7 Leadership Secrets from Ender Wiggin
(Ender's Game)

Greater Atlanta Chapter of the IIBA
Monthly Chapter Meeting
February 23, 2016, 6:30pm to 8:30pm

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➢ **Leadership lessons for Ender Wiggin is presented with all respect to the author. I highly encourage everyone to read Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card.**

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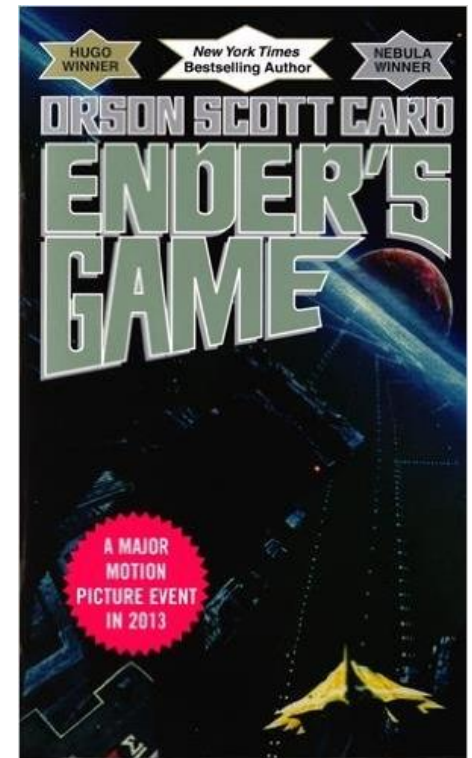
~~Ground~~ Space Rules

➢ **This session is for you, so please participate.**

➢ **Interrupt me for clarifications.**

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➢ **No animals were harmed during the creation of this presentation. Please support your local pet rescue groups.**

Management vs Leadership

➢ **Management:**
- o **"Getting the right things done on time." – <u>Dusty Rhoades</u>**
- o **HR and/or financial responsibility**
- o **"Boss" usually means bad manager**

➢ **Leadership:**
- o **Set the vision and goals**
- o **Communicate constraints**
- o **Decide how to achieve goals**
- o **Align teams to goal and help clear obstacles**

http://blog.startwithwhy.com/refocus/2015/07/management-vs-leadership.html

Why Should I Care About Being a Leader?

➢ **More opportunities and career control**

➢ **Increased compensation**

➢ **Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us by Daniel H. Pink**
http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation?language=en
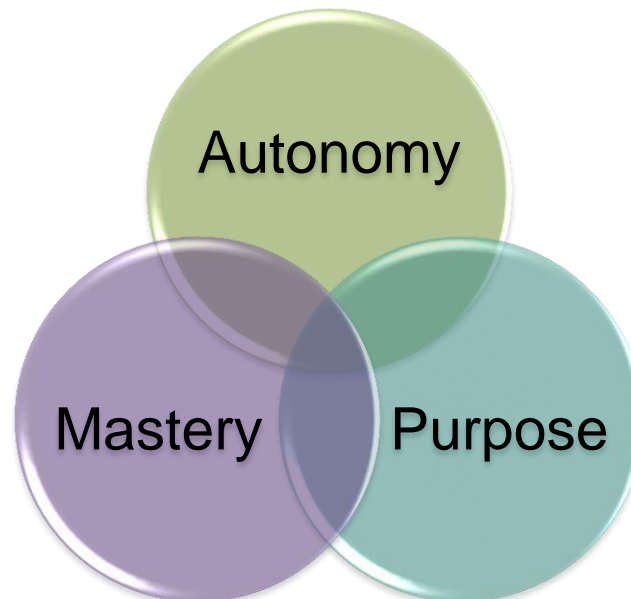
Ender's Game – A Little Background

➢ **Humanity is threatened after two previous Bugger wars, and Earth is preparing for a third war.**

➢ **The brightest children are taken at age 7 to Battle School to learn how to become the next generation of soldiers.**

➢ **The story follows Andrew "Ender" Wiggin who is believed to be our last hope to lead our armies in the next Bugger war.**

➢ **Students start as launchies, then move into small armies to compete in games in the Battle Room.**

➢ **At Command School, Ender and his toon leaders use a simulation game to control fighter groups in mock battles.**

http://ansible.wikia.com/wiki/Battle_Room#The_Battle_Room

1. The Enemy's Gate is Down

http://conceptartworld.com/?p=28623

1. The Enemy's Gate is Down

➢ **From Ender's Game:**
- o **In null gravity, orientation is what you choose.**
- o **Travelling "under" stars was a problem for soldiers who kept the orientation of gravity in the hall.**
- o **It's easier to "fall" toward your target.**

➢ **Lesson: Shift your perspective so that your goal is always clearly in front of you. Past perspectives can trap teams.**

➢ **Applied:**
- o **Restate the goal at every meeting.**
- o **Use the goal to challenge suggestions. "Will that help us achieve X goal?"**
- o **Identify where past perspectives are hindering progress.**

2. Learn Local Patterns and Customs

http://ansible.wikia.com/wiki/Ender's_Game_(Movie)

2. Learn Local Patterns and Customs

- ➢ **From Ender's Game:**
  - o **Bunking position is used to show status**
  - o **Slang language patterns are used by students to break from the highly structured environment**

- ➢ **Lesson:**
  - o **Take time to learn "Tribal Knowledge", and use when appropriate**

- ➢ **Applied:**
  - o **All in a name: FRD vs BRD example**
  - o **Define when you will follow the pattern (buy in), or deliberately break the pattern (stimulate new thinking)**
  - o **Use stories to imply group membership**

3. Know Your Team - Socrates

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➤ **From Ender's Game:**
  o **Dragon Army was all untrained launchies**
  o **Ender sorted, tiered training, used peer support, and identified special skills**

➤ **Lesson:**
  o **Create an environment where everyone contributes to the end goal.**

➤ **Applied:**
  o **What would success look like? How would people behave?**
  o **Make it personal; look beyond the role**
  o **Lead by example, always**

4. Trust Your Team Leads

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➤ **From Ender's Game:**
  o **Traditional teams followed instructions of commander**
  o **Instead of 4 toons of 10 soldiers, Ender created 5 split toons, giving him 10 autonomous units of 4 soldiers each**
  o **Ender structured simulator battles by blending group coordination with localized decisions**

➤ **Lesson:**
  o **Think globally, act locally.**

➤ **Applied:**
  o **Constantly realign group focus, teams, and priorities based on changing conditions**
  o **Use team leads to execute plans in each area**
  o **Create a cross-functional team to evaluate work and find innovative solutions**

5. Formations vs Guerrilla Tactics

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➢ **From Ender's Game:**
  o **Traditional armies couldn't adapt to Ender's 5/10 independent units making immediate decisions**
  o **Against the Buggers, Ender created a hybrid approach taking the best of one "hive" mind with localized decisions**
  o **Formations work best when facing overwhelming odds**

➢ **Lesson:**
  o **Too much structure limits performance and adaptability**

➢ **Applied:**
  o **Teams must have enough structure to remain aligned to a common goal**
  o **Structure can help overcome external chaos**
  o **Repeat what works, try new things**

6. Reactionary vs Proactive Leadership

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- ➤ **From Ender's Game:**
  - o **Example: Battling two armies blindly**
  - o **Example: Simulator groups Alai vs Bean**
  - o **Ender saw that traditional training produced predictable armies that cold be easily defeated**

- ➤ **Lesson:**
  - o **Don't build a team with processes for every problem, rather build a team that will adapt and overcome.**

- ➤ **Applied:**
  - o **Do you prioritize your day from your inbox?**
  - o **Start every meeting with the meeting outcome**
  - o **Try mental role playing prior to conflict encounters**

7. Over Utilizing Your "A Team"

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➤ **From Ender's Game:**
- o **Example: Petra and the nearly lost battle**
- o **Example: Rotating squad leaders during battles**

➤ **Lesson:**
- o **Sometimes the best person for the task isn't the best person for the task.**

➤ **Applied:**
- o **Star contributors can throttle work and reduce team productivity**
- o **Promote delegation of lower tasks and encourage mentoring**
- o **The best leaders are master delegators**

8. Bonus – The Loneliness of Leadership

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➢ **From Ender's Game:**
  o **Ender discovers he isn't part of social group anymore**
  o **Team keeps expecting Ender to find a way to win, but he has no one to turn to**

➢ **Lesson:**
  o **Teams must bond outside of their leadership.**

➢ **Applied:**
  o **Give your teams time to trash talk and complain**
  o **Limit your social time with the groups**
  o **A leader is just outside the friend zone**

Mastering Leadership by Ender Wiggin

Know Your Team

Learn Local Patterns and Customs

Trust Your Team Leads

Use Guerrilla Tactics, not Formations

The Enemy's Gate is Down

Don't Over Utilize Your "A Team"

Be Proactive, not Reactionary

Stay Connected – Stay Flexible – Lead On

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http://wallpaperswide.com/enders_game_2013_sci_fi_movie-wallpapers.html