

PART

Essential Leadership Qualities

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CHAPTER 1

Jim Kouzes: Leadership is Everybody's Business

Jim Kouzes is the co-author, with Barry Posner, of *The Leadership Challenge*, one of the most influential leadership books, which is currently in its fourth edition. He is the Dean's Executive Professor of Leadership at the Leavey School of Business of Santa Clara University (SCU). He served as president, then CEO and chairman of the Tom Peters Company from 1988 to 2000, and directed the Executive Development Center at SCU from 1981 to 1987. The *Wall Street Journal* has cited him as one of the 12 best executive educators in the US.

Jim Kouzes traces his interest in leadership back to January 20, 1961, when he served in John F. Kennedy's Honor Guard at the Presidential Inauguration as one of only a dozen Eagle Scouts. But it wasn't until 1982 when he joined the staff at SCU that he, together with SCU professor Barry Posner, began to dedicate himself to serious research on the practice of leadership.

Kouzes and Posner became intrigued by what people did when they were exercising leadership at their best. They asked leaders across all types of organizations to tell them Personal Best Leadership stories, and they have been asking the same question since. Based on their research, they wrote *The Leadership Challenge*, first published in 1987, and presented The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership (which is a registered trademark of Kouzes and Posner):

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(1) Model the Way, (2) Inspire a Shared Vision, (3) Challenge the Process, (4) Enable Others to Act, and (5) Encourage the Heart.

After more than 25 years' continuous research, Kouzes and Posner maintain that the five practices are enduring and universal. In the preface to the fourth edition of *The Leadership Challenge* released in 2007, they write: "Nothing in our continuing research has told us that there is a magical sixth practice that will revolutionize the conduct of leadership, and nothing in our research suggests that any of the Five Practices are now irrelevant."

With over 1.8 million copies sold and available in 22 languages, *The Leadership Challenge* is a bestseller around the world, including China. The appeal comes from its lucid structure: Leadership is about doing five things—and it comes with a guarantee. Kouzes and Posner write, "We also make you a promise: everything in this book is evidence-based. Everything we write about, everything we advise is solidly based in research—our own and others. If you engage in the practices we describe in this book, you will improve your performance and the performance of your team."

While this sounds simple enough, simple does not mean easy. For example, in a marathon you need to complete 42 kilometers, which is quite simple but not easy at all. Having this clearly in mind, Kouzes and Posner offered this caveat: "There is a catch, of course. You have to do it with commitment and consistency. Excellence in anything—whether it's leadership, music, sports, or engineering—requires disciplined practice."

The Leadership Challenge is not only a book. Kouzes and Posner have created other products around it and also over a dozen other books. What is intriguing is that they always do it together as co-authors. Kouzes-Posner is not a co-brand, but a single brand. When I requested an interview with Kouzes, he recommended a three-way conversation together with "Barry." Regrettably, when I visited Kouzes, Posner was busy with other commitments.

Unlike Posner, who has remained at SCU, Kouzes left academia for a while to run the Tom Peters Group Learning Systems in 1988 as president of the consultancy, and later on, CEO and chairman of the Tom Peters Company until 2000 (a role he refers

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to as that of a player/coach). Having come back to SCU as the Dean's Executive Professor of Leadership, Kouzes is now more of a coach.

Expertise and experience aside, Kouzes is also a considerate coach. When I talked to him in San Francisco in June 2008, a month after a massive earthquake hit the province of Sichuan in China, he opened the conversation by asking whether the earthquake had affected any of my family. He also showed his thoughtfulness in the way that he had meticulously prepared notes for the list of questions I had submitted earlier. Even before we started our dialog, Kouzes was already modeling the way.

Leadership is about Ordinary People

Liu: In the preface of *The Leadership Challenge*, it says that the book is about how ordinary people exercise leadership at their best. By ordinary people, I think you mean people who are not in a very obvious, or very high, leadership position. So what does leadership mean to ordinary people?

Kouzes: Our work has been based on an assumption that leadership is not reserved for the people at the top. It's not reserved for people who are elected officials. It's not reserved for people who are military generals. It's not reserved for people of any political status. You see "leadership" with the small "l" in every domain of life.

You see leadership on the playground with kids when someone is chosen as team leader or who emerges as a leader of a group. You see it in communities with their volunteers doing work, leading a project or leading a political activity.

You see leadership at home. In fact, the most important leadership role model for 18–30-year-olds, according to the research that Barry and I did, comes from family members, followed by teachers and coaches, then followed by community leaders, and, only after that, business leaders.

So it's pretty apparent that leadership is not just something about people who are CEOs and those who make the cover of

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magazines. It is something that is not dependent on age, gender, or position. Leadership is something everyone can do.

Although we have interviewed many CEOs, what we wanted to know is not what CEOs do that makes them the most effective. We also wanted to know what made people who were in any leadership roles, regardless of level, effective.

So we decided to construct a research project that asked people from supervisor level all the way up to the very top of organizations. Given the nature of our study, the majority were middle managers. After the first edition of *The Leadership Challenge* we expanded our study to include student leaders, as well as others outside of formal organizations. We asked: What is it that you are doing when you are performing at your best as a leader? We collected hundreds of Personal Best stories, and we literally took three-by-five cards and wrote down the specific behaviors from both the interviews and written cases that described what leaders did when at their best. We then organized these and it became our Five Practices.

If you are going to learn about leadership that is not based on a position, you need to study people who are across the range of leadership roles. The best way to do that is by asking them to tell a story about their best experience as a leader. If you do enough of that, you find enough people agreeing on certain things, and common themes become apparent. So like any initial observational research, that's what we did. The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership emerged from our analysis of the hundreds of cases and interviews.

Later, we tested the validity and reliability of our findings using an assessment questionnaire, The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), that measured the extent to which leaders engaged in The Five Practices and the impact these behaviors had on the attitudes and performance of team members. In addition to our research, after 25 years, more than 400 doctoral studies have been done using this model in a variety of different settings, testing its validity and its reliability. Ours is one of the most rigorously tested leadership models in use today.

Leadership is about Movement

Liu: Would you like to give a definition of leadership?

Kouzes: In our book, we define leadership as the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations. And each of those words is chosen very carefully.

It is an “art” because even though we have tried to put some science to leadership—if leaders do certain things they will have these outcomes, and we do our best as researchers to validate this—there is a lot you can’t account for. There is a lot that comes from the person, the person’s style, and the person’s background. There’s also the culture of the company and the country, the industry, the state of the economy, and a host of other variables. Leadership is very much like a performing art, because you are doing it with other people or in front of other people. It’s not something you do on your own. It’s not an art like painting.

It is about “mobilizing others” because leadership is about movement. If you look up “manage” and “lead” in a dictionary, you’ll find that “manage” comes from the word “manus” which means “hand.” Being a manager is about essentially handling things, organizing and making sure everything is in good shape, and being efficient—those kinds of connotations. The origin of the word “lead” comes from the words “go,” “travel,” and “guide.” Leadership is about going places. So you are mobilizing others.

We use “want to” because people do their best only when they do things of their own volition and when they are personally committed. People who do it because they have to do it, because they are getting a paycheck, because they are afraid they will be punished by their manager, or because they are told to do it, do not produce the best outcome. So there is an element of making sure that people want to do this, not just have to do this.

And it is a “struggle.” Leadership is often presented as too easy: here is the formula, do these five things, and you should be successful. But in fact it’s all about hard work, difficulty, adversity, and challenge.

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And last, leadership is about “shared aspirations” because it is not about the leader’s vision and values, it is about the collective. A leader represents a group of people, or represents a cause with a set of principles, not just himself or herself.

All of these are important elements of this definition. It’s also consistent with the origin, which is to “go,” “travel,” and “guide,” a sense of going someplace.

Managers must be Leaders

Liu: You have touched on the difference between leadership and management. Probably in many people’s minds, leadership is a better thing than management. What is your response to that?

Kouzes: Well, I had a manager title after my name for much of my career. My father had a manager title after his name. Managers tend to have a title. Leaders often do not. Managers are people who are most often appointed or selected. Leaders are people who often either emerge or might be elected. Management is a more formal operation. Leadership is often less formal. If you take some of the most recognized leaders historically—Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King or even, say, Mao in his early years—they weren’t elected or appointed. They just led. They behaved in ways that attracted followers. So leadership is not about the title or position. It’s about the behavior.

There is a distinction between “manage” and “lead” based on their word origins and the way the functions are typically described. “Manage” is typically described as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. Again, those practices have to do with keeping things in order, making sure everything is well-run and efficient.

Leadership is more about movement and going places and doesn’t necessarily have to do with anything being well organized. Often it may seem chaotic and disorganized because you are trying something new or going in a new direction. Things are unknown, and the process is often messy. It’s not as neat and tidy as management is often described.

That said, while there is a distinction between the two, we don’t find it necessarily very useful to make a big deal out of it. We try not

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to in our book because a manager—a person with a title—also has to be a leader. In today's environment people expect both, not just one or the other. Managers must manage, and they must lead.

Now the same is not true for leaders. Leaders don't always have to be managers. Again take the example of some of the most famous historical leaders of movements; they are not necessarily people with formal titles and they don't have the expectation that they'll do all the things that managers do, like make a budget or do a plan. But they are expected to provide some sense of direction, and some sense that we can all do this together, the things we expect from leaders.

Peter Drucker once said that he thought this was false dichotomy because the person who is expected to lead and manage is the same person. You can't really cut the person in half and say this half is a manager, and that half is a leader. You are both.

Leadership is about Popularity

Liu: I read your recent blog where you said maybe leadership is a popularity test. Peter Drucker has said that leadership is not about being popular. Could you elaborate on this?

Kouzes: Barry and I once wrote an essay called "Leaders Should Want to be Liked." I also wrote that blog after I happened to arrive in downtown San Francisco on the day that the torch was being carried through the streets of San Francisco for the Beijing Olympics.

It just struck me as I followed the news reports several days after, how a leader, Gavin Newsom, the mayor in this particular case, was being criticized from all sides. It's like nothing he could do was the right thing because if he took one action, he would have upset the people who were protesting, and if he took another action, he would have upset those who were carrying the torch and those who were sponsoring it. It's one of the classical lose-lose situations. Yet as much as that was true, as mayor he still had to maintain support.

This experience caused me to reflect on something you'll hear some leaders often say: "I don't care if people like me; I just want them to respect me." I don't know if you have a similar kind of phrase in Chinese, but it's something you will often hear in English.

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Do they really mean that? Are the people who say this truly serious about not wanting others to like them? And who is the “they” leaders are talking about when they make that statement? Can they really mean that they don’t care if their spouses don’t like them, or their kids don’t like them, or their business partners don’t like them, or their employees don’t like them, or their friends (would they have any?) don’t like them?

I think this is just an excuse for bad, self-protective behavior. If those leaders really do believe that, then they are limiting their capacity to get extraordinary things done. Our data show that when people say they like their manager, their effectiveness is higher, their performance is higher, and their satisfaction with the organization is also higher. If it’s true that people will perform at higher levels if they like you, then you should want to be liked. It’s no different from saying: if I set goals, people are more likely to perform at higher levels, therefore I should set goals. There is no difference between those two statements.

Then why do they say “I don’t care if people like me; I just want them to respect me”? Frankly I think it’s because many leaders need an excuse for doing things that are not likeable. But it’s not unlike being a parent. Do you have kids?

Liu: Yes, I have two sons.

Kouzes: So you know that sometimes, in the best interest of your children, you have to do things they may not like. It comes with being a parent. When you do something that they don’t like, your kids may even say out of anger “I hate you, Dad.” (We know they really don’t mean it, because they’re upset at the moment. It passes pretty quickly, and they are fine the next minute.) It’s a very similar situation when you’re in the leader role.

We often have to make decisions as leaders that other people do not agree with and do not like. That doesn’t mean that we have to make those decisions or take those actions in a manner that causes people not to like us. We can do it in such a way that at the end of the day others will still say, on the scale of “dislike” to “like,” that they like us as leaders. We perform in such a way that makes them like us.

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Leadership is a relationship. If people have a more positive feeling about their leader, they are much more likely to perform at higher levels. Isn't that their job, anyway? Leaders are here to improve performance, not to diminish it. That said, neither Gavin Newsom in San Francisco nor any leader in any country, in any company, in any governmental agency or not-for-profit organization will ever be liked by 100 percent of people. That's an impossibility.

Liu: There was an article in the *Harvard Business Review* called "The Great Intimidators," which argued that fear is also a great motivator.

Kouzes: What we know about fear is that physiologically it causes the kinds of responses that shut the body down. If you become fearful, you become much more vigilant, you are always watching out, you become much more self-protective and much more interested in yourself rather than in the broader community and what happens to others. This is all very physiological. Your blood goes to your basic organs, you are there ready to fight and protect, but you are not there to create, to take big risks and things like that.

So fear may be effective as an emotion if you want people to stop being effective. But if you want people to take risks, perform at higher levels, be innovative, and also enjoy what they are doing, then fear is not the emotion you want to instill. Intimidation may get people to do things but it definitely does not get them to do their best. That's really the important thing to remember.

Leaders are also Followers

Liu: When I first received an email from you, I noticed your signature line "love 'em and lead 'em." I love that, particularly the first part, "love them." But I'm a little concerned about the second part.

As you said, leadership is a relationship between leaders and followers. I think we are not only leaders, but also followers in many more situations. So, do we over-emphasize leadership compared with what we might call "followership?"

Kouzes: It is a great question. We haven't actually done as much research on "followership," but all leaders are also followers, except

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perhaps for the chairman of the board. Even that person has to respond to the shareholders in a capitalist system, or has to respond to some other higher authority; so even those at the top are following somebody. Just like manager/leader in many respects is a false dichotomy, leader/follower is a false dichotomy because we can all be both.

A middle manager is a classic example. A middle manager has to lead those who, in a hierarchical system, report to him or her, but also follow the direction that comes from above. We are often caught up in thinking “Well, I can’t behave in ways that are other than what I’m told to do from the top, so I just have to cascade those orders down to the bottom” in the very classical, rigid, militaristic, or bureaucratic sense. But if I look at myself both as a leader and a follower, I have some choices to make along the way.

I can choose to say: “This is aligned with the values we all agree on. This is aligned with the purpose, with the organization, and I am choosing to follow.” On the other hand I might come to a different conclusion and say: “You know, while this is one way of making this company effective, I have an innovative and creative idea that I think will make us even more effective. It is consistent with our organizational vision and values. But it is not one that people who are above me are advocating. I’m going to take the risk and put that idea forward in a way that will enlist them in it.” And when I do that, I’m becoming the leader.

I’ll tell you a little story. It’s a classical example. I think it is still included in the fourth edition of *The Leadership Challenge*. When Gail Mayville worked for Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream, the ice cream manufacturer in Vermont, she heard they had a problem. At the time, she was an administrative assistant. She didn’t have a title as a manager. Everyone was essentially her boss and she was at the bottom of the ladder, at the bottom of the hierarchy. But she had an idea on what would be valuable for the company to do to solve a critical problem. So when she decided that she would present that idea, she moved into the role of being a leader. So people can lead from any position. You don’t have to be the CEO. You don’t have to be a middle manager. You can be in both roles at the same time.

We are both leaders and followers. Sometimes we do our best to make sure that we enthusiastically implement what everyone

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has agreed on. Other times when I have an innovative and different way of doing something, let me put on my “leader hat” and try to put it forward, inspire a vision of the future and enlist other people.

Asians are more Forward-Looking

Liu: Have you been to China?

Kouzes: Twice.

Liu: Do you feel Chinese managers are different from managers in other places?

Kouzes: I can answer that in two ways.

First, if you look at our data, they do not show any meaningful differences. There may be some statistically significant differences, but not meaningful differences. For example, based on the scores on our *Leadership Practices Inventory*—our leader assessment instrument—it looks like Americans are better leaders than Asians. That is, American leaders score higher on most of the practices compared to Asian leaders. But we think that is not the case. We think it's a case of how people view the scale.

There is a tendency among Asian people when responding to this kind of survey to give a lower number rather than a higher number. Given a choice between giving someone a 7 and an 8, Asians will tend to give a 7 while Americans will tend to give an 8. We call it grade inflation in education. Americans seem to have a slightly more positive view of themselves, but it doesn't mean they are actually better.

That's why we don't look at the absolute scores so much as whether the lines are parallel to each other. They are; meaning Asians and Americans look very similar in terms of the leadership practices on which they score high, moderate and low. Essentially this means that we are relatively similar in our practices. This is also true across other cultures. This tells us that there are some leadership universals. There are some universal practices that work.

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Liu: There is a table in *The Leadership Challenge* showing the selection of people from different countries for the most admired leadership qualities. China is not in the table, but it illustrates the difference between other Asian countries and North America.

In the top four qualities, the Japanese and Koreans rank “Forward-looking” first, and “Inspiring” last. But the Canadians and Americans rank “Honest” first and “Competent” last.

Kouzes: Among all qualities, only “Honest,” “Forward-looking,” “Inspiring” and “Competent” get more than 60 percent universally. Their relative ranking may be different, but these are the only four leader qualities that 60 percent or more of people around the world say they look for in leaders. These four qualities make a composite picture of what we *most* expect of leaders. This is as true today as it was when we first started doing our research.

It is also true that in Asia there is a tendency to value “Forward-looking” more than any of these other qualities, which reinforces the point that being forward-looking is the one quality that differentiates leaders from other credible people, which we report in another book, *Credibility*. By the way, in addition to doing the research on what people look for in their leaders, we also did research on what people looked for in a colleague. We used the same list of attributes so we could compare the results. It was most intriguing to find that “forward-looking” was not something that the majority of people looked for in a colleague, but 71 percent of people looked for this quality in a leader.

And we are willing to acknowledge that in Asia the thinking is longer-term. People may often make the observations that we think short-term in the United States. There is much truth in this. We are so driven by numbers, quotas, and results that we lose sight of the long term. In America, we expect leaders to think long-term, but the pressures of business force them to think short-term.

Liu: There is another observation that stands out. Asian people don’t expect the manager or the leader to be as “inspiring” as many people in the United States do. That’s a very interesting finding.

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Kouzes: That is another distinction that we would acknowledge. The classic example is perhaps the sales person—always upbeat, positive, like a cheerleader. In Asia, you don't see that kind of behavior. That's cultural. Nevertheless, the expectation to be inspiring is held by more than 50 percent in many Asian countries; it's just that it is not as strong as it is in the West.

The Humility Factor

Liu: Let's talk about humility a little bit. In *The Leadership Challenge*, you say: "Humility is the only way to resolve the conflicts and contradictions of leadership." After reading that statement, I have two questions. First, how do you define humility? Second, are leaders like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs humble?

Kouzes: I love to look up the meaning of a word when I don't understand it. I don't just look up the definition, I look up the origin. "Humility" comes from a word that I think originally comes from an Arabic word, "humus," meaning "earth."

When I think about "humility," I think "down-to-earth." We often think about leaders as being at the very top. They get the suite on the top floor of the building. They are at the top of the hierarchy. Leaders who have humility may have the position that puts them in a very senior rank of the organization, but they don't ever forget where they came from, where they started. They don't ever lose touch with the people on the ground floor. They understand that if it weren't for those people, they wouldn't be where they are. So they don't flaunt their wealth, they don't abuse their status; they hardly ever talk about it.

To me, the best example of someone who is not humble is Donald Trump. He has put his name on all of his buildings. You know he is a TV star. He dresses like he is better than the rest. He arrives in limousines and all of those things say: "You know I am not you. And I'm proud of it."

The best leaders don't take that kind of attitude. They acknowledge that if it weren't for the people who show up every day and

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work really hard, this organization wouldn't be as effective as it is. It's not about me, it's about us. People may say it's the CEO who does this, the CEO who does that. But it's really not the case. It's a team of people that makes that possible. We reinforce this notion that leaders are people who are part of us, not above us.

And yes, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, as well as Michael Dell, and Richard Branson, these iconic figures in business are not very humble people, and their organizations have been effective. But there are also Gandhi, other political or religious leaders, and people we write about in our book. In business, Warren Buffet is someone who is also thought of as a very humble person. Unlike Steve Jobs, these are people who don't put themselves above others.

Liu: So you would take Steve Jobs as an exception to the rule.

Kouzes: I would say that Steve Jobs is an exception to the rule if you look at leadership in its broadest sense. However, Steve Jobs probably is not an exception if you take leaders of the Fortune 100 or Fortune 500 companies.

Leaders are Teachers and Learners

Liu: In *The Leadership Challenge* you say, "Leaders try, fail, learn. That's the leaders' mantra. Leaders are learners." I agree with you that leaders are learners. A lot of people are also saying leaders are teachers. What do you think about that?

Kouzes: Peter Drucker told a story about his first manager when he was in banking. Every week his manager would sit down with him and try to teach him what he knew. Drucker said, "I'm not sure who was learning more from that, me or my manager."

The best leaders are the best learners, but they are also the best teachers. They love to pass on their knowledge and experience to others. In the process of doing so, often they learn as much. I was once asked by one of my early mentors, "What's the best way to learn something?" I thought about it and I said, "To experience it, get out and try it, and see how it works." He said the best way to

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learn something is to teach it to somebody else. I thought: What a great observation!

That is not as easy as it sounds. Those who are teaching others, who are the best at it, are constantly learning things themselves. I find that when I have to prepare for, say, a new client, I'm doing a lot of reading and studying, asking a lot of questions and interviewing people to make sure that I have a better understanding of that particular client. I always love what I do because I am always learning. I love learning.

I think the two are in a sense the opposite sides of the same coin. If I am going to be a good teacher of others, I need to be a good learner.

The observation that leaders are learners also came from research that we did. Again it is those leaders who engage more frequently in learning who are more likely to be effective than those who engage less often in learning; which makes sense since practice is important. It takes more practice to become an exemplary leader than it does to become an ordinary leader.

Liu: Practice does not necessarily lead to knowledge. I mean practice per se. You have to reflect. Practice plus reflection, then you learn.

Kouzes: Becoming the best at anything requires essentially four things: having a particular goal to improve in some way; having a method for learning that and achieving that; having feedback about how well you are doing; and also paying as much attention to the method as to the outcome because we don't always get the outcome we would like the first time we try something. So if you are doing all those things you are deliberately practicing and learning continuously. And leaders can do that.

One of the things I often say is that it takes at least two hours of practice every day to stay the same; more if you want to get better. Most leaders respond by saying, "But I don't have two hours a day to add to my day. I'm already working hard." I say it's not that you have to add it but you have to use your time differently. You can structure your time in such a way that it might be 15 minutes here and 15 minutes there, and you are looking at it as a learner, which means you are stepping back and reflecting. "I wanted this result. And I was trying to do

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it this way. How well did I do it? Did I get the result? What went right? What went wrong? What can I do differently? Let me try something again.” If you look at it that way, then you are practicing.

Preaching and Practice

Liu: Both you and Dr. Posner hold or have held leadership positions in an organization. How was your experience of walking the talk, practicing what you preach? Did you find it different? Was it exciting or disappointing?

Kouzes: In some respects my role model for leading was my father. One of the things I noticed about my dad was that he was always going to school, and he was always trying to teach as well. One of the things I always remember in growing up was how much I admired his ability to handle all of that.

So my own experience with leading, I think, contributes a lot to the realness because for every practice, every recommendation, the test for me was, “Could I do this? Could I apply this to the work that I do? Or is this totally some theoretical notion that is not practical, not applicable?” So in my case, being a manager in an educational institution and being a CEO of a consulting company enabled me to get a reality test. Barry will tell you the same is true for him. He was the dean of the Leavey School of Business at SCU for 12 years. He knows what it's like to try to put into practice the things that we write about.

He and I also say that applying this is harder than writing about it, because in writing about it you are simply talking about the ideal situation, about how it ought to be. But when you are dealing with real people in real-life situations, there's often a difference between intention and execution. I think about it in terms of my golf game. I love to read golf magazines and imagine myself doing all those things that the pros recommend. But there's a difference between reading an article about golf and actually going out and playing golf. It's not as easy as it looks in those pictures. Barry and I are the first to say that leadership is a struggle. There's always a struggle going on. There are always conflicts.

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Still, writing about leadership helped us both be better leaders, and being leaders helped us be better researchers and writers.

Liu: You mentioned that writing about leadership might be easier than practicing leadership. I don't necessarily agree with you. It's probably just different. Writing as thorough and thoughtful a book as *The Leadership Challenge* is pretty difficult.

Kouzes: Yes, it is. It's now in its fourth edition. The first edition was about a year-long research project, a year-long writing project, and another year of all the editing back and forth. You are right. It's just different.

Liu: Warren Bennis used to be president of a university. After that, he said he finally realized he preferred more to be a coach than to be a player. Which role do you prefer, coach or player?

Kouzes: I really wanted to be a player/coach for most of my career. I wanted to both coach and play. I knew that I really liked teaching and I liked engaging other managers who were struggling with the same issues, and coaching and teaching. Currently in this stage of my life, I prefer to be a coach, not a player/coach.

Liu: My last question is about this Kouzes-Posner co-brand. It's amazing, you know. Co-authorship is fairly common but a long-lasting co-authorship is very, very unusual. How are you able to make it work?

Kouzes: You are right. It is very unusual. There are a couple of keys to our success, I believe.

First of all, Barry and I have a passion for our subject matter. We met because we had this common interest. And neither one of us seems to have the personality that wants to be dominant over the other. We are quite collaborative, willing to let one take the lead on something and the other one take the follower role, and vice versa.

Another key is that Barry had his role in another setting that was different from mine. So we were never like academic colleagues competing for tenure in the same institution, or we weren't working

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in the same consulting firm and both trying to run the company. That might have created conflicts.

When we collaborate on a book, it's pretty much a 50:50 proposition: he writes half, I write half. If it is a project where it may be appropriate for one to do more than the other, we are able to make sure that there is another project where the roles are reversed. I think this has served us well.

Liu: But your name always comes first.

Kouzes: Yes, except on some articles. I think the first time we did it the decision was ultimately based on age. I'm older. Age has its privileges sometimes, and I suppose this is one of them.

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