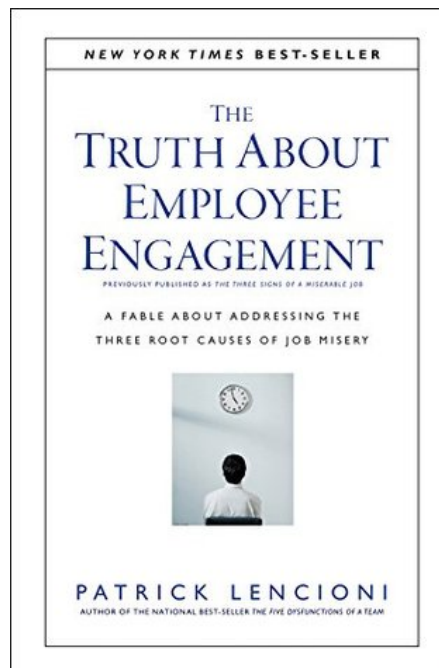




The Truth About Employee Engagement: A Fable About Addressing the Three Root Causes of Job Misery (J-B Lencioni Series)

Patrick Lencioni

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The Truth About Employee Engagement was originally published as *The Three Signs of a Miserable Job*.

A bestselling author and business guru tells how to improve job satisfaction and performance.

In his sixth fable, bestselling author Patrick Lencioni takes on a topic that almost everyone can relate to: job misery. Millions of workers, even those who have carefully chosen careers based on true passions and interests, dread going to work, suffering each day as they trudge to jobs that make them cynical, weary, and frustrated. It is a simple fact of business life that any job, from investment banker to dishwasher, can become miserable. Through the story of a CEO turned pizzeria manager, Lencioni reveals the three elements that make work miserable -- irrelevance, immeasurability, and anonymity -- and gives managers and their employees the keys to make any job more engaging.

As with all of Lencioni's books, this one is filled with actionable advice you can put into effect immediately. In addition to the fable, the book includes a detailed model examining the three root causes of job misery and how they can be remedied. It covers the benefits of managing for job engagement within organizations -- increased productivity, greater retention, and competitive advantage -- and offers examples of how managers can use the applications in the book to deal with specific jobs and situations.

Patrick Lencioni is President of The Table Group, a management consulting firm specializing in executive team development and organizational health. As a consultant and keynote speaker, he has worked with thousands of senior executives and executive teams in organizations ranging from Fortune 500 companies to high-tech startups to universities and nonprofits. His clients include. AT&T, Direct TV, JCPenney, Microsoft, Nestle, Northwestern Mutual, Southwest Airlines and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Lencioni is the author of ten bestselling books, including *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* and *The Advantage*. He previously worked for Oracle, Sybase, and the management consulting firm Bain & Company.

The Truth About Employee Engagement: A Fable About Addressing the Three Root Causes of Job Misery (J-B Lencioni Series) Details

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From Reader Review The Truth About Employee Engagement: A Fable About Addressing the Three Root Causes of Job Misery (J-B Lencioni Series) for online ebook

Kevin Bryden McDonagh says

A miserable job is not the same as a bad one. Through a consideration of my effect on those around me, this book may have forever changed my approach and understanding of management.

Chris says

I didn't read this book to find out if I have a miserable job. I read it to find out if the people I supervise have one. This book is clearly written for managers, etc. even though it claims to be useful for other employees. The moral for non-supervisors: try to not work at a miserable job!

This was my first Lencioni book and I was pretty surprised. You could fit the practical content onto about 15 pages or so. The rest of the book is a story, which serves as an extended parable demonstrating the concepts. It's a really interesting way to get a point across.

The points are useful. The story makes them fun. It isn't exactly a well-written story--the writing is sometimes clunky, and the plot and dialogue occasionally feel forced. For the first few short chapters I thought I might not be able to get through it. Then suddenly I got hooked and couldn't stop reading. Weirdly, this management story is a real page-turner.

Props to Lencioni for using such an enjoyable and memorable tool to pass on the kinds of management insights that, if practiced, would probably make everyone's lives a lot better.

Caroline says

I wasn't expecting to like this book as much as I did. It's a book on business management principles, but written as a story with fictional characters. Once I got over the fact that it's just a story and not literature, I liked it more. It was easier to read than straight-up theory. Best part is that the message of the book is fundamentally to treat your employees like human beings: know them, remind them how they matter, and help them to figure out how to measure their growth.

Nadia says

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Kimberly says

We are using this book in a leadership team meeting this fall to promote discussion among company leaders about their role in employee satisfaction, and eventually, the bottom line.

This is a quick read -- set up as the "fable" of Brian Bailey - a skilled, natural manager who rises to the top and understands people at all levels. As a young leader, Brian takes a small exercise equipment company from mediocre performance to the top of the industry. However, when he's forced to sell the company, he is annoyed that the successful culture and high level of engagement among his employees aren't more valued by the buyer.

He sets off on a personal mission to try to prove that culture matters, first in a small, roadside Italian restaurant and later at a regional sporting goods store.

His work at both leads him to conclude that there are three things that make work unbearable for employees, and thus negatively impact the success of a company:

1. Anonymity - people cannot be fulfilled at work if they are not known. All people need need to be understood and appreciated for their unique qualities. Personal connections at work matter.
2. Irrelevance - Everyone needs to know that his/her work matters to someone. Without seeing a connection between the work and the satisfaction of another person or group of people, an employee cannot find lasting fulfillment.
3. Immeasurement - employees need to be able to gauge their progress and level of contribution for themselves. They cannot be fulfilled in their work if their success depends on the opinions or whims of another person, no matter how benevolent that person may be. Without a tangible means of assessing success or failure, motivation eventually deteriorates as people see themselves as unable to control their own fates.

The fable - including the dialogue - is a little hokey. Brian is just too much of a goody-goody to be taken seriously at times. And his turn arounds of failing businesses are too easy to be realistic. However, I think there is something to the 3 signs theory (having been in a few "miserable jobs" myself over the years) and this is definitely a worthwhile read for anyone who manages people.

Sharon says

The fable behind this book was actually very enjoyable and made it stand out for me from other leadership and management books. I always said you can't teach people to care about their jobs, but this book has me questioning that phrase. I think it is very interesting and really liked reading the examples and practical breakdowns at the end of the book after the fable. I think this book would benefit managers more than employees, because employees might just get frustrated at their inability to change their organization to foster job happiness.

Brad says

As a big Lencioni fan, I'm not sure how I missed this one from almost 10 years ago. Another fable with some great points about employee engagement. Simple, but not easy, reminders to help employees see the meaning in their work, give them measurable things to work on, and get to know and care about them as people.

Kendra says

Not a particularly compelling narrator, but I enjoyed this. Mostly I just wanted an entire novel on the people in the restaurant, but I understand that the book had different goals in mind :D

Definitely some good stuff in here, and practical advice, though occasionally unrealistic approaches.

Luke Koskinen says

I love lencioni. And this book is no different. Some good tools and questions to ask yourself about your work and management at any level.

kingshearte says

In his sixth fable, bestselling author Patrick Lencioni takes on a topic that almost everyone can relate to: the causes of a miserable job. Millions of workers, even those who have carefully chosen careers based on true passions and interests, dread going to work, suffering each day as they trudge to jobs that make them cynical, weary, and frustrated. It is a simple fact of business life that any job, from investment banker to dishwasher, can become miserable. Through the story of a CEO turned pizzeria manager, Lencioni reveals the three elements that make work miserable -- irrelevance, immeasurability, and anonymity -- and gives managers and their employees the keys to make any job more fulfilling.

I read this one because I was applying for a management job at the store, and this book is one they make all their new managers read, as it apparently really embodies the management philosophy they strive for, so I thought I'd jump the gun a little and read it. It's not a bad little book, and I think it does make a lot of sense. There are other things that can make a job miserable, but not understanding why your job matters, not having specific goals to achieve, and not feeling like your bosses know or care about you are very valid concerns, and I have to admit that I can see those principles in action at my store, and it does contribute to making it the sort of job that I don't hate and that doesn't make me miserable every time I contemplate going to it.

Like I said, there are definitely other potential factors, though. My high-tech job, for example. My bosses definitely knew me. With 12 people in the company, anonymity is really not an issue. I understood how I was relevant. I helped people make their programs work. Seeing the relevance and how I helped other people was really not hard. And as for measurability, I didn't really do any specific measuring, but if I'd wanted to, it would have been easy. Say, number/percentage of customer issues resolved each day. Something like that. And yet. And yet I still hated that job with everything in my being after a while. The fact that I actually despised the work I was doing was definitely a factor. The erratic pay schedule is often cited by others, but I don't think that's what made it miserable; it simply made it that much harder to put up with all the other miserable factors. The unbelievably disorganized mess that was the project management there was definitely another factor. Both things not covered by Lencioni's treatise, but definitely things that made my job utterly miserable for me. So while I believe his points have a lot of merit, and more management teams should

definitely strive toward his model, I would caution against assuming that if those bases are all covered, everybody's happy little clams.

Jordan Silva says

Another good Lencioni read.

Sometimes I listen to these books, and at the very end hear the original publication dates and try to think back to where I was when the book was written, and wonder how things might be different had I read it then instead of now (a decade later). Books like this one might have changed a lot of things, but at the same time, it is possible I just wouldn't have gotten the message back then.

The TL;DR of the book is your employees want to know you care, want to know what they do impacts others, and want to know they are doing a good job (or a bad job). Pretty straight forward and obvious things...unless you are someone like me who forgets that people need to be told this stuff regularly.

Overall the story is easy enough to listen to, although the "fast forward" through time portions read a little like

Step 1: Show employees you care, help them figure out why they matter, and give them a scorecard.

Step 2: ...?

Step 3: Profit!

Phil Meyer says

Enjoyed this short read about employee fulfillment or the lack thereof. Lencioni's model is very similar to the Self-determination theory model (Autonomy - Control of your time, Competence - refers to mastery of unambiguously useful things, and relatedness - the feeling of connection to others.) but replaces autonomy by essentially splitting relatedness into two parts 1) being known and 2) relevance.

Anonymity

People cannot be fulfilled in their work if they are not known. All human beings need to be understood and appreciated for their unique qualities by someone in a position of authority.

Irrelevance

Everyone needs to know that their job matters, to someone. Anyone. Without seeing a connection between the work and the satisfaction of another person or group of people, an employee simply will not find lasting fulfillment.

Immeasurement

Employees need to be able to gauge their progress and level of contribution for themselves. They cannot be fulfilled in their work if their success depends on the opinions or whims of another person.

Marian Willeke says

Having just taken a position that oversees a team, I knew intrinsic motivation would be key for each of them to experience a successful outcome. As such, I took to heart the recommendation to read this book (among others). While reading is enjoyable for me, I was surprised with my swallowing this book whole within 24 hours, post-it notes being scribbled as I went through, accidentally identifying the first two signs before I knew that that they were the official signposts to turning around misery. Having been involved with connecting people at deeper levels during this past year, I could not agree more that the final missing ingredient was anonymity. In fact, I understood that to be a problem before I read the book, so I was gratified to see that it indeed was on the radar. This book helps me channel my energy to develop a positive environment for my team.

The only reason I give it a 4 out of 5 is because unless I was in this particular situation, I would have probably put the book aside. However, for managers looking for ways to help their employees be fulfilled, which creates the handy by-product of more effective results, this book is very insightful.

Andy says

Anonymity, Irrelevance, Immeasurement

Anna says

How I wish I could mail this to almost every boss I've had. The largest part is taken up by a fable which illustrates the ideas of the book, while the second part goes into more detail on how to implement the ideas and what they really mean. The three signs are:

1. Anonymity
2. Irrelevance
3. Immeasurement

1. Anonymity

All human beings need to be understood and appreciated for their unique qualities by someone in a position of authority. People who see themselves as invisible, generic, or anonymous cannot love their job, no matter what they are doing.

- A direct supervisor must be genuinely interested in employees on a personal level.
- They must ask about what's going on in people's lives.
- Must be done on a continuous basis.
- Managers must realize that people get out of bed in the morning to live their lives, and work tasks or only a part of that.

2. Irrelevance

People need to see a connection between the work and the satisfaction of another person or people. The work must matter to someone, even if it's just the boss.

- People need to be needed.
- Important to serve others, not merely themselves.
- People die emotionally when they start to believe in their own irrelevancy.
- A job is not a series of self-involved activities without a clear connection to others.
- Two questions must be asked: Who am I helping and how am I helping?
- Who: Sometimes, the answer is the boss. But bosses are afraid to be openly thankful for fear of looking self-serving. However, employees would likely appreciate acknowledgement of their role's importance in their boss's success. Otherwise, they are deprived of feeling that they've made a difference.
- How: Managers must help employees see how their work matters to someone.

3. Immeasurement

People need to be able to gauge progress for themselves. Need tangible means for assessing success or failure. Otherwise, that leads to lack of motivation as people see themselves as unable to control their own fate.

- Immeasurement simply means lack of clear means of assessing one's progress or success on the job.
 - Creates feelings of dependence on a manager to subjectively judge their achievements.
 - This forces employees to engage in politics and posturing.
 - Managers must identify areas an employee can directly influence, and then ensure that specific measurements are connected to the people they are meant to serve.
-