

The Leadership Challenge

James Kouzes & Barry Posner (2023)¹

Leadership Practices

Leaders build and sustain credibility through their actions. Five key practices enable them to earn trust and achieve exceptional results: (1) challenge the process, (2) inspire a shared vision, (3) enable others to act, (4) model the way, and (5) encourage the heart.

Challenging the Process

Leaders are pioneers—people who seek out new opportunities and are willing to change the status quo. They innovate, experiment, and explore ways to improve the organization. They treat mistakes as learning experiences. Leaders also stay prepared to meet whatever challenges may confront them.

Inspiring a Shared Vision

Leaders look toward and beyond the horizon. They envision the future with a positive and hopeful outlook. Leaders are expressive and attract followers through their genuineness and skillful communications. They show others how mutual interests can be met through commitment to a common purpose.

Enabling Others to Act

Leaders infuse people with spirit-developing relationships based on mutual trust. They stress collaborative goals. They actively involve others in planning, giving them discretion to make their own decisions. Leaders ensure that people feel strong and capable.

Modeling the Way

Leaders are clear about their business values and beliefs. They keep people and projects on course by behaving consistently with these values and modeling how they expect others to act. Leaders also plan and break projects down into achievable steps, creating opportunities for small wins. They make it easier for others to achieve goals by focusing on key priorities.

Encouraging the Heart

Leaders encourage people to persist in their efforts by linking recognition with accomplishments, visibly recognizing contributions to the common vision. They let others know that their efforts are appreciated and express pride in the team's accomplishments. Leaders also find ways to celebrate achievements. They nurture a team spirit that enables people to sustain continued efforts

¹ Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2023). *The leadership challenge* (7th ed.). Jossey-Bass/Wiley.

Leadership Self-Assessment Instructions

This assessment is designed to help you evaluate your leadership effectiveness based on five key practices: **Challenging the Process, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Enabling Others to Act, Modeling the Way, and Encouraging the Heart**. Follow these steps to complete your self-assessment:

1. **Reflect on Each Practice** – Consider specific examples of when you demonstrated each leadership practice and areas for improvement.
2. **Rate Yourself** – Mark **High, Medium, or Low** in the table based on how consistently you exhibit each practice.
3. **Identify Actions for Improvement** – For any **Medium** or **Low** ratings, list 1–3 actionable steps to strengthen your leadership.
4. **Set Goals** – Choose one focus area for the next three months and outline steps to improve.
5. **Follow Up** – Reassess in three months and seek feedback to track progress.

How Do I Rate My Leadership?

Practice	High	Medium	Low	Action
Challenge the Process				
Inspire a Shared Vision				
Enable Others to Act				
Model the Way				
Encourage the Heart				

Setting Goals

Goals	Choose 1 focus area from your goals to improve on during the next 3 months