

# THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

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## WHAT DO PEOPLE LOOK FOR IN A LEADER?

The survey 'Characteristics of an Admired Leader', with 20 possible character traits was administered to over 100,000 people. The top 4 characteristics were:

- Honest
  - Competent
  - Inspiring
  - Forward-looking
- Source Credibility

**“Credibility is the foundation of leadership”**

**DWYSYWD – Do what you say you will do**

“WHAT DID YOU DO WHEN YOU WERE AT YOUR PERSONAL BEST AS A LEADER?”

This is the basic question that guides *The Leadership Challenge* which is based on 30 years of research looking at the practices of successful leaders. This research includes “thousands of case studies and millions of survey responses” (p. xii).

## The 5 Leadership Practices

- **Model the way.** Lead by example. In order to model the way, leaders must be clear on their own values, it is impossible to consistently model what we want others to emulate, unless we are certain of what those behaviors look like.
  - **Clarify Values** – Find your voice, understand your own values and how they guide your decisions. Make decisions based “agreed upon values, principles, and standards” (p.70).
  - **Set the Example** – Make sure your behavior and leadership is aligned with your values. Be intentional in ensuring that the use of time and resources are aligned with the organizations values.
- **Inspire a shared vision.** It is expected that leaders will have a vision; however, their vision will be more effective and inspire motivation if it is shared and developed with the input and participation of the organization’s constituents (p. 97).
  - **Envision the Future** –Listen to others dreams and interests, develop a vision together of exciting possibilities.
  - **Enlist Others** – Appeal to common ideals to develop a shared vision.
- **Challenge the process.** To challenge the process means to be proactive in responding to challenges as opportunities for growth, as well as to actively and continually seek ways to improve.

- **Search for opportunities** - Effective leaders do not just maintain the status quo, but rather embrace challenges as opportunities to bring about change (p.149).
- **Experiment and take risks** – Be willing to take risks, empower others to experiment and take risks without feeling that the stakes are too high.
- **Enable other to act.** Constituents perform at their best and have higher levels of commitment when they feel that they can effect change and what they do matters.
  - **Foster collaboration** by creating a climate of trust.
  - **Strengthen others** – Relinquish control and coach people instead of holding on to the control. Constituent pride in their work is directly related to the level of freedom and decision making power they possess.
- **Encourage the heart.** Encouraging the heart is key to inspiring others, making them feel valued and that their contributions matter.
  - **Recognize Contributions.** Set clear goals and expectations against which performance can be measured, then as goals are met, recognize the achievements.
  - **Celebrate Values and Victories.** Celebrate victories and milestones as a team. Recognition and fun mixed together give constituents a sense of community and continue creating an environment in which people work together, trusting each other and giving their best towards accomplishing the shared vision of the team.

Kouzes, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (2017). *The Leadership Challenge, Sixth Edition*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.