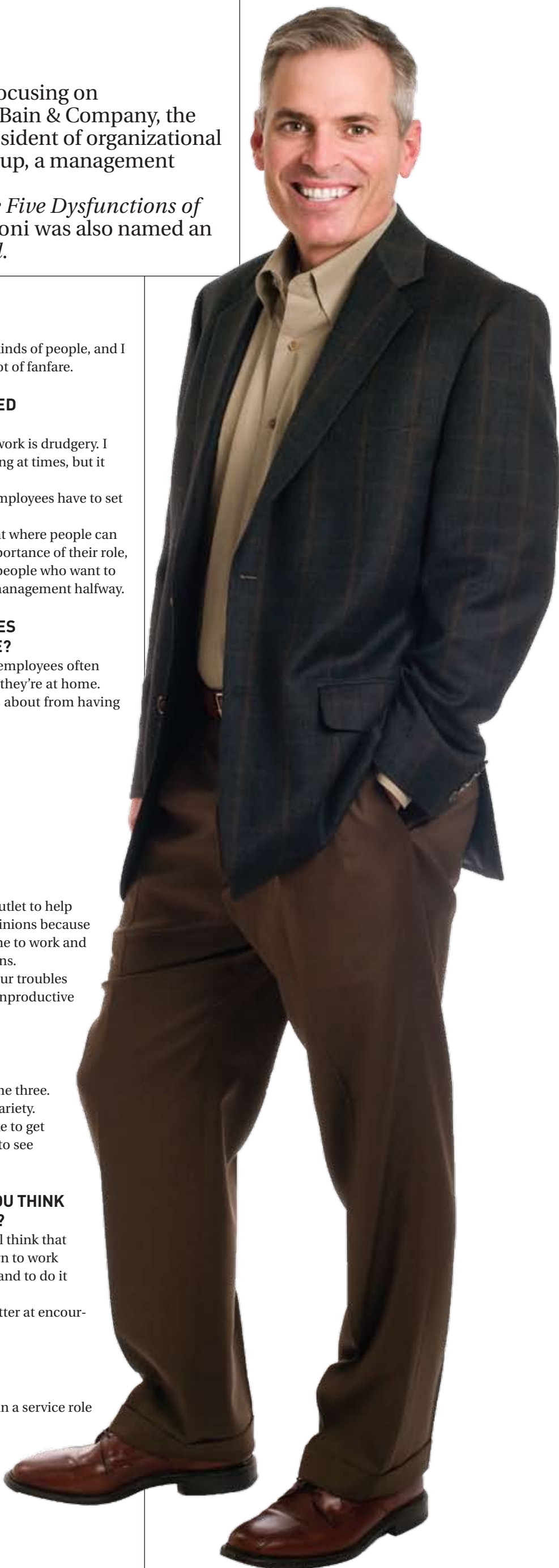


PATRICK LENCIONI

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Patrick Lencioni is a speaker, author, and consultant focusing on organizations and teams. He has previously worked at Bain & Company, the Oracle Corporation, and Sybase, where he was vice president of organizational development. In 1997, Lencioni founded the Table Group, a management consulting firm specializing in organizational health.

The author of eight best-selling books, including *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* and *The Three Signs of a Miserable Job*, Lencioni was also named an in-demand business speaker by *The Wall Street Journal*.



Q | WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB, AND WHAT LESSON DID YOU TAKE AWAY FROM IT?

My first job was as a busboy in a restaurant when I was 13. I learned to relate to all kinds of people, and I developed a strong appreciation for hard work and for people who do it without a lot of fanfare.

Q | DO YOU THINK THE OVERALL ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK NEED TO BE SHIFTED IN TODAY'S BUSINESS CULTURE?

I think the answer is yes. They've always needed to shift. There is this concept that work is drudgery. I think that work should be ennobling and lift people up. It can be hard and exhausting at times, but it shouldn't be demoralizing.

So I think yes, they need to change, and we need to realize that employers and employees have to set higher expectations for fulfillment at work.

I'm hopeful that managers will realize that it is their job to create an environment where people can be excited about coming to work—where they feel appreciated, understand the importance of their role, and get feedback on their work. I think we need to create a better environment for people who want to succeed, and we need to have less tolerance for people who aren't willing to meet management halfway.

Q | IS THERE MORE CROSSOVER BETWEEN PEOPLE'S WORK LIVES AND PERSONAL LIVES THAN THEY MIGHT INITIALLY REALIZE?

Absolutely. I think that one of the greatest inhibitors of fulfillment at work is that employees often come to work and they think they need to be different people than they are when they're at home. People have underestimated the amount of misery, stress, and anxiety that comes about from having to live two separate lives.

That's because all too often, employees go to work and don't feel like there's an outlet to help them deal with challenges in life. People also hold back their creativity and their opinions because they don't know if they will be welcomed or appreciated. I think people need to come to work and be fully the person they are in terms of their ideas, passions, troubles, and aspirations.

When we mute ourselves at work by holding back our ideas and by not sharing our troubles from time to time, we often end up going home and dealing with our emotions in unproductive and even destructive ways.

Q | WHICH DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST: SPEAKING, WRITING, OR CONSULTING?

If I had to do just one of them, I would not be happy. It's really the combination of the three. I couldn't be a full-time speaker, a full-time writer, or a full-time consultant. I love variety.

With speaking, for example, I love the fact that I can reach a larger audience. I like to get their reaction. I like to see when the points I make resonate—it's a wonderful thing to see people having "aha!" moments.

Q | WHAT IS AN AREA OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THAT YOU THINK IS OVERLOOKED OR UNDEREMPHASIZED BY COMPANIES TODAY?

How to benefit from healthy conflict. Companies and leaders within companies still think that it's appropriate to avoid interpersonal discomfort. Yet, successful organizations learn to work through interpersonal discomfort and to challenge and disagree with one another, and to do it kindly but with passion.

There's goodness that comes from healthy conflict. I think leaders have to get better at encouraging and tolerating conflict, and teaching people how to work through it.

Q | ARE THERE ANY NEW BOOKS OR PROJECTS ON WHICH YOU ARE WORKING?

I'm going to be writing a book this winter about consulting and about how anyone in a service role can provide better service to their clients.

Q | HOW DO YOU ENJOY SPENDING YOUR FREE TIME?

I spend all of my free time with my family. My wife and I have four little boys, and so I spend time with them either coaching their soccer or basketball teams, or just hanging out at home. And, I am always trying to find more time to spend with my wife.