

Introduction

Kouzes and Posner offer unrivaled insights into what it means to become an exemplary leader in today's world with their original research and over 30 years of experience studying the practices of extraordinary leadership. They show that anyone can become a better leader if they believe in themselves, aspire to excel, challenge themselves, to grow, engage the support of others, and practice deliberately. Learning Leadership challenges readers to do the meaningful and disciplined work necessary to becoming the best they can, using a new mindset and toolkit that can make extraordinary things happen. It's not the once-in-a-while transformational acts that demonstrate leadership. It's the little things that one does day in and day out that pave the path to greatness..

Credit: <http://www.leadershipnow.com/leadershop/97811191442-81.html>

Learning Leadership

The Five Fundamentals of Becoming an Exemplary Leader is divided into digestible bite-sized chapters that encourage daily actions to becoming a better leader. Key takeaways from the book include:

- 1. Believe in Yourself.** Believing in oneself is the essential first step in developing leadership competencies. The best leaders are learners, and they can't achieve mastery until and unless they truly decide that inside them there is a person who can make and difference and learn to be a better leader than they are right now.
- 2. Aspire to Excel.** To become an exemplary leader, people have to determine what they care most about and why they want to lead. Leaders with values-based motivations are the most likely to excel. They also must have a clear image of the kind of leader they want to be in the future—and the legacy they want to leave for others.
- 3. Challenge Yourself.** Challenging oneself is critical to learning leadership. Leaders have to seek new experiences and test themselves. There will be inevitable setbacks and failures along the way that require curiosity, grit, courage, and resilience in order to persist in learning and becoming the best.
- 4. Engage Support.** One can't lead alone, and one can't learn alone. It is essential to get support and coaching on the path to achieving excellence. Whether it's family, managers at work, or professional coaches, leaders need the advice, feedback, care, and support of others.
- 5. Practice Deliberately.** No one gets better at anything without continuous practice. Exemplary leaders spend more time practicing than ordinary leaders. Simply being in the role of a leader is insufficient. To achieve mastery, leaders must set improvement goals, participate in designed learning experiences, ask for feedback, and get coaching. They also put in the time every day and make learning leadership a daily habit.

5 Myths About Leadership (cont)

1. The Talent Myth: "You either have it or you don't."

Kouzes and Posner's research confirms that leadership is not actually a talent, but a learned set of skills and abilities. If you assume the best leaders have innate abilities, then you may overlook important potential leadership opportunities. The simple antidote to the talent myth is to cultivate the belief that you can develop as a leader, and then act upon it.

2. The Position Myth: "Leaders are only found at the top."

This myth confuses the position of a leader with that of authority. Just because someone has a hierarchical position, doesn't make them a good leader. Research shows that the number one reason people leave their jobs is because of their immediate manager. The simple truth is that leadership is about the actions you take, not the position you hold. To combat this myth, aspire to excel as a leader, and do not be content with the status quo.

3. The Strengths Myth: "Only focus on what you are good at."

Kouzes and Posner's research has found that overwhelmingly, the circumstances that enable exemplary leaders to flourish are not circumstances leaders find themselves prepared for or "strong" in, but are most often characterized by challenge and adversity. Focusing only on what you are good at won't spark innovation. To overcome this myth, challenge yourself or your team, and cultivate a culture of embracing challenge, curiosity, and learning.

4. The Self-Reliance Myth: "If you can't do it yourself it isn't worth doing."

Leadership doesn't happen in a vacuum. Even the most visionary leaders need teamwork and engagement. If leaders can't enlist others, they will likely fail. Think of yourself, or your leaders, like star athletes - give them the resources of coaching, mentoring, and leadership training.

5. The It-Comes-Naturally Myth: "You don't need to practice."

Great leaders might make it look easy, but the truth is, leadership performance doesn't develop without practice. Research shows that practicing deliberately, every day, is the key to success - not raw talent. Find ways to improve as a leader every single day by seeking out a challenge, saying thank you, taking a risk, and by asking the opinions of a co-worker. Find one way every single day to see yourself as a leader and act upon it

Credit: <https://www.sonomaleadership.com/blog/5-myths-you-need-to-know-about-learning-leadership>

5 Myths About Leadership

Companies often provide leadership training to seasoned professionals or to already successful managers, but it can be difficult for individual leaders to develop a leadership mindset and to practice their leadership skills.

The Leadership Challenge authors, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner's newest resource, *Learning Leadership: The Five Fundamentals of Becoming an Exemplary Leader*, states the key to developing a leadership mindset is to ensure that we are not being held back by any unconscious biases or "myths" about leadership. Whether you are developing leaders in your organization, or are an emerging or "unpracticed" leader, here are 5 "Leadership Myths" that could be holding you back:



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