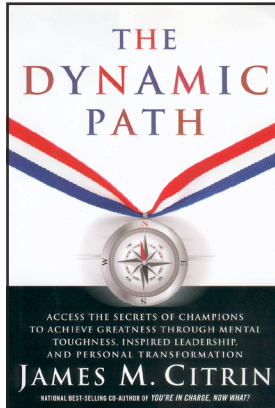


Book Reviews for Managers

The Dynamic Path

Access the Secrets of Champions to Achieve Greatness Through Mental Toughness, Inspired Leadership, and Personal Transformation

by James M. Citrin



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*"The dynamic path...
can apply to anyone."*

REVIEWED BY IAN COOK

Ground-breaking tennis great **Bil-lie Jean King** won 20 Wimbledon titles, 13 US Opens, the French and Australian Opens, and was ranked the world's No. 1 woman tennis player seven times. She went on to do pioneering work on Title IX legislation for women's access to athletics resources in schools and to found the Women's Tennis Association and the grant-giving Women's Sports Foundation.

Arnold Palmer racked up 61 PGA Tour victories, 19 international tournaments, 12 Champions (Senior PGA) wins and was the first person ever to earn one million dollars from golf. His legacy includes funding a radiation and chemotherapy treatment facility and a children's trauma center, building a multi-divisional business empire and founding the Golf Channel.

New York Knicks basketball great **Bill Bradley** won Olympic gold for the U.S. plus two NBA championships and election to the Basketball Hall of Fame. Later on he became a three-term Senator and a serious contender for the Presidency of the United States.

Most champions fade away in time, believing that their best years are now behind them. Author James Citrin wondered what differentiates them from top level athletes who, having retired from active competition, just keep growing, achieving and giving back to society. Think of people like Arthur Ashe, Terry Bradshaw, Mia Hamm, Tiger Woods (someday), and Lance Armstrong. They all follow what his research identifies as the "dynamic path."

While this is by no means the best book I've run across on leadership, Citrin does offer yet another perspective on the topic. The dynamic path these post-glory successes take can apply to anyone who starts out as an individual contribu-

tor and moves into a leadership role. If you are a sports fan, the examples and lessons from this book will particularly resonate with you. I am not a fan and they surely did with me.

Citrin's dynamic path has three stages:

1. *Champion* in their chosen sport. Here, not surprisingly, their focus is on *individual* results (theirs)
2. *Effective leader*, where they shift their focus to *collective* results
3. Leaving a *legacy* that benefits others through *enduring* results

Champion

The dynamic path is all about the athlete leveraging, later on, his or her experience on the court, the links and the field. Citrin identifies three key ingredients for becoming a champion: natural talent, persistent hard work, and mental toughness (the obsession to succeed).

Interestingly, each of the sports champions he studied at some point early on made a conscious decision to commit to the at least ten years of sweat and grind it takes to reach one's athletic performance peak. For Lance Armstrong, it was only when he faced cancer that he found the will to achieve his phenomenal success on the roads of France.

The mental toughness necessary for champion-level performance means pushing yourself to the limit and not being fazed by the many times you fail or fall short...because you no longer equate your performance with your self-worth. It also means mastering the ability to enter the proverbial "zone" where your execution just flows and you are no longer obsessed with winning. This reminds me of Canada's gold medal diver, Sylvie Bernier, who said that at Olympic level competition, "the difference is between the ears."

“Our sports heroes... must transform themselves from highly successful individual into effective leader”



Ian Cook, trainer, consultant, keynote speaker and Principal of Fulcrum Associates Inc., helps managers and supervisors get more from their people and teams through modern leadership approaches. Contact Ian to discuss the ideas in this article or to find out about related training programs, facilitation and coaching services, and keynote presentations for your organization.

Leader & Legacy

At the culmination of years of being a superstar whose autograph fans clamor for, whose interview the press vie for, and whose product endorsement corporations pay handsomely for, champions face a second choice (or “dynamic moment,” in Citrin’s terms). What will they do next?

Many attempt to cash in on their fame and celebrity status by trying their hand in building an enterprise that will continue to sustain and challenge them. Only some succeed leading a business. And only a few of these take the *full dynamic path*, with a third dynamic moment choice. They make the decision to leverage their name for a purpose bigger than themselves, a purpose that will help others and, hopefully, become an institutional legacy after they are gone.

In order to succeed with either of these two decisions, however, our sports heroes must confront a challenge perhaps bigger than any in their entire athletic career. *They must transform themselves from highly successful individual into effective leader.* It’s no longer about their own success and glory. They must now put the success of their organization and the people working with them first. If ever there was a battle against one’s ego, this is it.

The relatively few who succeed with this third shift—to legacy—are clear about who they are. And it’s not about their sport:

- Tiger Woods: “Golf is what I do. It is definitely not who I am.”
- Lance Armstrong: “My life goal now is, at the end of it all, to be remembered not for cycling but for having made a huge impact on getting rid of cancer. Cancer is my thing. I’m Lance and I’m a cancer survivor.”

The application to leaders at-large

There are three interesting lessons for all of us from Citrin’s look at the athletic greats who make it along the dynamic path.

One is that the competencies that make us an individual success—talent, hard work, dedication, mental toughness, striving to become incrementally better at your job every day—continue to serve us well in a leadership role. That said, however, when we are leading others these skills are superseded in impact by people leadership skills, acting with integrity, and standing for goals that positively affect the lives of others. Research by *The Leadership Circle* backs this up emphatically.

Secondly, build your leadership success on the talents you have developed and the life experience you have accumulated during the individual contributor phase of your career. Many sports greats do/did their legacy work within their athletic area. Studies by Zenger/Folkman, Gallup and others emphasize building on what you already do and know well.

Finally, the major “dynamic” shift all leaders must make to find their effective best is what author Bill George calls the shift from “I to WE,” from looking out for No. 1 to serving people beyond ourselves. Sports stars find this especially difficult but, in truth, we all struggle with it. I would say this “I to WE” element is on the leading edge of research discoveries about leadership when at its finest.

Despite all of the above, however, you don’t have to be famous or gifted at an Olympic level to leave a legacy. You don’t have to be a CEO either. All you need to do is ask yourself, wherever in your organization you lead from, “What is important to me?” “What do I want to create here?” This is what your staff will get excited about. And this is what will, even in small ways, live on when you are no longer on the planet.

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