



**EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY**

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# **THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE**

**Kouzes and Posner**

“Based upon evidence collected from around the world and over decades, **THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE** provides guidance on how to lead and inspiration to make the effort.”  
—Jeffrey Pfeffer, professor, Stanford Business School,

Kouzes and Posner suggest that “practice” is what leadership is all about. Their model, **THE FIVE PRACTICES OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**, is offered as a guide for all modern day leaders in all aspects of administration. The authors found, when researching for their book, that these five practices were common among exemplary leaders. This book is meant to be used as a tool by leaders to guide others to reach their maximum potential.

Kouzes and Posner warn, however, that in order to become an effective guide for others one must have their own house in order first. They suggest and offer questions by which leaders may challenge themselves as to their beliefs, practices and abilities. Gayle Hamilton speaks to this as she says, “You can’t follow someone who isn’t credible, who doesn’t truly believe what they are doing-and how they are doing it.” Gayle is head

of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, one of the many exemplary leaders that the authors have showcased in their book. Each practice in the book has with it numerous examples of leaders at their best. Along with the Five Practices, are the Ten Commitments of Leadership. These are offered as time-tested strategies through which leaders attain their goals.

Introduction to the Five Practices	2
Ten Commitments	3
Model the Way	4
Inspire a Shared Vision	5,6
Challenge the Process	7
Enable Others to Act	8
Encourage the Heart	9

## **TEN COMMITMENTS OF LEADERSHIP**

1. Find your voice by clarifying your personal values.
2. Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.
3. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.
4. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
5. Search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to grow, change, and improve.
6. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes.
7. Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust
8. Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion.
9. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.
10. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of

**FIVE PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP**

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

**Kouzes&Posner**

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FIVE PRACTICES

Very simply put-“YOU MUST LEAD FROM WHAT YOU BELIEVE.” (Alan Keith) This statement sums up the whole model of the Five Practices. If you do not truly believe in what you are telling your staff, or you do not model behaviors that you wish your staff to portray, how can you possibly hope to have people who believe and trust enough in you to follow your leadership? The old adage, “actions speak louder than

words”, is never truer than when dealing with people. If you hope to be a successful leader in whatever profession, you must lead by example-**Model the Way**. In order to be able to model, one must have a clear vision of what is needed and of what the end result will be. You must be able to get that vision from idea stage to one where others see it as well-**Inspire a Shared**



IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE THE MESSENGER, YOU WON'T BELIEVE THE MESSAGE.

**Vision.** Leaders must be able to take risks and do everything that they would ask others to do, whether it is mopping a spill on the floor to learning a new skill-**Challenge the Process**. Leadership is not a singular process but a relationship with others, good leaders use the term, “we”, more often than “I.” Good leaders share power-**Enable Others to Act**. Finally, leadership involves appreciation, encouragement and caring, thus- **Encouraging the Heart**.

## WHAT PEOPLE LOOK FOR AND ADMIRE IN THEIR LEADERS

While researching for their book, the authors interviewed thousands of business executives. The question put to them was, “What values do you look for and admire in your leader?” In response, 225 different characteristics, traits and values were given. Among these, in over 50% of the time,

four characteristics stood out. These were: honesty, forward-looking, competent, and inspiring. Through 3 editions of their book, from 1987 to 2002, these four characteristics remained in the lead. Honesty was always at the top of the scale. Along with honesty are the traits of being prin-

ciplined and ethical. People want to have leaders that have integrity and are credible.

“Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to make something extraordinary happen” Alan Keith, LUCAS DIGITAL

## STAYING IN LOVE

U.S. Army Major General John H. Stanford was asked by the authors how he would continue to develop leaders in the military or even private practice. His answer was not the typical strategy laden one. Stanford said, “When anyone asks me that question, I tell them I have the secret to success in life. The secret to success is to stay in love. Staying in love gives you the power to

ignite other people, to see inside other people, to have a greater desire to get things done than other people.” This statement is true no matter what field of endeavor you are in. A teacher who is in love with the profession of teaching will empower the students to grow and learn. The children see that love in the teacher and respond to that teacher as leader.



Leadership is not an affair of the head. Leadership is an affair of the heart.

## TEN COMMITMENTS OF LEADERSHIP : A summary of the strategies to help reach your goals.

### 1. FIND YOUR VOICE BY CLARIFYING YOUR PERSONAL VALUES.

- A. Look in the mirror, becoming more self aware. One way is by using the LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY. Ask for feedback on your practices.
- B. Take some quiet time to reflect on behaviors and beliefs.
- C. Watch others and learn from those you admire.
- D. Take time to identify and list values.
- E. Take realistic stock of your ability to succeed .

### 2.SET THE EXAMPLE BY ALIGNING ACTIONS WITH SHARED VALUES.

- A. Know what you are talking about.
- B. Reinforce values and beliefs through posters, pins, pictures and ceremonies.
- C. Relate stories of success to others, people relate to others through

this medium.

- D. Questions are teaching opportunities. They generate ideas and empower people to believe in themselves.

### 3. ENVISION THE FUTURE BY IMAGINING THE EXCITING AND ENNOBLING POSSIBILITIES

- A. Research past visionary leaders  
And borrow something from them to make your own.
- B. Think about your past and look forward to what you must do.
- C. Create a Vision statement, give voice and wings to your dream.
- D. Visualize yourself on your way to achieving your goal.

### 4. ENLIST OTHERS IN A COMMON VISION BY APPEALING TO SHARED ASPIRATIONS

- A. Get to know the people you are working with and find some commonalities.

- B. Collectively create a vision.
- C. Be positive about your vision, believe in it with all your heart, then others will to.
- D. Listen, listen, listen.

### 5.SEARCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES BY SEEKING INNOVATIVE WAYS TO CHANGE, GROW AND IMPROVE.

- A. Challenge yourself and others, making every task an adventure.
- B. Read: FUN WORKS:CREATING PLACES WHERE PEOPLE LOVE TO WORK by Leslie Yerkes.
- C. Change make-up of teams on a regular basis.

**HELP BEGETS HELP  
JUST AS TRUST  
BEGETS TRUST**

### 6.EXPERIMENT AND TAKE RISKS BY CONSTANTLY GENERATING SMALL WINS AND LEARNING FROM MISTAKES.

- A. Create a climate of change, do not be afraid of changing.
- B. Change by taking small steps at first and celebrating small wins to encourage further risk taking.
- C. Foster an atmosphere of safety-it is okay to make mistakes. When leaders make mistakes, good leaders talk about what they have learned from their mistake.
- D. Take inventories often. Question how you are doing, what is working well, what can be improved. Celebrate successes!
- E. Choices empower people to believe that they matter in the grand scheme of things. Choice=commitment and ownership.

### 7. FOSTER COLLABORATION BY PROMOTING COOPERATIVE GOALS AND BUILDING TRUST.

- A. Promote and conduct positive face-to-face interactions, this builds trust.
- B. When listening, ask questions for clarification, seek to understand the other's perspectives.
- C. In planning and discussions, use "we", not "I."
- D. Create opportunities for informal interactions, encourage "human moments" throughout the day.

## TEN COMMITMENTS, continued

### 8. STRENGTHEN OTHERS BY SHARING POWER AND DISCRETION.

- A. Assure that individual and group accomplishments and efforts get noticed.
- B. Make sure people's jobs are enriching and that they feel a sense of accomplishment.
- C. Assign higher profile tasks to others to ensure they get noticed and grow.

### 9. RECOGNIZE CONTRIBUTIONS BY SHOWING APPRECIATION FOR INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE.

- A. Recognize excellence, say Thank You, and promote positive expectations.
- B. Encourage goal setting, in yourself and others.

### 10. CELEBRATE THE VALUES AND VICTORIES BY CREATING A SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY.

- A. Create opportunities to celebrate accomplishments in public.
- B. Build team spirit by holding celebrations, rituals, and holding on to customs. Celebrate birthdays and transitions.

## 1. MODEL THE WAY

By modeling desired behavior, leaders get more commitment and higher work standards from their employees. Leaders must build credibility through what they say as well as by what they do. An exemplary leader is able to articulate his beliefs so that others may understand and see where he is coming from. As well, the leader must assure that his actions fit his words. A leader's values must fit in with his behaviors and expectations of other's behaviors. Values are what keep us going, they are the guidelines by which we live our lives, at work and at play. As Kouzes and Posner write, "Values constitute our

bottom line." Further to this they add, "...inform our decisions as to what to do and what not to do." Leaders need to be clear on their values and be able to share these values through their own voice. In doing this, leaders become authentic, leading from the inside. People gauge your value as a leader by what you do, more than by what you say.

" YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IN SOMETHING YOURSELF FIRST, BEFORE YOU CAN GET OTHERS TO BELIEVE." Ashraf Seddeek, Oracle Corp.

Kouzes and Posner suggest that leadership is a performing art. A leader learns to "act" in the manner required to get people to come on board. Leaders enact decisions in order to get to their goals.

The authors go further to suggest that "setting an example is essentially doing what you say you will do." Clarification of values is extremely important as is the consistency by which leaders show that they are worthy leaders to follow.

Leaders need to use storytelling, artifacts and symbols to reinforce their

beliefs. Storytelling of success in the company reinforces the fact that anyone, with the right amount of will and desire will succeed. Leaders need to question themselves constantly, making sure that they are modeling the way in a manner that is appropriate and desirable.

**YOU CAN'T BELIEVE IN THE MESSENGER IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THE MESSENGER BELIEVES.**



**LEADERSHIP IS A PERFORMING ART**

## 2. INSPIRE A SHARED VISION

Leaders must have a vision, whether we call it a mission, purpose, goal or agenda, it all comes down to the want and the need to create and accomplish something. However, a good leader must be able to impart his vision to others. The people must be able to "see" that vision and know what is in it for them. People need to feel like stakeholders in a project or assignment in order to perform at the top of their capacity. There

must be some kind of motivation, whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic—we all do something for a reason. In order for a leader to impart his vision he must feel passionately about it, he must speak about it with a sense of urgency and passion to enable others to feel the same way. Again, the leader must consider his people's needs and show why the vision would be for the greater good of all. Kouzes and Posner write,

"Envisioning a future is a process that begins with passion, feeling, concern, or an inspiration that something is worth doing." A leader with a vision needs to project into the future and see what is the result of his vision coming to fruition. If it is for the good of all concerned, and no harm comes about, then it is worthwhile to proceed. As well as imparting the vision, the environment must be structured as to enable others to

freely and passionately work towards completion of the vision. A vision statement should be part of the very beginning operations when working on a vision. The vision statement ideally should be created by all the stakeholders, not just the leader. In writing the statement, questions about where you want to see yourself (yourselves) in five to ten years is worthwhile doing. By dreaming big and visualizing what could be, all concerned will be instilled with the passion that is needed to get the project off the ground. Leaders who are enthusiastic about their vision and their people, who give voice to their people are by far better liked and more successful than those who keep all the ideas as theirs and direct and impose their visions on others. Being enthusiastic however is not all that is needed to find a vision. According to the authors, and I agree, it is an emotional, intuitive process of self-discovery and self-exploration, leading to self-creation .

**VISION MEANS AN  
IDEAL and UNIQUE  
IMAGE OF THE  
FUTURE FOR THE  
COMMON GOOD.**

### **DON BENNETT: The first amputee to climb Mount Rainier's 14,410 ft. volcanic summit describes his idea for The Amputee Soccer League.**

"When I got off the mountain, I was in top shape. The best shape I'd ever been in my life. And so right away...my mind is thinking, "What can I do to stay in shape?" So where does it come from? I think there is a bolt of lightning in the middle of the night. All I had was an inspiration. I didn't know much about soccer....So the next thing with the inspiration is to "get out and start to do

something." The doing part of it was picking up the phone, calling a few friends, and saying, "Why don't you meet me over on Mercer Island? I've got an idea here. I really feel it." So when they came over, I pull out a soccer ball. They already have their crutches, and we start kicking it...Then things started happening. You've got to kick the ball around to get the feel for it. The inspirations come with kicking the ball."



**YOU CAN'T REACH THE TOP OF  
THE MOUNTAIN UNLESS YOU  
TAKE THAT FIRST STEP.**

## ENLIST OTHERS: How to get the job done.

In order for others to buy into a leader's vision, the leader must develop a sense of shared destiny. The authors found, when researching for their book, that there were several reactions that people commonly felt when leaders had effectively communi-



**LISTEN:** Your good ideas may come from the most unlikely sources.

cated their vision. Among these were job satisfaction and pride in the organization. Good leaders have excellent communication skills, they use powerful language, and nonverbal expressiveness. Figures of speech, examples, stories, and anecdotes are all in their bag of tricks. They know how to catch people's atten-

tion and hold it. Listening skills are perhaps one of the most important tools of the exemplary leader. A good leader must listen with the heart, know who he is listening to and give importance to the task of listening. According to the authors, "Note the ratio between your ears and your mouth, and make certain that you listen twice as often as you talk."

### TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

This type of leadership "occurs when, in their interactions, people raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Their purposes...become fused...But transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both leader and the led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both."

Kouzes and Posner

### THREE ESSENTIALS NEEDED TO ENLIST OTHERS;

1. LISTEN DEEPLY TO OTHERS
2. DISCOVER AND APPEAL TO A COMMON PURPOSE
3. GIVE LIFE TO A VISION BY COMMUNICATING EXPRESSIVELY SO THAT PEOPLE CAN

**"I HAVE A DREAM THAT ONE DAY THIS NATION WILL RISE**

**UP AND LIVE OUT THE TRUE MEANING OF ITS CREED: "WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL." Martin Luther King, Jr.**

King was a great leader, he gave life and color to his vision when he spoke. Some comments by followers:

"It was vivid."

"He appealed to common bonds."

"He spoke with passion and emotion."

"He **knew** his audience."

"He was personally convinced of the Dream."



When leaders effectively communicate a vision the result is:

1. Job satisfaction
2. Motivation
3. Commitment
4. Loyalty
5. Esprit de corps
6. Clarity about values
7. Pride in the organization
8. Organizational productivity

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WAS FAMOUS FOR HIS PICTURESQUE LANGUAGE USED IN HIS SPEECHES;**

**EX:**

"..the red hills of Georgia"

"..the jangling discords of our nation"

# 3. CHALLENGE THE PROCESS

Exemplary leaders are always looking for ways to challenge themselves and others in order to foster growth and change. Change can be stressful, however, effective leaders welcome this stress as a time to renew, revamp and redo. Training is a crucial factor in change being successful. You can not possibly have people assigned new responsi-



**Leaders challenge the status quo and search for new ideas.**

bilities if workshops, or insertives are not conducted to allow people to gain skills to enhance their performance. Leaders need to set their expectations at a higher level in order for employees to reach their potential. Not only do employers have to set the bar higher for employees, they have to set it higher for themselves.

## FOUR ESSEN-

People usually do something for a purpose. Most times ,work related activities are done for an extrinsic purpose. Leaders have to motivate their employees to do things for intrinsic reasons—to get the feeling of a job well done. The authors suggest that, "Absolute dedication to extrinsic motivators severely limits an organization's ability to excel and to use the full potential of its employees."

A leader's attitude is crucial and sets the tone for how a company is run. Leaders who are open and challenge the status quo also are proactive in seeking new endeavors and creating new opportunities for change and in turn growth. Just because something has been done a certain way in an organization for years does not mean that it is the best way in the present day. Exemplary leaders are on the lookout for possibilities for improvement all the time.

### TIALS TO GETTING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS DONE:

1. Seize the initiative.
2. Make challenge meaningful.
3. Innovate and create.
4. Look outward for fresh ideas.

### TO SUCCEED IN CHALLENGING THE PROCESS YOU NEED TO:

1. Initiate incremental steps and small wins.
2. Learn from mistakes.
3. Promote psychological hardiness.

New challenges, risks, and experiences often incur fear in people. Reno Taini and Randy DuBois of an outdoor adventure group, Pro-Action Associates, talk about their experiences in this area:

"Consistently, we observe that the weakest muscle in the body is the one between the ears. Self-imposed limitations and beliefs

hold most people back. When individuals feel the surge of adrenaline and the thump of their hearts growing louder, they frequently interpret that feeling as fear. We encourage them to explore and push on their perceived limits. By translating that feeling into excitement, they then discover the elation of victory over crippling doubts-and the ways they link these feelings back to their

workplace are enormous."



**Experimentation is the key to challenging the process.**

**It's amazing: once they get started, people always accomplish more than they originally thought they could.**

**RANDY DUBOIS, PRO-ACTION ASSOCIATES**

## 4. ENABLE OTHERS TO ACT

Findings from the research for the book discovered that most extraordinary achievements were not done by one sole person but by a team of people. Collaboration is a necessary part of any organization. It is the key to accomplishing what you need to get done. An atmosphere of competitiveness



**LEADERSHIP IS NOT A SOLO ACT, IT'S A TEAM EFFORT.**

within an organization does not bring people together, rather, it pulls them apart. Trustworthiness or trust is at the root of collaboration. If a leader is not trustworthy he will have no followers, on the other hand if a leader can not trust his people, the organization does not succeed. Leaders must build an atmosphere of mutual trust within their or-

ganization. The authors also report that psychologists have found that , " people who are trusting are more likely to be happy and psychologically adjusted than those who view the world with suspicion and disrespect." Kouzes and Posner go further to say that, "Trusting leaders nurture openness, involvement, personal satisfaction, and high levels of commitment."

## CREATING A CLIMATE OF TRUST

How does a leader create a climate of trust? One way is to be open to influence. Get to know the people that you work with, what makes them tick? Use other's expertise, it is amazing within a school, for example, the varying strengths, abilities, and talents there are among the staff. Everyone needs to be heard, and in order for that to happen there needs to be an atmosphere of acceptance and trust. The more open a leader is the more encouraged the people will be to be open. This builds "interpersonal" trust. How do you begin to be open and encourage openness? Listening is a crucial part of an interpersonal relationship. Listening and appreciating others viewpoints shows respect for others. This in turn continues to build a trust relationship. **TRUST BEGETS TRUST**

**DO NOT THINK THAT YOU ARE THE BEST AND THAT YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING ALL BY YOURSELF-ONLY TEAMWORK BRINGS THE BEST RESULTS**

**HANS-ULRICH SCHAEER  
THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT  
GROUP (SWITZERLAND)**

## BE THE FIRST TO TRUST

### TO PROMOTE TRUST:

- disclose information about your beliefs
- admit mistakes
- ask for feed-back, positive and negative
- listen attentively to others
- share information
- say-We can trust them-and mean it

### TO MODERATE A DEFENSIVE CLIMATE:

- provide descriptive rather than evaluative comments
- paraphrase other' ideas
- ask questions for clarification
- express genuine feelings of caring



**TAKE A LOT OF HUMAN MOMENTS-face to face conversations.**



## EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY

NEVER UNDERRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF VISIBLY APPRECIATING OTHERS AND THEIR EFFORTS

MAKE IT GENUINE- LET IT COME FROM YOU HEART

Tips from Kouzes and Posner on how to Encourage the Heart.

CREATE A SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY

## 5. ENCOURAGE THE HEART

The authors suggest that motivation increases productivity only when a challenging goal is put forward and feedback is given on their performance. This encourages self-reflection and self-correction, thereby allowing for the individual's growth. As well., people can become self-advocates, questioning their progress and asking for help along the way in an attempt to reach the higher bar. As with children in school, if the teacher expects them to be mediocre and not do well, they more than likely will prove that expectation correct. The same is true of an organization, if the leader expects a high standard of performance, they will likely get it. On the reverse, if nothing is done to encourage and promote collaboration, trust and high standards,

then what will likely result is the fulfillment of the "self-fulfilling prophecy" of poor performance and standards. Not only do exemplary leaders expect high standards of their employees but they expect it of themselves. By focusing positively on expected behaviors, an organizations moral is lifted. Everyone can see themselves being productive and happy. Along with encouraging the heart comes the notion of listening "with your eyes and your heart." Leaders need to be visible, out and among their employees seeing what is going on and listening to what the people are saying. Leaders must recognize and reward employees for their progress-this encourages the heart immensely. A thank

### ENCOURAGE THE HEART BY CELEBRATING A JOB WELL DONE



you can perhaps go further than any other spoken word. People appreciate when their work is noticed and appreciated in turn. This shows them that they are valued and that they are an integral part of the organization.

I found this book to be truly an invaluable source of information for anyone who is now in a leadership position or who hopes to be. The authors write with clarity, and the book's format is easy to follow. With each of the five principles, the authors have included the Ten Commitments of Leadership. Many examples and strategies that are easily doable are included with each commitment. The chapters include many examples of exemplary leaders and how they go about encouraging and building strong, faithful employees.

This is a book that I will definitely refer to time and time again and it will have a place on my desk for years to come. I encourage all leaders to read this book and to choose one or two of the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership to start working on and bringing into practice.

V. Salmaso