

DISCUSSION Guide

IMPACT PLAYERS

**How to Take the Lead, Play Bigger,
and Multiply Your Impact**

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THE IMPACT PLAYERS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Use this guide to explore the Impact Player Mindset and practices together as a team. Be introspective, considering the ways in which you personally are striving to be an Impact Player but falling short. Discuss the decoys that seem productive but actually reduce impact. Talk about the framework as a set of habits that will require constant attention for people. And most importantly, remember that these discussions will have their greatest impact when, as leaders, you are as committed to your own self-reflection and awareness as you are to the development and improvement of your team.

Share a copy of this document with everyone who joins the discussion. Each of the exercises are designed for individuals to capture their own insights while they share with their teammates.

1. CONSIDER THE IMPACT

Reflect on your own experiences working with an Impact Player. How did their actions and results differ from other contributors?

WHAT DID THEY DO DIFFERENTLY?

HOW DID THEY AFFECT OTHERS?

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

If you've mastered an Impact Player practice, which one would you start developing now? Why that practice?

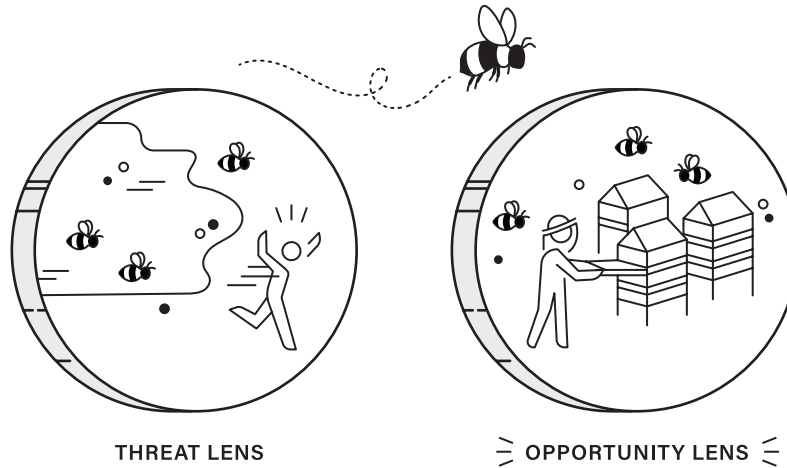
[DO THE JOB THAT'S NEEDED] [STEP UP, STEP BACK] [FINISH STRONGER] [ASK AND ADJUST] [MAKE WORK LIGHT]

When you work with others, which Impact Player practice do you appreciate the most? Why that practice?

[DO THE JOB THAT'S NEEDED] [STEP UP, STEP BACK] [FINISH STRONGER] [ASK AND ADJUST] [MAKE WORK LIGHT]

2. EXPLORE THE MINDSET

Impact Players wear opportunity goggles. Impact Players see the following everyday challenges differently than others: messy problems, unclear roles, unforeseen obstacles, moving targets, and unrelenting demands. Whereas others see these challenges as threats, Impact Players see them as opportunities to add and create value.



Threat or Opportunity: With a colleague, talk through an everyday challenge you suspect triggers your Threat Lens. Describe the challenge. What do you see? What do you do? How could reframe that challenge with an Opportunity Lens?

EVERYDAY CHALLENGES Pick a challenge to talk through:	THE SITUATION What happens?	YOUR MINDSET What do you see? (circle one)	YOUR ACTION What do you do? (circle one)	REFRAME FOR IMPACT How can you reframe the threat as an opportunity?
 MESSY PROBLEMS	_____ _____	A distraction from my job or A chance to be useful	Do your job or Do the job that's needed	_____ _____
 UNCLEAR ROLES	_____ _____	A reason to look for leadership or An opportunity to provide leadership	Wait for direction or Step up, then step back	_____ _____
 UNFORESEEN OBSTACLES	_____ _____	An added hassle or A chance to build strength and prove myself	Escalate Issues or Finish stronger	_____ _____
 MOVING TARGETS	_____ _____	A detour from my strengths or A reason to build new capabilities	Stick to what you know best or Ask and adjust	_____ _____
 UNRELENTING DEMANDS	_____ _____	A reason to ask for help or A need to work together	Add to the burden or Make work light	_____ _____

3. ELEVATE YOUR PLAYMAKERS

Playmaking is something that people do, not only exceptionally but also naturally. When they see a challenge, they respond by going into the Impact Player “zone.” Use these questions to help identify one individual team member’s unique playmaking abilities. Then explore how you can use these superpowers to drive impact.

What everyday challenge causes them step up and multiply their impact?



MESSY PROBLEMS



UNCLEAR ROLES



UNFORESEEN OBSTACLES



MOVING TARGETS



UNRELENTING DEMANDS

Which Impact Player practices come natural to them?

[DO THE JOB THAT’S NEEDED] [STEP UP, STEP BACK] [FINISH STRONGER] [ASK AND ADJUST] [MAKE WORK LIGHT]

Give their playmaking ability a superpower name.

HELLO, MY PLAYMAKING SUPERPOWER IS:

Explore 3 ways you could use their playmaking superpower to drive impact.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

4. DEVELOP A TEAM PLAYBOOK

Use these 10 questions to explore further how you can use the Impact Players framework to create a culture where everyone makes their highest contribution.

WHAT ABOUT THE TEAM?

1. How could we use these ideas in on-boarding new hires, both to set expectations and give people permission to contribute in more impactful and meaningful ways?
2. What can we do to enable everyone on the team to be Impact Players, especially those who work behind the scenes or in underrepresented groups?
3. How can we use these ideas to reduce burnout? How can we help people increase their impact without having to work harder or more hours?
4. What are some of the ways that we might be diluting our impact while working hard and being well intended?
5. How does the shift to remote work or hybrid schedules affected people's ability to be Impact Players?
6. How can Impact Players hoping to make themselves useful avoid getting stuck only doing trivial tasks?
7. How can we help people mitigate risk so they can better approach uncertainty and ambiguity with an Opportunity Lens?
8. How can our team use perspective taking and upward empathy to better understand the needs of our internal or external stakeholders?
9. What should I be doing differently as a leader to enable people to be Impact Players?

TIPS FOR LEADERS & DISCUSSION FACILITATORS

Most managers will want to share the ideals and insights from this book with the teams they lead. However, if you do, take an approach that favors dialogue over dissemination. Broadcasting the ideas over email en masse without inviting dialogue is a surefire way to cause resentment and rejection. Similarly, using the framework to label others will also shut down learning.

If you want to create interest and sustained impact, share the ideas rather than inflict them upon someone. In addition to discussing these ideas as a team, you can use the framework to set the right expectations and give people permission to deviate from more traditional ways of working. Look for inflection points when people are getting started, for example, new-hire induction, project kickoffs, or transfers between departments. Additionally, these practices can be incorporated into hiring criteria, leadership models, talent development programs, and inclusion strategies.

IN SHARING AND DISCUSSING THE BOOK, HERE ARE A FEW CAVEATS THAT MIGHT HELP FRAME A TEAM DISCUSSION:

1. The notion of Impact Players is not limited to sports. Though the Impact Player idea is lifted from athletics, this is not a story about high-performing athletes or coaches. I've borrowed a few terms and metaphors and included several examples from the sports world because athletics provide vivid examples of excellence and clear outcomes. However, there are Impact Players in almost any organization or community.

2. This is not a contrast between winners and losers. Our focus will be far more nuanced. We will explore how the Impact Player Mindset differs from the Contributor Mindset and the subtle distinctions in thinking and action that make all the difference.

3. The distinction between the Impact Player and the Contributor is not a classification of individuals but of practices. This book will likely be of greatest value to you as you think of Impact Player and Contributor Mindsets as modes of thinking—orientations that we all move into and out of—and periodically ask yourself: Which mindset am I using right now?

4. Becoming an Impact Player isn't a winner-take-all competition. The book's mentalities and practices are, by and large, learnable and coachable, hence available to all. Impact Players are stellar but not necessarily singular—much as a town may have multiple five-star hotels or restaurants. Likewise, a leader can develop an entire team with the Impact Player Mindset.

5. This is not a rallying cry to work harder. The Impact Player mentality isn't about pushing oneself and leaning in when you really want to lie down; the Impact Players we studied didn't necessarily work any harder or any longer than their peers, but they did tend to work with greater intentionality and focus while they were working. They created an energy and impact that prevented exhaustion.

6. The book is not intended as a quick fix. The Impact Players we studied evinced these practices authentically and consistently. When the Impact Player mentality is deeply held and authentically practiced, it can work for you, too. If you are looking for career practices that will help you cut the line and get ahead quickly, this is not the book for you.