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Summary

## The Leadership Challenge

### 4th Edition

#### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The fundamentals of leadership are not a fad. While the context of leadership has changed dramatically, the content of leadership has endured the test of time.

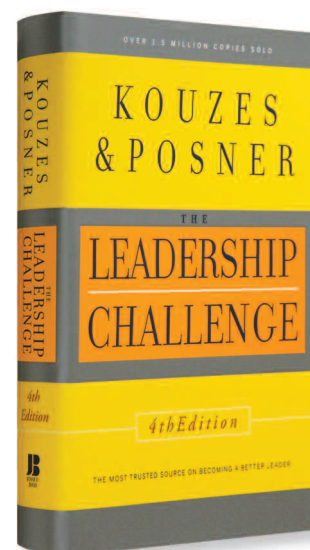
When leaders understand that leadership is a relationship and they begin to engage in the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® — Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart — they are better able to embark on a lifetime of success and significance.

The Leadership Challenge is about how leaders mobilize others to want to get extraordinary things done in organizations. It is about the practices leaders use to transform values into actions, visions into realities, obstacles into innovations, separateness into solidarity and risks into rewards. It's about leadership that creates the climate in which people turn challenging opportunities into remarkable successes.

Authors James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D., offer a set of leadership practices based on the real-world experiences of thousands of people who have answered the call for leadership. They confirm the discovery that when the leader in everyone is liberated, extraordinary things happen.

#### IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to utilize the five practices common to personal-best leadership experiences.
- How to improve your performance and the performance of your team with commitment and consistency.
- How to strengthen your abilities and uplift your spirits, as well as those of others.
- How the magic word “we” can help you enable people to act.
- How ordinary people exercise leadership at its best.



by James M. Kouzes and  
Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D.

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# THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D.

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Kouzes and Posner are the co-authors of *A Leader's Legacy*, *Credibility*, *Encouraging the Heart* and *The Leadership Challenge Workbook* and more than a dozen other books and workbooks on leadership and leadership development.

*The Leadership Challenge*, 4th edition, by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D. Copyright © 2007 by John Wiley & Sons Inc. Summarized by permission of the publisher Jossey-Bass, a Wiley imprint. 389 pages, \$29.95, ISBN 978-0-7879-8491-5. To purchase this book, go to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com).

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## Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations

When they are doing their best, leaders exhibit certain distinct practices, which vary little from industry to industry, profession to profession, community to community and country to country. Good leadership is an understandable and universal process. Though each leader is a unique individual, there are shared patterns to the practice of leadership. And these practices can be learned.

### The Future of Leadership

The domain of leaders is the future. The leader's unique legacy is the creation of valued institutions that survive over time. The most significant contribution leaders make is not simply to today's bottom line; it is to the long-term development of people and institutions so they can adapt, change, prosper and grow.

Leadership is important, not just in your career and within your organization, but in every sector, in every community and in every country. We need more exemplary leaders, and we need them more than ever. There is so much extraordinary work that needs to be done. We need leaders who can unite us and ignite us.

In the end, leadership development is self-development. Meeting the leadership challenge is a personal — and a daily — challenge for all of us. If you have the will and the way to lead, you can. ●

## What Leaders Do and What Constituents Expect

Leadership can happen anywhere, at any time. It can

happen in a huge business or a small one. It can happen in the public, private or social sector. It can happen in any function. It can happen at home, at school or in the community. The call to lead can come at 4 o'clock in the morning or it can come late at night. The energy and motivation to lead can come in ways you'd least expect.

### Personal-Best Leadership

From an analysis of thousands of personal-best leadership experiences, leadership researchers James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, Ph.D., discovered that ordinary people who guide others along pioneering journeys follow rather similar paths. Though each experience was unique in expression, every case followed remarkably similar patterns of action. Kouzes and Posner have forged these common practices into a model of leadership that provides guidance for leaders as they attempt to keep their own bearings and steer others toward peak achievements.

Leadership is not about personality; it's about behavior. The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership are available to anyone who accepts the leadership challenge. And they're also not the accident of a unique moment in history. The Five Practices have stood the test of time, and the most recent research confirms they're just as relevant today as they were more than 25 years ago.

### The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

This research has uncovered five practices common to personal-best leadership experiences. When getting extraordinary things done in organizations, leaders engage in these Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership:

**1. Model the way.** Exemplary leaders know that if



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they want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others. To effectively model the behavior they expect of others, leaders must first be clear about guiding principles. They must clarify values.

Exemplary leaders go first. They go first by *setting the example* through daily actions that demonstrate they are deeply committed to their beliefs.

**2. Inspire a shared vision.** As Mark D’Arcangelo, system memory product manager at Hitachi Semiconductor, said about his personal-best leadership experience, “What made the difference was the vision of how things could be and clearly painting this picture for all to see and comprehend.”

Leaders gaze across the horizon of time, imagining the attractive opportunities that are in store when they and their constituents arrive at a distant destination. They *envision exciting and ennobling possibilities*.

Leaders have to *enlist others in a common vision*. To enlist people in a vision, leaders must know their constituents and speak their language. Leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue.

**3. Challenge the process.** Jennifer Cun, in her role as a budget analyst with Intel, noted how critical it is for leaders “to always be looking for ways to improve their team, taking interests outside of their job or organization, finding ways to stay current on what the competition is doing, networking and taking initiative to try new things.”

Leaders are pioneers. They are willing to step out into the unknown. They *search for opportunities to innovate, grow and improve*.

Leaders know well that innovation and change involve *experimenting and taking risks*.

**4. Enable others to act.** Hewlett-Packard’s Angie Yim was the technical team leader on a project involving core team members from the United States, Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong. In the past, she said she “had a bad habit of using the pronoun ‘I’ instead of ‘we,’” but she learned that people responded more eagerly and her team became more cohesive when people felt part of the “we.” “This is a magic word,” she realized. “I would recommend that others use it more often.”

Leaders *foster collaboration and build trust*. They engage all those who must make the project work — and, in some way, all who must live with the results.

Leaders make it possible for others to do good work. Exemplary leaders strengthen everyone’s capacity to deliver on the promises they make.

**5. Encourage the heart.** Genuine acts of caring uplift the spirits and draw people forward. *Recognizing contributions* can be one to one or with many people. It’s part of the leader’s job to show appreciation for people’s contributions and to create a culture of *celebrating values and victories*.

### What People Look for and Admire in Leaders

Research documents consistent patterns across countries, cultures, ethnicities, organizational functions and hierarchies, gender, education levels, and age groups. For people to follow someone willingly, the majority of constituents believe the leader must be:

- **Honest.** Honesty is the single most important factor in the leader-constituent relationship. If people anywhere are to willingly follow someone, they first want to assure themselves that the person is worthy of their trust. They want to know that the person is truthful, ethical and principled.
- **Forward-looking.** People expect leaders to have a sense of direction and a concern for the future of the organization. Leaders must know where they’re going if they expect others to willingly join them on the journey. They have to have a point of view about the future envisioned for their organizations, and they need to be able to connect that point of view to the hopes and dreams of their constituents.
- **Inspiring.** People expect their leaders to be enthusiastic, energetic and positive about the future. It’s not enough for a leader to have a dream. A leader must be able to communicate the vision in ways that encourage people to sign on for the duration and excite them about the cause.
- **Competent.** To enlist in a common cause, people must believe that the leader is competent to guide them where they’re headed. They must see the leader as having relevant experience and sound judgment. If they doubt the person’s abilities, they’re unlikely to join in the crusade.

### Credibility Is the Foundation

Above all else, we as constituents must be able to believe in our leaders. We must believe that their word can be trusted, that they’re personally passionate and enthusiastic about the work that they’re doing, and that they have the knowledge and skill to lead.

If leaders practice what they preach, people are more willing to entrust them with their livelihood and even their lives. This realization leads to a straightforward prescription for leaders on how to establish credibility: *Do what you say you will do*.

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To be credible in action, leaders must be clear about their beliefs; they must know what they stand for. They must put what they say into practice; they must act on their beliefs and “do.”

This consistent living out of values is a behavioral way of demonstrating honesty and trustworthiness. People trust leaders when their deeds and words match. ●

### Model the Way

CMP Media Electronics Group’s Tim Avila said, “Having faith in my principles and beliefs gave me the courage to navigate difficult situations and make tough decisions.”

To stand up for your beliefs, you have to know what you stand for. To walk the talk, you have to have a talk to walk. To do what you say, you have to know what you want to say. To earn and sustain personal credibility, you must first be able to clearly articulate deeply held beliefs.

#### Clarify Values

Clarifying values is where it all begins. To clarify values as a leader you must engage in these two essentials:

- **Find your voice.** You must know what you care about. To act with integrity, you must first know who you are. You must know what you stand for, what you believe in and what you care most about. Clarity of values will give you the confidence to make the tough decisions, to act with determination and to take charge of your life. Once you have the words you want to say, you must also give voice to those words.
- **Affirm shared values.** Shared values are the foundations for building productive and genuine working relationships. Although credible leaders honor the diversity of their many constituencies, they also stress their common values. Important as it is that leaders forthrightly articulate the principles for which they stand, what leaders say must be consistent with the aspirations of their constituents.

*High-performance values* stress the commitment to excellence, *caring values* communicate how others are to be treated, and *uniqueness values* tell people inside and outside how the organization is different from all the others. These three common threads seem to be critical to weaving a values tapestry that leads to greatness.

#### Set the Example

Leaders take every opportunity to show others, by their own examples, that they’re deeply committed to the values and aspirations they espouse. No one will believe you’re serious until they see you doing what

### Ten Commitments of Leadership

Embedded in the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership are behaviors that can serve as the basis for learning to lead. Here are the Ten Commitments of Leadership:

1. Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared ideals.
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 seizing the initiative and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve.
6. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience.
7. Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships.
8. Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.
9. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.
10. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

you’re asking of others. Leading by example is how leaders make visions and values tangible. It’s how they provide the evidence that they’re personally committed.

To set the example, you need to:

- **Personify the shared values.** Leaders are their organizations’ ambassadors of shared values. Their mission is to represent the values and standards to the rest of the world, and it is their solemn duty to serve the values to the best of their abilities. Spend your time and attention wisely, watch your language, ask purposeful questions and seek feedback.
- **Teach others to model the values.** *Teach others* what’s expected so they can hold themselves accountable for living the values of the organization, *confront critical incidents*, *tell stories* about what team members do to live the values and *reinforce the behavior you want repeated*.

In practicing these essentials, leaders become role models for what the whole team stands for and they also create a culture in which everyone commits to aligning themselves with shared values. ●

### Inspire a Shared Vision

Organized efforts — whether those of a company, a project or a movement — begin in the mind’s eye. Call it what you will — *vision, purpose, mission, legacy, dream, aspiration, calling or personal agenda* — the point is the same. If we are going to be catalytic leaders in life, we have to be able to imagine a positive future. When we envision the future we want for ourselves and others, and when we feel passionate about the legacy we want to leave, then we are much more likely to take that first step forward. If we don’t have the slightest clue about our hopes, dreams and aspirations, the chance that we’ll lead is nil.

### Ideal and Unique Image of the Future for the Common Good

Exemplary leaders are forward-looking. They are able to *envision the future*, to gaze across the horizon of time and imagine the greater opportunities to come. They are able to develop an *ideal and unique image of the future for the common good*.

Leaders develop the capacity to envision the future for themselves and others by mastering two essentials:

- **Imagine the possibilities.** There are ways we can improve our capacity to imagine exciting possibilities and to discover the central theme for our lives. Improvement comes when you engage in conscious introspection. You need to do more to *reflect* on your past, *attend* to the present, *prospect* the future and *feel* your passion.
- **Find a common purpose.** What people really want to hear is not simply the *leader’s* vision. They want to hear about *their own* aspirations. They want to hear how their dreams will come true and their hopes will be fulfilled. They want to see themselves in the picture of the future that the leader is painting.

Listen deeply to others. Determine what’s meaningful to them. Make it a cause for commitment. People commit to causes, not to plans.

### Enlist Others

Keith Sonberg, director of site operations for Roche in Palo Alto, Calif., said, “What really drives performance is not metrics. It’s passion plus pride equals performance. I call it the three P’s. The leader’s job is to create an environment where people are passionate about what they’re doing and take pride in what they’re doing. The end result will always be performance.” For Sonberg and his team, the three P’s are all about sustainability, a vision of a company that delivers a triple bottom line. “We want to be environmentally sound,

economically sound, economically viable and socially just,” Sonberg explained.

Beyond the vision and mission statements, Sonberg and his team developed a program with categories of projects — including energy conservation, natural resources conservation, recycling, green engineering and construction, and employee and community growth and development. They wanted to become a model for what an organization could do to create sustainability.

### Mobilizing a Crowd

Whether they’re trying to mobilize a crowd in a grandstand or one person in the office, to enlist others, leaders must improve their capacities to act on these two essentials:

- **Appeal to common ideals.** Ideals reveal our higher-order value preferences. Connect to what’s meaningful to others, take pride in being unique and align your dream with the people’s dream.
- **Animate the vision.** Leaders have to arouse others to join in a cause and to want to move decisively and boldly forward. Use symbolic language, make images of the future, practice positive communication, express your emotions and speak from the heart.

Successfully engaging in these two essentials can produce very powerful results. When leaders effectively communicate a vision, constituents report significantly higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, loyalty, team spirit, productivity and profitability. ●

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### Challenge the Process

When it comes to innovation, the leader’s major contributions are in the creation of a climate for experimentation; the recognition of good ideas; the support of those ideas; and the willingness to challenge the system to get new products, processes, services and systems adopted.

### Search for Opportunities

*The work of leaders is change.* All change requires that leaders actively seek ways to make things better, to grow, innovate and improve. To search for opportunities to get extraordinary things done, leaders make use of two essentials:

- **Seize the initiative.**
- **Exercise oversight.**

Sometimes leaders have to shake things up. Other times they just have to grab hold of the adversity that surrounds them. Whether change comes from outside challenges or inside challenges, leaders make things happen. And to make *new* things happen, they rely on *out-*

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*sight* to actively seek innovative ideas from outside the boundaries of familiar experience.

### Seize the Initiative

When people think about their personal bests, they automatically think about some kind of challenge. Why? The fact is that when times are stable and secure, people are not severely tested. They may perform well, get promoted, even achieve fame and fortune. But certainty and routine breed complacency. In contrast, personal and business hardships have a way of making people come face to face with who they really are and what they're capable of becoming.

Leaders must be innovators to navigate their organizations into and through the global economy.

### Exercise Oversight

If leaders are going to detect demands for change, they must stay sensitive to external realities, especially in this networked, global world. They must go out and talk to their constituents, be they citizens, customers, employees, stockholders, students, suppliers, vendors, business partners, managers or just interested parties. They must listen — in person, on the phone, via e-mail, via Web sites — and stay in touch.

As CEO of Bay Area Credit Services, Michael Priest learned firsthand that leaders must look forward to fresh ideas. "Sometimes you just can't predict where the change will come from," he says, "but you have to have your eyes wide open if you have any hope of even catching a glimpse of it."

Leaders can expect demand for change to come from both inside and outside the organization. Unless external communication is actively encouraged, people interact with outsiders less and less frequently and new ideas are cut off.

### Experiment and Take Risks

To create a climate in which the norm is to experiment and take risks, it's essential for leaders to:

- **Generate small wins.** Leaders should dream big but start small. Dream big about crossing that enormous cosmos to find some new world, but start small with a few short journeys to test your theories and your abilities.
- **Learn from experience.** Studies of the innovation process make the point: "Success does not breed success. It breeds failure. It is failure which breeds success."

These essentials can help leaders transform challenge into an exploration, uncertainty into a sense of adventure, fear into resolve and risk into reward. They are the keys to making progress that becomes unstoppable. ●

## Three Ways to Clarify Values

Here are three actions that you can use to clarify values for yourself and others:

- **Write a tribute to yourself.** Begin the process of clarifying your values by reflecting on your ideal image of yourself — how you would most like to be seen by others.
- **Write your credo.** Get a single sheet of paper and write a "credo memo."
- **Engage in a credo dialogue.** Gather together the people you lead for a dialogue about shared values. Tell them what you've learned about personal and shared values. Tell them that you've written a credo memo that you'd like to share with them, but before doing that you'd like them to do the same thing. Ask each person to share with a few colleagues in small groups what he or she wrote. Model the process by reading your memo to them and telling them why you prize the values you chose.

## Enable Others to Act

The first order of business for Jill Cleveland when she became finance manager at Apple Inc. was "to learn how to trust my employees. After being responsible only for myself for so long, it was very difficult to have to relinquish control. But I understood that in order for my employees, and thus myself, to be successful, I needed to learn to develop a cohesive and collaborative team, beginning with trust as the framework." This is a key realization for all leaders.

### Foster Collaboration

World-class performance isn't possible unless there's a strong sense of shared creation and shared responsibility. To foster collaboration, leaders have to be skilled in two essentials. They must:

- **Create a climate of trust.** To build and sustain social connections, you have to be able to trust others and others have to trust you. Psychologists have found that people who are trusting are more likely to be happy and psychologically adjusted than are those who view the world with suspicion and disrespect. Be the first to trust. Be open to influence. Share information and resources.
- **Facilitate relationships.** To create conditions in which people know they can count on each other a leader needs to develop cooperative goals and roles, support norms of reciprocity, structure projects to pro-

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mote joint efforts, and support face-to-face interactions.

Collaboration can be sustained only when you create a climate of trust and facilitate effective long-term relationships among your constituents. To get extraordinary things done, you have to promote a sense of mutual dependence — feeling part of a group in which everyone knows they need the others to be successful.

Here are three action steps that you can take to fulfill the leader's commitment to foster collaboration:

- **Show trust to build trust.** Building trust is a process that begins when one party is willing to risk being the first to ante up, being the first to show vulnerability and being the first to let go of control. Since you're the leader, the first to trust has to be you.
- **Say we, ask questions, listen and take advice.** When talking about what is planned or what has been accomplished, it's essential that you talk in terms of *our* vision, *our* values, *our* goals, *our* actions and *our* achievements.
- **Get people interacting.** Create opportunities for people to interact with one another and, in the process, form more trusting, more collaborative relationships.

People can't all be in this together unless you get them interacting on both a personal and a professional basis. People need these opportunities to socialize, exchange information and solve problems informally.

### Strengthen Others

Exemplary leaders enable others to take ownership of and responsibility for their group's success by enhancing their competence and their confidence in their abilities, by listening to their ideas and acting upon them, by involving them in important decisions, and by acknowledging and giving credit for their contributions.

Creating a climate in which people are fully engaged and feel in control of their own lives is at the heart of strengthening others. People must have the latitude to make decisions based on what they believe should be done.

Here are two leadership essentials that strengthen others:

- **Enhance self-determination.** Leaders accept and act on the paradox of power: *You become more powerful when you give your own power away.* Self-determination can be enhanced in a number of ways. The most significant actions a leader can take to ensure that people can decide for themselves are to provide more choices, to design jobs that offer latitude and to foster personal accountability.
- **Develop competence and confidence.**

Developing competence and building confidence are essential to delivering on the organization's promises and maintaining the credibility of leaders and team members alike. To get extraordinary things done, leaders must invest in strengthening the capacity and the resolve of everyone in the organization.

### Turning Constituents Into Leaders

Strengthening others is essentially the process of turning constituents into leaders — making people capable of acting on their own initiative. A virtuous cycle is created as power and responsibility are extended to others and as people respond successfully.

Here are three action steps you can start taking to strengthen others:

- **Increase individual accountability.** Enhancing self-determination means giving people control over their own lives. Therefore you, the leader, have to give them something of substance to control and for which they are accountable.
- **Offer visible support.** Make others more visible. By fostering outside contacts, and by developing and promoting people with promise, you help build a greater sense of personal power, increase confidence and open doors for people so they can exercise more of their own influence.
- **Conduct monthly coaching conversations.** Schedule a once-a-month one-on-one dialogue with each of your direct reports. ●

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## Encourage the Heart

In high-performing organizations — and when people report being at their personal best — people work quite intensely and often put in very long hours, but this doesn't mean they don't or can't enjoy themselves. To persist for months at a demanding pace, people need encouragement. They need emotional fuel to replenish their spirits. They need the will to continue and the courage to do something they have never done before. One important way that leaders accomplish this is by recognizing individual contributions.

### Recognize Contributions

Recognition is about acknowledging good results and reinforcing positive performance. It's about shaping an environment in which everyone's contributions are noticed and appreciated.

Exemplary leaders understand this need to recognize contributions and are constantly engaged in these essentials:

- **Expect the best.** Successful leaders have high

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expectations of themselves and of their constituents.

- **Personalize recognition.** To make recognition personally meaningful, you first have to get to know your constituents.

By putting these essentials into practice to recognize constituents' contributions, leaders stimulate and motivate the internal drive within each individual — and fulfill their commitment to encouraging the heart.

### Celebrate the Values and Victories

Performance improves when leaders bring people together to rejoice in their achievements and to reinforce their shared principles. If leaders are to effectively celebrate the values and victories, they must master these essentials:

- **Create a spirit of community.** Celebrations are among the most significant ways we have to proclaim our respect and gratitude, to renew our sense of community, and to remind ourselves of the values and history that bind us together. Celebrations serve as important a purpose in the long-term health of our organizations as does the daily performance of tasks.
- **Be personally involved.** One of the most significant ways in which leaders show others that they care and that they appreciate the efforts of their constituents is to be out there with them. This visibility makes them more real, more genuine, more approachable and more human.

### Perpetuate the Stories

Leaders are on the lookout for “catching people doing things right,” and this can't be easily done sitting behind a desk. They want to see and know firsthand what's being done right, not only so that they can let that person know to “keep up the good work” but so that they can tell others about this and other examples of what it means to put into practice and live out shared values and aspirations. ●

## Leadership for Everyone

Leadership is not about position or title. Leadership is about relationships, credibility and what you do.

### You Are the Most Important Leader

If you're a manager in an organization, to your direct reports you are the most important leader in your organization. You are more likely than any other to influence their desire to stay or leave, the trajectory of their careers, their ethical behavior, their ability to per-

form at their best, their drive to wow customers, their satisfaction with their jobs, and their motivation to share the organization's vision and values.

The leaders who have the most influence on people are those who are the closest to them. You have to challenge the myth that leadership is about position and power.

### U.S. Army Maj. Gen. John H. Stanford

U.S. Army Maj. Gen. John H. Stanford grew up poor, failed sixth-grade but went on to graduate from Penn State University on an ROTC scholarship. He survived multiple military tours in both Korea and Vietnam and was highly decorated. The loyalty of his troops was extraordinary. Stanford headed up the Military Traffic Management Command for the U.S. Army during the Persian Gulf War. When he retired from the Army he became county manager of Fulton County, Ga., when Atlanta was gearing up to host the 1996 Summer Olympics, and then he became superintendent of the Seattle Public Schools, where he sparked a revolution in public education.

When asked how he'd go about developing leaders, whether in colleges and universities, in the military, in government, in the nonprofit sector or in private business, he replied:

“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 fire to ignite other people, to see inside other people, to have greater desire to get things done than other people. A person who is not in love doesn't really feel the kind of excitement that helps them to get ahead and to lead others and to achieve. I don't know any other fire, any other thing in life that is more exhilarating and is more positive a feeling than love is.”

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

### RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *The Leadership Challenge*, you'll also like:

1. ***The 8th Habit* by Stephen Covey.** Covey presents one more habit that will make you not just effective, but great. Find your voice and help others do the same.
2. ***Leadership Gold* by John Maxwell.** Maxwell shares a lifetime of leadership truths that can guide anyone who currently leads or aspires to lead.
3. ***Transparency* by Warren Bennis, Daniel Goldman and James O'Toole.** Digital technology makes transparency all but inevitable in this era. Three essays look at this urgent issue from different angles and offer leaders practical advice on how to embrace transparency.