
'The Leadership Challenge' by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner
Reviewed by Kinga Winiarska

Great leadership book helping to understand 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 book is fairly easy to read and follow. Can serve as a discussion point with your team at work or any volunteer organization that supports developing leaders. If you are interested in being a leader or bettering your current leader skills, this book will assist you in doing so.

Amazon Description:

Featured Guest Review by Marshall Goldsmith

The Leadership Challenge is written for real leaders, who today face some of the toughest organizational challenges we've ever encountered. And, it provides practical, real-world advice based on Jim's and Barry's extensive global research that is indispensable for leaders at all levels.

I always refer leaders to this book, because although my Ph.D. is in Organizational Behavior, my undergraduate background is in mathematics. And, I respect people who gather real facts! In developing the Leadership Practices Inventory, which is possibly the world's most widely respected tool for 360° leadership feedback, Jim and Barry have thoroughly reviewed input from tens of thousands of respondents. They've then used this data to form sound conclusions about what works--and what doesn't work--in terms of leadership behavior.

The central theme of *The Leadership Challenge* is that leadership is for everyone. It can be learned, but, let's face it, it's not easy. *The Leadership Challenge* is based upon learnings from leaders at all levels--and shows how "regular people" can make a huge, positive difference in their organizations. It is written in a way that can help executives, mid-managers, first-line supervisors, project leaders--and even individual contributors--better understand how they can lead and immediately apply what they have learned in their work.

For example, Jim and Barry asked managers about their clarity around their personal values as well as around the values of their organizations. These managers were also asked about their level of commitment to the organization, their level of motivation and productivity, job satisfaction, and so on. To me, what they found is fascinating! Leaders with the highest levels of commitment are those who are clearest about their own personal values. Clarity about personal values was more prevalent in a positive workplace attitude and level of engagement than was clarity around organizational values. In doing the research for my recent book, *Mojo*, I found something similar to be true as well: People who find happiness and meaning at home are more likely to also find happiness and meaning at work.

Finally, for those of you reading this book now, I'd highly recommend that you put what you read here into practice. This book can help you lead in such a way that your organization will become a better place for you, your managers, employees, and colleagues-to-be. At the same time, if you implement what you learn here, you'll make a positive difference in not only your organization, but also in your own life and in the lives of those whom you lead.