

# Audio-Tech Business Book Summaries

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## The Leadership Challenge

Fourth Edition

by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner

*A summary of the original text.*

Let's begin by taking a look at the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership as revealed by the extensive research of Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner.

In 1983, the authors began conducting their research to analyze thousands of personal best leadership experiences. In each case, they found remarkably similar patterns of action. They forged those practices into a model of leadership and boiled it down to the essentials that every leader must practice to achieve success. The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership are:

1. Model the Way
2. Inspire a Shared Vision
3. Challenge the Process
4. Enable Others to Act
5. Encourage the Heart

**Model the Way** refers to the

most fundamental way in which leaders earn — and sustain — credibility: They do what they say they will do. There are two parts to this practice. To model behavior effectively, you must first *clarify your values*. You must find your own voice and then clearly and distinctively express your values to everyone in the organization. You must believe in the values you express, but those values must not be merely your own personal principles. They must represent what the company stands for.

But however eloquent your speech, you must then follow it with actions that reflect your expressed values. That's where the second part comes in: *You must set the example*. Your words and deeds must be consistent. Effective leaders set the

example through daily actions that demonstrate that they are deeply committed to their beliefs. If you're not willing to do a given task, why should others be willing? The best leaders are distinguished by relentless effort, steadfastness, competence, and attention to detail.

The second practice is to ***Inspire a Shared Vision***. This is also a two-part practice. First, you must *envision the future by imagining and believing in an exciting, highly attractive future for the organization*. You must be confident that you can make that extraordinary future come true. An exemplary leader is exceptionally good at imagining a future that does not yet exist. But the vision in his imagination is not enough to create an organized movement or to forge significant change in a company.

The second part in the equation is to *enlist others in a common vision*. In order to do this, you must convince people that you understand their needs and have their interests at heart. Leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue. You must have intimate knowledge of people's dreams, hopes, aspirations, visions, and values. You will breathe life into these hopes and dreams and create a unity of purpose by showing constituents how the dream is for the common good. You must make your own enthusiasm contagious.

The third practice is to ***Challenge the Process***. Most leadership challenges involve a change in the status quo. In fact, not one of the leaders interviewed by the authors claimed to have achieved a personal best by keeping things the same. All leaders therefore must challenge the current process. The first step in doing this is to *search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve*. This search comes from listening — to customers, clients, vendors, people in the labs, and people on the front lines. You must constantly look outside yourself and your organization for new products, processes, and services.

The second part of challenging the existing process is to *experiment and take risks*, despite the possibility of failure. Good leaders look for small victories that can build confidence in their team. Each small win builds confidence in long-term success. Failure is also a valuable learning experience.

The fourth practice is to ***Enable Others to Act***. Success requires a team effort. It requires group collaboration and individual accountability. This is so crucial to realizing grand dreams that the authors devised a simple test around it: To determine whether someone is on the road to becoming a leader, they simply count the number of times the person uses the word "we."

Enabling others to act entails two things: First, *foster collaboration and build trust*. Engage all those who must make the project work, including peers, managers, customers, clients, and suppliers. Second, *make it possible for others to do good work*. Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence. Good leaders do not hoard power. They give it away.

The fifth practice is to ***Encourage the Heart***. This refers to genuine acts of caring to uplift the spirits of the people on the team. First, *recognize contributions*. Show appreciation for individual excellence. For example, write a personal note rather than send an e-mail. Second, *celebrate values and victories through creating a spirit of community*. For example, establish a public recognition program that rewards performance. This serves to align behavior with the cherished values expressed at the outset.

Now that we've outlined the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, let's take a look at what

constituents look for in their leaders.



## **CREDIBILITY IS THE FOUNDATION OF LEADERSHIP**

What leaders say they do is one thing; what constituents say they want from leaders and how well leaders meet those expectations is another. Strategies, tactics, skills, and practices are empty without an understanding of the fundamental human aspirations that connect leaders to constituents.

The authors administered a questionnaire to more than 75,000 people throughout the world, asking what qualities in a leader would inspire them to follow *willingly*. The results are striking for their consistency. Four characteristics rose to the top of the list, receiving more than 60 percent of the votes over time and across many cultures. For people to willingly follow a leader, the leader must be:

1. Honest
2. Forward-looking
3. Inspiring
4. Competent

These four characteristics are intimately bound up with the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. For example, you cannot *Model the Way* without being honest. You can't *Inspire a Shared Vision* without being forward-looking and inspiring. Being competent allows you both to *Challenge the Process* and to *Enable Others to Act*.

Let's take a closer look at each of the four attributes that compel people to follow a leader.

**Honesty** rose to the top of the list and emerged as the single most important characteristic people look for in leaders. Whether people follow a leader into battle or into the boardroom, they insist that he or she be truthful, ethical, and principled. The terms "integrity" and "character" came up frequently as another way of saying that they're looking for honesty. Honesty is strongly tied to values and ethics. People inherently admire leaders who know where they stand on important principles and have confidence in their own beliefs.

In the second instance — being **forward-looking** — more than 70 percent of respondents ranked this attribute high on the list. People want leaders to have a sense of direction and a concern for the future of the organization. No one wants to follow someone who's lost. A good leader has a clear destination in mind for the company.

The third attribute people demand from leaders is that they be **inspiring**. People expect their leaders to be enthusiastic, energetic, and positive about the future. While leaders define the content of the work to be done, they can make the context far more meaningful if they're able to inspire people. Inspiring leaders breathe life into people's dreams and aspirations, making them much more willing to sign on for the duration. Emotions are contagious, and positive emotions resonate throughout an organization and help to make extraordinary things happen.

The final attribute that people want in leaders is **competence**. This refers to the leader's track record of getting things done. Although people demand a basic level of understanding of the fundamentals of the industry, market, or professional service environment, they also

know that leaders can't be expected to be the most technically competent people in their fields. What's most important is that the leader take the time to learn the business and to know the current operation.

All of these attributes add up to making a leader credible. *Credibility is the foundation of leadership.* Above all else, constituents must be able to believe in their leaders. In a separate survey, the authors found that people who perceive their managers as having high credibility were more likely to:

- Be proud to tell others they're part of the organization.
- Feel a strong sense of team spirit.
- See their own personal values as consistent with those of the company.
- Feel attached and committed to the organization.
- Have a sense of ownership of the operation.

This realization leads to a straightforward prescription for leaders about how to establish credibility: *Do what you say you will do.*

With this background, we can now go on to explore the 10 commitments of leadership.



## **MODEL THE WAY**

### **1. CLARIFY VALUES**

The most admired leaders are people with strong beliefs about matters of principle. They have an unwavering commitment to a clear set of values. They are passionate about causes.

People expect leaders to speak out on matters of values and conscience. But to speak out, you have to know what to speak about. That is why *clarify values* is the first of the 10 commitments. To clarify values you must master two essential tasks: First, *find your voice*. Second, *affirm shared values*.

Based on their findings, the authors formulated what they call the First Law of Leadership, which states that if you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe the message. That in turn led to two corollaries:

1. You can't believe in the messenger if you don't know what the messenger believes.
2. You can't be the messenger until you have a clear idea of what you believe.

A leader can't speak the truth unless he speaks in his own voice. That is why the first step is to find your voice. If the words you speak are not your words, you will not be consistent in word and deed. To find your voice, you must explore your own inner territory and find out who you are, what you stand for, what you care about, and what you believe in. It is in the process of learning who you are that you will come to know what your values are.

One way to develop a true and genuine voice is to be more conscious about the words you use. Words send signals and project hidden assumptions. Credible leadership means you must be the author of your own experience. You cannot copy someone else or read a script written by someone else. You have the freedom and obligation to be authentic. That in turn will lead to shared values across the organization.

Here are three actions that you can use to clarify values for yourself and others. First, *write a tribute to yourself*. How would you most like to be seen by others? What descriptions of you would make you feel proudest? Ask yourself seven questions:

1. What do I stand for?
2. What do I believe in?
3. What am I discontented about?
4. What keeps me awake at night?
5. What brings me suffering?
6. What brings me joy?
7. What am I passionate about?

The second action is to *write your own credo*. Make it just one page long. It should contain the principles that you would leave behind to guide your constituents' decisions and actions if you were not around. Identify the values and beliefs that are important to you, and then rank them in order of their importance.

The third action is to *engage in a credo dialogue*. Gather the people you lead and discuss shared values. Ask them to write their own credo memos. Give them five to ten minutes to write, and then ask each person to share what he or she wrote. Remind the team that the objective of this exercise is clarifying values. From this process, you can find common values to pursue.



## **2. SET THE EXAMPLE**

Leaders take every opportunity to show others by their own example that they're deeply committed to the values and aspirations they communicate. In other words, no one will believe that you're serious until they see you doing what you're asking of others. That's why the second commitment is to ***set the example***.

There are two actions that are essential for setting the example. First, *personify the shared values*; and second, *teach others to model the values*. In practicing these essentials, you will become a role model for what the whole team stands for. You will also create a culture in which everyone commits to aligning themselves with the shared values.

As a leader, you are always being watched by people who are looking for signals. They're watching to see what the message is — not in what you say, but in what you do. All people constantly send non-verbal signals, but leaders are under much closer scrutiny, so your signals are more powerful. You have to be mindful of the choices you make, because you're setting an example of what's appropriate and what's not.

Here are four signal-sending actions to consider as you work to exemplify the shared values of your company:



- First, *spend your time and attention wisely*. Spend these precious and nonrenewable resources on the most important values. For example, by attending operating meetings in the field, you can provide visible evidence of your concerns and the direction you want to pursue.
- Second, *watch your language*. Use words and phrases that best express the culture you want to create. Researchers have documented the power of language in shaping thoughts and actions. For example, if you want people to act like citizens of a village, then you have to talk about them that way, not as subordinates in a hierarchy.
- Third, *ask purposeful questions*. Raise questions that intentionally stimulate people to think more purposefully about values. The questions you ask send messages about the focus of the organization. They're indicators of what is most important to you. Questions direct attention to the values that should be attended to, and how much energy should be devoted to them.
- Fourth, *seek feedback*. Ask others about the impact of your behavior on their performance. Seeking feedback provides a powerful statement about the value of self-improvement and how everyone can always improve. Since credibility is the foundation of leadership and stems from doing what you say you will do, it is essential to ask others to let you know how well you're succeeding.

The second essential action is to teach others to model the values. There are three steps you can take to do this:

- First, *confront critical incidents*. Respond to those disruptive occurrences in the life of your organization in ways that reinforce core values. There are critical moments when you have to take action to put values squarely on the table in front of others so that everyone can return to this common ground for working together. In this way, you set an example for what it means to take action on the basis of values.
- Second, *tell stories*. Publicly give examples of what team members do to live the values and make sure to mention the moral at the end of the story. Story telling is more compelling than providing rules or guidelines. It makes the world concrete and engages the emotions.
- Third, *reinforce the behavior you want repeated*. Keep score and measure performance to determine consistency with values. Tangibly and intangibly recognize performance that's consistent with espoused values. Simply measuring performance often improves it. But rewards and recognition will reinforce values as well. The important message to keep in mind is that what you choose to reinforce is what people will choose to value.



## INSPIRE A SHARED VISION

### 3. ENVISION THE FUTURE

Exemplary leaders are forward-looking. That's why the third commitment is to *envision the future*. Leaders develop a capacity to envision the future for themselves and others by mastering two essentials: First, *imagine the possibilities*; and second, *find a common purpose*.

Clarifying your vision, like clarifying your values, is a process of self-exploration. It's an intuitive, emotional process. A vision of the future represents the broad theme you want to convey. It is your central message. To get at that theme, you need to first reflect on your past. In one study, researchers found that CEOs who reflected on past events before envisioning future ones had significantly longer time horizons than those who envisioned the future before listing the past events.

When you look into your past, you elongate your future. You also enrich it with detail from past experience. Search your past to discover recurring themes in your life.

After reflecting on the past, you can attend to the present. The future is always hiding within the present, waiting to be discovered by visionaries. Envisioning the future is about paying attention to the little things that are going on all around you and being able to recognize patterns that point to the future.

This leads to prospecting the future. A good leader will project himself ahead in time. It takes practice to become good at envisioning the future. You have to spend more of today thinking more about tomorrow if your future is going to be an improvement over the present. Don't get caught up in the details of daily life.

The second essential action to envision the future is to *find a common purpose*. Good leaders get people involved in asking, "What's next?" They talk out loud about the implications of the things they're doing now. They encourage people to ask the question, "What legacy do we want to leave?"

One important talent that enables this process is the ability to listen deeply. You must ask good questions, remain open to ideas from others, and be willing to lose an argument in the interest of the common good. Through this process, you will find the common thread that weaves the fabric of human needs together with the shared values of the company.



#### **4. ENLIST OTHERS**

Good leaders know that in order to achieve extraordinary results, they have to get everyone on board with a vision and enlist others to make it a reality. That's why the fourth commitment is to ***enlist others***.

To enlist others, you must do two things well: First, *appeal to common ideals*; and second, *animate the vision*.

What truly excites people is the possibility that what they are doing can make a profound difference in the future of their families, friends, and colleagues. They want to know that what they do matters.

Exemplary leaders also communicate what sets their product or service apart and makes it unique. Uniqueness fosters pride and boosts self-respect.

The second essential task for enlisting others is to *animate the vision*. You must help people to see and feel how their own interests and aspirations are aligned with the vision.

One way of doing this is to use symbolic language. For example, one CEO refers to himself as a catalyst, which is an enzyme that initiates a chemical reaction but isn't used up itself. Good leaders are fond of clever, meaningful metaphors that can touch people, inspire their imagination, and make them feel part of a special team.

Images also serve to animate the vision. Create word pictures that can be seen in the mind's eye. Vividly imagine the destination, and then describe it so colorfully that others will see it, too.

Good leaders aren't afraid to express their emotions in the service of enlisting others. Emotion generates energy and makes things more memorable. Scientists have shown that emotionally significant events create stronger, longer-lasting memories.

Here are three action steps you can take to increase your ability to enlist others:

- First, *record your shared vision*. Write down an ideal and unique image of the future for yourself and for your organization. Make it from three to five minutes long when read aloud.
- Second, *breathe life into your vision*. Define your vision in concrete terms. Be evocative and provocative, using figures of speech and metaphors.
- Third, *expand your communication skills*. Expressing the vision is the most difficult task for leaders. The more practice in public speaking you have, the more comfortable you'll be with it. Then let your emotions show.



## **CHALLENGE THE PROCESS**

### **5. SEARCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES**

The work of a leader is to create change. And all change requires that leaders actively seek ways to make things better, to grow, to innovate, and to improve. To ***search for opportunities*** — the fifth commitment — you must take two steps: First, *seize the initiative*; and second, *develop "outsight,"* which means seeking ideas from outside the organization.

It is quite clear that leaders must be innovators. You must bring new ideas, methods, and solutions into use. The goal is to make something happen, to change the business-as-usual environment.

To create the right conditions so that your constituents can seize the initiative, you must foster a can-do attitude by providing opportunities for people to gain mastery over tasks one step at a time. During periods of rapid change, it may seem that there's no time to stop for training. But that short-term thinking won't aid in the search for new opportunities.

Good leaders create challenges with a clear purpose. They understand that whatever is rewarding is what gets done. Giving people meaningful work and meaningful rewards leads to meaningful action in the pursuit of new opportunities.

The second big source of opportunities is from *outside the organization*. Research conducted



at MIT's Sloan School of Management showed that higher-performing groups had significantly more communication with people outside their own labs than did lower-performing groups. Tellingly, the longer the group had been in existence, the more insular it became. This gradually choked off information from outside — which caused the number of innovations to drop. Therefore, you must let ideas flow freely from outside, and remain open to opinions other than your own. Keep alert to new possibilities from anywhere or anyone. Constantly survey the landscapes of technology, politics, economics, demographics, art, religion, and society in search of new ideas.

By treating every job as an adventure, questioning the status quo, and enlisting everyone in the organization in this effort, you will not only search for opportunities but will actually find them.



## **6. EXPERIMENT AND TAKE RISKS**

The sixth commitment is to *experiment and take risks*. That means attempting things that might fail, *generating small victories*, and *learning from experience*. When taking new risks, dream big but start small. If you think of problems too broadly and expansively, it can overwhelm people and make the task seem too daunting.

To encourage people to reach for big wins but not become fearful, you need to generate small wins along the path to the big victory. These wins then generate excitement, commitment, and energy.

To do this, you must first *break big jobs down into small steps*. Good leaders also know that you have to try a lot of small experiments before you get it right. Whatever you call your experiments — model sites, pilot studies, demonstration projects — all of them are methods for trying small things in the service of larger ones. These tactics generate lots of possibilities for small wins.

Small wins not only lead to big results, they are of value in and of themselves. In a study at DuPont, for example, minor technical changes — rather than major innovations — accounted for more than two-thirds of cost reductions over a 30-year period. At the same time, small wins build people's confidence and reinforce their natural desire to feel successful. Because additional resources tend to flow to winners, this means that slightly larger wins can be attempted each time.

The second essential for experimenting and taking risks is to *learn from experience*. People make mistakes, especially when attempting something new. Without mistakes, they can't know what they can and cannot do. The overall quality of work improves when people are allowed to fail. In a paradoxical way, success does not breed success. It breeds failure. It is failure that breeds success.

It is important to recognize those failures as perfect opportunities for learning. This requires a spirit of inquiry, openness, patience, and a tolerance for error with a capacity for forgiveness. Let people try things they've never tried before. Don't focus on placing blame for a failure, only on finding the important lessons from it.

Leaders learn by trial and error, by confronting themselves on what they are worrying about,

and by bouncing their hopes and fears off of someone they trust.

Significantly, one reason that exemplary leaders engage in learning is that they are humble about their own abilities. They recognize that they don't know it all and can't do everything. They realize that they still have a lot to learn.

Another reason that leaders are serious learners is that they're apt to adopt a scientific method in their analysis of problems, challenges, and opportunities. Rather than trying to prove that they're right, scientists try to prove themselves wrong. Only by ruling out rival hypotheses can they be more confident that some phenomenon is what they believe it to be. Leaders recognize that mistakes are part of the learning process.



Successful leaders have an ability to grow and thrive under stressful situations in which there is high risk. Researchers found that people who tolerated stress well had adopted certain assumptions about themselves and their interactions with the world. Among them were:

- They felt a strong sense of control, believing that they can influence the direction and outcome of what was going on around them through their own efforts.
- Lapsing into powerlessness, feeling like a victim of circumstances, and passivity seemed like a waste of time to them.
- They were strong in commitment, believing that they could find something in whatever they were doing that seemed interesting, important, or worthwhile.
- They were curious about what was going on around them, and this led them to find interactions with people and situations stimulating and meaningful.
- They were unlikely to engage in denial or feel disengaged, bored, or empty.
- They felt strongly about the need for challenge, believing that personal improvement and fulfillment would come through the continual process of learning from both negative and positive experiences.
- They felt that it was not only unrealistic but also stultifying to simply expect — or even to wish for — easy comfort and security.



## **ENABLE OTHERS TO ACT**

### **7. FOSTER COLLABORATION**

The seventh commitment is to ***foster collaboration***. That means generating a strong sense of shared creation and shared responsibility. Leaders who do this have to be skilled in two essentials: *Creating a climate of trust* and *facilitating relationships*.

Trust is a central issue in human interactions. It begins with trusting others. In a study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers, trust was the number one differentiator between the top and bottom 20 percent of companies on the *Financial Times* 100 list. The more trusted people feel, the better they innovate.

Psychologists have also found that people who are trusting are more likely to feel happy and well-adjusted than those who view the world with suspicion. Trust is the most significant predictor of an individual's satisfaction with his organization. When you create a climate of trust, you take away the controls and allow people to be free to innovate and contribute. Trusting leaders nurture openness, involvement, personal satisfaction, and high levels of commitment to excellence.

Here are three important steps to take in building a climate of trust:

- First, *be the first to trust*. Be open, show vulnerability, and be the first to let go of control. Demonstrate your trust before asking others to trust you. Leaders must go first, as the word implies.
- Second, *be open to influence*. Exemplary leaders consider alternative viewpoints, and they make use of other people's expertise and abilities. By demonstrating openness to the influence of others, you contribute to building the kind of trust that enables your constituents, in turn, to be more open to your influence upon them.
- Third, *share information and resources*. By modeling the sharing of resources and information, you encourage others to do the same. By consulting with others and getting them to share information, you make certain that people feel involved in making decisions that affect them. By seeking diverse inputs, you also help to create a forum for competing points of view.

The second essential in fostering collaboration is to *facilitate relationships*. To get extraordinary things done, people have to rely on one another. They need to have mutual dependence — a community of people in which each knows that they need the others in order to be successful. There are three keys to facilitating relationships:

First, *develop cooperative goals and roles*. Keeping individuals focused on a common goal promotes a stronger sense of teamwork than emphasizing individual objectives. Individuals must clearly recognize that unless they each contribute whatever they can, the team will fail.

Second, *support norms of reciprocity*. This leads to predictability and stability in relationships. If people know that you'll reciprocate, they know that the best way to deal with you is to cooperate. Sharing goals and reciprocating makes work less stressful.

Third, *structure projects to promote joint effort*. People are more likely to cooperate when the payoffs for working together are greater than the payoffs for working alone. They need to understand that by working together they can achieve what no individual can.



## **8. STRENGTHEN OTHERS**

The eighth commitment is to *strengthen others*. It involves two essential practices: To

*enhance self-determination* and to *develop competence and confidence in others*. There are three keys to enhancing self-determination:

First, *provide choices*. Choice builds commitment. Choice is required in order to provide exceptional customer service. Employees give extra effort when they have the authority to give customers what they want.

Second, *design jobs to offer latitude*. If you want higher levels of performance, you must make your employees feel as if they are in control. They need to be allowed to be creative and flexible in doing their jobs.

Third, *foster accountability*. People are less likely to cooperate with colleagues who are not held accountable for their actions. Accountability results in a sense of ownership, too. Leaders who create real ownership are on the way to extraordinary results.

The second step in this commitment is to develop competence and confidence. There are four keys to this:

- First, *increase expenditures on training and development*. In other words, educate your constituents. Equip employees with skills and resources to do superior work. Make them more qualified, more capable, and more effective.
- Second, *organize work to build competence*. Make sure that people's jobs are designed so that they know what is expected of them. Enrich their responsibilities so that they experience variety in their assignments. Provide opportunities for them to make meaningful decisions about how their work gets accomplished.
- Third, *foster self-confidence*. Having confidence and believing in your ability to handle the job is essential in promoting and sustaining consistent effort. By communicating to constituents that you believe that they can be successful, you help people to improve their performance.
- Fourth, *act as a coach*. Never take control away from others. Let your constituents decide, and then let them take responsibility for the decisions they make. When leaders coach and share power with others, they demonstrate profound trust and respect.



## **ENCOURAGE THE HEART**

### **9. RECOGNIZE CONTRIBUTIONS**

The ninth commitment is to ***recognize contributions***. To do this, you must both *expect the best* and *personalize recognition*. There are five elements to expecting the best:

First, *bring others to life* by offering them an opportunity to perform and confidence in their performance. Show faith in your constituents' capacities. Be nurturing, supportive, and encouraging. Research shows that people act in ways that are consistent with what others expect of them.

Second, *draw out high performance* from constituents. Believing in others is an extraordinar-

ily powerful force in propelling performance. Give people permission to feel self-confidence, courage, and the will to live up to expectations.

Third, *give clear expectations and goals* to focus people's attention. Being clear about what is expected, and what you're trying to accomplish, is essential to helping people stay the course.

Fourth, *give feedback to keep people engaged*. Once people know the goal, they have to know what sort of progress they're making toward it. Feedback can also let them know what they might need from others and who might benefit from their assistance.

Fifth, *create the conditions for success*. Controlling managers have low credibility. Inspecting, correcting, and checking up on people signal a lack of trust. Create an atmosphere of trust and confidence to show that you fully believe that the outcome will be the best and that you are not constantly worrying that the worst will happen.

To achieve the second part of recognizing contributions, *personalizing recognition*, there are four steps to take:

First, *get close to people*. To make recognition personal, you have to know the person you're recognizing. Find out what motivates your constituents, what they like and don't like, and the kinds of recognition they appreciate.

Second, *be creative about incentives*. Don't rely exclusively on the organization's formal reward system. People respond to all kinds of rewards. For example, spontaneous and unexpected rewards are often more powerful than formalized ones. On-the-spot recognition is perhaps the most powerful of all (such as telling an employee — in front of peers — how well he's doing).

Third, *just say thank you*. This sounds obvious, but can be easily overlooked. If a client sends a compliment about an employee to a manager, e-mail it to all employees.

Fourth, *be thoughtful*. Personalizing recognition comes down to asking yourself this question: "What could I do to make this a memorable experience so that this person always remembers how important his or her contributions are?"



## **10. CELEBRATE THE VALUES AND VICTORIES**

The tenth and final commitment is to *celebrate the values and victories*. That involves bringing people together, sharing the lessons from success, and getting personally involved. This is how leaders reinforce in others the courage required to get extraordinary things done.

There are two essential parts of this process. First, *create a spirit of community* and second, *be personally involved*.

There are five keys to creating a spirit of community:

- First, *connect celebration, community, and commitment*. Every gathering is a chance to renew commitment. Never let an opportunity pass to make sure that everyone knows why they're all there and how they're going to act in service of that purpose.



- Second, *celebrate accomplishments in public*. Public celebrations showcase real examples of what it means to do what you say you will do. They also build commitment, because they make people's actions visible to their peers.
- Third, *make celebrations part of organizational life*. Put them on the calendar. Celebrate business milestones, individual accomplishments, and anniversaries of an employee's service.
- Fourth, *provide social support*. Ceremonies and celebrations are an opportunity to let people know they aren't alone and that there is strong support within the group. Social support enhances productivity, psychological well-being, and even physical health.
- Fifth, *have fun together*. Having fun sustains productivity, creating what researchers call subjective well-being. Foster a playful atmosphere at the office.

The second part of this commitment is to *be personally involved*. This is fairly straightforward. Leadership is a relationship, and people are much more likely to enlist in initiatives led by those with whom they feel a personal attachment.

The best way to be personally involved is to be out there among your constituents. Good leaders wander the halls, eat in the cafeteria, listen to complaints, go to parties, and attend organizational events. Believability goes up when leaders are personally involved.

Be mindful of the messages you're sending when you celebrate. Celebrations are much more than parties. They're rituals that create meaning. And because celebrations are so visible and significant, it's important to be clear about the statements you're making and the behaviors you're reinforcing. Be prepared at every public opportunity to reinforce the culture and the meaning you want to create.



## **LEADERSHIP IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS**

Leaders are made, not born. Leadership is a set of skills and abilities that anyone can learn. Those skills can be strengthened, honed, and enhanced.

As we've discussed in this summary, the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership can make better leaders of us all. The Five Practices are:

1. Model the Way
2. Inspire a Shared Vision
3. Challenge the Process
4. Enable Others to Act
5. Encourage the Heart

Leaders who use these practices create higher-performing teams, increase sales and customer satisfaction levels, and foster renewed loyalty and greater organizational commitment.

We also considered each of the four attributes that compel people to follow a leader, including that the leader be:

1. Honest
2. Forward-looking
3. Inspiring
4. Competent

People who work with such leaders are significantly more satisfied, committed, energized, and productive.

Finally, we explored each of the 10 commitments of leadership. These 10 commitments are:

1. Clarify values
2. Set the example
3. Envision the future
4. Enlist others
5. Search for opportunities
6. Experiment and take risks
7. Foster collaboration
8. Strengthen others
9. Recognize contributions
10. Celebrate the values and victories

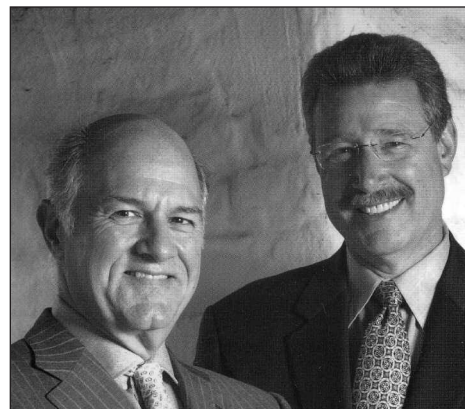
If you want to make a significant impact on people, on communities, and on organizations, you can do so by making the most important commitment: the commitment to become the very best leader you can be.



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

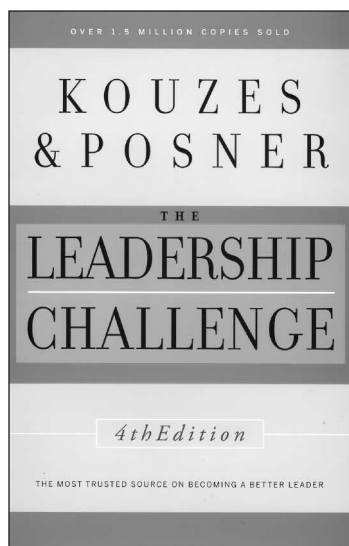
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**Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner** have co-authored more than a dozen other leadership books, including *Credibility: How Leaders Gain It and Lose It, Why People Demand It; Encouraging the Heart; and A Leader's Legacy*. They also developed the highly acclaimed Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). More than 350 doctoral dissertations and academic research projects have been based on the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership model.

Jim and Barry were named Management/Leadership Educators of the Year by the International Management Council.



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