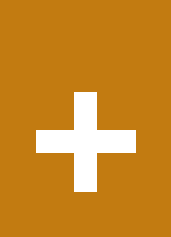
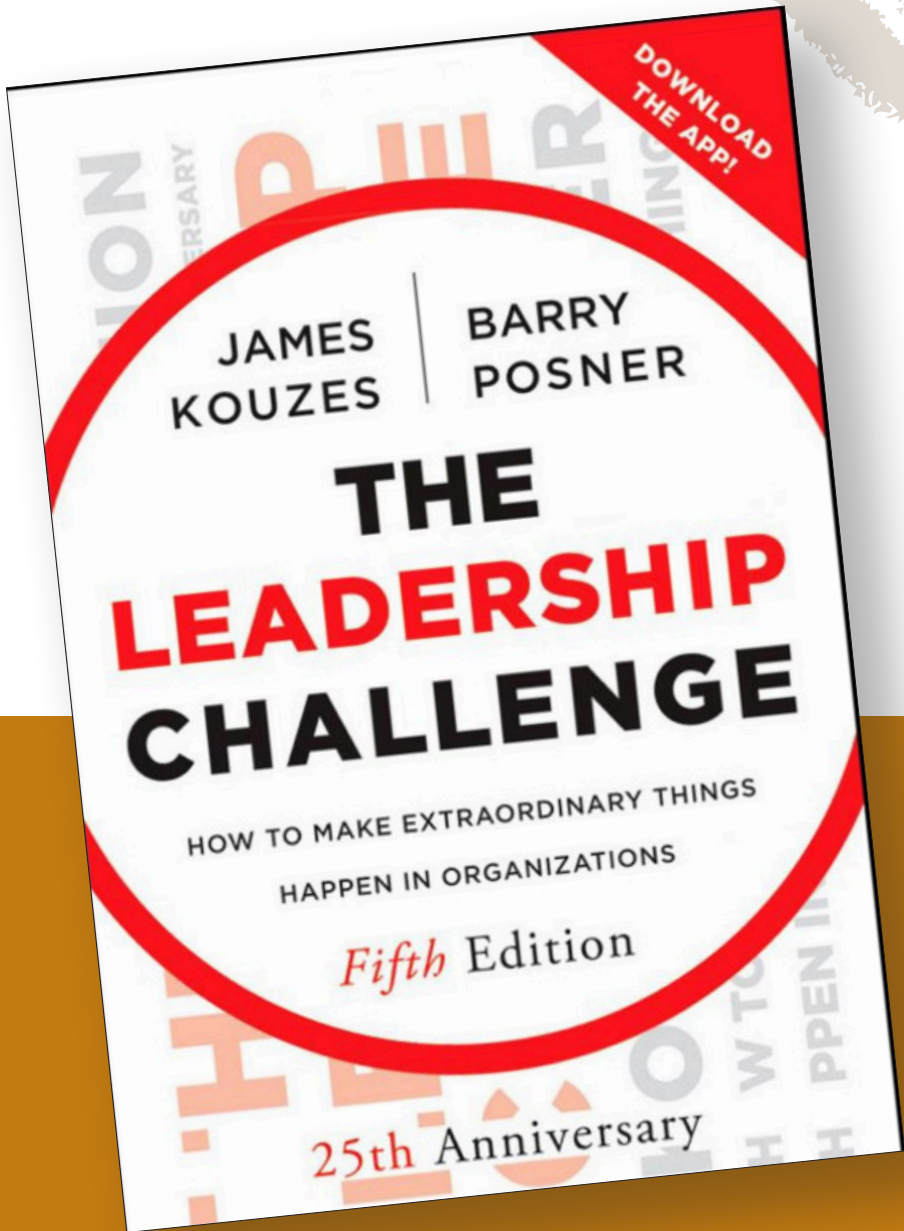


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The Leadership Challenge | *James Kouzes and Barry Posner*

The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations
Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 2012. 396 pages.

“Leaders get people moving. They energize and mobilize. They take people and organizations to places they have never been before. Leadership is not a fad, and the leadership challenge never goes away.”

— James Kouzes and Barry Posner

For more than 25 years, *The Leadership Challenge* has been the most trusted source on becoming a better leader. Based on authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner’s extensive global research, this all-new edition casts their enduring work in context for today’s world, proving how leadership is a relationship that must be nurtured, and most important, that it can be learned.

While the context of leadership has changed dramatically, the content of leadership has endured the test of time. The authors’ Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership remain not only relevant to today but also critical to a leader’s success.

1

Practice 1—Model the Way

The first step a leader must take along the path to becoming an exemplary leader is inward. It’s a step toward discovering personal values and beliefs. Leaders must find their voice. They must discover a set of principles that guide decisions and actions. They must find a way to express a leadership philosophy in their own words and not in someone else’s.

Yet leaders don’t just speak for themselves. They also speak for their team and organization. Leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue. Therefore, leaders must reach out to others. They must understand and appreciate the values of their constituents and find a way to affirm shared values. Leaders forge unity. They don’t force it. They give people reasons to care, not simply orders to follow.

Leaders stand up for their beliefs. They practice what they preach. They show others by their actions that they live by the values they profess. They also ensure that others adhere to the values that have been agreed on. It is consistency between words and actions that builds credibility.

Commitments of Exemplary Leadership:

1. *Clarify Values* by finding your voice and affirming shared values.
2. *Set the Example* by aligning actions with shared values.

Take Action:

- Examine your past experiences to identify the values you use to make choices and decisions.
- Articulate the values that guide your current decisions, priorities, and actions.
- Help others articulate why they do what they do, and what they care about.
- Build consensus around values, principles, and standards.
- Make sure that people are adhering to the values and standards that have been agreed upon.

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- Make sure your calendar, your meetings, your interviews, your emails, and all the other ways you spend your time reflect what you say is important.
- Keep your commitments; follow through on your promises.
- Repeat, repeat, and repeat the phrases that evoke the feelings that you want to create in your workplace.
- Ask purposeful questions that keep people constantly focused on the values and priorities that are the most important.
- Broadcast examples of exemplary behavior through vivid and memorable stories that illustrate how people are and should be behaving.

If you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe the message.



Practice 2—Inspire a Shared Vision

The future holds little certainty. There are no guarantees or easy paths to any destination, and circumstances can change in a moment. Pioneering leaders rely on their own internal compass and a dream.

Leaders look forward to the future. They hold in their minds ideas and visions of what can be. They have a sense of what is uniquely possible if everyone works together for a common purpose. Leaders are positive about the future, and they passionately believe that people can make a difference.

But visions seen only by the leaders are insufficient for generating organized movement. Leaders must get others to see the exciting future possibilities. They breathe life into visions. They communicate hopes and dreams so that others clearly understand and share them as their own. They show others how their values and interests will be served by the long-term vision of the future.

Leaders are expressive, and they attract followers through their energy, optimism, and hope. With strong appeals and quiet persuasion they develop enthusiastic supporters.

Commitments of Exemplary Leadership:

3. *Envision the Future* by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.
4. *Enlist Others* by appealing to shared aspirations.

Take Action:

- Determine what you care about, what drives you, where your passions lie.
- Use your past experiences as clues for understanding key themes in your life and understanding what you find worthwhile.
- Be curious about what is going on around you – especially the things that aren't working so well.
- Spend time thinking and finding out about the future.
- Elevate what you and others are doing from a job to a "calling."
- Talk to your constituents and find out about their hopes, dreams, and aspirations for the future.
- Show your constituents how their long-term interests are served by enlisting in a common vision.
- Promote people's pride in what they contribute.

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- Share metaphors, symbols, examples, stories, pictures, and words that represent the image of what you all aspire to become.
- Be positive, upbeat, and energetic when talking about the future of your organization.

You build a credible foundation of leadership foundation when you DWYSYWD – Do What You Say You Will Do

3

Practice 3—Challenge the Process

Challenge is the opportunity for greatness. People do their best when there's the chance to change the way things are. Maintaining the status quo simply breeds mediocrity. Leaders seek and accept challenging opportunities to test their abilities. They motivate others as well to exceed their self-perceived limits. They seize initiative and make something meaningful happen. Leaders treat every assignment as an adventure.

Most innovations do not come from leaders – they come from the people closest to the work. They also come from oversight. Exemplary leaders look for good ideas everywhere. They promote external communications. They listen, take advice, and learn.

Progress is not made in giant leaps; it's made incrementally. Exemplary leaders move forward in small steps with little victories. They turn adversity into advantage, setbacks into successes. They persevere with grit and determination.

Leaders venture out. They test and they take risks with bold ideas. And because risk-taking involves mistakes and failure, leaders accept the inevitable disappointments and treat them as opportunities for learning and growth.

Commitments of Exemplary Leadership:

5. *Search for Opportunities* by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve.
6. *Experiment and Take Risks* by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience.

Take Action:

- Always be asking, "What's new? What's next? What's better?"
- Be restless; don't let routines become ruts.
- Put yourself in new situations; take on a new project at least once a quarter.
- Find out if "the way things are done around here" still makes sense. If it doesn't, do something different.
- Seek firsthand experiences outside your comfort zone and skill set.
- Assign meaningful work to people so that they can see how their efforts contribute significantly to outcomes.
- Set incremental goals and milestones, breaking big projects down into achievable steps.
- When mistakes are made, always ask, "What can we learn from this experience?"

The Leadership Challenge | *James Kouzes and Barry Posner (cont'd)*

- Spend time learning something relevant and new every day, and make sure you offer that opportunity to your constituents.
- Accept this mantra: Never stop experimenting.

The best leaders are simply the best learners, and life is their laboratory.

4

Practice 4—Enable Others to Act

Leaders know that they can't do it alone. They need partners to make extraordinary things happen in organizations.

Leaders invest in creating trustworthy relationships. They build spirited and cohesive teams, teams that feel like family. They actively involve others in planning and give them the discretion to make their own decisions. Leaders make others feel like owners, not hired hands.

Leaders develop collaborative goals and cooperative relationships with colleagues. They are considerate of the needs and interests of others. They know what these relationships are the keys that unlock support. Leaders bring people together, creating an atmosphere where people understand that they have a shared fate and that they should treat others as they would like to be treated. Leaders make sure that everyone wins.

Mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary group efforts. Leaders nurture self-esteem in others. They make other feel strong, capable, and confident to take both initiative and responsibility. They build the skills and abilities of their constituents to deliver on commitments. They create a climate where people feel in control of their own lives.

Commitments of Exemplary Leadership:

7. *Foster Collaboration* by building trust and facilitating relationships.
8. *Strengthen Others* by increasing self-determination and developing competence.

Take Action:

- Spend time getting to know your constituents and finding out what makes them tick.
- Listen, listen, and listen some more.
- Clearly articulate and frequently repeat the common goal that you are all striving to achieve, the shared values that are important, and the larger purpose of which everyone is a part.
- Structure projects so that there is a common goal that requires cooperation.
- Make sure that people understand how they are interdependent with one another.
- Let people make choices about how they do their work and serve their customers.
- Provide the necessary resources (especially information) to perform effectively.
- Demonstrate your confidence in the capabilities of constituents and colleagues.
- Set aside the time necessary to coach.
- Ask questions; stop giving answers.

The Leadership Challenge | *James Kouzes and Barry Posner (cont'd)*

A grand dream doesn't become a significant reality through the actions of a single person. It requires a team effort.



Practice 5—Encourage the Heart

Getting extraordinary things done in organizations is hard work. The climb to the summit is arduous and steep. Leaders encourage others to continue the quest. They inspire others with courage and hope.

Leaders give heart by visibly recognizing people's contributions to the common vision. With a thank-you and a smile, and public praise the leader lets others know how much they mean to the organization.

Leaders express pride in the accomplishments of their teams. They make a point of telling the rest of the organization about what the teams have achieved. They make people feel like heroes.

Hard work can also be fun work. Hoopla is important to a winning team. Everybody loves a parade. Leaders find creative ways to celebrate accomplishments. They take time out to rejoice in reaching a milestone.

And what sustains the leader? From what source comes the leader's courage? The answer is love. Leaders are in love – in love with the people who do the work, with what their organizations produce, and with their customers.

Commitments of Exemplary Leadership:

9. *Recognize Contributions* by showing appreciation for individual excellence.
10. *Celebrate the Values and Victories* by creating a spirit of community.

Take Action:

- Make sure people know what is expected of them.
- Let people know that you believe in them, not just in words but also in actions.
- Create an environment that makes it comfortable to receive and give feedback – including to top leaders.
- Connect with people in person.
- Make saying thank you a natural part of your everyday behavior.
- Be sure to make connections to the fundamental principles when you explain why you are holding a celebration.
- Never pass up any opportunity to publically relate true stories about how people in your organization went above and beyond the call of duty.
- Make sure that people understand how they are “part of the whole” and that lots of others are working to make them successful, even if they don't know them.
- Get personally involved in as many recognitions and celebrations as possible.
- End each of your team meetings with a round of public praise.

The Leadership Challenge | *James Kouzes and Barry Posner (cont'd)*

Recognition is the most powerful currency leaders have, and it costs nothing.

Of all the things that sustain a leader over time, love is the most lasting. It's hard to imagine leaders getting up day after day, putting in the long hours and hard work it takes to get extraordinary things done, without having their hearts in it.

The best-kept secret of successful leaders is love: staying in love with leading, with the people who do the work, with what their organizations produce, and with those who honor the organization by using its products and services.

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

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Recommended Resources

1. **Read** as Auxano Founder and Team Leader Will Mancini dives into the developmental process of visionary leadership. The result? 28 Vision-Based competencies for your staff or ministry team.
2. **Read** *The Four Challenges of Empowerment*, as Will Mancini develops the heart-building, character-shaping nature of leadership empowerment that is hard to realize.
3. **Watch** a brief, 3-minute video as *The Leadership Challenge* authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner introduce the Five Exemplary Practices of Leadership, the heart of the book.
4. **View** a superb presentation of *The Leadership Challenge* by author Jim Kouzes to a network of organizations in the Silicon Valley.
5. **Download** a free version of a mobile app for *The Leadership Challenge*, containing a concise version of the Five Practices, linked to actions that will help leaders integrate the practices into their daily routine. A low-cost version has additional features including a leadership news feed and a leadership feedback process.

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Go Ahead Actions for Vision Clarity

by Clint Grider, Ph.D., CFRE

Vision Clarity Connection

At the 25th anniversary of James Kouzes' and Barry Posner's *The Leadership Challenge*, the subtitle of this classic guide is as poignant as ever: *How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations*.

In a world marked by uncertainty and rapid change, the authors' Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership remain critical to facilitate "extraordinary things." And, yet, how often do we as leaders quickly agree with the premise behind these important insights, without taking action to personally integrate them deeper into our lives? Perhaps due to the tyranny of the urgent, how often do we miss the opportunity to model, inspire, challenge, enable, and encourage in ways that impact our stakeholders and others' lives more than we could ask or imagine?

The practical steps included to create a personal Action Plan, undergirded by clear articulation of one's values and beliefs are especially poignant. Clarity of vision balanced by practical implementation is of the utmost importance if a leader is to continually improve in his or her ability to truly *lead*. As you review the "Take Action" details listed in this SUMS, be mindful of this balance. Don't miss the weight of this simple idea that is far from simplistic in its power for our lives.

Go Ahead

1. Download the free *Leadership Challenge Mobile Tool* and create your own plan to integrate "Take Action" activities into your daily life. Create reminders and share via social media.
2. In your next leadership meeting, list the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership on a whiteboard and quickly review several of the authors' Take Action examples under each. Ask everyone to force rank the five Practices from "We do a great job in our organization with this" (5) to "We really struggle with this." Add up and discuss the results.
3. Break up into three sub-groups and assign one of the Practices ranked in the bottom three to each group. Ask the groups to discuss what each Take Action point in their assigned Practice feels like at your organization, answering: "Why do we as a leadership team sometimes struggle with this?" Have each group rank their top three reasons, write on a flipchart, and present to the overall team for further dialogue.
4. Have you identified someone who can help your team articulate ways to continually improve leadership and vision alignment in your organization with stunning clarity? Do you need help to objectively look at where you are and next steps to consider? Call or email me for a free one-hour assessment.



More About Clint Grider

Highly regarded as a “vision optimizer,” Clint can keenly identify the key people and strengths that are at the core of an organization’s culture. With this discernment, he guides leaders through a vision process that results in meaningful results and sustainable momentum. Bringing the gifts of encouragement and creativity to the process, he helps teams advance vision through increased passion and ownership. Blending these abilities with years of experience building healthy organizations, Clint guides churches and non-profits to realize big dreams. A Certified Fund Raising Executive, Dr. Grider has an additional ability to serve organizations in developing and aligning resources to achieve their goals. Clint has served in leadership roles for successful campaigns ranging from \$2 million to \$637 million. He also has served as a strategic planning consultant for universities, schools, churches, and other non-profits, with a particular emphasis on helping organizations improve their systems and capacity. This unique combination of skills and experience have enabled him to effectively serve organizations like Sky Ranch, Baylor College of Medicine, America’s Family Coaches, Houston Baptist University, and the Texas A&M Foundation. Clint received his bachelor’s in business administration and marketing from Baylor University, master’s in educational psychology from Baylor, and Ph.D. in educational administration with specializations in process improvement and strategic planning from Texas A&M University. He and his wife Kindra have been married 22 years and live near Dallas, Texas with their two daughters.

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