

The Only Way to Win:

How Building Character Drives Higher Achievement and Greater Fulfillment in Business and in Life

Book's Argument: According to Loehr, what truly matters most is your answer to the following question: Who do you become as a result of the pursuit of your goals? Loehr argues that a successful life is contingent on how we connect and contribute to the lives of others. For him, this linkage serves as the doorstep of character. Rather than an end in itself, achievement becomes a means to the end of building character.



Key Takeaways: True self-esteem (Deci & Ryan) develops when one's actions are congruent with one's inner core of values and beliefs. Success depends on the amount of energy invested in making yourself a better person. From Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, there are three major sustainable sources of motivation that enable optimal human performance:

Autonomy	I want to decide what to do with my life
Mastery	I want to be really good at something for its own sake
Relatedness	I want to make a difference in the world, leave a legacy for others

As goes society, so go its individual members, and vice versa, each reflecting the other's values. Character, Greek *character*, refers to an "enduring or indelible mark."

Performance character strengths originate from our emotional and mental needs and govern our relationship with ourselves. Moral character strengths emanate from our spiritual needs and govern our relationship with others. Building character is analogous to building muscle, they grow in response to energy investment.

The key to happiness and fulfillment is intrinsic and may be driven by a new life scorecard that requires serious, soulful reflection. The challenge is to focus not on the outcome alone but, most importantly, on how we achieve the outcome. We must be truthful, fair, respectful, positive and constructive, humble in victory, and compete with honor.

For Jean Piaget, moral development occurs in response to cognitive changes as we age. Morality of constraint is exercised when we are young and keep rules sacred because we get punished if we do not follow them. Morality of cooperation begins to form when we show concern for the rights of others, judge by intentions vice consequences, and show respect for the opinions of others while valuing our own thoughts and ideas.

Best Quote: "...true happiness...is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose." – Hellen Keller "The qualities that make us human emerge only in the ways we relate to other people." – Harold Kushner "True fulfillment is, I believe, vicarious. We get our deepest satisfaction from the fulfillment and growth and happiness of others." – Charles Hardy "The proper time to influence the character of a child is about a hundred years before he's born." – William R. Inge "You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him." – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Why it's important: What matters is the person we are becoming as a consequence of the pursuit, and character must be at the heart of everything we do and are. While we do not get to pick our plight, we can choose how we live our lives, how fulfilling they can be, and the legacy we leave for those we love. Making sure character trumps all is the only way to win.

Jim Loehr (2012)