are.
  - "What would be your 'mission impossible'?" What would really stretch your team and be a huge win for the company?
- Diminisher
  - Asks questions to show genius.
  - Liberator: asks questions to teach.
  - Diminishers are know it alls.
- The Three Practices of the Challenger
  - #1: Seed the opportunity.
    - Understand that people grow through being challenged.
    - Show the need and show the opportunity.
    - Challenge the assumptions.
    - Reframe the problems.
      - The most powerful work is done in response to opportunities, not problems.
    - Provide a starting point.

- #2: Lay down a challenge.
  - Find a challenge that stretches the organization.
  - Ask the hard questions.
  - Let others fill in the blanks.
- #3: Generate belief.
  - Need to get people to believe that they can do it.
  - Orchestrate an early win.
- The Diminisher's Approach to an Early Win
  - #1: Telling what they know.
    - Rarely in a way that invites contribution.
  - #2: Testing what you know
  - #3: Telling others how to do their jobs.
  - #4: Create idle cycles.
    - Because everything must go through them or have their stamp on it, they create massive downtime.
- Become a challenger.
  - #1: Take the extreme questions challenge
    - The best leaders ask questions and let other people find the answers.
  - #2: Create a stretch challenge.
  - #3: Take a bus trip.
    - Get out of the office and into the field and generate ideas.
  - #4: Take a massive baby step.
    - Another way for saying an early win.

## 5: THE DEBATE MAKER

- It is better to debate a decision without settling it than settling a decision without debating it.  
-Joseph Joubert
- Multipliers focus not on what they know, but on how to know what others know. They are interested in relevant insight from any source.
- The Three Practices of the Debate Maker
  - #1: Frame the issue.
    - The Question: Form the right questions before.
    - The Why: Why is this question so important?
    - The Who: Who will be involved in making the decision?
    - The How: How will the final decision be made?
  - #2: Spark the debate.
    - Engaging. The question is compelling to everyone in the room.
    - Comprehensive. The right information is shared to generate a holistic and collective understanding of the issues at hand.
    - Fact based. The debate is deeply rooted in fact, not opinion.

- Educational. People leave the debate more focused on what they learned than on who won or lost.
    - Balance the yin (free thought) and yang (structure to the process)
  - #3: Drive a sound decision.
    - Make the decision.
    - Communicate the decision and rationale.
- The Diminisher's Approach to Debate
  - #1: Raise issues.
    - Lose focus.
    - Raises obstacles.
  - #2: Dominate the discussion.
  - #3: Force a decision.
- Rules for shared inquiry
  - #1: The discussion leader only asks questions.
  - #2: Respondents must supply evidence to support their positions.
  - #3: Everyone participates. Pull info out of introverts.
- Protocol
  - #1: Ask the hard question
  - #2: Ask for evidence
  - #3: Ask everyone
  - #4: Ask people to switch positions

## 6: THE INVESTOR

- "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." -Antoine De Saint Exupery
- Multipliers jump in and coach, but they always give accountability back. They don't jump in and take over to get it to the finish line.
- Micromanager vs. Investor
  - Micromanager: Steps in and takes over. Takes on accountability.
  - Investor: Coaches, and keeps accountability with the team.
- Three Practices of the Investor
  - #1: Defines ownership.
    - Name the lead.
    - What would happen if you told them they own 51% of the vote?
    - Give ownership for the end goal.
    - Stretch the role.
  - #2: Investing resources
    - Teach and coach
    - Diminishers tell you what they know, multipliers help you learn what you need to know.
    - Provide backup.
  - #3: Holding people accountable.

- One leader carries book, but only writes in it when it is his action item.
  - Give it back.
  - Expect complete work.
  - Respect the natural consequences
    - Let natural consequences teach those when the consequence is not fatal.
- Diminisher's approach to execution
  - Faulty assumption: "people will never be able to figure it out without me."
  - Cling to ownership.
  - They jump in and out of the project.
    - They think they have to be "all over it" or "completely absent".
  - They take stuff back.
- Become an investor
  - #1: Give 51% of the vote.
  - #2: Let nature take its course.
    - Let it happen.
    - Talk about it..
    - Focus on next time
  - #3: Ask for the fix.
  - #4: Give it back.

## 7: THE ACCIDENTAL DIMINISHER

- "We judge others by what they do, we judge ourselves by our intentions." -Edward Wigglesworth
- The Accidental Diminisher
  - Idea Guy
    - Always has ideas, likes to share them.
    - However, team follows those ideas, then he comes with more new ideas.
    - The team gets fatigued, and less responsive to initiatives.
  - Always on
    - Always engaged.
    - Big personality.
    - Turn the leader off in their head and avoid.
    - When the leader is always on, everyone else goes to sleep mode.
  - Rescuer
    - Jumps in at the first sign of distress.
    - Doesn't let people grow.
  - Pacesetter
    - Achievement oriented leader who leads by example.
    - Puts people in the role of spectator.
    - You want followers, not spectators.
  - Rapid responder
    - Quick to take action.

- Creates apathy, slow to respond if someone else is always on it.
- Optimist
  - Not realistic about situation and it can be discouraging.
- Protector
  - Protect your team too much.
  - Need to learn some stuff on their own.
- Strategist
  - Can go too far and be too prescriptive. May need to let the team find their way on their own.
- Perfectionist
  - 80% solution may be better with 100% ownership of team vs. 100% solution with you owning all of it.
  - Don't miss out on that.

SEE CHART OF THESE TENDENCIES

## 8: DEALING WITH DIMINISHERS

- When dealing with a diminisher, the best way out is often to multiply up.
- Most common responses to dealing with a diminisher
  - Confront them
  - Avoid them
  - Quit
  - Comply and lie low
  - Ignore the diminishing behavior
  - Tell HR
- These are all very ineffective.
- The death spiral
  - Diminishing behavior
    - Control, dictate, micromanage
  - Your reaction
    - Judgment
  - Your actions
    - Criticize, stop listening, exclude
  - Their counteractions
    - Force, suspicion, interference
  - The outcome
    - Standoff between two diminishers
- Break the death spiral
  - Diminishing behavior
    - Control, dictate, micromanage
  - Your reaction
    - Curiosity

- Your actions
  - Consider their perspective, listen, learn, invite
- Their counteractions
  - Trust, respect, give space
- The outcome
  - Cooperation between a lesser diminisher and a multiplier
- Cycle breakers
  - #1: It's not necessarily about you.
  - #2: Diminishing isn't inevitable.
  - #3: You can lead your leader.
- Level 1: Defenses against the dark arts of diminishing managers
  - #1: Turn down the volume.
    - Know what to ignore, what to pay attention to, and manage your emotional/physical energy allocated to dealing with it.
  - #2: Strengthen other connections.
    - Build other circles of influence.
  - #3: Retreat and regroup.
  - #4: Send the right signals.
    - Provide delivery assurance to ward off the micromanager.
    - And updates.
  - #5: Assert capability.
    - "For three days, let's play a game. You pretend that I am amazing at my job and you have total confidence in my abilities to get it done right..."
  - #6: Ask for performance intel.
    - Clear direction.
    - Performance feedback.
    - If not getting these, need to get better intel.
  - #7: Shop for a new boss.
- Level 2: Multiplying up
  - #1: Exploit your bosses strengths.
    - Maximize what they do well.
  - #2: Get them a user's guide.
    - Let them know what you are good at, struggle with, etc.
  - #3: Listen to learn.
    - Find out what they can teach you and learn.
  - #4: Admit your mistakes.
    - Nothing feels the diminisher like an unrepentant mistake.
  - #5: Sign up for a stretch.
    - Take on something outside your comfort zone.
  - #6: Invite them to the party.
    - Bring them in your business, rather than keep them out.

- Level 3: Inspiring multiplier leadership in others
  - #1: Assume positive intent.
  - #2: Address one issue at a time.
  - #3: Celebrate progress.

## 9: BECOMING A MULTIPLIER

- “when I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.” -Lao Tzu
- “If it can be learned, it can be taught.”
- Becoming a multiplier.
  - #1: Start with the assumption.s
    - People are smart and can figure this out.
  - #2: Work the extremes.
    - Leaders do not need to be good at everything. They need to have a few number of skills mastered and be free of a show stopping weakness.
    - Neutralize a weakness.
    - Top off a strength.
  - #3: Run an experiment
    - Test out a multiplier discipline, get feedback and improve, then go to bigger experiments.
    - Labeling talent
    - 30 day experiment to identify the native genius of each member on your team.
  - #4: Brace yourself for setbacks.
    - Give yourself permission to stumble as you cultivate new multiplier habits.
      - I am going to give space.
      - I am going to assume people can figure it out.
    - Share your strategy with those around you.
  - #5: Ask a colleague.
    - Let someone else choose the experiment for you.
    - Let them share with you where you can improve your multiplier abilities.
- Traits of strong cultures
  - Common language
    - Words and phrases have a common meaning.
  - Learned behaviors
    - A set of learned responses to stimuli
  - Shared beliefs
    - Acceptance of something as true
  - Heroes and legends
    - People who are admired or idealized for their qualities. Stories told about their actions.
  - Rituals and norms
    - Consistent behavior followed by an individual or group.
- Building Deep Culture

- Common Language
  - #1: Hold a book talk.
    - Go through concepts.
  - #2: Discuss accidental diminishers
- Learned behavior
  - #3: Introduce multiplier mindsets.
  - #4: Teach multiplier skills.
- #5: Fuse multipliers with daily decisions.
  - Shared beliefs
- #6: Codify a leadership ethos.
  - Define expectations for managers.
- Heroes and Legends
  - #7: Spotlight multiplier moments.
  - #8: Measure managers.
- Rituals and norms
- #9: Pilot a multiplier practice.
- #10: Integrate practices with business metrics.