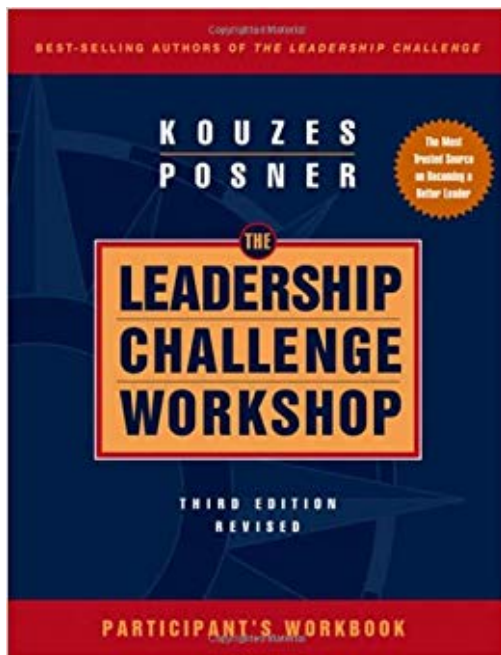


# The Leadership Challenge Workshop, Participant's Workbook by James M. Kouzes, Barry Z. Posner



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This *Participant's Workbook* is designed to accompany you on an exciting journey of self-discovery. Grounded in Kouzes and Posner's celebrated Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership model, the interactive pages help you to uncover the deeper meanings of: Model the Way Inspire a Shared Vision Challenge the Process Enable Others to Act Encourage the Heart



Reviews of the **The Leadership Challenge Workshop, Participant's Workbook** by James M. Kouzes, Barry Z. Posner

Nejind  
The Leadership Challenge is considered a classic on leadership principles. Kouzes and Posner have spent more than three decades studying the best practices of top leaders. In their book, they explain five practices that all great leaders engage in. Under these five practices, they also discuss ten commitments of exemplary leadership. Below are some of the ideas and quotes that stood out to me.

#### Practice 1 - Model the Way

1. The first step to being a great leader is to clarify your values.  
"You must be able to 'clearly articulate deeply held beliefs'" (44).  
"To find your voice, you have to explore your inner self. You have to discover what you care about most, what defines you, and what makes you who you are" (46).  
Question: What values guide your current decisions, priorities, and actions? (69).

2. The second step is to set an example by aligning actions with shared values.

"Credibility is the foundation of leadership" (37). You have to practice what you preach. Do what you say you will do. (39).  
"Titles are granted, but it's your behavior that earns you respect" (16).  
"Leader's deeds are far more important than their words" (17).  
"Leading by example is more effective than leading by command" (17).  
"What you do speaks more loudly than what you say" (70).  
Use stories to "pass on lessons about shared values" (91).  
"How you spend your time is the single best indicator of what's important to you" (96).  
Question: How are you spending your time?

#### Practice 2 - Inspire a Shared Vision

3. The third step is to envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.  
Vision begins with "one person's imagination" (103).  
"Leaders are dreamers. Leaders are idealists. Leaders are possibility thinkers" (105).  
"Leaders need to spend considerable time reading, thinking, and talking about the long-term view, not only for their specific organization but also for the environment in which they operate" (110).  
"Imagination is more important than intelligence" - Albert Einstein (112).  
"It is easier to drive fast when there is no fog on the road. This 'analogy illustrates the importance of clarity of vision...You're better able to go fast when your vision is clear" (123).

Question: What do you care about? What drives you? Where do your passions lie? What do you want to accomplish and why? (126). What ideas and visions do you hold in your mind of what can be? (100).

4. The fourth step is to enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.

"You can't command commitment; you have to inspire it. You have to enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations" (18).  
"No matter how grand the dream of an individual visionary, if others don't see in it the possibility of realizing their own hopes and desires, they won't follow voluntarily or wholeheartedly" (117).  
"The best leaders are great listeners" (118).  
"People commit to causes, not to plans" (121).  
"People aren't going to follow someone who's only mildly enthusiastic about something. Leaders have to be wildly enthusiastic for constituents to give it their all" (129).  
"Visions are about ideals. They're about hopes, dreams, and aspirations. They're about the strong desire to achieve something great. They're ambitious. They're expressions of optimism. Can you imagine a leader enlisting other in a cause by saying, 'I'd like you to join me in doing the ordinary?'" (130).  
"Feeling special fosters a sense of pride" (134).  
"Show people how their dreams will be realized" (138).  
"Visions are images in the mind...They become real as leaders express those images in concrete terms to their constituents" (143).  
Question: What common ideas are you appealing to? (152).

#### Practice 3 - Challenge the Process

5. The fifth step is to search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and looking outward for innovative ways to improve.  
"Maintaining the status quo simply breeds mediocrity" (156).  
"100% of the shots you do not take will miss going into the basket" (166).  
"Find ways for people to stretch themselves. Set the bar incrementally higher, but at a level at which people feel they can succeed" (169).  
"Be on the lookout for new ideas, wherever you are" (181).  
Question: What are you doing new today in order to become better than yesterday?

6. The sixth step is to experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience.

"Nothing new and nothing great is achieved by doing things the way you've always done them. You have to test unproven strategies...break out of the norms that box you in...venture beyond the limitations you normally place on yourself" (188).  
"Big things are done by doing lots of little things" (196).  
"It is hard to argue with success" (197).  
"Small wins produce results because they make people feel like winners and make it easier for leaders to get others to want to go along with their requests" (199).  
"Learning is the master skill" (202).  
Question: How are you changing, improving, growing, and innovating?

#### Practice 4 - Enable others to Act

7. The seventh step is to foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships.  
"The team is larger than any individual on the team" (21).  
"We can't happen without trust" (219).  
"When you create a climate of trust, you create an environment that allows people to freely contribute and innovate" (222).  
"Placing trust in others is the safer bet with most people most of the time" (223).  
"People have to believe that you know what you're talking about and that you know what you're doing" (226).  
"Once you help others succeed, acknowledge their accomplishments, and help them shine, they'll never forget it" (234).  
"Demonstrate that you trust them before you ask them to trust you" (239).  
Question: Who are you willing to trust?

8. The eighth step is to strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.

"The paradox of power: you become more powerful when you give your own power away" (244).  
"Feeling powerful...comes from a deep sense of being in control of your own life" (246).  
"Individual accountability is a critical element of every collaborative effort" (252).  
"The more freedom of choice people have, the more personal responsibility they must accept" (253).  
"If your constituents aren't growing and learning in their jobs, they're highly likely to leave and find better ones" (261).  
Question: Do the people around you feel powerful?

#### Practice 5 - Encourage the Heart

9. The ninth step is to recognize contributions by showing appreciation.  
"The climb to the top is arduous and steep. People become exhausted, frustrated, and disenchanted, and are often tempted to give up. Genuine acts of caring draw people forward. "recognition is the most powerful currency you have and it costs you nothing." (23).  
"Say Thank You" (244).  
"Spontaneous, unexpected rewards are often more meaningful than expected, formal ones" (292).  
Question: Do you say "thank you" enough?

10. The tenth step is to celebrate values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

"Leaders never get extraordinary things accomplished all by themselves" (30).  
"Celebrate accomplishments in public" (307).  
"Get personally involved...leadership is a relationship" (315).  
"Make celebrations part of organizational life" (323).  
Question: Who are you celebrating?

For a great book on Christian leadership, check out: The Secret of Obed-Edom: An Ancient Story with Hidden Truth for Your Spiritual Journey

## Kanal

This book first came to my attention during a leadership course a number of years ago when I was a federal civilian employee. It was required reading and at the time, and perhaps still, there was a personal survey instrument used to help the individual class members understand their strengths and areas for improvement in the five practice areas. The concepts found in the book show leadership in action. It is this practical application that takes this beyond a book of theory and establishes it as a journeyman's guide to the process of being a leader and helps develop masterful leadership qualities.

The second time I came into contact with this book was during a graduate level course on leadership during a Master of Arts program in Management and Leadership at Webster University. The type of leadership style discussed in this book is a perfect example of what was referred to as transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are described as those that are effective at working with people. These five practices fit quite neatly into my personal leadership style and my personality.

Highly recommended.

## Whitemaster

It's an easy read, and they keep it interesting. My only complaint is that the book has way too many examples and stories. It's like a page to introduce a concept and explain it, followed by 10 pages of stories. So there is like 10-20 pages of academic level material in the book. On the plus side, that makes this book a very easy book to write a book report on

Alsalar

I admire the work that Kouzes and Posner have put into their five practices model and if someone asked me which books on leadership they should read, I would include "The Leadership Challenge". Nonetheless, it has some weaknesses in my view.

First, I feel it focuses so much on the inspirational side of leadership that it underplays the "sleeves-rolled-up" (getting the task done) reality of leadership in smaller firms. This feels like a big-company orientated book.

Second, it doesn't say much about how to develop leadership presence, even though the best leaders seem to have it. To me, great leadership is not just a matter of the right behaviours (which is what this book focuses on), it also depends on your presence. This, I feel, is a gap in the book.

Third, it might give some readers the impression that leaders must always be visionaries. It misses the point that a vision isn't always necessary, but a group purpose is. The purpose may be expressed as a vision, but then again it might not. It might instead be more pragmatic and short-term, especially if it's leadership of a rescue team we're talking about, not an international company.

Fourth, it says what you have to do (the five practices) to lead, but knowing what to do won't always enable someone to do it - especially if the behaviours aren't natural to them. Many leaders are stuck in old habits because of their psychology, but The Leadership Challenge doesn't address this.

Fifth, The Leadership Challenge, I feel, gives the impression that successful leaders have to be inspiring and lead from the front. But surely it is possible to put forth an inspiring idea without always being personally inspiring? Sure, it's helpful to be inspiring and a cheerleader kind of leader, but not everyone is like this. Think of Jim Collins book, "Good to Great," and the level 5 leaders he wrote about. They exuded humility and will, but were often rather low-profile. My point is that there are other ways of leading, but this book could give some people the idea that there's only one way of being a leader.

If you want a companion read that addresses these five points, the best I know of at this point is James Scouller's "The Three Levels of Leadership". This too provides a comprehensive, easily understood model of leadership, but it also gets into the leader's psychology and leadership presence, while staying practical and applicable to both large and small firms.

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