



Multipliers

How The Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter

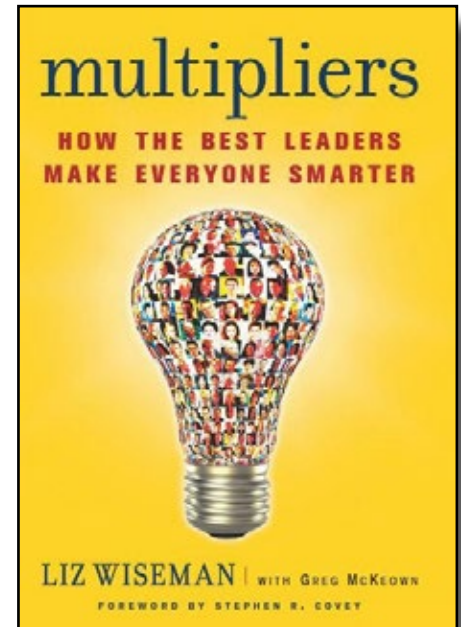
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THE SUMMARY

Certain leaders amplify intelligence. These leaders, whom we have come to call Multipliers, create collective, viral intelligence in organizations. Other leaders act as Diminishers and deplete the organization of critical intelligence and capability. But what is it that these Multipliers do? What is it that Multipliers do differently than Diminishers?

Multipliers are genius makers. Everyone around them gets smarter and more capable. People may not become geniuses in a traditional sense, but Multipliers invoke each person's unique intelligence and create an atmosphere of genius – innovation, productive effort, and collective intelligence. As we studied both Diminishers and Multipliers, we consistently found that they hold radically different assumptions about the intelligence of the people they work with. These assumptions appear to explain much of the difference in how Diminishers and Multipliers operate.

The Diminisher's view of intelligence is based on elitism and scarcity. Diminishers appear to believe that really intelligent people are a rare breed and I am one of the few really smart people. They then conclude, "Other people will never figure things out without me". In addition to assuming intelligence is a scarce commodity, Diminishers see intelligence as static, meaning it doesn't change over



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time or circumstance. The Diminisher's two-step logic appears to be people who don't "get it" now, never will; therefore, "I'll need to keep doing the thinking for everyone." In the Diminisher world, there is no vacation for the smart people.

Multipliers hold very different assumptions. Multipliers have a rich view of the intelligence of the people around them. If Diminishers see the world of intelligence in black and white, Multipliers see it in Technicolor. They assume: people are smart and will figure it out. They see their organization as full of talented people who are capable of contributing at much higher levels. They think like one manager we interviewed who takes stock of her team members by asking herself, "In what way is this person smart?" In answering this question, she finds colorful capabilities often hiding just below the surface. Instead of writing people off, as not worth her time, she is able to ask, "What could be done to develop and grow these capabilities?" She then finds an assignment that both stretches the individual and furthers the interests of the organization.

Such Multipliers look at the complex opportunities and challenges swirling around them and assume: there are smart people everywhere who will figure this out and get even smarter in the process. Therefore, they conclude that their job is to bring the right people together in an environment that liberates people's best thinking and then to get out of their way. So, what are the practices that distinguish the Multiplier? We found five disciplines in which Multipliers differentiate themselves from Diminishers.

Attract and Optimize Talent. Multipliers lead people by operating as Talent Magnets, whereby they attract and deploy talent

to its fullest regardless of who owns the resource. In contrast, Diminishers operate as Empire Builders, insisting that they must own and control resources to be more productive.

Create Intensity that Requires Best Thinking. Multipliers establish a unique and highly motivating work environment where everyone has permission to think and the space to do their best work. Multipliers operate as Liberators, producing a climate that is both comfortable and intense. In contrast, Diminishers operate as Tyrants, introducing a fear of judgment that has a chilling effect on people's thinking and work. They demand people's best thinking, yet they don't get it.

Extend Challenges. Multipliers operate as Challengers by seeding opportunities, laying down a challenge that stretches an organization, and generating belief that it can be done. In contrast, Diminishers operate as Know-It-Alls, personally giving directives to showcase their knowledge. While Diminishers set directions, Multipliers ensure direction gets set.

Debate Decisions. Multipliers make decisions in a way that readies the organization to execute those decisions. They operate as Debate Makers, driving sound decisions through rigorous debate. They engage people in debating the issues up front, which lead to decisions that people understand and can execute efficiently. In contrast, Diminishers operate as Decision Makers who tend to make decisions efficiently within a small inner circle, but they leave the broader organization in the dark to debate the soundness of the decision instead of executing it.

Instill Ownership and Accountability.

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Multipliers deliver and sustain superior results by inculcating high expectations across the organization. By serving as Investors, Multipliers provide necessary resources for success. In addition, they hold people accountable for their commitments. In contrast, Diminishers serve as Micromanagers who drive results by holding on to ownership, jumping into the details, and directly managing for results.

Although the Multiplier/Diminisher framework might appear binary, I wish to emphasize that there is a continuum between Multipliers and Diminishers, with just a small number of people at either polar extreme. Our research showed that most of us fall along this spectrum and have the ability to move toward the side of the Multiplier. With the right intent, the Multiplier approach to leadership can be developed. The good news is that 1) Multipliers are out there, 2) we have studied them to uncover their secrets, and 3) you can learn to become one. And not only can you become a Multiplier yourself, you can find and create other Multipliers. That will make you a multiplier of Multipliers.

Chapter 2: The Talent Magnet

Multipliers operate as Talent Magnets. They attract talented people and then use them to their fullest; you might think of it as working at their highest point of contribution. They get access to the best talent, not because they are necessarily great recruiters, but rather because people flock to work for them. In contrast, Diminishers operate as Empire Builders who hoard resources and under-utilize talent. They bring in top talent and

make big promises, but they under-utilize their people and disenchant them. Why? Because they are often amassing the resources for self-promotion and their own gain. Empire builders accumulate people. They collect people like knickknacks in a curio cabinet – on display for everyone to see, but not well utilized. Each of these approaches produces a self-perpetuating cycle. The Talent Magnet spawns a virtuous cycle of attraction and the Empire Builder spawns a vicious cycle of decline. Among the Multipliers we studied in our research, we found four active practices that together catalyze and sustain this cycle of attraction.

Look For Talent Everywhere. Talent Magnets are always looking for new talent, and they look far beyond their own backyard. A Talent Magnet knows that genius comes in many forms. Some minds excel at quantitative analysis or verbal reasoning. Other minds offer creative genius, innovating through fresh thinking and bold ideas. Some minds are critical, spotting every problem or land mine lurking within a plan; the genius of some others is to find a way to tunnel around these land mines. In their quest to assemble the finest talent, Talent Magnets are blind to organizational boundaries. They see the multiple forms of intelligence that exist everywhere. Talent Magnets live in a world without walls and without hierarchical or lateral restrictions. Instead, they see talent networks. For this reason, you can often spot Multipliers leading cross-functional projects and inter-company ventures. They may be in key staff roles, or they may also be at the top of the org chart. The common denominator is that they look beyond boundaries for talent.

Find People's Native Genius. Talent Magnets know how to uncover and access

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the native genius of others. By “native genius” I mean something even more specific than a strength or a skill that might be highly rated on a 360 degree leadership assessment. A native genius is something that people do, not only exceptionally well, but also absolutely naturally. They do it easily and freely. They get results that are head-and-shoulders above others but they do it without breaking a sweat.

Utilize People at Their Fullest. Once a Talent Magnet has uncovered the native genius of others, he or she looks for opportunities that demand that capability. Some of these are obvious; others require a fresh look at the business or organization. Once they’ve engaged the person’s true genius, they shine a spotlight on them so other people can see their genius in action.

Remove the Blockers. Talent Magnets are attractors and growers of talent and intelligence. Leaders who serve as Multipliers provide others the space and the resources to yield this growth. But the Talent Magnets go beyond just giving resources. They remove the impediments, which quite often means removing the people who are blocking and impeding the growth of others. In almost every organization there are people who overrun others, consuming the resources needed to fuel the growth of people around them. Like weeds in a garden bed, they choke the development of the intelligence around them.

Multipliers operate from a belief that talent exists everywhere and they can use it at its highest if they can simply identify the genius in people. Diminishers think People need to report to me in order to get them to do anything. Empire builders focus their energy on acquiring resources and slotting them into organizational structures where

they are visible and clearly under the command of the leader. For some leaders, this amassing of talent can become an obsession.

Divide and conquer is the modus operandi of Empire Builders. They bring in great talent and carve out a fiefdom for them, but they don’t encourage people to step beyond their walls. Rather than give broad scope to their management team, Empire Builders ensure that they, themselves, are the point of integration. You can often spot an Empire Builder because he or she either operates exclusively through one-on-one meeting or runs staff meetings as an official report-out from each fiefdom.

One way Empire Builders stifle their talent is by hogging the limelight for themselves. They are often the Prima Donnas, insisting that they get maximum time on the stage and that scripts are written to feature them. Whereas Talent Magnets give credit, Empire Builders take credit. When leaders play the role of Empire Builder, they bring in great resources, but they underutilize them because they fundamentally undervalue them. They continue to operate in a “one brain, many hands” organizational model that stunts the growth of both intelligence and talent around them. Diminishers build organizations where people go to die. This is why Diminishers are costly to organizations. The assets in their portfolio don’t increase in value.

The promise of a Multiplier is that they get twice the capacity, plus a growth dividend from their people as their genius expands under the leadership of the Multiplier. Let’s now look at a few starting points for becoming a Talent Magnet.

Become a Genius Watcher. Here are three

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steps to help you begin genius watching:
1) *Identify it.* Make a list of eight to ten people you work with closely. Start to note the things they do both easily and freely. 2) *Test it.* Once you've developed a hypothesis about each person, test out your thinking and refine your views. 3) *Work it.* Once you've found a native genius for someone, make a list of five different roles you could put this person in that would utilize and expand this genius.

Pull Some Weeds. Leaders most often know who the blockers are. The most common mistake they make is waiting too long to remove them. If you want to unleash talent that is latent in your organization, find the weeds and pull them out.

Talent Magnets create a cycle of attraction that is exhilarating for employer and employee alike. Their organizations are a coveted place of employment, and people flock to work for them knowing the Talent Magnet will stretch them, grow them, and accelerate their careers. It is a thrill ride with the speed and exhilaration of a roller coaster but one that, like the revenue chart of every CFO's dreams, moves constantly "up and to the right."

Chapter 3: The Liberator

Corporate environments and modern organizations are the perfect setup for diminishing leaders and have a certain built-in tyranny. The org chart, the hierarchy, the titles, the approval matrixes skew power toward the top and create incentives for people to shut down and comply. In any hierarchical organization, the playing field is rarely level. These hierarchical structures make it easy

for Tyrants to reign. And in their reign, these managers can easily suppress and constrain the thinking of the people around them. Multipliers liberate people from the oppressive forces within corporate hierarchy. They liberate people to think, to speak, and to act with reason. They create an environment where the best ideas surface and where people do their best work. They give permission to people to think. Among the Multipliers we studied in our research, we found three common practices.

Create Space. Everyone needs space. We need space to work. Liberators don't take it for granted that people have the space they need. They deliberately carve out space for others to be able to make a contribution. Liberators are also more than just good listeners. They are ferocious listeners. They listen to feed their hunger for knowledge. They listen to learn what other people know and add to their own reservoir of knowledge. They don't just listen the majority of the time. They massively shift the ratio, listening most of the time. This creates space for others to share what they know. Operating with consistency is one of the most vital of the practices of a Liberator. In our interviews, we continually heard how Multipliers operate with a consistency that enables others. The consistency of their actions creates two effects: 1) It establishes a predictable patterns of behavior. This allows others to know when it is their turn and where there is space for them to contribute. 2) It creates safety. When people operate in predictable ways, we know what to expect and we become comfortable around them. This comfort allows people not only to jump in, but to also do so with full power of thought.

Demand People's Best Work. As a manager

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you know when someone is below his or her usual performance. What is harder to know is whether people are giving everything they have to give? Asking whether people are giving their best gives them the opportunity to push themselves beyond their previous limits. It is a key reason why people report that Multipliers get more than 100 percent intelligence out of them. Requiring people's best work is different from insisting on desired outcomes. Stress is created when people are expected to produce outcomes that are beyond their control. But they feel positive pressure when they are held to their best work.

Generate Rapid Learning Cycles. Perhaps most important, Liberators give people permission to make mistakes and the obligation to learn from them. Tyrants and liberators expect mistakes. Tyrants stand ready to pounce on the people who make them. Liberators stand ready to learn as much from the mistake as possible. The highest quality of thinking cannot emerge without learning. Learning can't happen without mistakes. Liberators get the best thinking from people by creating a rapid cycle between thinking, learning, and making and recovering from mistakes. They move rapidly through this cycle in order to generate the best ideas and create an agile organization. Diminishers don't generate these cycles. They might request – if not demand – people's best thinking, but they fail to establish the environment where ideas are easily expressed and developed to full maturity and efficacy.

Diminishers haven't developed this smooth duality of comfort and pressure. Instead they jerk the organization around as they swing between two modes: 1) militant insistence on their ideas and 2) passive indifference to the ideas and work of

others. Tyrants are like a gas that expands and consumes all the available space. They dominate meetings and hog all the airtime. They leave little room for anyone else and often suffocate other people's intelligence in the process. They do this by voicing strong opinions, over expressing their ideas and trying to maintain control.

There is an assumption that underlies the practices of a Liberator. It is that people's best thinking must be given, not taken. A manager may be able to insist on certain levels of productivity and output, but someone's full effort, including their truly discretionary effort, must be given voluntarily. This changes the leader's role profoundly. Instead of demanding the best work directly, they create an environment where it not only can be offered, but where it is deeply needed. Because the environment naturally requires it, a person freely bestows their best thinking and work. Diminishers, on the other hand, believe that pressure increases performance. They demand people's best thinking, but they don't get it. They fail to establish the environment where ideas are easily expressed and developed to a full maturity and efficacy. An unsafe environment yields only the safest ideas.

Remember that the path of least resistance is often the path of the Diminisher. Becoming a Liberator requires long-term commitment. Here are a few starting points.

Play Your Chips. If you want to create more room for others to contribute, and especially if you are prone to dominating a discussion, you might consider a good game of poker chips. Take five poker chips, each worth a number of seconds of talk time. One worth 120 seconds, the next three worth 90 seconds, and one worth

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just 30 seconds. Limit your contribution in the meeting to just five comments, represented by each of the chips. You can spend them whenever you wish, but you only have five. Use the chips wisely, and leave the rest of the space for others to contribute.

Label Your Opinions. Divide your views into “soft opinions” where you have a perspective to offer and ideas for someone else to consider and “hard opinions” where you have a clear and potentially emphatic point of view. By doing so, you can create space for others to comfortably disagree with your “soft opinion” thinking and establish their own views. Reserve the right to have “hard opinion” for when it really matters.

Make Your Mistakes Known. There is no easier way to invite experimentation and learning than to share stories about your own mistakes. As a leader, your acknowledgement of your personal mistakes will give others permission to experience failure and go on to learn and recover with dignity and increased capability.

Multipliers liberate people from the intimidation of hierarchical organizations and the domination of tyrannical leaders. They see intelligence around them, and they release it into the organization so it can be freely utilized at its highest point of contribution. They create an environment where ideas can be heard and where intelligence can be given, grown, and stretched through challenge.

Chapter 4: The Challenger

Diminishers operate as Know-It-Alls, assuming that their job is to know the

most and to tell their organizations what to do. The organization often revolves around what they know, with people wasting cycles trying to deduce what the boss thinks and how to – at least – look like they are executing accordingly. In the end, Diminishers place an artificial limit on what their organizations can accomplish. Because they are overly focused on what they know, they limit what their organization can achieve to what they themselves know how to do.

In setting direction for their organizations, Multipliers have a fundamentally different approach. Instead of knowing the answer, they play the role of Challenger. They use their smarts to find the right opportunities for their organizations and challenge and stretch their organizations to get there. They aren’t limited by what they themselves know. They push their teams beyond their own knowledge and that of the organization. As a result, they create organizations that deeply understand a challenge and have the focus and energy to confront it. How does the Challenger engage the full brainpower of the organization? Among the Multipliers we studied in our research, we found three common practices.

Seed the Opportunity. Multipliers understand that people grow through challenge. They understand that intelligence grows by being stretched and tested. So even if the leader has a clear vision of the direction, he or she doesn’t just give it to the people. Multipliers don’t just give answers. They provide just enough information to provoke thinking and to help people discover and see the opportunity for themselves. They begin a process of discovery. Multipliers ask the questions that challenge the fundamental assumptions in an organization and disrupt

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the prevailing logic. They provide a starting point, but not a complete solution. By offering a starting point, they generate more questions than answers. These questions then encourage their team to fully define the opportunity while giving them confidence that they are building on a solid foundation.

Lay Down a Challenge. Once an opportunity is seeded and intellectual energy is created, Multipliers establish the challenge at hand in such a way that it creates a huge stretch for an organization. While Diminishers create a huge gap between what they know and what other people know, Multipliers create a vacuum that draws people into the challenge. They establish a compelling challenge that creates tension. People see the tension and the size of the stretch and are intrigued and, perhaps, even puzzled. Diminishers give answers; Good leaders ask questions. Multipliers ask the really hard questions. They ask the questions that challenge people not only to think, but also to rethink. They ask questions so immense that people can't answer them based on their current knowledge or where they currently stand. To answer these questions, the organization must learn. When a Multiplier has successfully laid down the challenge, people see the stretch, are intrigued, and become intellectually engaged. The burden of thinking has been shifted to the organization. This process of ownership and stretch continues to build energy by creating the intellectual muscle for the challenge.

Generate Belief. By seeding the opportunity and laying down a challenge, people are interested in what is possible. But this isn't enough to create movement. Multipliers generate belief – the belief that the impossible is actually possible. It isn't

enough that people see and understand the stretch; they need to actually stretch themselves. You can almost feel the energy of the organization begin to tip in a new direction. This shift happens when an individual or organization has fully embraced a challenge and has generated the belief in what is possible. It is not the Multiplier who whips up this belief. Rather, it is the challenge he or she has issued that generated this commitment. This challenge process builds the intellectual muscle, the emotional energy, and the collective intent to move forward. Multipliers orchestrate the process needed to shift the weight of an organization.

In contrast to Multipliers, Diminishers have a fundamentally different approach to providing direction. Instead of using their intelligence to enable people to stretch toward a future opportunity, they give directions in a way that showcases their superior knowledge. Instead of seeding an opportunity and laying out a believable challenge, Diminishers tell and test. Like the stereotypical Know-It-All, they tell people what they know, tell people how to do their jobs, and test other people's knowledge to see if they are doing it right.

Why do Challengers get more from their resources? By playing the Challenger instead of the Know-It-All, they access more brains. Get those brains working faster, and earn the full discretionary effort of their people. Once they have a clear view of the latent opportunities and challenges, they understand that there are no resources worthy of waste. Wisdom tells them that it is imperative to engage all intelligence and capability in service to these opportunities.

Becoming a Challenger starts with developing an overactive imagination

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and a serious case of curiosity. In our research, we analyzed how Multipliers and Diminishers were rated against forty-eight leadership practices. It is not surprising that the highest-rated practice for Multipliers was “Intellectual Curiosity.” Multipliers create genius in others because they are fundamentally curious and spark learning around them. This curiosity takes the form of an insatiable need for deep organizational understanding. The question of “why” is at the core of their thinking. They ponder possibilities. They want to learn from people around them. At the heart of any challenge is intellectual curiosity: I wonder if we could do the impossible? The first step in the journey is to stop answering questions and begin asking them.

What is this like for people who are willing to sign up? It is “Exhilarating, exhausting, challenging, gratifying.” This means that Multipliers get contributions from their people that far surpass what they thought they had to give, and it is this concomitant exhilaration that makes people sign up again and again.

Chapter 5: The Debate Maker

How leaders make decisions is profoundly influenced by how they engage and leverage the resources around them. Our research has shown that Diminishers tend to make decisions solo or with a small inner circle. As a result, they not only underutilize the intelligence around them, but they also leave the organization spinning instead of executing. Multipliers make decisions by first engaging people in debate – not only to develop sound decisions, but also to develop collective intelligence and to ready their

organizations to execute.

Diminishers seem to hold an assumption that there are only a few people worth listening to. Multipliers hold a very different view. They don’t focus on what they know but on how to know what others know. They seem to assume that with enough minds we can figure it out. They are interested in every relevant insight people can offer. In our research we found that Multipliers did three specific things very differently from Diminishers when it came to decision-making. While Diminishers raise issues, dominate discussions, and force decisions, Multipliers:

Frame the Issue. Our research showed that Debate Makers know that the secret sauce of a great debate is what they do before the debate actually begins. Multipliers use their own know-how to shape the way people look at issues. They have the ability to frame questions in a way that nobody else would have thought about. They sift through a variety of factors to identify the right issues and spend time formulating the right questions. Multipliers identify the decision-critical data that needs to be gathered and analyzed prior to the debate. They ask others to come to the debate armed with relevant information so they are prepared to contribute. As a result of properly framing the issues, every person knows what is at stake, what is expected of them, and the level of honesty and rigor that will be required of the group as a whole.

Spark the Debate. After framing of the issue, Multipliers spark the debate. They remove the factors that cause people to doubt themselves or their ideas and the fear that causes people to hold back. They ask questions that challenge conventional thinking. They ask the questions that

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unearth the assumptions that are holding the organization back. They ask the questions that cause the team to think harder and dig deeper. They ask for evidence. They aren't overly swayed by opinion and emotional arguments; they continue to ask for evidence that would confirm a point of view. And they ask for evidence that might suggest an alternative point of view. They pursue all sides of the issue. When the group moves too quickly toward agreement, Multipliers often step back and ask someone to argue the other point of view. Or then might make the argument themselves. They make sure all rocks are turned over.

Drive a Sound Decision. Multipliers may relish great debate, but they pursue debate with a clear end: a sound decision. They ensure this in three ways. First, they re-clarify the decision-making process. Second, they make the decision or explicitly delegate it to someone else to decide. And third, they communicate the decision and the rationale behind it.

Instead of looking out broadly into their organization for intelligence, Diminishers tend to make decisions quickly either based solely on their own opinions or with input from a close inner circle. Then people begin to spin and speculate and get distracted from enthusiastically carrying the decision out. Instead of framing issues for debate and decisions, Diminishers tend to raise issues abruptly, and then dominate the discussion before forcing a decision.

In summary, Decision Makers don't use the full complement of talent, intelligence, and information that is available to them. This capacity sits idle in their organization. To counteract this, they continue to ask the organization for more resources, wondering why they aren't more

productive. In contrast to this, Multipliers not only engage the best thinking of the resources around them; they use debate to stretch the thinking of the individuals on the team. When decisions are debated vigorously, real facts and issues surface, forcing people to listen and learn. As a result, Multipliers get full capability out of their current resources and they stretch and increase the capacity of the organization to take on the next challenge.

We've gone through a master approach to how Multipliers create debate, but here is a simplified, three-step process to get started:

- 1) Ask the hard question. Ask the question that will get at the core of the issue and the decision. Ask the question that will confront underlying assumptions. Pose the question to your team and then stop. Instead of following up with your views, hold yours and ask for theirs.
- 2) Ask for the data. When someone offers an opinion, don't let it rest on anecdote. Ask for evidence. Look for more than one data point. Ask them to identify a cluster of data or trend. Make it a norm so people come into debates armed with the data – an entire box if necessary.
- 3) Ask each person. Reach beyond the dominant voices to gather in and hear all views and all data. You might find that the softer voices belong to the analytical minds who are often most familiar with and objective about the data.

As you rethink your role as a leader, you will come to see that your greatest contribution might depend on your ability to ask the right question, not have the right answer. You will see that all great thinking starts with a provocative question

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and a rich debate, whether it is in the mind of one person or an entire community.

Chapter 6: The Investor

Thus far the book has explored why multipliers make people smarter and more capable in their presence. But now I ask you to consider a different question: What happens when the Multiplier isn't there? What happens to people when the sunlight of the Multiplier isn't shining in their part of the world? This chapter addresses this most curious question: Can Multipliers create an organization that can act intelligently and deliver results without their direct involvement?

Multipliers operate as Investors. They invest by infusing others with the resources and ownership they need to produce results independent of the leader. It isn't just benevolence. They invest, and they expect results. There are three ways that they do this.

Define Ownership. Investors begin this cycle by establishing ownership up front. They see intelligence and capability in the people around them, and they put them in charge. Clarifying the role that you will play as a leader actually gives people more ownership, not less. They then understand the nature of your involvement and when and how you will invest in their success. And most important, they understand that they hold the majority ownership position and that success or failure hinges on their efforts. When people are given ownership for only a piece of something larger, they tend to optimize that portion, limiting their thinking to this immediate domain. When people are given ownership for the whole, they stretch their thinking and challenge

themselves to go beyond their scope.

Invest Resources. The moment Investors establish an ownership position, they step in and begin investing. They protect their investment by infusing the knowledge and resources the person will need to successfully deliver on their accountability.

Hold People Accountable. In working with hundreds of business executives, there is something I've noticed about the finest of these leaders. They all appear to have slanted tables in their offices. These leaders have a natural leaning to give accountability to others and keep it there. When their people push problems over to the manager's side of the table, by the end of the conversation, those problems slide right back to where they came from. The leader helps, offer suggestions, asks great questions and may escalate a critical issue, but the accountability slides back and rests with their staff. Their tables slant in the direction of other people. Allowing consequences to have their effect allows natural forces to inform intelligent action. It communicates that the manager believes people are smart enough to figure things out. People become more independent because they feel they own both their actions and the result or consequences of those actions. Investors want their investments to be successful, but they know they can't intervene and alter natural market forces. By providing the possibility to fail, these leaders give others the freedom and the motivation to grow and succeed.

The Diminisher operates from a very different assumption: People will never be able to figure it out without me. They believe if they don't dive into the details and follow up, other people won't deliver. These assumptions breed dependency,

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as full ownership is never offered up. They assign piecemeal tasks but jump in believing that other people cannot make it work. Unfortunately, in the end, these assumptions are often proven true as people become disabled and dependent on the Diminisher for answers, for approval, and to integrate the pieces together. When this happens, Diminishers look outward, asking themselves only, "Why are people always letting me down?" When Diminishers eventually leave an organization, things fall apart. Things crumble because the leader has held the operation together with micromanagement and sweat equity.

Micromanagers don't use the full complement of talent, intelligence, and resourcefulness that is available to them. This capacity sits idle in their organizations. To counteract this, they continue to ask the organization for more resources, wondering why people aren't more productive and are always letting them down. In contrast to this, Investors not only engage people though clearly delegating responsibilities to them, they extend assignments that stretch the thinking and capability of the individuals and the team. They grow the assets in their portfolio. As a result, they get full leverage out of their current resources and they stretch and increase the capacity of the organization to take on the next responsibility.

Much like a serial entrepreneur who builds one successful company after another, these leaders can become Serial Multipliers. Of course, doing so requires the leader to break free of the addiction to praise that entraps many senior leaders and instead become addicted to growth – growth of the business and growth of the people around them. Serial Multipliers grow intelligence. This intelligence isn't ephemeral, fleeing

when the Multiplier is no longer by their side. It is real, and it is sustainable, which is what allows the Multiplier to replicate the effect again and again.

But to become a Serial Multiplier, you have to have a starting point and a first success to begin the positively addictive cycle. Here are four strategies for becoming an Investor:

- 1) Let them know who is boss. When you delegate, you probably let people know what you are expecting of them. But take this to the next level and let people know that they (not you) are in charge and accountable. Tell them how you will stay engaged and support them, but that they remain in charge.
- 2) Let nature take its course. Nature teaches best. When we let nature take its course and allow people to experience the natural consequences of their actions, they learn most rapidly and most profoundly. When we protect people from experiencing the natural ramifications of their actions, we stunt their learning. Real intelligence gets developed through experimentation and by trial and error.
- 3) Ask for the fix. Many people are promoted into management positions because they are natural problem solvers. So when someone brings you a problem, it is only natural for you to want to fix it. And chances are, people will expect you to because you so often do. In that split second before you respond to a problem, ask people to complete the thought process and provide a fix.
- 4) Hand back the pen. When someone is stuck and asks you for your opinion, it can be hard not to take over. For some,

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the tendency to take over is so great that they sit on their hands afraid to speak out lest it turn into a hostile takeover. When you see your team members are struggling, offer help, but have an exit plan.

Multipliers invest in others in a way that builds independence to allow others to apply their full intelligence to the work at hand, and also to expand their scope and influence. The independence they create in others also allows the Investor to reinvest over and over, becoming a Serial Multiplier. The math is simple but powerful.

Chapter 7: Becoming a Multiplier

As various people have heard these ideas and read this book, I have observed a nearly universal three-step reaction:

Resonance. People tell us that the distinction between Diminishers and Multipliers vividly reflects their reality and that they have experienced these dynamics in actions. They usually remark, "Yes, I have worked for this guy!"

Realization of the Accidental Diminisher. Virtually all readers have confessed that they see some degree of a Diminisher within themselves. For some, there are only trace amounts. For others, it is a chronic pattern of behavior. They realize that their well-meaning management practices are, in all probability, having a diminishing effect on the people they work with.

Resolve to be a Multiplier. After identifying their own Diminisher tendencies, they build conviction to become more of a Multiplier. They have a genuine desire, but are often overwhelmed by the standard of the

Multiplier, and the apparent magnitude of the task of becoming one.

I realize that learning to lead like a Multiplier can feel overwhelming. For a start, many national and organization cultures lean to the Diminisher side; Multiplier leadership isn't often the norm. The path of least resistance is frequently the path of the Diminisher. And while I appreciate the challenge, I have also worked with leaders who have grown, become Multipliers, and realized the benefits of this approach. It is not hard to be a Multiplier, but it is definitely easier to be a Diminisher.

Professionally speaking, I was raised among overachieving, type-A, driver-drivers. So it often surprises my clients when I suggest they take the lazy way. Let me explain. I've noticed that the more important something is, the more likely a lazy man's approach will work best. When something is based on sound design, it doesn't need to be forced. It just needs the right amount of effort applied in exactly the right place or in the right way. You can lead like a Multiplier by following this same principle. You can do it the hard way by tackling everything at once. You can attempt to apply all five disciplines, all the time and all the way. Chances are you will exert great effort but show little progress and will eventually give up. Or you can take the lazy way, and with the right approach and tools, make sustainable progress without overwhelming yourself or others.

Below are three lazy-way strategies or accelerators that can propel you on your journey to become a Multiplier. Any one of these, or all three together will accelerate your development and enable you to attain maximum results with just the right

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amount of effort.

Accelerator #1: Work the Extremes. You do not need to excel at each of the Multiplier disciplines and master every practice. As we studied Multipliers, we noticed that each individual Multiplier wasn't necessarily, or even typically, strong in all five disciplines. The majority of Multipliers were strong in just three. There were many who were strong in four or even all five, but having strength in three disciplines appears to be a threshold for Multiplier status. We also noticed that these Multipliers were rarely in the Diminisher range in any of the five disciplines. A leader does not have to be exceptional in all five disciplines to be considered a Multiplier. A leader needs two or three strong disciplines and the other disciplines can just be good enough.

Instead of trying to develop in all five disciplines, an aspiring Multiplier should set an extreme development plan. Begin by assessing your leadership practices and then work the two extremes:

- 1) Neutralize a weakness. A common misconception in executive coaching is that coaching or development can – or even should – turn your weaknesses into strengths. The truth is that you do not need to be fabulous at everything. You just can't be bad. You simply need to neutralize the weaknesses and move to the middle, acceptable zone. Having realistic goals frees up capacity to do the most important development work: turning your modest strengths into towering strengths.
- 2) Top off a strength. Leaders with a small number of strengths are viewed more highly than leaders who have a broad base of capabilities. Of the five disciplines, identify your strongest

area and then build a deep and broad repertoire of practices that allows you to excel at this discipline. Become a world-class Challenger or a resounding Talent Magnet. Invest your energy wisely and progress from good to great by topping off your strengths.

Accelerator #2: Start with the Assumptions. Because behavior follows assumptions, you can knock out a whole set of behaviors by adopting the right belief. Consider the following: A leader begins with a simple assumption and a singular idea: that people are smart and the job of a leader is to draw out the intelligence of others. With this simple idea, leaders might begin by restraining themselves more and listen to others. They then might start asking more questions. They become skilled in the art of asking the right questions and begin posing the most difficult questions that challenge the underlying assumptions of the organization. They then use these questions to seed and establish challenges for the organization. Next they bring this sense of challenge and inquiry into key decisions and become masterful Debate Makers.

Accelerator #3: Take a 30-Day Multiplier Challenge. The most effective and enduring learning involves small, successive experimentation with new approaches. When these small experiments produce successful outcomes, the resulting energy fuels the next, slightly bigger experiment. Over time, these experiments form new patterns of behavior that establish a new baseline. One technique to catalyze this cycle of experimentation is to take a 30-Day-Multiplier Challenge and focus your efforts on a single discipline for thirty days. Why thirty days? Research shows that it takes approximately thirty days of concentrated effort to form a new habit.

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Like any good researcher, you should record your experiences in a journal, learning from what works and what doesn't.

When we teach the Multiplier ideas to teams and organizations, we often ask the questions, "Does any of this matter?" "How does leading like a Multiplier matter to you, your organization, or even the world at large?" First, it matters to you because people will give you more. The research shows consistently that even high-performing people gave Multipliers 2X more that they gave their Diminisher counterparts. People don't give a little more – they give a lot more. They give all of their discretionary effort and mental energy. They dig deep and access reserves of brainpower that they alone know exist. They apply the full measure of their intelligence. They reason more clearly, comprehend more completely, and learn more quickly. In the process they get smarter and more capable.

Second, it matters to the organization you work for. Many organizations face the double whammy of new challenges and insufficient resources. Perhaps you can relate to one start-up that experienced years of extraordinary growth. Their strategy had been to "throw people at the problem." But as their growth declined, they had to try to outperform their market without adding headcount. Suddenly resourcing leverage was as strategically important as resource allocation. A leader in a Fortune 500 company recently shared with us that in one particular division, one in three of his people were utilized below the 20 percent level! Organizations led by Multipliers can more than double their capability of their people and hence their organizations.

Third, leading like a Multiplier matters to the world at large. Albert Einstein is credited with the saying, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them." But what if we could access twice as much of the available intelligence and channel it to the perennial problems we face? What solutions could we generate if we could access the underutilized brainpower in the world? Surely we need leaders who can extract and utilize all available intelligence to solve our most complex and vital challenges. Leading like a Multiplier matters to the world at large.

Leading like a Multiplier is a choice we encounter daily or perhaps in every moment. What choices are you making? And how will these choices affect what the people around you become? Is it possible that the choice you make about how you lead can impact not just your team, or even your immediate sphere of influence, but generations to come? A single Accidental Diminisher turned Multiplier could have a profound and far-reaching impact in a world where the challenges are so great and our full intelligence underutilized. Which will you be: A genius? Or a genius maker? The choice matters.

The Pastor's Perspective

It struck me as I was reading that every pastor should be a multiplier. The key issue, to me, isn't the particular approach to multiplying; it is a paradigm issue. Specifically, how do I as a leader see myself, and see those around me? Multipliers see the value and potential in those around them, and even when they are confident in their own abilities, they are not arrogant. That allows them to

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make the most of the people around them.

I believe I am a multiplier; I like to believe I am one. However, I also know that I can fool myself. I've been wondering—what evidence do I have that I am really a multiplier? Good intentions, or just believing in the idea, do not make me a multiplier. How many of the multiplier behaviors am I really exhibiting, and how many of the results am I seeing?

And the real question—would the people around me view me as one? I suspect everyone who reads this book would agree with the basic premise; I wonder how many of us actually are living it out. I think it is worth taking the time to look deeply and honestly at the reality of how we are leading. If being a multiplier is really something that we can learn, and I believe it is, then it makes sense that we should really invest the time, thought, and energy needed to become an effective one. The potential pay-off is huge.