

The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork

Study Guide

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This document contains a summary and reflection questions for
The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork by John Maxwell

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1-Law of Significance

One is too small a number to achieve greatness.

An individual acting alone never achieves anything of significance. Look below the surface. You will find seemingly solo acts are team efforts. Why is that true?

You may be good-but you're not that good!

- Teams bring energy, resources, skills, and ideas not available to an individual.
- Teams provide a broader and deeper insight to problems.
- Teams foster humility and community.
- Teams hold one another accountable.

Why are we tempted to do things alone?

1. **Ego:** Few people are fond of admitting they can't do everything themselves.
2. **Insecurity:** Some individuals are threatened by other people. They fear loss of control. They fear that someone might be better than they are.
3. **Naivety:** Some individuals underestimate the difficulty of achieving big things.
4. **Temperament:** It is not natural for some people to form teams. It doesn't occur to them as the way to do things.

Reflect and Apply

Think about a big dream you have.

- Is it bigger than you are?
- Would it benefit others?
- Is it worth dedicating a large amount of your effort to make it a reality?

If you answered yes to all three questions, think about the kinds of people that would make a good team to achieve the dream. Make a list of people you know who would be good on the team. Invite them to team up with you.

2-Law of Big Picture

The goal is more important than the role.

Members of a team must have mutually beneficial shared goals. Winning teams have players who put the good of the team ahead of themselves. That may mean sacrificing personal satisfaction or glory.

When you see the big picture correctly, you serve the team more quickly.

How can you help a team become a big picture team?

1. Look **up** at the Big Picture. Establish a clear vision that all members support.
2. Size up the situation. Help members see how challenging the goal is and how important their contributions will be.
3. Line up needed resources. The better resourced the team is, the fewer distractions they will have in reaching the goal.
4. Call up the right players. You can't win with bad players. Only bring people onto the team who support the vision and have skills that will help the team achieve the goal.
5. Give up personal agendas. Help team members remember to ask, "What's best for the rest?"

Reflect and Apply

- Are you participating in something greater than yourself? Are you willing to take a subordinate role to reach the goal?
- Think of ways you can help team members embrace the law of the Big Picture.
 - ▶ Paint the big picture vision.
 - ▶ Honor team members who sacrifice for the good of the team.

3-Law of the Niche

All players have a place where they add most value.

When the right team member is in the right place, everyone benefits. Great things happen when all members on the team take the role that maximizes their strength. When a team member is in the wrong position, morale erodes. Those serving in an area of weakness become resentful that their best is untapped. Others on the team who think they could do better also become resentful. People become unwilling to work as a team.

You are most valuable where you add the most value.

To put people in the places that best use their talents and benefit the team, you must know:

1. The Team: Be clear on the team's purpose, culture, and history.
2. The Situation: Be clear on the team's current challenges.
3. The Players: Be clear on each person's experience, skills, temperament, attitude, passion, discipline, and potential. Do not push people out of their gift zones.

How do you find your niche?

- Be secure enough to change and try new things.
- Keep trying new roles until you find the one that makes your heart sing.
- Know your strengths and weaknesses.
- Trust your leader or get on another team.
- Be committed to the big picture for the team or get on another team.

Reflect and Apply

- If you know your niche but are not working in it, start planning a transition.
- If you have no idea of your niche, look for recurring themes in your life, take some temperament tests, ask others to describe your strengths, and try new things.

4-Law of Mount Everest

As challenges escalate, need for teamwork escalates as well.

If you have a dream, you need a team to accomplish it. How do you put together your team?

The time to build your team is before you have a critical challenge.

1. Define your dream. What would you like to accomplish during your time on earth?
2. Evaluate your existing team. Your potential is only as good as your existing team.
3. Define your dream team. What type of team would it take to realize your dream? Your team is key.

The kind of challenge determines the kind of team you need.

<i>Type of Challenge</i>	<i>Type of Team</i>
New	Creative
Controversial	United
Changing	Fast and Flexible
Unpleasant	Motivated
Diversified	Complementary
Long-term	Determined
Everest-sized	Experienced

When your team doesn't match the challenge:

- Develop the team members.
 - ▶ Enthusiastic beginners need direction.
 - ▶ Disillusioned learners need coaching.
 - ▶ Cautious completers need support.
 - ▶ Self-reliant achievers need responsibility.
- Add key team members to fill gaps.
- Consider having a team member step into a leadership role for a season.
- After attempts at training and coaching, if a member does not have the skills or attitude

necessary for the team, remove that ineffective member.

Reflect and Apply

- You cannot win a great challenge alone. Teach yourself to rally with your team.
- That which is true for team members is true for the leader. If you don't grow, you must go.

5-Law of the Chain

Strength of the team is impacted by its weakest link.

Your team is not for everyone.

- Not everyone **will** take your journey. Some will not want to go.
- Not everyone **should** take your journey. Where you are going is not right for some.
- Not everyone **can** take your journey. Some will not have the skills required for the journey.

A weak link will eventually rob the team of momentum and potential.

The Impact of a Weak Link on Stronger Members:

1. They have to help the weak links.
2. They begin to resent the weak links.
3. They become less effective because of the increased load covering for the weak links.
4. They begin to question the leader's ability to deal with the weak links.

Reflect and Apply

Prioritize your responsibilities: organization first > the team > individual team members > yourself last.

Are you hindering the team?

- Having trouble keeping pace with the team.
- Not growing in my area of responsibility.
- Not supportive of big picture.
- Difficulty seeing my weaknesses.
- Struggling to work well with team members.

If yes, put a plan in place to address the issues or to find another team.

6-Law of the Catalyst

Winning teams have players who make things happen.

Without a catalyst, a team loses focus, gets out of rhythm, decreases in energy, breaks down in unity, and loses momentum. A catalyst is a person who gets it done and then some, who brings intensity and fun to the team.

To recognize a potential catalyst, look for people who are:

- Intuitive: They sense things others don't.
- Communicative: They say things others don't say to get the team moving. They know when a person needs a boost and when a person need a boot.
- Passionate: They bring contagious enthusiasm to a team.
- Talented: They have the skills to succeed and share their gifts with others to help them succeed.
- Creative: They look for fresh, innovative ways to do things.
- Initiating: They step forward to make things happen.
- Responsible: They are willing to carry the load to make things happen.
- Generous: They give of themselves to carry something through.
- Influential: Others respond to what they say and do.

Reflect and Apply

- You need catalysts to push the team to its potential.
- Identify and enlist catalysts for your team.
- Identify those with the potential to be catalysts. Encourage them and help them develop as catalysts.

7-Law of the Compass

Vision gives team members direction and confidence.

A team that embraces a vision becomes focused, energized, and confident. It knows where it is headed and why it is going there.

A Team's Vision Must Be Aligned with a:

1. Moral Compass (look above): This helps members check their motives.
2. Intuitive Compass (look within): It must resonate with team members to fire up the committed and fry the uncommitted.
3. Historical Compass (look behind): It should build on the past to show value of those who have contributed. Use stories.
4. Directional Compass (look ahead): Use goals to bring targets to the vision.
5. Strategic Compass (look around): Develop a strategy. People need instruction in what to do to make the vision become a reality.
6. Visionary Compass (look beyond): Challenge people with a far-reaching vision.

Reflect and Apply

- Do you know and embrace your team's vision? If not, perhaps you belong on another team.
- How does your team's vision align with your strengths, convictions, and purpose?

A leader is responsible for keeping the vision in front of people. Every vision message should possess:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clarity | <input type="checkbox"/> Connectedness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purpose | <input type="checkbox"/> Goals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty | <input type="checkbox"/> Stories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Challenge | <input type="checkbox"/> Passion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy |

8-Law of the Bad Apple

Rotten attitudes ruin a team.

Why Are Attitudes Important?

- When attitudes go up so does the potential of the team.
- Attitude is catching.
- Bad attitudes compound faster than good ones.
- Rotten attitudes left alone ruin a team.

Your attitude is key to shaping the team's attitude.

Attitudes are subjective. Watch for symptoms like these:

- Inability to admit when they are wrong.
- Failing to forgive. Holding a grudge.
- Petty jealousy. Expecting the same rewards for less results or contribution to the team.
- Overpowering belief in their own importance.
- Hogging all the credit. Seeking the spotlight even if they have not earned it.
- A critical spirit. Never praising others.

Reflect and Apply

If you notice the symptoms of a bad attitude in someone, you may have a bad apple on your team. Conduct a crucial conversation with the person.

- Tell him what you have observed.
- Give him the opportunity to clarify or correct your impressions.
- Set clear expectations for behaviors on the team.
- Hold him accountable.
- If he does not meet expectations, remove him from the team.

Assess your own attitude and how you behave towards team members. Do you need an attitude adjustment?

9-Law of Countability

Members must be able to count on each other when it counts.

The Formula for Countability

We don't work for each other; we work with each other.

- Character: Person you can trust.
- Competence: Person who is able to do his part.
- Commitment: Person who will not give up when things become difficult.
- Consistency: Person who is reliable over time.
- Cohesion: Person who puts the team first.

Character +Competence +Commitment +Consistency +Cohesion <hr/> = Countability
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Reflect and Apply

How is your countability?

Key Quality	never<.....>always
Demonstrate high integrity	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Serve with excellence	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Dedicated to the team's success	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Reliable	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Act to pull the team together	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

How can you promote countability on your team?

- Give recognition to the team when possible.
- Encourage things that promote team identity.
- Focus on a common purpose.
- Take time to have fun together.
- Be an example of high countability.

10-Law of the Price Tag

A team fails to reach potential if it fails to pay the price.

Truths about the Price Tag

1. Every member must pay the price.
2. You must continue to pay the price. Avoid **destination disease** where you think that meeting one goal means you can stop working.
3. The price increases if the team wants to improve or change. Each member must step up to the challenge.
4. The price never decreases. Each person must decide whether the goal is worth the price they must pay.

The Price of Being a Team Player

- Sacrifice: You will need to put much effort into supporting the team.
- Time Commitment: It takes time to build relationships and learn how to become a team.
- Personal Development: You will need to keep growing to continue to benefit the team.
- Unselfishness: You will need to think of the team's needs above your own.

Reflect and Apply

- Which of your personal goals are you willing to give up for the team?
- If you are the leader, model sacrifice by:
 - ▶ Continuing to grow for the team's sake.
 - ▶ Giving your time for the team's sake.
 - ▶ Empowering others for the team's sake.
 - ▶ Making difficult decisions for the team's sake.
- Once you have modeled sacrifice, challenge team members to do the same.
- Reward team members for making sacrifices and tell them how it makes a difference.

11-Law of the Scoreboard

A team can make adjustments when it knows where it stands.

Team that succeed make adjustments to continually improve themselves and their situations. The game plan tells what you **want** to happen. The scorecard tells you what **is** happening. You need a scorecard to:

- Provide a snapshot of where you are.
- Evaluate your performance.
- Help you make decisions.
- Help you see where to make adjustments.

When you know what to do, you can do what you know.

Reflect and Apply

- How do you measure progress for your ministry?
- As a leader, how do you make sure your team members continue to evaluate, adjust, and make good decisions?
- How consistently and effectively do you consult your scorecard?

12-Law of the Bench

Great teams have great depth.

Starters = frontline people who directly influence the course of the organization and spend time in the spotlight

Bench = people who indirectly add value and are often neglected and overlooked

The Bench is Indispensable

- Most successful people begin as apprentices on the bench. Good leaders keep their eyes open for emerging talent.
- The success of a supporting member can multiply the success of a starter. When each person works in an area of strength, the entire team wins.

- There are more people on the bench than there are starters. Neglecting the majority of the team brings failure to the whole team.
- A correctly placed bench player will at times be more valuable than a starter.
- A strong bench gives the leader more options.
- The bench is key at critical times for the team.

You Can Predict the Future of the Team by Three Things

1. Who is joining the team? Only add good players. If you find a strong potential player, consider adding him even if you don't have an open position.
2. How are you developing the team? Take the initiative to make sure everyone on the team is growing and improving.
3. Who is leaving the team? People will come and go. The key is to replace each loss with a more effective person. Remove people who don't add value.

Reflect and Apply

- Are you building the bench today for the crisis you will face tomorrow?
- Consider these factors when recruiting:
 - ▶ Personality
 - ▶ Passion (what motivates the person)
 - ▶ Pattern (in what situations they tend to succeed)
 - ▶ Potential
 - ▶ Profile (how well they would fit your culture)
 - ▶ Placement (which team would benefit most from their participation and where they would most likely thrive)
- Are you cultivating an attitude of service and teachability?
- Do you perform at your best for the sake of the team?
- Do you honor the people on the bench? Are you mentoring a teammate on the bench?
- As a leader, are you making sure the revolving door moves so that players joining are better than those who are leaving?

13-Law of Identity

Shared values define the team.

If everyone embraces the same values, team members have a connection to one another and to the team. Organizational values influence and guide the team's behavior.

Shared values are like:

- Glue: Hold people together in difficult times.
- A Foundation: Make things stable.
- A Ruler: Set the standard for performance.
Note: They only have meaning if people behave consistent with the stated values.
- A Compass: Let people know if they are heading in the right direction and making the right decisions.
- A Magnet: Attract people with like values.
- An Identity: Give the team a unique identity.

Reflect and Apply

- Do team members demonstrate our ANTIOCHian values?
- As a leader, do you practice and teach others our values?

14-Law of Communication

Interaction fuels action.

Every teams needs to develop good communication in four directions.

Communication increases connection.

1. Leader to Teammates:
Leadership rises and falls on communication. A leader's communication should be:
 - ▶ Consistent
 - ▶ Clear (straightforward)
 - ▶ Courteous

2. Teammates to Leader: Be direct and respectful when communicating with a leader.
3. Among Teammates: Communicate for the common good.
 - ▶ Be supportive.
 - ▶ Stay current. Avoid rehashing issues. Settle them and move forward.
 - ▶ Be vulnerable (open and frank).
4. Between the Team and the Public: Once you leave the room, have a united voice. When people approach you:
 - ▶ Listen to what they say. Be sure you understand their concerns.
 - ▶ Respond without delay.
 - ▶ Be realistic in the commitments you make.

Reflect and Apply

- If there are barriers to good communication between you and a teammate, you need to remove those barriers.
- Leaders must be good listeners. When a leader is a poor listener, he misses out on important information, the team stops communicating, and team performance suffers.

How well do you listen? How do you know?

<i>What do they think about my listening?</i>	<i>poor <.....> good</i>
Those I lead	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
My peers	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
My leader or coach	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
Those I serve	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

15-Law of the Edge

The difference between two equally talented teams is leadership.

Good leaders can provide a lift to a team. Ways they do that include:

- Delegates responsibility and authority for key tasks.
- Knows what motivates each team member and gives assignments with that in mind.
- Coaches team members to bring out their potential.
- Learns quickly and helps others learn as well. Models continuous learning.

The more leaders a team develops, the greater the edge from leadership.

Reflect and Apply

- You don't have to be **the** leader to be **a** leader on your team.
- Take personal responsibility for your leadership growth.
- If you are the leader of a team:
 - ▶ Attract the best leader to the team that you can. Look for people whose talent is greater than yours.
 - ▶ Develop the people already on the team.

16-Law of High Morale

When you're winning, nothing hurts.

High morale helps the team perform at its best.

High Morale is the Great...

- Exaggerator: It makes everything seem good.
- Elevator: Performance goes up a level.
- Energizer: The team has high energy.
- Eliminator: It helps the team work through obstacles that would ordinarily stop them.

- Emancipator: It gives the team a sense of freedom to take risks.

Stages of Morale and What a Leader Should Do

Stage	Leader Tasks
Poor Morale: Leader must do it all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fix what's broken. • Show people you believe in them. • Be energetic. • Communicate hope.
Low Morale: Leader must do productive things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model high-return behaviors. • Develop relationships with high-potential people. • Arrange small victories. • Communicate vision.
Moderate Morale: Leader must do difficult things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make changes to improve the team. • Earn buy-in from team members. • Communicate commitment. • Develop and equip members.
High Morale: Leader must do little things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the team focused. • Communicate successes. • Remove morale mashers. • Allow others to lead.

Reflect and Apply

- As a team member, your dedication and enthusiasm will help your own performance and inspire some of your teammates.
- As a leader, assess the morale level of your team. Perform the corresponding tasks in the table above to help move your team to the next stage of morale. (If your team is at the high moral level, don't take it for granted. Keep performing the tasks.)

17-Law of Dividends

Investing in the team compounds over time.

Developing people pays off in every way. When everyone on the team is investing in others, the benefits are like those of compound interest.

Get Started

1. Decide to invest in the team. This starts the process.
2. Gather the best team possible. This elevates the potential of the team.
3. Pay the price to develop the team. This ensures growth. You will have to give up something to have the resources necessary to develop the team.
4. Do things as a team. This provides community. Share some common experiences.
5. Empower team members. This raises up leaders for the team. Avoid holding too tightly to your power or position.
6. Give credit for success to the team. This lifts team morale. Compliment those who perform.
7. Observe how your investment is yielding results. This bring accountability to the team.
8. Stop investing in members who don't grow. This eliminates losses for the team. Spend your time on those who want to grow and are growing.
9. Create new opportunities for the team. This allows them to stretch.
10. Give the team the best chance to succeed. This guarantees the team a high return. Clear as many obstacles as you can.

Reflect and Apply

- As a team member, are you giving a good return for what your teammates are investing in you?
- As a leader, take responsibility for investing in your core leaders.
- As a leader, make investing in others part of your organization's culture.