

Chapter 1 Summary

When Leaders Are at Their Best

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## WHEN LEADERS ARE AT THEIR BEST

In chapter 1 of *The Leadership Challenge*, we read about When Leaders are at Their Best. Kouzes and Posner explain the “Ten Commandments of Exemplary Leadership.” Model the Way- Kouzes and Posner state, “titles are granted, but its your behavior that earns you respect.” Being in a position of leadership is necessary to lead an organization, but that is not sufficient to get people moving towards a common goal. Titles, on their own, do not clarify the leaders guiding principles. "Do as I say, not as I do" doesn't for work. Leaders must be held accountable for the behaviors and organizational values set by the organization. Inspire a Shared Vision- Kouzes and Posner state, “Leaders envision the future by imaging exciting and ennobling possibilities.” The only visions that take hold are shared vision and you will create them only when you listen closely to others, appreciate their hopes, involve them in the process and attend to their needs.

Challenge the process- “leaders don’t sit idly by waiting for fate to smile upon them; they venture out,” writes Kouzes and Posner. The greatest leaders recognize the present-day is nothing more than a platform for the envisioning of, and positioning for, the future. Leaders should create a climate of experiment by encouraging others to take risk and not penalize failure. Enable others to act- “Grand dreams don’t become significant realities through the actions of a single person,” states Kouzes and Posner. Leaders must be able to create an environment where each employee wants to work cooperatively and collaboratively. When leaders develop effective teamwork and they will inspire productivity, quality and loyalty. Encourage the heart- Leaders recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. When people feel good about their work and accomplishments, it feeds engagement which in turn feeds productivity and the bottom line.