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PATRICK LENCIONI

NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

The
MOTIVE

A LEADERSHIP FABLE



**WHY SO MANY LEADERS ABDICATE THEIR
MOST IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Motive

Also by Patrick Lencioni

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The Motive

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Patrick Lencioni

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*This book is dedicated to Sister Regina Marie Gorman and
Weldon Larson, for your precious witness of faith and deep
humility as leaders.*

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INTRODUCTION

Whenever I hear a graduation speaker exhort a group of students to “go out into the world and be a leader,” I want to stand up and shout, “No!!! Please don’t be a leader, unless you’re doing it for the right reason, and you probably aren’t!” Let me explain.

This is the eleventh or twelfth business book I’ve written, depending on how you count them. If someone were to dive into a stack of my books for the first time, I’d tell them to start with this one.

That’s because the majority of the other books I’ve written focus on *how* to be a leader: How to run a healthy organization, lead a cohesive team, manage a group of employees. However, over the years I’ve come to the realization that some people won’t embrace the instructions I provide because of *why* they wanted to become a leader in the first place.

Throughout my childhood, people exhorted me and my peers to be leaders. I accepted their encouragement at face value and sought opportunities to lead people and organizations from the moment I could captain a team or run for student council. But, like so many people, I never stopped to consider *why* I should be a leader.

As it turns out, the primary motive for most young people, and too many older ones, is the rewards that leadership brings with it. Things like notoriety, status, and power. But people who are motivated by these things won't embrace the demands of leadership when they see little or no connection between doing their duties and receiving those rewards. They'll pick and choose how they spend their time and energy based on what they are going to *get*, rather than what they need to *give* to the people they're supposed to be leading. This is as dangerous as it is common. The purpose of *The Motive* is to make it a little less common.

I hope that this book helps you understand and, perhaps, adjust your leadership motive so that you can fully embrace the difficult and critical nature of leading an organization. Or, perhaps, it will help you come to the peaceful conclusion that you might not want to be a leader at all and allow you to find a better use for your talents and interests in a different role.

The Fable

THE SITUATION

Shay Davis knew that it was too soon for him to get fired. Six months was not enough time for even the most aggressive private equity firm to axe a recently promoted CEO. But it wasn't too soon for them to start thinking about it.

Golden Gate Security wasn't exactly failing under Shay's brief period of leadership. The company, headquartered in Emeryville, a mostly commercial town on the eastern shore of the San Francisco Bay, was still growing, albeit more slowly than most other regional security companies in the west. Profit margins were solid, but they looked anemic compared to those of All-American Alarm, the massive and most aggressive national company in the home and small business security market.

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Shay figured that the private equity guys would give him another nine months to jump-start Golden Gate, but he wasn't going to wait that long. After climbing the ladder for more than two decades and finally making it to the top, he wasn't about to let all those years of hard work go to waste.

So he decided to throw his pride out the window and make a painful phone call.

RESEARCH

Lighthouse Partners was a small consulting firm located in Half Moon Bay, California, that had a reputation for working with interesting and successful clients. One of those clients was Del Mar Alarm, a San Diego-based company that was the shining star of the regional security arena in California and a small thorn in Shay Davis's side.

Whether it was a panel discussion at a trade show or an article in a business magazine, Del Mar and its British-born CEO, Liam Alcott, were regularly lauded for their off-the-chart profitability as well as for their ability to fend off national competitors like All-American.

Normally, Shay would never have considered hiring a competitor's consulting firm, but he was beginning to feel desperate enough to try something new. When he contacted the consultant at Lighthouse who

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worked with Del Mar, she explained that she'd have to check with her client to see if it would be okay for her to work with another company in the same industry. Shay decided he probably wouldn't hear back from her. He was right.

But he could never have predicted what would happen next.

NEMESIS

It's hard to hate someone you don't know, but Shay figured he was getting pretty good at it in regard to Liam Alcott.

Though he had never really met Alcott, aside from a handshake or a perfunctory greeting at an industry event, Shay had heard him speak a few times and read more print interviews than he cared to remember. He had grown to resent the phony affability of the man who seemed to have such an easy time doing what Shay hadn't yet figured out.

So when Shay's assistant, Rita, came into his office to announce that someone named Liam was calling for him on line one, Shay figured it was one of his own executives pulling a prank on him. But before he could pick up the phone to play along, he noticed the 619 area code and decided that the caller might just be his nemesis from San Diego.