

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

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## Stay Connected

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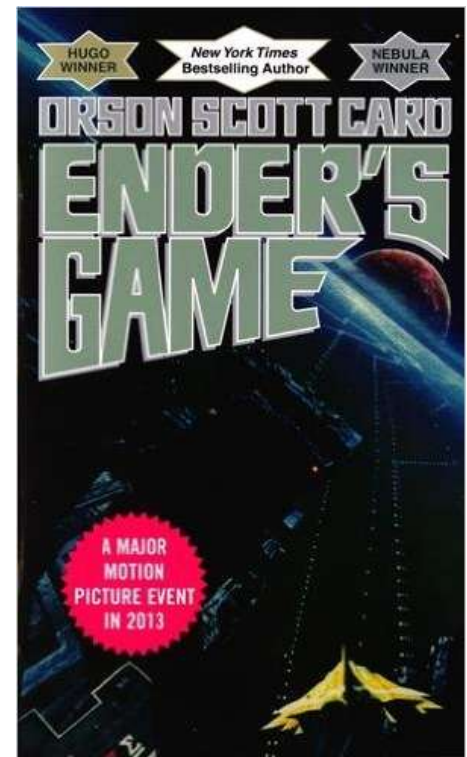
## Ground Rules

- **This session is for you, so participate.**
- **These are tricks and tips that worked for me, but might not be right for everyone or every situation. Please consult a coach or physician to find a program that is best for you.**
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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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# Management vs Leadership

## ➤ Management:

- **“Getting the right things done on time” – Dusty Rhoades**
- **HR and/or financial responsibility**
- **“Boss” usually means bad manager**

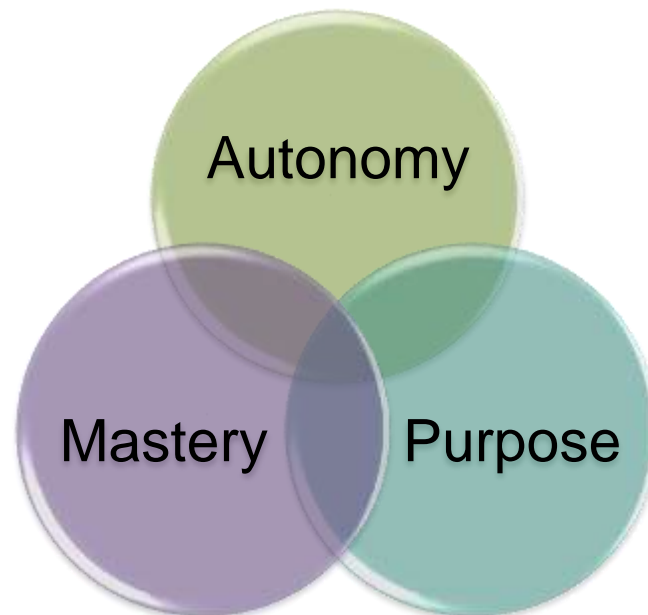


## ➤ Leadership:

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

## 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](http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation?language=en)



# Ender's Game – Movie Preview

<https://youtu.be/X5ev-nOWJH8>

## Ender's Game – A Little Background

- **Earth is threatened by an extraterrestrial invasion of Buggers. There have been two previous Bigger wars, and Earth is preparing for a third war that could happen any time.**
- **Best a brightest children at age 7 taken 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 Bigger 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](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:

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

## ➤ Lesson: Shift your perspective so that your goal is always clearly in front of you. Your past perspective can trap you.

## ➤ Applied:

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

## 2. Learn Local Patterns and Customs



[http://ansible.wikia.com/wiki/Ender's Game \(Movie\)](http://ansible.wikia.com/wiki/Ender's_Game_(Movie))

## 2. Learn Local Patterns and Customs

### ➤ From Ender's Game:

- **Use of bed assignments to show status**
- **Slang language patterns to break from structured environment**

### ➤ Lesson:

- **Take time to learn "Tribal Knowledge" and use when appropriate**

### ➤ Applied:

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

### 3. Know Your Team - Socrates



<http://www.realstylenetwork.com/celebrities/2013/11/enders-game-is-a-thought-provoking-ride/>

### 3. Know Your Team - Socrates

➤ **From Ender's Game:**

- **Dragon Army was all untrained launchies**
- **Sorted, developed tiered training, used peer support, and identified special skills**

➤ **Lesson:**

- **Creating an environment where everyone contributes to the end goal.**

➤ **Applied:**

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

## 4. Trust Your Team Leads



<http://www.screeninsults.com/enders-game.php>

## 4. Trust Your Team Leads

### ➤ From Ender's Game:

- **Traditional teams followed instructions of commander**
- **Ender created 5 (vs 4 traditional) toons with half toons, and one special operations unit; 10 possible autonomous units**
- **Ender structured simulator battles by blending group coordination with localized decisions**

### ➤ Lesson:

- **Think globally, act locally.**

### ➤ Applied:

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



## 5. Formations vs Guerrilla Tactics



<http://collider.com/enders-game-review/>

## 5. Formations vs Guerrilla Tactics

### ➤ From Ender's Game:

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

### ➤ Lesson:

- **Too much structure limits performance and adaptability**

### ➤ Applied:

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

## 6. Reactionary vs Proactive Leadership



<http://collider.com/enders-game-review/>

## 6. Reactionary vs Proactive Leadership

### ➤ From Ender's Game:

- **Battling two armies blindly**
- **Simulator groups: Alai vs Bean**
- **Ender saw that traditional training produced predictable armies that could be easily defeated**

### ➤ Lesson:

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

### ➤ Applied:

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

## 7. Over Utilizing Your “A Team”



[http://ender.wikia.com/wiki/Petra\\_Arkanian](http://ender.wikia.com/wiki/Petra_Arkanian)

## 7. Over Utilizing Your “A Team”

### ➤ From Ender’s Game:

- **Petra and the nearly lost battle**
- **Rotating squad leaders during battles**

### ➤ Lesson:

- **Sometimes the best person for the task isn’t the best person for the task.**

### ➤ Applied:

- **Individual “star” contributors throttle work and can reduce team productivity**
- **Promote delegation of lower tasks and encourage mentoring**
- **The best leaders are master delegators**

# Mastering Leadership by Ender Wiggin



# Stay Connected – Stay Flexible – Lead On

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[http://wallpaperswide.com/enders\\_game\\_2013\\_sci\\_fi\\_movie-wallpapers.html](http://wallpaperswide.com/enders_game_2013_sci_fi_movie-wallpapers.html)



## 8. Bonus – The Loneliness of Leadership



<http://blog.acton.org/archives/62058-enders-game-and-neo-malthusianism.html>

## 8. Bonus – The Loneliness of Leadership

### ➤ From Ender's Game:

- Ender discovers he isn't part of social group anymore
- Team keeps expecting Ender to find a way to win, but he has no one to turn to

### ➤ Lesson:

- Teams must bond outside of their leadership.

### ➤ Applied:

- Give your teams time to trash talk and complain
- Limit your social time with the groups
- A leader is just outside the friend zone