

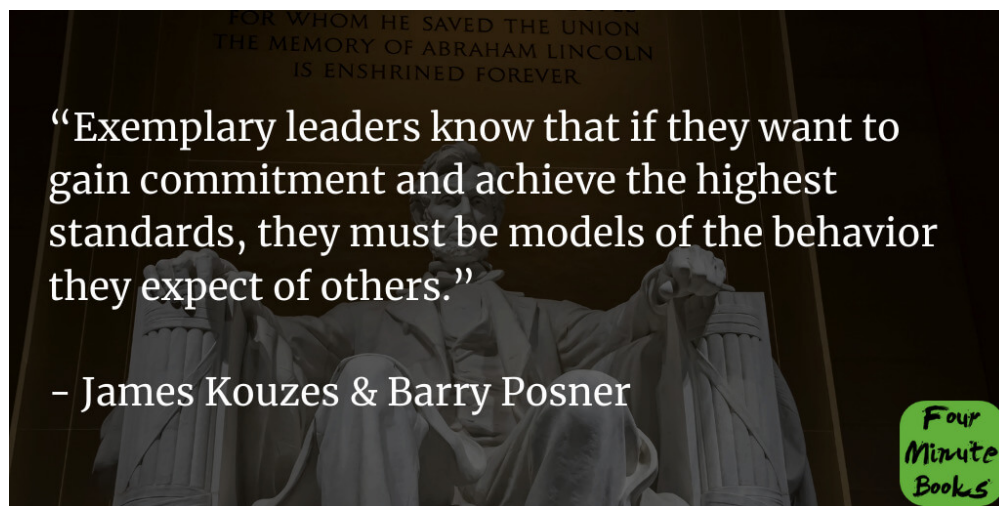
The Leadership Challenge Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Leadership Challenge* shares the top leadership lessons from 25 years of experience and research of authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner and explains what makes successful managers and how you can apply the same principles to become one yourself.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



I've been lucky to have a lot of great leaders throughout my life. From the Boy Scouts to being a missionary, I've learned a lot about what an awesome leader looks like.

Not every person in charge of me was effective though. And, unfortunately, most people don't get to be around great leaders to see how it's done right. For you, it might have been a boss that micromanaged you or the coach that was too mean.

Either way, their examples had an impact on you. Now that it's time for you to lead, you've fallen into some of the same pitfalls. But the good news is that they weren't inherently bad, and neither are you.

What we all need is simply to learn the principles of excellent leadership and apply them.

If you want to inspire others, boost productivity, and enhance your work environment you need to constantly ask yourself "what do I have to do to become the best leader?"

Luckily, you don't have to go far to find the answer. James Kouzes and Barry Posner have summarized their findings after 25 years of experience and research on this question in their book *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in*

Organizations.

Here are the 3 of the most helpful lessons this book taught me:

1. You're always setting an example for those you lead, the only question is, is it a good one or a bad one?
2. The best leaders are proactive and look for opportunities and challenges.
3. You must trust your team members to make good decisions if you want to achieve great things.

Get ready to learn all the secrets of great leadership! Let's dive right in and get learning!

Lesson 1: Effective leadership means setting a good example.

It's much easier to persuade someone to follow you if you're doing the right thing than if you're merely telling them what to do. Sometimes this even results in people changing their behavior without even realizing it!

Imagine your boss comes into work in basketball shorts and a T-shirt. Are you likely to follow his demand that you wear a suit every day? Of course not! And on the flip side, if he wears a nice suit to work, you won't feel comfortable coming in shorts and a T-shirt yourself!

Take inspiration also from the example of Steve Skarke. After becoming a plant manager he noticed a lot of garbage around the place. Skarke knew that the company had a goal of becoming a "world-class plant." And he recognized that the garbage wasn't helping.

It would have been easy for him to start barking rude orders for people to "clean up their act." But he took the higher road. **Skarke bought a trash can and went around collecting garbage every day.**

Eventually, he noticed that he didn't have to pick up as much anymore. His team had followed his example and started cleaning up after themselves without him even asking!

The moral of the story is, if you want those you lead to do something or act a certain way, it's best to show them how by doing it yourself.

Lesson 2: Be proactive by always seeking out challenges and opportunities.

If it weren't for the proactive attitude of one Starbucks manager, the Frappuccino might not exist.

Initially, the company didn't want to invest in blenders. But this manager knew that her drink creation, which required a blender to make, would be a hit. So instead of just giving up, she bought her own blender and began using it to make the drink.

Years later, the Frappuccino is one of Starbucks' most popular drinks and has made the company millions of dollars.

It's easy to stay within your comfort zone and bow to the commands of upper leadership. But often, you'll discover the best opportunities only by venturing into the unknown. Be open to receiving ideas at any moment and from any place.

Once you do take the leap of faith to implement a new idea, things can take off in unimaginable ways. And while everybody would love that new opportunity, most don't think about potential improvements.

This is why you as a leader must take charge to think proactively.

Innovation like this requires that you have a good baseline understanding of where your company and market are at, though. You need to constantly gather information. You might visit competitors or even call your own company pretending to be a potential customer.

Lesson 3: If you want to accomplish amazing things you have to empower your team members to make their own choices.

I've been fortunate to never have a boss take credit for my work. But I can imagine how depressing it can be. If it did happen to me it would kill my motivation because I'd know that nobody would ever recognize my efforts.

Research even confirms that when people feel that they can't control what's happening to them their productivity and performance suffer.

Good leaders know this and instead empower their team members to make their own decisions. This added level of agency instills a sense of ownership, which boosts efficiency.

Consider the powerful example of Aruba Networks trusting their employees by eliminating their strict vacation policy and instead opting to let people choose their days off.

The company noticed that they were wasting a lot of time and energy coordinating vacation schedules, so decided to cut the policy. Instead, they let employees choose time off based on the projects they needed to get done, which ended up boosting productivity!

While you're empowering people you also need to help them develop their competence and confidence. Help people get into the flow state by understanding what they're good at and the challenges that will make them grow.

When you give people the opportunity to rise to a new level you will improve everybody's productivity, engagement, and success.

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The Leadership Challenge Review

I really like *The Leadership Challenge*. It gave me a lot of ideas on how to improve as a leader and also reminded me of some of my favorite leaders. I also enjoyed seeing how these principles are applicable whether you lead in an office, your home, or anywhere else in the world!

Who would I recommend The Leadership Challenge summary to?

The 47-year-old who just became a manager and feels a little overwhelmed, the 22-year-old that wants to start working on becoming a great leader, and anyone who is in charge of a team of any kind.