



NCCL

Certificate

IN THE PRACTICE OF **CATECHESIS**

A Guide to Leadership Practices for Catechetical Ministry

Part One

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From: *The NIV Leadership Bible—Leadership Principles from God’s Word* (Zondervan, 1998)

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The Leadership Challenge (7th Edition) by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. Wiley, 2023.

4. “Leadership is Not a Position.”

James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. Chapter 1 in *Everyday People, Extraordinary Leadership*. Wiley, 2021.

1. Servant Leadership in the Bible

From: *The NIV Leadership Bible—Leadership Principles from God’s Word* (Zondervan, 1998)

1. John 13:1-17 (Jesus, Servant Leader)

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Master, are you going to wash my feet? Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well.” Jesus said to him, “Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all.” For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

So when he had washed their feet [and] put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, “Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me ‘teacher’ and ‘master,’ and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it. (NABRE)

Reflection

In John 13 Jesus demonstrates the upside-down values of God’s kingdom. The greatest leader is the lowest servant. When he finished washing the disciple’s feet he said, “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” Real servant leadership follows this radical, no-holds-barred directive.

Serving others can be tough; expending your energies and resources in the interest of others can be exhausting. Yet the most effective leaders are servants. Nobody demonstrated this better than Jesus on the night prior to his crucifixion. Alone with his disciples in a room in Jerusalem, Jesus did the unthinkable. When there was no servant to carry out the custom of foot washing, Jesus assumed the role. The Master became the servant. The greatest and most high became the least and the lowest.

Jesus was able to do this because he was secure in himself. He knew who was and where he was going (v. 1). But Jesus also served his disciples because he loved them (v. 1). While these two reasons would be adequate in and of themselves, the Lord had another reason for his actions. When he had finished washing the disciples’ feet, Jesus told them, “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (v. 15). The Lord didn’t tell them to do “what” he had done. He commanded them to do “as” he had done. They weren’t to become full-time foot-washers, but rather full-time servers of men and women. They were to be servant leaders.

- ◆ Are you a follower of Jesus? Do you desire to be his disciple? Make a commitment to do as he did and expend your energies in service to others.
- ◆ Why are we so impressed with what Jesus did? What is it so hard to be a servant leader? How can you follow the Lord’s example. Read Isaiah 53 to gain additional insights into the character of Jesus as a servant leader.

2. Mark 10:35-45 (To Serve, Not Be Served)

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." He replied, "What do you wish [me] to do for you?" They answered him, "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left." Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" They said to him, "We can." Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Reflection

One crucial message Jesus wanted his disciples to grasp was that in God's kingdom leaders are servants. To drive that point home, Jesus stated that even he "did not come to be served, but to serve (v. 45). The reading from Mark gives us a glimpse of what Jesus did as the ultimate Servant Leader, as well as providing some insights as to the bottom-line results of good servant leadership.

Jesus taught that service is the path to legitimate leadership. Robert Greenleaf made an essential point about how an attitude of servant leadership begins and what kinds of results it can produce: "The servant-leader is servant first. . . . it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve—after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature." (*Servant Leadership*, p. 13-14)

How do we know whether a leader is genuinely serving? Greenleaf states that "The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"

Let's take a look at Jesus' example. Jesus didn't merely talk servant leadership; he lived it out. In fact, the only reason he came to earth was to serve God and, through his death and resurrection, to serve humanity. As for his inner circle of disciples, they became better people in every conceivable way after he had met them than they were before. Even though he had been present at creation and had every right to act as "leader-first," Jesus' statement in verse 45 shows that his paradigm was unquestionably "servant-first."

Jesus refocused his follower's thinking to align more closely with the servant-first model. Greenleaf's insightful distinction provides us with some mental tracks on which to run as we carry that focus into action.

3. Isaiah 52:13—53:12 (Jesus, The Suffering Servant)

*See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted.
Even as many were amazed at him— so marred were his features,
beyond that of mortals his appearance, beyond that of human beings—
So shall he startle many nations, kings shall stand speechless;
For those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it.*

*Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth;
He had no majestic bearing to catch our eye, no beauty to draw us to him.
He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, knowing pain,
Like one from whom you turn your face, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.*

*Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured.
We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted,
But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity.
He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed.
We had all gone astray like sheep, all following our own way;
But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.*

*Though harshly treated, he submitted and did not open his mouth;
Like a lamb led to slaughter or a sheep silent before shearers, he did not open his mouth.
Seized and condemned, he was taken away. Who would have thought any more of his destiny?
For he was cut off from the land of the living, struck for the sins of his people.
He was given a grave among the wicked, a burial place with evildoers,
Though he had done no wrong, nor was deceit found in his mouth.
But it was the Lord's will to crush him with pain.
By making his life as a reparation offering he shall see his offspring, shall lengthen his days,
and the Lord's will shall be accomplished through him.
Because of his anguish he shall see the light; because of his knowledge he shall be content;
My servant, the just one, shall justify the many, their iniquity he shall bear.
Therefore I will give him his portion among the many, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty,
Because he surrendered himself to death, was counted among the transgressors,
Bore the sins of many, and interceded for the transgressors.*

Reflection

More often than not, leadership skills are used in the service of personal gain and career advancement rather than in service to others. Yet God himself demonstrated through the life and ministry of his Son that leadership is intended for use in an *other*-centered way.

Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. As the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, Jesus clearly communicated his purpose for coming to this earth: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45). In his sacrifice on the cross, Jesus provides us with the ultimate illustration of servant leadership. This example of servanthood transcends any that has ever been seen before or since: “at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8).

Christ “took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows” (53:4). If we believe this, what prevents us from serving others as he served us? What do we have to believe about God and ourselves in order to fully embrace a servant-leadership mindset?

4. Mark 9:33-37 (The First Must Be Last)

They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, he began to ask them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them, "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me."

Reflection

At some point in the future, every knee will bow at the name of Jesus. Yet he came to earth in the form of a servant, and he expects those who serve him in this world to express that service to him through their ministry to others. Mark 9:33-37 shows the contrast between leadership as seen by the world and by the Word.

A Biblical view of servant leadership makes evident that the service we render to others is really a measure of the service we render to God. Christ himself is the model of this servant mindset, and he commands his followers to imitate his service to them. When Jesus washed his disciple's feet, he was giving them a visual parable of the use of power in God's kingdom.

On more than one occasion, Jesus' disciples argued over "which of them was considered the greatest" (Luke 22:24; cf. Matthew 20:20-28). As they jockeyed for the highest position in the kingdom, Jesus had to encourage them to turn their thinking upside-down. He informed them that the way of God's children must be radically different from the way of this world. Earthly rulers seek power and control, but for the followers of Christ, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35)

Jesus said, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:39). How do you relate this truth to the issue of servant leadership.

5. Luke 22:24-30 (The Greatest Is the One Who Serves)

Then an argument broke out among them about which of them should be regarded as the greatest. He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those in authority over them are addressed as 'Benefactors'; but among you it shall not be so. Rather, let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at table? I am among you as the one who serves. It is you who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father has conferred one on me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Reflection

As the disciples struggled among themselves for the power positions, Jesus gently reminded them of who really held the power. It's a lesson that we'll do well to take to heart as we consider our own leadership positions. Luke 22:24-30 shows who holds the power in God's kingdom.

Here Jesus' instructions to his disciples take a slightly different tack. Jesus clarifies his own role in the power structure. Look at verses 29 and 30.

Jesus wanted his disciples to learn the important concept of leading first as a servant. But as the disciples contemplated their various roles in the Lord's kingdom, their minds immediately focused on the positions of power and prestige each wanted to inherit. Each thought he should have the most important role.

But the Lord interrupted their argument with words intended to bring about a perspective that they had perhaps forgotten: Jesus was the one who would "confer on them a kingdom." He was the one who held the power because God the Father had conferred it on him. And the power structure in the kingdom of God was radically different from what the world perceived as power. Imagine the disciples' downcast faces as they received this impromptu performance appraisal from the Master. For the disciples, Jesus' words must have been a wake-up call. And although they may not have fully understood what they were being called to do in service to God and to others, they would learn quickly enough.

Have you ever found yourself in a situation in which you were vying with others for power? Remember, in such situations, who really holds the power. It is God who ordains and confers leadership. And the most successful leaders are those people who are willing to share in God's kingdom values and act as servants to those who follow.

6. John 15:1-8 (Vine and Branches)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

Reflection

Jesus often used nature to illustrate spiritual truth, and the organic metaphor in this passage speaks of reproductive life. The vine, branches, and fruit constitute an integrated biological system in which the fruit is the abundant product of life that is derived from the nutrients in the soil. Just as the branch must receive its life from the vine, so believers must depend upon and look to the life of Christ within them to find their spiritual vitality. And just as the fruit nourishes others and contains within itself the seeds of its own reproduction, so the outward manifestation of the life of Christ in us nourishes and reproduces his life in others. If any part of the system malfunctions, the byproduct of fruit will fail to appear.

Systems involve leaders, groups and circumstances. In the case of this allegory, the leader is Jesus and the group consists of his followers. Disciples of Christ who are called into positions of leadership must first be submissive to the spiritual system described in this passage before they can hope to create organizational and relational systems that will have a lasting impact on others.

7. Acts 4:36-37, 9:26-30, 11:22-26 (Barnabas, Servant Leader)

Acts 4:36-37

Thus Joseph, also named by the apostles Barnabas (which is translated “son of encouragement”), a Levite, a Cypriot by birth, sold a piece of property that he owned, then brought the money and put it at the feet of the apostles.

Acts 9:26-30

When he arrived in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. Then Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he reported to them how on the way he had seen the Lord and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus. He moved about freely with them in Jerusalem, and spoke out boldly in the name of the Lord. He also spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they tried to kill him. And when the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus.

Acts 11:22-26

The news about them reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas [to go] to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart, for he was a good man, filled with the holy Spirit and faith. And a large number of people was added to the Lord. Then he went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a large number of people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

Reflection

Jesus was a great servant leader, but he was the Son of God. Can we hope to measure up to the standard he set? Can regular people become true servant leaders as well? Before writing off this model as idealistic and unattainable, we might do well to read this brief statement about Barnabas, another true servant leader.

Barnabas was one of the church’s all-time great leaders, and in this passage we discover why. Barnabas was a giver. He believed that he existed for the good of the church more than he believed that the church existed to serve him and meet his needs.

A leader can select from two fundamental but opposing orientations toward his or her organization. One paradigm prompts him or her to *take from* the organization as many perks and privileges as possible. In this model, the organization exists to provide a title, a job, status, and service. The second orientation asks the leader to evaluate what he or she can contribute or *put into* the organization. In this scenario the leader takes what is need from the organization but his or her passion is to make it great, to serve its needs. The leader following the latter course is a servant leader, and Barnabas effectively modeled this approach. His life teaches its systemic principle. Simply put, Barnabas was a man who was convinced that God had placed him on earth to help others to live productive and satisfying lives.

Good leaders do good things. Their lives matter. That’s good. Servant leaders do great things. They help others’ lives to matter by serving them. Servant leadership is great leadership. Barnabas’ life illustrates numerous leadership truths, but servant leadership is certainly one of the most important.

8. Philippians 2:19-24 (Timothy, Servant Leader)

I hope, in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be heartened by hearing news of you. For I have no one comparable to him for genuine interest in whatever concerns you. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know his worth, how as a child with a father he served along with me in the cause of the gospel. He it is, then, whom I hope to send as soon as I see how things go with me, but I am confident in the Lord that I myself will also come soon.

Reflection

Paul singled out Timothy as one of a rare breed when he commended him to the Philippian church as a leader who would serve them well. In Philippians 2:19-25 Paul provided a brief character sketch of a true servant leader. Read it and discover the qualities which, in Paul's opinion, contribute to great leadership.

In this passage Paul explained why Timothy was a great servant leader. "I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ: (vv. 20-21). Timothy embodied three principles of servant leadership.

First, the servant leader must define what his or her leadership is going to produce. If the leader hopes to produce privilege or prestige, he or she won't serve well but will expect to be served by the followers. Timothy had *genuine interest* in others' *welfare*. Each word is loaded.

Second, the servant leader knows whom he or she serves. With that understanding comes a knowledge of the accountability that he or she has to others and, ultimately, to God. Timothy served Paul by serving those whom Paul had commissioned him to lead. In turn, both Paul and Timothy served the Lord and helped the Philippians to achieve what they Master had commissioned them to accomplish.

The servant leader who loses sight of this model ceases to lead. Such an individual can inadvertently communicate the idea that no one is in charge, that the "leader" runs nothing more than the organization's errands. But a thorough knowledge of "who leads the leader," and the accountability and authority which that structure conveys, empower the servant leader to lead with God's kingdom in mind. Timothy understood this, and Paul contrasted him with those who were looking after their own interests, "no those of Jesus Christ" (v. 21).

Finally, servant leaders are rare. Paul stated that he knew of "no one else like" Timothy (v. 20). Jesus taught that the greater service, the greater the leader (Matthew 20:26-28). To be truly unique—or highly valuable—be a leaders who, like Timothy, serves the organization by helping followers succeed.

2. Eleven Qualities of Christian Leadership

William Miller [From Chapter Six in *Digital Leadership and Ministry*, Liturgical Press, 2022]

In this fast-paced world where we are bombarded constantly with words and images, asked to make quick decisions, and implored to take action, we must have a strong foundation in the spirituality of leadership.

Leadership expert Warren Bennis observed that people do not set out to be leaders. People set out to live their lives, expressing themselves fully. When that expression is of value to others, they become leaders. “So the point is not to become a leader. The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely—all your skills, gifts, and energies—in order to make your vision manifest. You must withhold nothing. You must, in sum, become the person that you started out to be, and enjoy the process of becoming.” (Bennis, 111-112)

The following eleven qualities of Christian leadership are developed from the work of Robert Greenleaf, author of the book *Servant Leadership* and numerous books and articles on servant leadership. Greenleaf was a corporate executive turned university professor and presenter who pioneered the servant leadership approach in the business and nonprofit worlds.

These eleven qualities proposed for Christian leadership in the twenty-first century can guide you in reflecting on your own leadership style and approach—affirming your strengths and identifying areas you want to enhance or strengthen in your practice of pastoral leadership.

1. A Christian leader embraces the belief that each member of a team has unique gifts and talents.

Each member of your team has something unique to contribute to the mission. One of the leader’s responsibilities is to help each one discover and utilize those gifts and talents. In some cases, they are obvious; in other cases, the diamond may still be “in the rough” and need a great deal of polishing. Take time to get to know those whom you lead, their interests, their backgrounds, their likes and dislikes. At the same time, allow them to get to know you. The time you spend with them in building a relationship of confidence and trust will pay dividends as you share, learn, and grow in your ministry together.

One of the greatest gifts that God gives us is the privilege of being cocreators, as we are invited to use our gifts and talents to build the reign of God here on earth. One of the greatest joys for any Christian leader is helping others to learn, grow, and participate in utilizing their gifts and talents. Every project you and your team undertake benefits from the ways that you support your team by affirming their giftedness and empowering them to use their talents.

2. A Christian leader is a servant who inspires others to serve.

This is exactly the picture of leadership that Christ gave to us as he washed the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper. This example fits nicely with Greenleaf’s assertion that “servant leaders are healers in the sense of making whole by helping others to a larger and nobler vision and purpose than they would likely attain for themselves” (Greenleaf, 240). Note his use of the word “inspires.” This implies that the leader demonstrates passion for the cause at hand—a palpable energy—that he or she communicates in a positive and energizing fashion.

Greenleaf highlights the importance of this principle when he writes “it is terribly important that one know, both about oneself and about others, whether the net effect of one’s influence on others enriches, is neutral, or diminishes and depletes (Greenleaf, 56). He cites the example of Pope John XXIII, who had a profound impact on Greenleaf’s vision of effective leadership. Under the leadership of John XXIII, “for a brief moment in history (four short years) many literate persons in the Western world felt a lift of spirit, they became more significant as persons, they gathered strength to contend with the forces that were grinding them down” (Greenleaf, 247). Bringing a positive, inspiring attitude to all you do with your team will help create an environment where all members want to be there and feel free to be creative, bringing their own “best selves” to the work at hand.

3. A Christian leader is responsible for identifying, developing, and nurturing future leaders.

An effective leader empowers others to develop their gifts and talents. A leader concentrates on being a mentor to those on the team who are interested in learning more about their craft. Greenleaf sees this as a very important responsibility; building a team whose members “grow taller and become healthier, stronger, more autonomous” (Greenleaf, 53). Few tasks are more worthwhile or more satisfying than helping another person realize their leadership potential while growing in their relationship with God and with the faith community they serve.

4. A Christian leader models justice.

Pastoral leaders lead from a clear set of core values and personal principles. In the words of Chris Lowney about Pope Francis: “great leadership is ‘incarnational’—that is, leaders imitate Jesus, who willingly plunged into a messy world and nonetheless remained undeterred from his vision of how human beings ought to treat one another” (Lowney, 69). Greenleaf, a self-proclaimed optimist by nature, describes the servant leader as one who accepts the limitations imposed by injustice as a foundation upon which the leader can build toward wholeness through adventurous and creative achievement. As Christian leaders, we must constantly ask ourselves: How do our actions, programs, and projects contribute to making the world a more just, peaceful, and equitable place, as well as preserving our planet for generations to come? This question provides a yardstick by which a leader can measure the positive impact of the ministry.

5. A Christian leader exercises participative management.

A good leader is a good listener who solicits ideas and insights from other members of the team. When possible, the leader allows the team to have influence over the decision-making process. “Insecure leaders hold back from consultation; they fear that by asking advice they will appear uninformed or vacillating, or that subordinates may come up with better ideas than the boss” (Lowney, 118).

The effective leader is a collaborator who puts the mission of the team ahead of any one individual. In this context, leading well means investing time and energy in building and sustaining a well-qualified, well-functioning team. It is not up to the leader to be an expert in every facet of the mission but to recognize, recruit, and motivate others on the team who possess the necessary information and skills to design and implement a successful ministry or project.

6. A Christian leader is a visionary.

Greenleaf connects a “visionary” quality of leadership to the gift displayed by the prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures. The prophets were not “fortune tellers” in some magical sense. They were intelligent, insightful individuals with remarkable intuition. They were able to accurately assess the results that would derive from specific courses of action. Greenleaf believed that individuals with that same gift of prophecy are with us in every era of history, including the present.

I now embrace the theory of prophecy, which holds that prophetic voices of great clarity, and with a quality of insight equal to that of any age, are speaking cogently all of the time. Men and women of a stature equal to the greatest of the past are with us now addressing the problems of the day and pointing to a better way. The variable that marks some periods as barren and some as rich in prophetic vision is the interest, the level of seeking, the responsiveness of the hearers. (Greenleaf, 22)

Individuals with this gift for prophecy have a heightened sense of awareness, allowing them to “open wide the doors of perception so as to enable one to get more of what is available of sensory experience and other signals from the environment than people usually take in. (Greenleaf, 40)

Visionary leaders are responsible for helping set the vision that will guide the mission of the ministry and assist in designing individual projects with their teams. Be ready to recognize and affirm the visioning power of other team members when you see it.

7. A Christian leader leads by example.

A compelling vision and convincing words are important, but most importantly, an effective leader and leadership team lead by example. Walt Whitman wrote: “We convince by our presence.” When our presence as leaders engenders confidence in those whom we lead—a confidence based upon values such as integrity, vision, determination, and confidence—those whom we are leading will trust us and want to work alongside us.

8. A Christian leader is a person of joy.

Our joy is from the Lord! “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:38- 39 NRSV). This should create in us a feeling of irreplaceable joy. This quality of joy comes from living a life in harmony with the Spirit of God. This same quality is what keeps team members and volunteer leaders engaged.

I hope you are able to feel the pleasure that God receives from your ministry. And I hope you feel tremendous joy—the joy that comes from knowing that you are using gifts that have been uniquely given to you in order to give honor and glory to God. Always remember that you are working to ensure that the gospel message will be cherished and lived for generations to come in those whom you educate. Moreover, when challenging circumstances arise in your ministry or in your personal life, remember the one who has given you your joy—to cherish and to share.

9. A Christian leader is a good communicator.

Robert Greenleaf advocates for the importance of listening well: “only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first. I have seen enough remarkable transformation in people who

have been trained to listen to have some confidence in this approach. It is because true listening builds strength in other people.” (Greenleaf, 31) He reminds the reader of the words of St. Francis, “Lord, grant that I may not seek so much to be understood as to understand.” Stephen Covey believed so strongly in the importance of listening well that he made it the fifth of his seven habits of highly effective people: Seek first to understand, then to be understood!

Effective communication involves answering the following questions: who? what? when? where? and how? The leader must determine who needs to be a part of the conversation, what the leader should say, when the conversation should happen, where the conversation should take place, and how it should happen or what tools should be used.

10. A Christian leader rests, relaxes, and rejuvenates.

One of the hardest disciplines to master is the self-discipline of taking time for “the three R’s” of self-care—*rest*, *relax*, and *rejuvenate*. This self-care is necessary for all parts of one’s life: the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects. A leader makes every effort to eat well, get plenty of sleep, take breaks that allow the mind to unwind and concentrate on things other than work, and participate in activities that feed the soul. In addition to taking breaks that allow one to pace oneself during a project or a particularly hectic time of ministry, it is important to plan for vacations and times of retreat. These are the opportunities that provide an extended period for applying “the three R’s” of self-care.

Some leaders find it helpful to rely on someone who can assist them in applying these sound principles, such as a counselor or a spiritual director. Those whom you lead will notice the care you take of yourself. In that way, you will become a mentor for them. They will benefit from the example of a more balanced, more alert, and more pastoral leader.

10. A Christian leader is a person of prayer.

Prayer is our way of communicating with the divine, our way of building and strengthening the loving relationship that we have with the Lord. Love grows as relationships becoming stronger—with God, with others, and even with ourselves. Relationships are at the root of life and at the heart of love. The ideal way to build strong relationships is through prayer. God is always inviting us to enter more deeply into the relationship that each one of us shares with God—a relationship based on love, faith, and hope. Pastoral leaders transform lives—their own and others—by helping people grow in their relationship with and love for God.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, wrote: “All the things in this world are gifts of God, created for us to be the means by which we can come to know him better, love him more surely, and serve him more faithfully.” Ignatius’s spiritual principle of finding the divine in all of God’s creation was further developed by Rev. James Bacik into a concept he calls “situational spirituality.”

Situational spirituality has three underlying principles. First, we are oriented toward mystery. We are wired for God and restlessly search for the meaning of life. St. Augustine framed it in these words: “Our souls are restless, Lord, until they rest in you.” We long for an intimate relationship with the God. Second, we are interdependent social creatures, called to love others and to accept the love of others, especially God. Third, our outlook regarding creation is basically good. One could say, the grace of God interpenetrates us because we are each “temples of the Holy Spirit.”

To develop a situational spirituality, one begins by asking questions such as: What am I dealing with? Where is God in this moment or this process? What would God want me to observe and to learn from this

situation? By asking such questions, we are letting our lives write the agenda for our spiritual journeys. At that point, anything and everything that we experience has the potential to speak to us about God. The principle of situational spirituality is an exciting and empowering way to live and to grow in our relationship with the Lord. A leader who can sense the presence of God in everything—sacred liturgy, beautiful music, fine art, the majesty of a sunset or a thunderstorm, the person standing close by—will more readily grasp the potential for God’s handiwork in the design of a new project or relationship or leadership situation. Feeling the loving presence of God in such an intimate way, whether we are celebrating a joyful moment or suffering in a difficult circumstance, can give us tremendous comfort and reassurance.

God can and does speak to us in myriad ways at countless times during the course of each day. We begin to realize and appreciate this process once we have trained ourselves, with the help of God’s grace, to have “eyes to see and ears to hear”. It is one of the most important spiritual principles we can embrace and model for others.

A wonderful tool for applying the principles of situational spirituality is another Ignatian practice, the Daily Examen. In the Daily Examen, we mentally review the events of the day to see where the goodness of God was particularly present or where we failed to appreciate and act upon God’s wisdom and grace. It is a simple and beautiful way to call to mind that God is in the midst of our day, even though we might not have realized it at the time. Here is a quick and easy way to practice the Daily Examen.

1. In the evening, find a quiet place to meditate by looking back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. If parts of the day are confusing or if you cannot remember some aspects, ask God to bring clarity and understanding.
2. Review the day with a grateful heart. Remember, prayer is best begun with an attitude of gratitude. As you walk through the day, note the times of joy and delight. Focus on the day’s gifts. Consider the work you accomplished and the people with whom you interacted. What did you receive from them? What did you give to them? Think about the details of the day, such as what you ate, what you saw, and so forth—remembering that God is in the details.
3. Pay attention to your emotions. One of the many great insights of Ignatius was his realization that we can often detect the presence of the Holy Spirit in the movements of our emotions. Take time to reflect on the various emotions you experienced during the day. How might God have been speaking to you through those emotions?
4. Choose a specific feature of the day and pray it. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to a particular thought, feeling, or encounter from the day. It may be something striking or something that seemed insignificant at the time. Follow where the Spirit leads and take some time to pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether it is a prayer of intercession, praise, repentance, gratitude, surrender, or petition.
5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you wisdom and strength for the challenges the next day may present. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you think about it. Are you excited, delighted, doubtful, anxious, or reluctant? Allow yourself to form these feelings into prayer(s). Seek God’s guidance and pray for hope, courage, or whatever you feel is needed for the situations you may face. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to God as a friend. Sometime during the process, take a few moments to ask the Lord for forgiveness for your sins. Don’t forget to do all of this in a spirit of gratitude. If time allows, end your Examen with the Lord’s Prayer. (Adapted from “How Can I Pray”)

All of the great leaders I have referenced in this chapter, both the secular and the religious, have recognized one very important concept. The great theologian and philosopher Teilhard de Chardin summarized it this way: “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” And prayer is a vitally important practice for every spiritual being. There are myriad ways to pray. Each leader must find the ways that best resonate with his or her life experience in building and sustaining a loving relationship with God, who loves us unconditionally. Here I have focused on one process, and an attendant practice of it, that have been particularly helpful for me as a Christian leader. No doubt you have discovered, and will continue to discover, the practices that work for you.

In Conclusion

Embracing a servant leadership approach helps us to imagine what is to come: “‘How do we get the right things done?’ will be the watchword of the day, every day. And the context of those who bring it off will be this: all men and women who are touched by the effort grow taller, and become healthier, stronger, more autonomous *and* more disposed to serve.” (Greenleaf, 60)

Charles Keating summarizes the spirituality of leadership in this way. “The effective leader is in a constant process of development, learning from his or her experience. . . . He or she accepts human nature as essentially relational, made as we are in the image and likeness of a relational God. He or she knows how to get jobs done while helping people feel their worth. . . . He or she appreciates the richness of diversity and helps others do the same . . . keeping a burning desire to better everything ‘through Christ, with Christ and in Christ’. And like Christ, he or she will use all that is truly human to manifest the divine.” (Keating, 132-33)

The Christian leader will find great joy and satisfaction in working with others, so that they may continue to progress in becoming the very best people that they can become for themselves, for others, and for God. This is what happens when we follow our passion, that fire in our souls that has been given to us by God. To be a Christian leader in a pastoral setting is “to care passionately that each successive generation will know Jesus Christ, the Good News he embodied, and the mission he commissioned to us.” (Quinlan, 141)

The Word was made flesh, dwelt among us, and now lovingly leads us forward as servant-leaders. We are bearers of the Word and builders of God’s reign, right here, right now.

Reflection on the Pastoral Leadership Competencies

- ◆ Which of these qualities do you consider your greatest strengths as a pastoral leader?
- ◆ Which of these qualities do you want to improve or enhance as a pastoral leader?
- ◆ How can you develop a personal learning plan to strengthen the areas you identified for growth as a pastoral leader?

Endnotes

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Exemplary Leadership: Five Practices & Ten Commitments

The Leadership Challenge (7th Edition) by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. Wiley, 2023.

Leadership is a set of behaviors and actions that are available to everyone.

Leadership is in the actions that you take. It emerges from the values that guided your decisions and behavior. It results from the visions you have for yourself and others. It is evident in the changes you initiate and the challenges you accept. It appears in the trust you build and the connections you strengthen. It's about how you others up and how you make others feel values.

(James Kouzes and Barry Posner)

In *The Leadership Challenge* James Kouzes and Barry Posner identify five practices and ten commitments for leadership drawn from their extensive research with leaders in organizations. They write that leadership is about how leaders mobilize others to want to get extraordinary things done in organizations. "It's about the practices the leaders use to transform values into actions, visions into realities, obstacles into innovations, separateness into solidarity, and risks into rewards."

Practice 1. Model the Way

Commitments

- Find your voice by clarifying your personal values.
- Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.

Leaders stand for something, believe in something, and care about something. They find their voice by clarifying their personal values and then expressing those values in their own unique and authentic style. Leaders also know that they cannot force their views on others. Instead, they work tirelessly to forge consensus around a set of common principles. Leaders must set the example by aligning their personal actions with shared values. Modeling the way is essentially about earning the right and the respect to lead through direct individual involvement and action. People first follow the person, then the plan.

- ◆ *What are the personal values you bring to your leadership approach and style?*
- ◆ *How well aligned are your leadership actions with the shared values in your parish community?*

Practice 2. Envision the Future

Commitments

- Envision the future by imaging exciting and ennobling possibilities.
- Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.

Leaders envision the future by imaging exciting and ennobling possibilities. They dream of what might be, and they passionately believe that they can make a positive difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the community or organization can become. But visions seen by the leader are insufficient to mobilize and energize. Leaders enlist others in exciting possibilities by appealing to shared aspirations. They breathe life into the ideal and unique images of the future and get others to see how their own dreams can be realized by embracing a common vision.

- ◆ *What is your vision for the future in your church? What is the vision for the future of faith formation?*
- ◆ *How do you enlist others in envisioning the future?*

Practice 3. Challenge the Process

Commitments

- Search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow, and improve.
- Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes.

The work of leaders is change. To them the status quo is unacceptable. Leaders search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow, and improve. They seize the initiative to make things happen. And knowing they have no monopoly on good ideas, leaders constantly scan the outside environment for creative ways to do things. Leaders experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and by learning from mistakes. And, despite persistent opposition and inevitable setbacks, leaders demonstrate the courage to continue the quest. Exemplary leaders know that they have to be willing to make some personal sacrifices in service of a higher purpose.

- ◆ *How do you seek out opportunities for innovation? What are the current opportunities for innovation?*
- ◆ *How do you lead the implementation of new, innovative projects?*

Practice 4. Enable Others to Act.

Commitments

- Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust.
- Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion.

Leaders know they cannot do it alone. It takes partners to get extraordinary things done in an organization. So, leaders foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust. They develop teams with spirit and cohesion. They promote a sense of reciprocity and a feeling of “we’re all in this together.” Leaders understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts. Leaders strengthen others by sharing power and providing choice, making each person feel competent and confident. They nurture self-esteem and sustain human dignity.

- ◆ *What are the ways you enable others to act by fostering collaboration and strengthening others?*

Practice 5. Encourage the Heart.

Commitments

- Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.
- Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

Getting extraordinary things done in organizations is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders need to recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. Genuine acts of caring uplift spirits and strengthen courage. On every winning team, the members need to share in the rewards of their efforts. So leaders should celebrate the values and the victories by creating a spirit of community. This means expressing pride in the accomplishments of their team and making everyone feel like everyday heroes.

- ◆ *How do you recognize the contributions of others? How do you celebrate their accomplishments?*

Worksheet: Applying the Practices of Exemplary Leadership to Catechetical Ministry

Practice 1. Model the Way

- ◆ How can catechetical leaders bring their personal values to their leadership approach and style?
- ◆ How can catechetical leaders work to align their leadership actions with the shared values in a parish AND/OR help reshape the shared values in the parish to foster better alignment?

Practice 2. Envision the Future

- ◆ How can catechetical leaders develop a shared vision for the future of catechesis in their parish?
- ◆ How can catechetical leaders engage others in envisioning the future?

Practice 3. Challenge the Process

- ◆ How can catechetical leaders seek out opportunities for innovation in parish catechesis? What skills are needed to seek out opportunities for innovation?
- ◆ How can catechetical leaders lead the implementation of new, innovative projects? What's required to lead innovation?

Practice 4. Enable Others to Act.

- ◆ What are the ways that catechetical leaders can enable others to act by fostering collaboration and strengthening others?

Practice 5. Encourage the Heart.

- ◆ How can catechetical leaders recognize the contributions of others?
- ◆ How can they celebrate their accomplishments?

CHAPTER 1

Leadership Is Not a Position

WHEN YOU HEAR the word “leader,” what immediately comes to mind?

Maybe you think of someone with a title, such as CEO, president, prime minister, or admiral. Maybe you think of some famous public figure, such as a celebrity actor or singer, start-up founder, or pro athlete. Maybe you think of someone from the history books who led a revolution, conquest, or world-changing movement. Or maybe you think of someone who created a breakthrough invention, won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize, wrote a best-selling novel or Grammy-winning song. It's rather common to see these kinds of responses. They are reinforced every time you read one of those lists of the “50 Greatest Leaders of the Year.” In fact, if you take a look at one of the most well-known lists, you'll see that 100 percent of the so-called “greatest leaders” fall into these categories.¹ It's true for young leaders as well. In a list of young global leaders prepared by the World Economic Forum, 85 percent of the young leaders held the title of a senior executive, founder, or government official.² The majority of “leaders” who make these lists and are featured in the popular press are people with titles and at the apex of their organizations.

1

Everyday People, Extraordinary Leadership

It's not that these individuals aren't leaders. They are. It's just that they are *not* the *only* leaders on the planet. In fact, they aren't even the majority of leaders. We've collected data from millions of people around the world and we can report, without a doubt, that there are leaders everywhere. There are leaders in every profession, discipline, and field, in every type of organization and industry, every religion, and every country; you find them from young to old, male, female, and gender nonconforming, across every ethnic and cultural category. Leaders are not just found at the top of organizations; they abound at all levels, including the middle, as well as on the front lines. There are leaders outside of formal organizations, too, in neighborhoods, community associations, clubs, sports teams, and families.

You could have a title like manager, director, or vice president. You could have people who report to you directly, but these would not necessarily make you a leader. Titles are granted, but being a leader is something that you earn, and you earn it not by your place in the organization but by how you behave. And through your behavior, you earn recognition as a leader in the eyes of those around you, and in the relationships you have with them. Indeed, it's much more likely that you are a leader who is a parent, coach, teacher, frontline worker, project manager, volunteer, community activist, or concerned citizen. You could also be a leader who is an individual contributor, professional, volunteer, analyst, consultant, representative, administrator, engineer, or scientist. You don't have to be at the top to lead; you can lead from any position or place.

So let's get something straight right from the start. Leadership is *not* a hierarchical level. It is not a title or a rank. It is not a position of power or a place of privilege. When you look up the word *leadership* in the dictionary it does not start with an uppercase *L*. It starts with a lowercase *l*, and *lead*, *leader*, and *leadership* literally derive from the word meaning “to go” or “to guide.” That's what leadership is all about: going places and guiding others.

From whom do people seek this kind of guidance and direction? We decided to find out.

2

Leadership Is a Relationship

In a global study involving over 35,000 people, we asked them to think about the individuals in their lives who were their role models for leadership.³ We provided a number of categories from which their leadership role model might come. Take a look at the list in Table 1.1. From which category is the one person whom you would choose as your leadership role model?

Whom did you select? When thinking back over their lives and selecting their most important leadership role models, respondents overwhelmingly nominated a family member more often than anyone else. Next most important were a teacher or coach and an immediate supervisor. Those under 25 years of age (Gen Z) had these ranked second and third, while Millennials (Gen Y and Gen X; ages 25 to 55) and Boomers

TABLE 1.1 Leadership Role Models

- Actor or Entertainer
- Business Leader
- Coach
- Community Leader
- Co-Worker/Colleagues
- Family Members
- Immediate Supervisor
- Religious Leader
- Political Leader
- Professional Athlete
- Teacher
- None/Not sure

(56 and older) had them ranked in the reverse order. For those in the workplace, their teachers and coaches are their immediate supervisors. Another 6 percent indicated a co-worker or colleague. Altogether these four categories accounted for more than three-quarters of all responses. Eight percent indicated “none/not sure,” which meant that only 16 percent of all responses were in the categories of business leader, community leader, political leader, religious leader, actor or entertainer, and professional athlete. This pattern is relatively stable across genders, ethnic groups, educational levels, industries, professions, and even hierarchical levels.

The data clearly shows that the people selected are individuals respondents are closest to. They are not the people in the news, on TV, or in social media. They’re the ones with whom people have had the most frequent contact. In other words, leadership role models are *local*. While famous folks may occupy the headlines, those with whom you have more personal contact are most likely to become your role models and have more influence over how you lead and how you develop as a leader. And make no mistake about it, the same realization applies to you. You very well could be the leadership role model for those closest to you—more than could someone on that so-called list of the world’s best leaders.

These results have extremely important implications. Parents, teachers, and coaches are the individuals who are setting the leadership example for young people. It’s not hip-hop artists, movie stars, professional athletes, or others making news on social media who inspire them about leadership. And if you are a parent, a teacher, or volunteer coach, *you* are the one they are most likely going to look to for the example of how a leader responds to competitive situations, handles crises, deals with loss, or resolves ethical dilemmas. It’s not someone else. It’s *you*.

The findings also reveal that if you’re in a work organization, you are more likely to find role models among your colleagues on your immediate team than at the pinnacle of the organization or somewhere on the outside. If you are now a supervisor or manager, *you* may already be someone’s role model. You are more likely than any other person in the organization to influence their desire to stay or leave, the trajectory of their careers, their ethical behavior, their ability to perform at their best,

their drive to wow customers, and their motivation to share and serve the organization's vision and values.

There's no escape. To some, *you* are or could be their role model for leading. Those individuals could be colleagues on your team, they could be peers in another part of your workplace, they could be kids on the youth athletic team or club you coach after work, they could be people from your community who are working with you as a volunteer, or it could be your son or daughter, spouse or partner, at home.

A question for you to consider: If you are potentially a role model for someone, wouldn't you want to be the best role model you can be? It's your choice. Just be aware that regardless of title or position, be it at home, in school, the community, or workplace, you must take responsibility for the quality of leadership the people around you observe and receive. You are accountable to yourself and others for the leadership you demonstrate.

The individuals selected most frequently as leadership role models—family members, teachers, coaches, immediate supervisors, and co-workers—also make evident the most important finding of all. They underscore the truth that *leadership is a relationship*. Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. This is true regardless of whether the relationship is one-to-one or one-to-many. If you are going to be a leader whose guidance others want to follow willingly, there must be a human connection, something that binds you and others together. It's the quality of this relationship that will determine over the long term whether others will follow your lead or not. To lead effectively, you have to appreciate the underlying dynamics of the leader-constituent relationship. It's extremely important to understand, therefore, the qualities that people look for in the leaders they would *willingly* follow. If people are going to want to follow you over the course of a project or the course of a career, what do they *most* want to see in your behavior?

A relationship between people characterized by fear and distrust will never produce anything of lasting value. A relationship characterized by mutual respect and confidence will overcome the greatest adversities and leave a legacy of significance. Any discussion of leadership must attend to

the dynamics of this relationship. Strategies, tactics, skills, and techniques are empty without an understanding of the essential human aspirations that connect people with their leaders and leaders with their people.

Credibility Is the Foundation of Leadership

What sort of person would you listen to, take advice from, be influenced by, and willingly follow, not because you have to, but because you want to? What does it take for you to be the kind of person that others want to follow, doing so enthusiastically and voluntarily? Understanding and responding to these expectations is essential to the exercise of exemplary leadership.

To understand this leader-constituent relationship we have routinely been conducting surveys over the past 40 years about the personal values, traits, and characteristics that people indicate are most important to them in an individual they would willingly follow. A key word in this sentence is “willingly.” It is one thing to follow someone because you think you have to “or else,” and it's another when you follow an individual because you want to.

We've gathered responses from more than 120,000 respondents, and they have been striking in their consistency over the years.⁴ Our evidence shows that people must pass several essential character tests before they earn the designation of leader from other people, as demonstrated by the data presented in Table 1.2.

All the characteristics receive votes, and therefore each one is important to at least some individuals. What is most evident, however, is that over time, across continents, demographic, and organizational differences, only four have continuously received the majority (over 60 percent) of the preferences. What people most look for and admire in a leader has been constant. If people are going to follow someone willingly, they must believe the individual is honest, competent, inspiring, and forward-looking.

TABLE 1.2 Personal Values, Traits, and Characteristics That People Look for in Their Leaders*

Value, Trait, or Characteristic	Percentage of Respondents Selecting This Category*
Honest (truthful, has integrity, trustworthy, has character, ethical)	87
Forward-looking (visionary, foresighted, concerned about the future, has sense of direction)	69
Competent (capable, proficient, effective, gets the job done, professional)	67
Inspiring (uplifting, enthusiastic, energetic, optimistic, positive about future)	66
Intelligent (bright, smart, intellectual, logical)	45
Broad-minded (open-minded, flexible, receptive, tolerant)	38
Dependable (reliable, conscientious, responsible)	34
Supportive (helpful, offers assistance, comforting)	36
Fair-minded (just, unprejudiced, objective, forgiving)	40
Straightforward (direct, candid, forthright)	34
Cooperative (collaborative, team player, responsive)	27

(Continued)

TABLE 1.2 (Continued)

Value, Trait, or Characteristic	Percentage of Respondents Selecting This Category*
Courageous (bold, daring, gutsy)	24
Caring (appreciative, compassionate, concerned, loving, nurturing)	22
Determined (dedicated, resolute, persistent, purposeful)	22
Imaginative (creative, innovative, curious)	22
Ambitious (aspiring, hard-working, striving)	19
Mature (experienced, wise, has depth)	16
Loyal (faithful, dutiful, unswerving in allegiance, devoted)	15
Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)	10
Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-confident)	6

* Note that several synonyms are included in each category.

While the fact that what people look for in their leaders has remained consistent over time, despite the ever-shifting forces affecting economic and social life, there is another profound implication revealed by this data. These survey results have a solid conceptual foundation in what social psychologists and communications experts refer to as “source credibility.”

In assessing the believability of sources of information—whether newscasters, salespeople, physicians, or priests; whether business executives, military officers, politicians, or civic leaders—researchers typically evaluate them on their perceived trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism. The more highly people are rated on these three dimensions the more credible they are perceived as sources of information.⁵

Notice how remarkably similar these three characteristics are to the essential qualities people want from their leaders—honest, competent, and inspiring—three of the top four items selected in our surveys. Link the theory to this data, and the striking conclusion is that people want to follow leaders who, more than anything, are credible. *Credibility is the foundation of leadership.* People must be able, above all else, to believe in their leaders. To willingly follow them, people must believe that the leaders' word can be trusted, that they are personally passionate and enthusiastic about the work, and that they have the knowledge and skill to lead.⁶

If you are going to ask others to follow you to some uncertain future, and if the journey is going to require hardships and possibly sacrifices, then it is imperative that people believe in you. People must be able to believe that your words can be trusted, that you will do what you say, that you are personally excited and enthusiastic about the direction in which the group is headed, and that you have the knowledge and skills to lead.

This all leads to the *First Law of Leadership*: *If people don't believe in the messenger, they won't believe the message.*

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

So what is it that leaders do to build and sustain credibility? What do they do that makes others see them as capable and trustworthy leaders? What are the behaviors that people exhibit that engage and mobilize others to want to follow? What are people actually *doing* when they are leading and making extraordinary things happen?

To answer these questions, we have been asking people since the early 1980s to tell us what they did when they were at their “personal best” as leaders. We continue to ask this question in our studies and workshops around the world. We have collected thousands of Personal-Best Leadership Experiences—stories about times when individuals report how they excelled at leading, when they were operating at peak performance—from across a wide variety of settings, nationalities, organizations, levels, ages, genders, educational backgrounds, and the like. We’ve interviewed students in universities, individual contributors at work, middle managers in large and small companies, volunteers in the community, and executives in the C-suite about times when they excelled at leading—when they were doing their best as leaders.

Before finding out what others said, reflect for a moment on something that *you* would consider your Personal-Best Leadership Experience. This experience could be a time when you emerged as the informal leader, or it could be a time when you were appointed to take on the lead role in a new project. It could be in any functional area, in any type of organization, in a staff or line role. The experience does not need to be in your current organization. It could be in a prior job, a club, a community volunteer setting, a professional organization, a school, a team, a congregation, or even a family setting. It could be a project to improve a product or service, an initiative to bring about a change in your neighborhood, the turnaround of a poorly performing team, the start-up of a new business, jumping in during a crisis, or any other kind of challenge that required leadership.

When we initially analyzed the themes in the thousands of personal-best stories we had collected, two meta-lessons emerged and continue to be front and center. The first lesson we learned is that *everyone has a story to tell*. Regardless of whom we ask, people are able to identify a time when they did their best as a leader. The specifics of the personal-best stories varied from person to person because the individuals responding to the Personal-Best Leadership Experience Questionnaire were different from one another along a myriad of factors. Despite any individual differences, settings, and circumstances, the second lesson we learned is that the

actions and behaviors of leaders when at their best are *more similar than they are different*. There is a set of *common behaviors and actions* that people demonstrate when they operate at their personal-best as leaders. These behaviors are universal, and they have stood the test of time and place.⁷ Moreover, hundreds of independent scholars have validated this framework in their own studies investigating the central role leadership plays in personal well-being, organizational productivity, and effectiveness.⁸ The evidence is clear: exemplary leadership is found in every corner of the globe, every sector of society, every community, every organization, and every type of individual.

We've grouped these behaviors into a *leadership operating system* that we call The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.⁹ When making extraordinary things happen, leaders:

- ▶ Model the Way
- ▶ Inspire a Shared Vision
- ▶ Challenge the Process
- ▶ Enable Others to Act
- ▶ Encourage the Heart

Let's take a brief look now at each of The Five Practices. We will explore them more completely in Chapters 2 through 6. In those chapters you will find numerous stories and examples about how people much like you have applied them in their settings. We'll also provide several practical ideas about how you can learn to be the best leader you can be.

Model the Way Titles are granted, but it's your behavior that earns you respect. This sentiment was expressed in everyone's personal-best case, as represented by such comments as "I couldn't tell anyone what to do, I had to show them," "I had to be a role model for the behavior I wanted from others," and "I had to be clear about my personal values and then make sure that I walked the talk." Exemplary leaders know that if

they want to earn the respect of the people around them and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others. Exemplary leaders *Model the Way*.

To effectively model the way, you first must be clear about your guiding principles. You must *clarify values by finding your voice*. When you understand who you are and the values you hold dear, then you can speak authentically about the beliefs that you want to guide your decisions and actions. But *your* values aren't the only values that matter. Leaders don't speak just for themselves. They also speak for the group, and in every team, organization, and community, there are others who also feel strongly about matters of principle. As a leader, you also must help identify and *affirm the shared values* of the group you are working with. Without an agreed-on and collective understanding of what is right and what is wrong, then anything goes, and there are neither practical nor ethical standards for people to follow.

When it comes to determining how serious leaders are about what they say, however, a leader's actions are far more important than their words. People listen to the talk, and then they watch the walk. Words and actions must be consistent for leaders to be believed, so exemplary leaders *set the example by aligning actions with shared values*. The best way that you prove that something is important is by doing it yourself. Through daily actions, leaders demonstrate their deep commitment to their beliefs and to the shared values of the groups they are part of.

Inspire a Shared Vision People describe their Personal-Best Leadership Experiences as times when they imagined exciting and meaningful futures for themselves and others. They reported actions such as: "I told the team that we need everyone's commitment to make our vision a reality, to reach our dreams and make them happen," "The more I imagined what was possible, the more clearly I could describe what the future might hold in store for all of us," and "We had to be aligned so that we could find a common purpose as a team going forward." They had a desire to create something that no one else had ever created before. They had visions of what could be, and they had absolute faith and confidence

that those aspirations could become reality. When performing at their best, leaders *Inspire a Shared Vision*.

In many ways, leaders live their lives backward. By building upon experiences, they see pictures in their mind's eye of what success will look like even before they've started their projects, much as architects draw blueprints or engineers build models. Their clear image of the future pulls them forward, and they are able to speak enthusiastically and energetically about the compelling possibilities. They *envision the future by imagining exciting and enabling possibilities*.

Yet visions seen only by leaders are insufficient to create an organized movement or a significant change. People will not follow until they can embrace a vision as their own. They must be able to see exciting possibilities for themselves. To realize a vision, then, leaders have to be clear not only about why it is important to them, but they must be equally clear about why it is important to those they lead. To perform at their best, leaders *enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared ideals and aspirations*.

When you truly understand and take to heart the hopes and dreams of those you are involved with, you can breathe life into the aspirations of others. You are able to forge a unity of purpose by explaining and showing how and why the dream is for the common good. The way you ignite passion in others is by expressing contagious enthusiasm for the compelling vision of the group, communicating their zeal through vivid language and an expressive style.

Challenge the Process Every single personal-best leadership case involved some change from the status quo. Not one person claimed to achieve a personal best by keeping things the same, doing what had always been done. They said: "I needed to change the business-as-usual climate by finding ways to experiment and learn," "We began by brainstorming what we would change if anything was possible," and "We found that big things are done by doing lots of small things." This is why leaders *Challenge the Process*.

Challenge is the crucible for greatness. It provides the context in which adversity and vision interact to provide for the creation of

something new. When at their best leaders are pioneers. They are willing to step out into the unknown and continuously *search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve*.

While they are proactive, leaders aren't the only creators or originators of new programs, services, or processes. In fact, it's more likely that they're not. Innovation comes more from listening than from telling—more from asking questions and hearing what others are thinking and have to say. When challenging the process, your primary contributions are often the recognition of good ideas, the support of those ideas, and the willingness to challenge the system to get new products, processes, services, and systems adopted.

We also found that in the Personal-Best Leadership Experiences, leaders had to *experiment and take risks by continually generating small wins and learning from experience*. Leaders know well that innovation and change all involve trial and error. One way you can deal with these potential risks and failures is to approach change through incremental steps. Little victories, when piled on top of each other, build confidence that people can meet even the most significant challenges. In making those victories possible, you strengthen commitment to the long-term future.

Learning also unlocks the door to progress, and exemplary leaders make a point to ask "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected. The best leaders are the best learners, treating every experiment, every innovation, and every mistake as an opportunity to develop and grow.

Enable Others to Act Leaders know they can't do it alone. Grand dreams don't become significant realities through the actions of a single person. In their personal-best cases, they showed their appreciation of this truth with statements such as: "It was necessary to take into consideration each person's perspectives and ensure that the decisions were made by the team and not individual decisions," "The key was building relationships with people who were needed to help us make this happen," and "Giving them the space and latitude to do their work gave

them the confidence to do what hadn't been done before." Leadership is a team effort, not a solo performance, and to make extraordinary things happen in organizations exemplary leaders *Enable Others to Act*.

Leaders proudly discussed how they had to *foster collaboration by building a climate of trust and facilitating relationships*. They engage all those who were necessary to make the project work, and develop collaborative relationships with colleagues. They are considerate of the needs and interests of others. They bring people together, creating an atmosphere where people understand they have a shared fate and that they should treat others as they would like to be treated. They make sure that everyone wins.

This experience underscores how the work of leaders is making people feel strong, capable, and committed. Leaders *strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence and confidence*. People don't stick around for very long or perform at their best if their leader makes them feel weak, dependent, or alienated. People will give their all when you can strengthen their belief that they can do more than they ever thought possible. In fact, it was not unusual for people to indicate that when working with their best leaders, they gave more than 100 percent of themselves to the endeavor because that leader was able to bring out from them more than what they themselves had imagined. When people have confidence in you and your relationship with them is based on trust they are most willing to take risks, make changes, and maintain forward momentum.

Encourage the Heart The climb to the top of any new and challenging endeavor is arduous and steep, and it is not surprising that people can become exhausted, frustrated, and disenchanted. Leaders indicated in their Personal-Best Leadership Experiences that they had to *Encourage the Heart* of those with whom they were working to carry on, especially when they might have been tempted to give up. They said things such as: "You have to show people that you care about them as people and how they are capable of doing a lot more than they think." "Praise and encouragement are the best gifts because people need to have

their hard work and efforts acknowledged, to know that they are making a difference," and "We were generous with compliments and this allowed us to feel good about ourselves, and when you feel good you are more productive."

Genuine acts of caring, whether exhibited in dramatic gestures or simple actions, uplift people's spirits and keep them motivated. It is part of a leader's job to *recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence*. Over the years, we've seen thousands of examples of individual recognition and group celebration, from handwritten thank-you notes to marching bands and biopic video ceremonies. But recognition and celebration aren't about fun and games—though both abound when leaders encourage the hearts of their constituents. Encouraging the heart is also not about orchestrating formal awards ceremonies or throwing parties designed to create some artificial sense of camaraderie. It is about *celebrating the values and the victories by creating a spirit of community*. Public encouragement is valuable because it's how you visibly reinforce what's important and show appreciation for actions that support the team's values. Whether striving to raise quality standards, recover from disaster, or make a dramatic change of any kind, people must see the benefit of aligning behavior with cherished values. When celebrations and rituals are done with authenticity and from the heart, you build a strong sense of collective identity and community spirit that can carry a group through tough times.

These five leadership practices—Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart—do not represent an ideology or theory about leadership so much as they provide an operating system for what it means to be practicing leadership, and making a difference. Engaging in any of the behaviors associated with The Five Practices does not necessitate any particular personality or require any specific demographic characteristics or advanced educational degrees. There's a very good chance that you are already leading; you just might not recognize that you are doing it. Or perhaps you don't believe you can exercise leadership and don't see yourself as a leader; in that case, there's a very good chance that what you think you can't do, you won't do.

You Are Already Leading

Another essential lesson we learned when analyzing Personal-Best Leadership Experiences is that leadership is a set of *behaviors and actions* that are available to everyone. Leadership is *not* some mystical quality or the private reserve of a special class of charismatic people. It is not a gene or a trait in the DNA of a blessed few. It is not a single personality characteristic or a special innate talent that some people have and others do not. It is not a singular strength, and it is not a gift from the gods.

We repeat: Leadership is a set of behaviors and actions that are available to everyone. Let's check out that claim! For each of the questions below, please answer "yes" or "no." Have you ever:

- ▶ Spoken about one or more values that you hold dear?
- ▶ Set a personal example of what you wanted someone else to do?
- ▶ Talked excitedly about something that might be possible, even though it didn't exist today?
- ▶ Asked someone else to go along with you to do something?
- ▶ Tried to make something work better than it was currently?
- ▶ Been one of the first people to try something new or different from what you were used to doing?
- ▶ Listened intently to someone else's point of view, someone you didn't necessarily agree with?
- ▶ Helped someone else learn how to do an assignment or work better?
- ▶ Said "thank you" to another person for a job done well?
- ▶ Taken part in a celebration recognizing the accomplishment of a colleague?

These are just some of the actions that leaders take day-in and day-out when at their best, and if you answered "yes" to many or most of the

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questions above, then congratulations because this means *you are already leading*. Maybe you are not leading frequently enough, but you are leading. On the other hand, if you answered "no" to most of these questions, we think you'll agree that all of them are actions you could take if you were convinced that doing so would be beneficial, resulting in greater well-being and productivity for yourself and others.

Leadership is in the actions that you take. It emerges from the values that guide your decisions and behavior. It results from the visions you have for yourself and others. It is evident in the changes you initiate and the challenges you accept. It appears in the trust you build and the connections you strengthen. It's about how you lift others up and how you make others feel valued.

Even though we can demonstrate to you that leadership is something you—and others—can do, leadership myths persist. And clearly those myths include believing that leadership comes with a title or position, that it requires a set of direct reports, and that leadership is some genetic quality that is in short supply. Becoming an exemplary leader begins with the *belief* that everyone is capable of leadership and that you can be a better leader than you are right now because you can learn to improve your skills and abilities. It is also essential that you believe that your actions matter and that leadership makes a difference.

Leadership Makes a Difference

Exemplary leadership makes a significant difference in people's levels of well-being, commitment, and motivation, their work performance, and the success of their organizations. That's the definitive conclusion from analyzing data from over three million respondents around the world using the *Leadership Practices Inventory* to assess how often people engage in *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*.¹⁰ Those leaders who most frequently use *The Five Practices* are considerably more effective across a variety of outcomes than their counterparts who use them less often.

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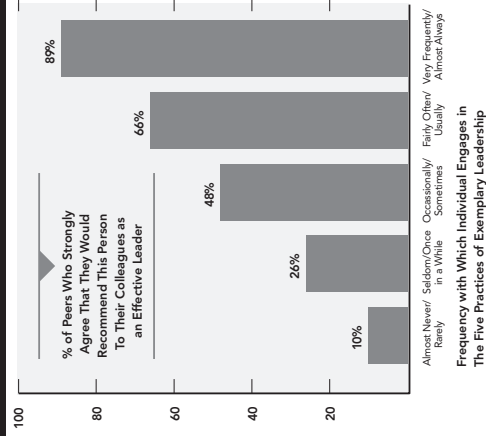
Looking at the data just for those people who indicate they are “individual contributors” (as opposed to executives, middle managers, or supervisors) reveals the same pattern as these overall findings. In each of the subsequent chapters we present empirical evidence from their peers that further substantiates these results.* For example, there is a very strong correlation ($r = .67$) between the likelihood of “being recommended to colleagues as a good leader” by one’s peers and the frequency to which they observe the individual engaging in The Five Practices. As shown in Figure 1, the more frequently that one’s colleagues and co-workers observe that person engaging in The Five Practices, the more strongly they agree that that individual is a good leader. This certainly makes sense. You can’t be regarded as a leader if you don’t behave as a leader.

So you don’t have to be in a leadership position or have direct reports in order to make a difference to your colleagues and co-workers or to be seen as most effective by your manager. The bottom line empirically is that the more you utilize The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, the more likely it is that you’ll have a positive influence on other people and the organization. That’s what all our data and the scores of research conducted by independent scholars¹ add up to: If you want to have a significant impact on the people around you and the organizations you are involved with, you’d be wise to invest in learning the behaviors that enable you to become the very best leader you can.

While The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership don’t *completely* explain why leaders and their organizations are successful—which is actually good news because you should be very skeptical of anyone who promises perfection or offers a money-back guarantee—it is clear that engaging in them makes quite a difference no matter who you are,

* Unless otherwise indicated, when we refer to “data” we are using the results from the sample and analysis described in the Appendix. The sample generally involves the independent viewpoints of the co-workers and colleagues who were asked to provide feedback on the leadership behaviors of one of their peers. They completed the Observer version of the Leadership Practices Inventory, provided demographic information, answered various questions about their attitudes toward leadership, and offered an assessment of the leadership effectiveness of their peer.

Figure 1 Likelihood of Being Recommended as a Good Leader by Peers Increases with Greater Frequency of Leadership Practices



what you do, or where you are located. How you behave as a leader matters, and it matters a lot. *You* are the leader who makes the most difference in the lives of those you lead. And you are the one who has to determine how to match these practices and their associated behaviors to the settings and circumstances that you face. That’s how you combine the art of leadership with mastery of the science of leadership.

In the next five chapters are detailed descriptions of what people do to Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. You will find stories and examples of people just like you who demonstrate each of these leadership practices, and we provide ideas, tools, and techniques that you can use on your leadership development journey.

CHAPTER 1 Leadership Is Not a Position

As you read each of the chapters, keep in mind the key messages from this overview of our research on what people are doing when they are leading:

- ▶ Leadership is not a position or hierarchical place or genetic trait
- ▶ Leadership is a relationship
- ▶ Leadership role models are local
- ▶ Leadership is everyone's business
- ▶ Credibility is the foundation of leadership
- ▶ Leadership is an understandable, observable, and learnable set of behaviors and actions
- ▶ You are already leading . . . and you can exercise leadership more frequently
- ▶ Leadership makes a difference
- ▶ You make a difference

In the next chapter we explain how you begin to earn the trust of the people around you. We show how you Model the Way by clarifying values and setting an example for others.