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The Art Of Captaincy: What Sport Teaches Us About Leadership

Synopsis

Mike Brearley is one of the most successful cricket captains of all time, and in 1981 he captained the England team to the momentous Ashes series victory against Australia. In The Art of Captaincy, his treatise on leadership and motivation, he draws directly on his experience of man-managing a team, which included a pugnacious Ian Botham and Geoffrey Boycott, to explain what it takes to be a leader on and off the field. Giving an insight into both his tactical understanding of the game as well as how to get a group of individuals playing as a team in order to get the best out of them, The Art of Captaincy is a classic handbook on how to generate, nurture and inspire success. With a new introduction by former England player and BBC commentator Ed Smith to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its first publication, The Art of Captaincy remains urgently relevant for cricket fans and business leaders alike. Covering the ability to use intuition, resourcefulness and clearheadedness and the importance of empathy as a means of achieving shared goals, Brearley's seminal account of captaincy is the ultimate blueprint for creating a winning mind-set but also shows how the lessons in the sporting arena can be applied to any walk of personal or professional life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Even non-cricket fans would be advised to 'slog' through this tome. Brearley's book, written in the mid 1980's is as relevant today as it was back then. Sure the anecdotes stop in 1985 but they provide a fascinating look at what it was like to be a cricketer in the 1960's - 1980's: lemon squash and biscuits, nutjobs like Close, eccentrics like Dexter and Boycott.Brearley gives you his

step-by-step guide to being a captain and what pitfalls such a position brings up. Sam Mendes chips in with the introduction, having read this book when he was having difficulties with 'American Beauty'.

What a great read for cricket & also for some of the simple life lessons of working with people on a day-to-day basis.

Although this book will be primarily of interest to cricketers, it's a mistake to regard it just as a cricket book. Brearley's profession enables him to write authoritatively on captaincy as one aspect of the broader skills of leadership and motivation. Anyone interested in management would find this book as helpful as any of the reference works available on the subject.Brearley was one of the finest captains I have seen in over 50 years of watching cricket. Richie Benaud and Imran Khan, in different ways, were as successful in lifting their teams to great performances, but they were both great cricketers in their own right. Brearley was the weakest player in the side for most of his career as a test captain and the success of the team when he was leading it is testament to how important leadership is.Thoroughly recommended. I wish he'd write an autobiography!

What strikes readers of Brearley's treatise on captaining a cricket side is its relevance so long after it was written. Though it deals with a dying era of wildly eccentric English cricketers the likes of which we will never see again (Close, Dexter, Underwood, Cowdrey et.al) and the golden era of county cricket that professional sport finally replaced, his thought's on the game still hold as true as the day he penned them. Captaincy is still all of the things Brearley discusses and very little he doesn't. Even his predictions seem to be by a man who had seen the future. His discussion of the new trend of 'sledging,' the over aggressive nature of the modern players and his distaste for them seem more than justified today.With England coming to realise in recent times that a side will only be as good as the commitment the team shows, leadership becomes ever more prized. Recent sides have rallyed round a strong leader and become greater than the sum of parts because of it. That having been said, it is Brearley's point that the Australian's have always selected a team and then picked a captain from amongst them that seems to reveal a much deeper issue for the English game. Afterall, Brearley only averaged just above 20 for his country, yet still had a safe pair of hands in the field, something the present side still lacks. It is no coincidence that the Australian side fields as well as its best does. Ponting just happens to be the player the selector's picked to captain. In the end Brearley makes the point clear that a captain leads by example, certainly thought needs

to behind his actions but his deeds stir the team to act.The Art of Captaincy points to strength of conviction, always back the hunch style cricket that the Australian game has always played, as the key to sucess. England are still looking to get back that sense of belief that deserted them somewhere in the summer of 1989. Reading this book only helps to remind us of a time when England were Kings. Surely they must rise again?

I don't have much to compare against (as it is the only cricket-related book I've read), but it makes an excellent read. Most of Brearley's arguments are based on sound logic, and he relates some pretty interesting anecdotes to back it up. A lot of these are however from English county cricket, and many readers may not be able to relate to them. The book is still a very compelling read and I would highly recommend it to anyone who's involved in playing the game, or interested in reading about it.

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