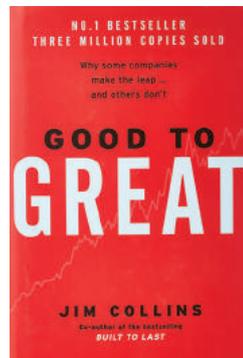




**GOOD TO GREAT: WHY SOME COMPANIES
MAKE THE LEAP... AND OTHERS DON'T**



THE BOOK


Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't

by James C. Collins



INTRODUCTION

After five years of research, Jim Collins, author of the best-seller Built to Last, put his team's hard work into his insightful book Good to Great. Starting with the question, 'Can a good company become a great one?' Collins and his team came up with eight factors that take an organisation from good to great.

By examining 11 'good to great' companies, Collins demonstrates exactly what it takes for an organisation to level up. Every one of the 11 companies demonstrated all of the 8 factors discovered by Collins and his team, but what's interesting is that they can be applied to anyone at any time, whether you are looking to guide others or excel at school.

There are so many parallels between business and life, which is why this book is an essential read for all ages. In this summary, I have explained each business lesson and shared how it can be applied to students and teachers.



5 BEST QUOTES

"Good is the enemy of great. And that is one of the key reasons why we have so little that becomes great. We don't have great schools, principally because we have good schools. We don't have great government, principally because we have good government. Few people attain great lives, in large part because it is just so easy to settle for a good life."

"For, in the end, it is impossible to have a great life unless it is a meaningful life. And it is very difficult to have a meaningful life without meaningful work."

"Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of conscious choice and discipline."

"Great vision without great people is irrelevant."

"The moment you feel the need to tightly manage someone, you've made a hiring mistake. The best people don't need to be managed. Guided, taught, led—yes. But not tightly managed."



9 BIG IDEAS

1. BECOMING GREAT

The idea for Good to Great came about when a business person said Collins' previous book *Built to Last* was interesting but ultimately useless. The problem, this person said, was that all the businesses covered in *Built to Last* were already great. He asked, "What about the vast majority of companies that wake up partway through life and realise that they're good but not great?"

Collins saw this as a reasonable and valid question, and so research for Good to Great began. After an exhaustive search, Collins and his research team settled on 11 companies that fit their criteria for starting as good, then becoming great.

The research uncovered how every 'great' company has eight factors in common with its high-achieving peers.

2. FACTOR ONE: LEVEL 5 LEADERS

The first step to making a company great is leadership.

Collins and his team identified five levels of leadership, with level five being the ideal leader for a company to reach greatness.

The key to level five leadership is a lack of ego and the ability to put the company and its future ahead of your own fame and aggrandisement. Level five leaders tend to be naturally humble and attribute a lot of their success to luck.

Great leaders think about the future of the company more than their own, and therefore their company thrives. In fact, one of the more interesting findings that Collins and his team made was that no company that hired a 'superstar ceo' made the good to great list.

How can this apply to teachers and students? It's all about staying humble, looking at the bigger picture and keeping the greater good in mind.

3. FACTOR TWO: FIRST WHO ... THEN WHAT

The second key concept in making a company great is about who is on the 'bus'. Collins maintains that getting the right people on your bus needs to come before you decide where to go.

Without the right team, you might be heading towards the right destination, but you will struggle to get there. It takes the right people to meet all your goals. If this means getting rid of the wrong people, so be it. It may feel ruthless, but in the long run, it is best for them as well. If they are not the right people for your particular bus, then they will not be happy anyway.



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Collins also adds three rules to make sure you have the right people on the bus:

1. **When in doubt, don't hire. Hang on until you find the right person**
2. **When you know you need to make a change, act. Don't drag your feet and keep the wrong people around**
3. **Put your best people on your biggest opportunities, not your biggest problems**

How can this apply to teachers and students? Choose the people you surround yourself with wisely and spend less time with the ones who don't support you as you strive towards your goals.

4. FACTOR THREE: CONFRONT THE BRUTAL FACTS

You can't take a company or yourself from good to great if you don't confront the brutal facts.

This means that if something is not working out, you have to face it and act accordingly. You can't keep steamrolling forward despite the brutal fact that you are failing.

Collins says the best way to build this culture is with the following four steps:

1. **Lead with questions, not answers**
2. **Engage in dialogue and debate, not coercion**
3. **Conduct autopsies without blame**
4. **Build red flag mechanisms that help you identify when things are going wrong**

How can this apply to teachers and students? Be realistic, ask for feedback and listen to what people say.

5. FACTOR FOUR: THE HEDGEHOG CONCEPT

The hedgehog concept is key to succeeding in the rest of the ideas below.

This concept comes from an old fable about a fox and a hedgehog. While the fox is cunning and full of multiple ideas, the simple hedgehog has only one, roll into a ball. The thing is, the hedgehog's one idea is so effective that no matter what the fox tries, he can't eat the hedgehog.

Find one solid idea and stick with it.

Your core idea can be anything but the key is to stick with it and understand the three circles.



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The three circles are:

1. What are you deeply passionate about?
2. What can you be best in the world at?
3. What drives your economic engine?

Where these three circles intersect is where your hedgehog concept should be.

You also need to remember that this is a long game. It could take years to be great but if you stick to your hedgehog concept and the rest of the steps in Good to Great, you can make it.

How can this apply to teachers and students? Figure out what you love, what you're good at and what has the potential to support you financially in the future... and build from there.

6. FACTOR FIVE: A CULTURE OF DISCIPLINE

It takes discipline to turn a company from good to great.

You need a culture full of self-disciplined people who take disciplined action, fanatically and consistently.

Remember, though, discipline is different from tyranny. Tyrannous leaders tend not to be able to foster the same longevity as those who foster independence as well as discipline. Collins vouches for a culture of duality, one where people adhere to a consistent system but also have freedom and responsibility in the framework of that system.

How can this apply to teachers and students? Set goals and find ways to stay disciplined so you can achieve them (but remember to have some fun along the way).

7. FACTOR SIX: TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATORS

Great businesses see technology as a tool, and a means to an end and not as the end itself. The dot-com bubble of the early 00s proved this. So many companies popped up, with the only thing going for them being that they were in tech. Of course, none of these companies lasted.

The good to great companies in Collins' research all used technology wisely and innovatively but never made it their core concept. Rather it was a means to serve their hedgehog concept.

How can this apply to teachers and students? Leverage technology where you can but remember to always include a human element in your work.



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8. FACTOR SEVEN: THE FLYWHEEL AND THE DOOM LOOP

These are two concepts that go hand in hand.

First, the flywheel. Collins says to picture a massive metal disk mounted horizontally on an axle. Imagine trying to spin this wheel. It will take a lot of effort and many rotations before it gains true momentum. That is what it takes to become great. There is no single point that makes the difference. It is all a culmination of small efforts put together that makes the wheel spin or your company succeed.

In contrast, the companies that don't achieve greatness enter the 'doom loop'.

Rather than gaining momentum and spinning, the doom loop lurches back and forth and never gets anywhere. You can see how using your hedgehog concept will spin your flywheel, while changing ideas will put you in the doom loop.

How can this apply to teachers and students? Pick a goal and take every small step required to work towards it.

9. FACTOR EIGHT: BUILT TO LAST

Here are the four core concepts from his first book *Built to Last* that Collins believes make a difference when it comes to going from good to great:

1. Clock Building, Not Time Telling: This is about creating an organisation that can live through multiple leadership changes. For students and teachers, it's all about adaptability.

2. Genius of the AND: The genius of AND is embracing balance. You can be for purpose and profit, or for discipline and creativity.

3. Core Ideology: Having a core ideology is about having a purpose behind your work and what you are striving for.

4. Preserve the Core/Stimulate Progress: Even with a core focus, change is necessary. Have a mindset that embraces change, improvement, innovation and renewal.

**3 ACTION STEPS****1. IDENTIFY YOUR CORE PURPOSE**

What makes you happy, what are you good at and what has the potential to generate financial success in the future?

When you identify this, you'll have not only something to strive for but a reason to pursue it.

2. INCH TOWARDS SUCCESS

Nothing good ever happens overnight. Remember there is a lot of hard work on the way to greatness.

3. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE BEST PEOPLE

In business, at school and in life, everything will be easier if you keep the people who lift you up and challenge you to try harder the closest.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

The key takeaway of Good to Great is that any business (or any individual) can become great.

By following the example of others who have risen above the crowds and especially by showing discipline, you can take your company or your achievements to greatness and stay there.



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