

The “ME” Syndrome

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Many people are familiar with the "me" syndrome which is where players are in it simply for themselves and don't care what is in the best interests of the team. Given the choice between doing what is in their best interests or in their teams best interests, the players afflicted with the "me" syndrome will chose themselves over the team. If they can score a goal a game and lose most games or score the occasional goal and win most games, they chose the option of scoring and losing. A team with players suffering from the "me" syndrome will end up being unsuccessful.

The "I" syndrome isn't as well known but can cause almost as many problems as the "me" syndrome. The player suffering from the "I" syndrome thinks that the way for the team to be successful is for her to do more and try to take over. This is the person you see at the end of the game who tries to dribble through everyone to score the winning goal. The person with the "me" syndrome does this for the glory while the person with the "I" syndrome does it for the good of the team.

Unfortunately, neither really works. If you have 5 players with the "I" syndrome, you will have 5 players at the end of the game trying to do what each thinks is the best thing for the team. Frequently, this result in a frantic finish with players running all over the place but unfortunately, it doesn't usually work. The person with the "I" syndrome thinks she is doing what is in the team's best interests but in reality she is really being counterproductive.

The player with the "we" syndrome will do what is in the best interests of the team even if it means taking a step back for the team. While the "we" player and the "I" player have the same interests, the "we" player understands that the best interests of the team takes more than just personal effort. An example is that in the last few minutes of the game, while the "I" player is trying to do everything on her own, the "we" player is trying to find the best way to succeed any way possible whether it directly relates to their own effort or not. The "we" player ends up being the successful one even if sometimes the "me" and "I" players sometimes get the short-term glory.

A player can change from a "me" player to an "I" player to a "we" player but only if they understand the concept. Without knowing that being a "me" or "I" player is a problem, they will never know they have to get better and become a "we" player.

If you are a player, the first step in becoming a better team player is to ask yourself whether you are a “me” player, an “I” player or a “we” player. Then if you are not happy with your HONEST answer, set out to do something about this.