

There are people who bring you down in life. And then there are people who bring you up. You want to be around the ones who fill your tank. We had a lot of them on the team.

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2.2 Filling Emotional Tanks

People do better when their Emotional Tanks are full. The E-Tank is like the gas tank of a car. If your car's gas tank is empty, you can't drive very far. If you have a full tank, you can go a long way.

Triple-Impact Competitors understand a key way to make teammates better is to make sure they get their E-Tanks filled on a regular basis.

■ The Portable Home Team Advantage

The home team wins about 60 percent of the time in professional sports. There are several reasons for this, but there is no doubt the emotional support of the fans is a big part of it.

This isn't rocket science. People perform better when they feel better about themselves than when they are down on themselves. Having people cheer for you makes you feel better and helps you perform better.

When their E-Tanks are full, your teammates are more open to improvement, they are more optimistic, deal better with adversity, have more energy, and respond better to challenges.

If your team members routinely fill each others' tanks, your team can develop a *portable* home team advantage. It's as if you play all your games – home or away – in front of a huge supportive crowd who has your back. And we know that means better results on the scoreboard.

■ Natural Tank Drainers

Humans are natural tank drainers who don't need to be taught how. We are better at draining tanks than filling them, often doing it without even realizing it.

Criticism and sarcasm, which can be very satisfying, are deadly tank drainers. Nonverbal actions like frowning, rolling your eyes, and sighing dramatically also drain E-Tanks. Ignoring someone when he or she speaks? Ditto.

■ Using the Magic Ratio to Fill Teammates' E-Tanks

Triple-Impact Competitors constantly look for opportunities to fill teammates' E-Tanks. And it turns out that it takes a lot of tank filling for people to be able to do their best.

Research indicates optimum performance comes from about five tank-fillers for each criticism. This is called the "Magic Ratio" (5:1) because people improve so much it seems like magic.

Tank fillers can be verbal or nonverbal, extended interactions, or quick hits that take virtually no time. Here are some tools guaranteed to fill the tanks of your teammates, and make your team better, if you employ them.

Tank-Filling Tools	Examples
Names	People love to hear their own name, so use your teammates' names often: "Hey, Gabriel, how's it going?"
Comings & Goings	Greet teammates and say goodbye after practices and games: "Sandra, see you at practice tomorrow!"
Praise	Praise works best when it is truthful and specific: "Enrique, your hustle in the fourth quarter got us all going!"
Express appreciation	Simply saying thanks fills E-Tanks: "Daniella, thanks for showing me how you do that move."
Offering to help	Offering help to a teammate is a potent tank filler: "Need any help getting ready for Friday's game, Ralph?"
Glue actions	Be the person on your team who notices and comments on the unsung things that hold a team together: "Jaya, great pick for Carla on that game-winner. We wouldn't have won without it!"
Check-ins	Look out for teammates who seem down and check in with them: "How you doing, Rashad? You seem a little down today."
Watching out for younger players	If you are an older or more talented player, being friendly to younger or less talented players can make them more confident, more likely to work hard, and a bigger contributor to the team's success.

Tank-Filling Tools	Examples
Asking and listening	Being asked for your ideas and being listened to are big tank fillers: "I'm having trouble getting open on that new route. How do you do it?"
Mistake Ritual (see Chapter 1.4)	A person's tank is lowest after a mistake: "Don't worry, Marjorie, we'll get it back. Just flush it!"
Nonverbal actions	Tank filling doesn't have to be talk. Smiling, clapping, fist bumps, head nods, thumbs up, and eye contact all fill tanks.

Triple-Impact Competitors commit to making their team better by becoming a regular tank-filler. Use Exercise 6 on the following page to create a plan for filling your teammates' E-Tanks this season.

Exercise 6: Creating an E-Tank Action Plan

In Chapter 2.2 you learned about the power of filling Emotional Tanks. Here are some ideas for how you can fill your teammates' E-Tanks:

- Give specific, truthful praise during practices and games.
- Invite a teammate you don't know well to join you for lunch.
- Go out of your way to look out for teammates who need extra tank filling.
- Send tank-filling messages via texts or Facebook.
- Rally teammates to go to the junior varsity or freshmen game to root for the younger athletes in your program.
- Identify the kinds of things – music, exercise, games, naps, hanging out, journaling – that fill your own E-Tank and do them regularly.

1. Identify a few teammates who might need tank-filling right now. What specifically can you do to fill their respective E-Tanks?

2. What are you going to do to fill *your* E-Tank during the season?



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