

Leaders Eat Last

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Overview

- Book explains why the best performing organizations have a culture that unifies them.
- We are wired to respond to performance incentives and accomplishment, but we are also motivated by cooperation, trust, and love.
- Marine Corps – senior officers allow junior officers to eat first..
- Leaders put their own needs behind the needs of their team.
- The best leaders create companies that balance the selfish need for reward and achievement with the selfless desire to cooperate and care for others, creating a culture that feels better and is more successful.

Creating a Circle of Safety



Aesop's fable: four oxen in a field, preyed on by a lion; they stayed close and when he came near, they turned their tails to one another and he was met with horns.

When they quarreled and separated, the lion attacked them one-by-one and made an end of all four.

- Need to create a circle of safety for employees
- If they feel safe, they can focus on doing their best work – together – to meet the challenges and danger outside the company (competition)
- If employees don't feel safe – if they're worried leaders and co-workers don't have their backs, won't give them credit, don't care about them...
 - ...they spend their energy protecting themselves from their own co-workers, instead of advancing the company

It's All about Chemicals

- We are biologically designed to be rewarded for repeating behaviors that are in our best interest, and we are programmed to respond to danger
- We need to tap into this programming
- Five Chemicals are at work: EDSO + the big C
 - Endorphins
 - Dopamine
 - Serotonin
 - Oxytonin
 - Cortisol

Endorphins

- Exist to mask physical pain
- Runners 'high'
- Designed to provide humans with endurance
 - As a species, we are not stronger or larger, but designed for endurance
- A 'selfish' hormone
 - We can generate endorphins by ourselves and they can be addictive...

Dopamine

- A positive 'hit' when we accomplish something
- Designed to motivate us to find food when we're not hungry...
- Why performance incentives work
- Why vision needs to be visual
 - Not necessarily about doing more – it has to be clear – "I Have a Dream" speech gave a visual people could see.
- Why we put our goals in writing
 - Released by scratching things off our to-do list; by alcohol, drugs, gambling, and by your smart phone!
- Selfish & Addictive
 - Highly addictive and risky in business if this is the primary motivator without balance.

Serotonin

- Fosters positive feelings of pride and status
- Responsible for the feeling when receiving an award or diploma
- The leadership chemical
 - Chemical about our relationship with others
 - We feel pride when recognized by others
 - We feel pride when others we care about are recognized
- Recognize those with more status – alphas – work to move up
- Give privileges to those with higher status
- We give alpha status to leaders, and are comfortable with CEOs making more
 - Just like pack animals give consideration to the ‘alphas’
- Comes with an expectation that they will protect and provide
- Leaders (alphas) have to put their needs aside in times of danger and threat
 - Ex. CEOs who didn’t take a paycheck and reinvested in the company during the economic downturn

Oxytocin

- The love chemical
- Released when caring for children, through hugs, and when we do something nice for someone else
- Inhibits addiction, boosts immune system, lengthens life, makes us more capable and creative
- Builds over time
 - The more you get, the more you get – but trust and positive feelings (love) takes time to build in relationships.
- Unites a team and balances the ‘selfish’ chemicals
- Happens through in person interaction (not email)
 - Email is rational, in person is emotional
- Leaders have to build emotional relationships through giving something more valuable than money – their time

The Big C – Cortisol

- Released when we have stress – ‘fight or flight’
- Speeds up our heart rate and readies us for action

- Shuts down nonessential systems – growth and immune
 - This is why some people’s jobs are killing them... drip, drip, drip
 - A steady release of cortisol is dangerous and unhealthy – leads to diabetes, heart disease, and cancer
- Inhibits oxytocin (turns off our good feelings)
- Number one way to generate it is to do something for someone else – 12th step in AA

Leadership Responsibility

- Create a circle of safety
 - Spartans (movie 300) – most important thing was their shield to create the circle of safety
- Generate confidence in your team through building trust that you have their back... passed down and extended to customers
- Sacrifice time and energy to care for team members
- Balance EDSO – reward performance, but create a safe, connected community, limit triggers of the big C
- Leadership is a choice, not a rank or title – look after those to the right and left of you
- The best organizations have a culture that unifies the team and taps into the positive chemicals that motivate us to do our best.

