**The Truth About Leadership**

By James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner

Book Excerpts

**Introduction – The Ten Truths**

1. The first truth is that **you make a difference**. It is the most fundamental truth of all. Before you can lead, you have to believe that you can have a positive impact on others.
2. The second truth is that **credibility is the foundation of leadership**. You have to believe in you, but others have to believe in you, too.
3. The third truth is that **values drive commitment**. People want to know what you stand for and believe in.
4. The fourth truth is that **focusing on the future sets leaders apart**. The capacity to imagine and articulate exciting future possibilities is a defining competence of leaders.
5. **You can't do it alone** is the fifth truth. No leader ever got anything extraordinary done without the talent and support of others.
6. **Trust** is the 6th truth. You can't do it alone and have to rely on others. What's needed to make this happen? Trust.
7. The seventh truth is that **challenge is the crucible for greatness**. Exemplary leaders, the kind of leaders people want to follow, are associated with changing the status quo.
8. Truth #8 reminds you that you **either lead by example or you don't lead at all**. Leaders have to keep their promises and become role models for the values and actions they espouse.
9. Truth #9 is that **leaders are the best learners**. You have to believe that you (and others) can learn to lead, and that you can become a better leader tomorrow than you are today.
10. The tenth truth is that **leadership is an affair of the heart**. It could also be the first truth. Leaders are in love with their constituents, their customers and clients, and the mission that they are serving.

**Chapter 1 – You Make a Difference**

* Everything you will ever do as a leader is based on one audacious assumption. The assumption that you matter.
* Myth and legend treat leadership as if it were the private reserve of a very few charismatic men and women. Nothing is further from the truth. Leadership is much more broadly distributed in the population, and it's accessible to anyone who has the passion and purpose to change the way things are.
* You don't have to look up for leadership. You don't have to look out for leadership. You only have to look inward.
* The numbers reveal that the behavior of leaders explains more about why people feel engaged and positive about their workplaces than any particular individual or organizational characteristic.
* Regardless of whether one is under or over 30 years of age, when thinking back over their lives and selecting their most important leadership role models, people are more likely to choose a family member than anyone else.

**Data on Leader Role Models**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Role Model Category*** | ***Age: 18 to 30*** | ***Age: Over 30*** |
| family member | 40% | 46% |
| teacher or coach | 26% | 14% |
| community or religious | 11% | 8% |
| business leader | 7% | 23% |
| political leader | 4% | 4% |
| professional athlete | 3% | 0% |
| entertainer | 2% | 0% |
| None/not sure/other | 7% | 4% |

* The leader who has the most influence over your desire to stay or leave, your commitment to the organization's vision and values, your ethical decisions and actions, your treatment of customers, your ability to do your job well, and the direction of your career, to name but a few outcomes, is your most immediate manager.

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| --- |
| **The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership** |
| 1. **model the way**
 |
| 1. **inspire a shared vision**
 |
| 1. **challenge the process**
 |
| 1. **enable others to act**
 |
| 1. **encourage the heart**
 |

* No one can make you a leader, either. You have to take the first step for yourself. To be willing to take actions that others will want to follow.

**Chapter 2 – Credibility Is The Foundation of Leadership**

* The truth is that credibility is the foundation of leadership. This is the inescapable conclusion we've come to after 30 years of asking people around the world what they look for and admire in a leader, someone whose direction they would willingly follow.
* It turns out that the believability of the leader determines whether people will willingly give more of their time, talent, energy, experience, intelligence, and support. Only credible leaders earn commitment, and only commitment builds and regenerates great organizations and communities.

**Characteristics of Admired Leaders**

| ***Characteristic*** | ***Percentage Selecting*** |
| --- | --- |
| honest | 85% |
| forward-looking | 70% |
| inspiring | 69% |
| competent | 64% |
| intelligent | 42% |
| broad-minded | 40% |
| dependable | 37% |
| supportive | 36% |
| fair-minded | 35% |
| straightforward | 31% |
| determined | 28% |
| cooperative | 26% |
| ambitious | 26% |
| courageous | 21% |
| caring | 20% |
| loyal | 18% |
| imaginative | 18% |
| mature | 16% |
| self-controlled | 11% |
| independent | 6% |

* Being honest means telling the truth and having ethical principles and clear standards by which you live. People need to believe that your character and integrity are solid. They need to believe that you are worthy of their trust.
* Being forward-looking means having a sense of direction and a concern for the future of the organization.
* Being inspiring means sharing the genuine enthusiasm, excitement, and energy you have about the exciting possibilities ahead.
* Being competent refers to your track record and your ability to get things done. People have to believe that you know what you are talking about and that you know what you are doing. Leadership competence is different from technical competence. You don't have to be the most skilled engineer to lead a high-technology company, for instance, but you do need to be able to mobilize the best efforts of your engineers to get extraordinary things done.
* …we find that when people say their immediate manager exhibits high credibility, they're significantly more likely to: be proud to tell others they're part of the organization, feel a strong sense of team spirit, see their own personal values as consistent with those of the organization, feel attached and committed to the organization, and have a sense of ownership of the organization. On the other hand, when people say their manager exhibits low credibility, they are significantly more likely to produce only if they are watched carefully, are motivated primarily by money, say good things about the organization publicly but criticize it privately, consider looking for another job if the organization experiences problems, and feel unsupported and unappreciated.

**Chapter 3 – Values Drive Commitment**

* People want to know your values and beliefs, what you really care about, awake at night. They want to know who most influenced you, the events that shaped your attitudes, and the experiences that prepared you for the job. They want to know what drives you, what makes you happy, what ticks you off. They want to know what you're like as a person and why you want to be their leader.
* So, if you are a new leader who walks into that room one day, you better be prepared to answer the question, “Who are you?”
* You cannot fully commit to something unimportant to you - no one can. You can't fully commit to something that doesn't fit with who you are and how you see yourself.
* Becoming a leader begins when you come to understand who you are, what you care about, and why you do what you do.
* Values represent the core of who you are. Every aspect of your life: your moral judgments, the people you trust, the appeals you respond to, the way you invest your money and your time. And in turbulent times, they provide a source of direction amid depressing news and challenging personal adversities.
* Clarity of values gives you the confidence to take the right turns, make the tough decisions, to act with determination, and to take charge of your life.
* Essentially, clarity about personal values has the most significant impact on employees’ feelings about their work and what they're doing in the workplace… people cannot commit fully unless it fits with their own beliefs.
* The very first step on your leadership development journey is to search for your answer to the question, “What's my framework for living?” You have to find your own true voice. You cannot speak in someone else's. You have to speak in your own voice. You cannot ask someone else to choose your values for you. You have to choose them for yourself.
* Leading others is definitely not about getting others to conform to your point of view. Conformity produces compliance, not commitment. Unity is essential, and unity is forged, not forced.
* Leadership is more about listening than telling. Your task is to gain consensus on a common cause and a common set of principles. You need to build and affirm a community of shared values.
* Credible leaders listen, not just to their own aspirations, but also to the needs and desires of others. Leadership is a relationship, and relationships are built on mutual understanding.

**Chapter 4 – Focusing On the Future Sets Leaders Apart**

* People want to know where you're going. They want to know the kind of future you have in mind.
* Leaders are custodians of the future. They are concerned about tomorrow's world and those who will inherit it. They ask, “What’s new? What's next? What's going to happen after the current project is completed?” They think beyond what’s directly in front of them, peer into the distance, imagine what's over the horizon, and move forward toward a new and compelling future.
* …the importance of being forward-looking increased with age, experience, and level in the organizational hierarchy.
* Front-line leaders are expected to anticipate events only about 3 months down the road. Due to the timelines of their more complex projects, mid-level managers often need to look three to five years into the future. Those In the executive suite must focus on a horizon that's ten or more years away.
* And how does a new leader develop the capacity to be forward-looking? The answer is simple: spend more time in the future. You have to carve out more time each week to peer into the distance, imagining what might be out there. You have to spend the time today in order to have the time tomorrow.
* Researchers tell us that most top executives spend only about 3% of their time thinking about, and getting others on board with, the critical issues that will shape their business 10 or more years down the road.
* You must remind others, who are often so mired in the day-to-day details of work and life that they lose their bearings, that there is a larger purpose to all this doing. They are working hard in order to build something different, to make something new, to create a better future.
* …being forward-looking is the differentiating leadership credibility factor; you need to spend more time reading about, thinking about, and talking about the long-term view. Make it your business to spend time studying the future. Set up a future research committee to study potential changes and developments in areas affecting your organization. Put together a team to continually track 50 or 60 publications that represent new thoughts on trends in your domain.
* There are various ways you can classify and categorize the most significant business trends. The World Future Society recommends these six distinct categories: demographics, economics, government, environment, society, and technology to improve your understanding of the world around you.
* You must remain optimistic and hopeful about what is yet to come. You must truly believe that the future will be brighter and be confident that we will all get there together. A positive difference can only be made by a positive leader.

**Chapter 5 – You Can’t Do It Alone**

* …leaders are here to serve others, and not the other way around.
* “No matter how capable a leader is, he or she alone won't be able to deliver a large project or program without the joint efforts and synergies that come from the team.” – Eric Pan, Regional Head of The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants in South China
* While there are several hundred definitions of leadership in the academic literature, the simplest way to know is just to look to see whether that person has followers. If you think you're a leader and you turn around and no one is following you, then you’re simply out for a walk.
* The Center for Creative Leadership found that the critical success factor for the top three jobs in organizations is the “relationships with subordinates.”
* The mandate is very clear. Build your own and your team members' abilities to work with each other. Doing this well will have a direct impact on your personal and organizational success.
* When you listen, when you hear, when you truly understand the needs of your constituents, you will connect with them in ways an out-of-touch leader cannot. You will make a primal connection.
* There is a deep human yearning to make a difference. People want to know that there is a purpose to their existence. They want to know that their life means something. A significant part of the leader's job is uncovering and reflecting back the meaning that others seek.
* You have to know your constituents, and you have to speak to them in a language they will find engaging.
* Truly inspirational leadership is not about selling a vision; it’s about showing people how the vision can directly benefit them and how their specific needs can be satisfied.
* …the best leaders take actions that make people feel strong and capable. They make people feel that they can do more than they thought they could. One of the reasons people want to follow a leader is because they know that they will be better off as a result of being in that relationship than they would be otherwise.
* Often, people just lack a little courage and confidence. They blossom when they have a leader who believes in them and gives them support and encouragement.
* Rather than thinking that you have all the answers, you need to be able to ask great questions. Great questions send people on pioneering journeys in their minds. They are a lot more likely to discover novel ideas when you set them free to explore on their own.
* High-quality relationships don't happen spontaneously. They require leadership. It's your job to interact with others in ways that promote connection, collaboration, confidence, and competence.

**Chapter 6 – Trust Rules**

* In a 2009 international study, the majority of people said they trust a stranger more than they trust their boss.
* A PricewaterhouseCoopers study of corporate innovation among *The Financial Times* *100* showed that the number one differentiating factor between the top innovators and the bottom innovators was trust.
* Trust rules your personal credibility. Trust rules your ability to get things done. Trust rules your team's cohesiveness. Trust rules your organization's innovativeness and performance. Trust rules your brand image. Trust rules just about everything you do.
* In an experiment on the impact of trust on group problem solving, leaders in a high trust condition had greater influence on group members and were more willing to accept influence attempts by group members than were leaders in a low trust condition. The same study also found that high trust led to greater acceptance of group member's interdependence, more cooperation, and enhanced information flow among all group members.
* Trust is the framework that supports all relationships. Building that structure of trust begins when one person takes a risk and opens up to another. If you're the leader in the relationship, that person needs to be you. You need to ante up first.
* … you need to demonstrate that you have the competence, the system, and the processes to make people feel safe and trusting. You have to do it in real-time by dealing with situations that might create fear and suspicion.
* Trusting others encourages them to trust you. Distrusting others persuades them to distrust you.

**Four Actions To Keep In Mind**

1. Behave predictably and consistently
	1. If your behavior is confusing, indecisive, or inconsistent, then others cannot depend upon you to behave in certain ways across similar situations or make reasonable hypotheses about how you might react under new or different circumstances.
2. Communicate clearly
	1. If you frequently make statements that you don't intend as commitments but that others might reasonably interpret as such, then they will have reason to believe that you are unreliable and not trustworthy
3. Treat promises seriously
	1. Problems arise when people have different perceptions of the importance of both your word and the circumstances required to justify not keeping your promise. Further complications occur when people can't distinguish between wishes or vague promises on your part and those to which you're seriously committed
4. Be forthright and candid
	1. There is no such thing as a little bit of dishonesty. Discovering that someone has been dishonest casts doubt over everything he says and does. By the way, honesty doesn't require full disclosure. It does, however, require a clear indication of areas about which full disclosure should not be expected and an explanation of why it's not appropriate.
* Your job as a leader is to make sure that people get the information they want and need, when they want and need it, and in a form they can use and understand.
* When there is an information vacuum, people will make up their own answers. And these answers are more likely to be negative and cynical than to be the truth.
* When it comes to sustaining trust over the long term, you have to communicate, communicate, and communicate. Selectively sharing information, failing to keep people informed, and telling people too late about matters important to their work only leads to distrust and suspicion. It's also important to be clear, timely, and relevant.

**Chapter 7 – Challenge Is The Crucible For Greatness**

* When we first analyzed the initial set of personal best leadership cases nearly three decades ago, what immediately struck us was that people always choose situations in which they were challenged in very significant ways.
* The study of leadership is the study of how men and women guide people through uncertainty, hardship, disruption, transformation, transition, recovery, new beginnings, and other significant challenges.
* “The brick walls are there for a reason. They are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something.” – Dr. Randy Pausch
* In order to learn how to thrive under adverse circumstances and recover from setbacks, you first need to embrace the challenge. Change always opens up all kinds of new and exciting possibilities for the future. What are these for you? What are some innovative solutions that you can explore? How can you go about searching for new and innovative solutions that might lead you and your colleagues (or organization) out of your current situation? …In addition, you need to be able to control what you can.
* …while you may not control what is happening in the larger environment, you can control how you respond to the news about what you are facing. You need to believe that you can beneficially influence the direction and outcome of what is going on around you through your own efforts.
* To be a leader, you need to make something happen. You need to feel a strong sense of commitment, believing that you can find something in whatever you are doing that is interesting, important, or worthwhile. Consider taking actions that create forward momentum, even little things that can get you moving in the right direction.
* Grit is that firmness of spirit, that unyielding courage that is essential in dealing with challenges. And researchers are finding that it plays an essential role in attaining difficult goals.
* …you need to find a goal that can sustain your interest and the interest of those around you for some considerable time. To be the most successful, you and your constituents must have a passion for a purpose and the perseverance to hang with it for the long term. This focus gives meaning to sticking through the hard times and to dealing with the often-inevitable disappointments and setbacks that accompany any significant accomplishment.
* … engage in some positive self-talk. Acknowledge the challenges and difficulties, but then tell yourself, and others, that these challenges can be overcome with hard work and determination.
* Mistakes happen. Defeats occur. Failure is inevitable. These are not dirty words to leaders. Rather, they are signs that you're doing something tough, exacting, and out-of-the-ordinary.

**Chapter 8 – You Either Lead By Example or You Don’t Lead At All**

* You have to model the way you want others to feel, think, and act. You have to show others that you are going to do exactly what you are asking them to do.
* Leaders have only two tools at their disposal: what they say and how they act. What they say might be interesting, but how they act is always crucial.
* Cornell professor Tony Simons has investigated the “behavioral integrity”- his term for doing what you say you will do - of managers and has found that organizations where employees strongly believed (that) their managers followed through on promises and demonstrated the values they preached were substantially more profitable than those whose managers scored average or lower on being role models.
* “I learned that I must change myself first and let others see me, and then they will know how to follow.”– Penny Zhang
* When you give your word that you'll do something, and then you follow through on your commitments, it has a powerful effect on people.
* Nothing undermines or erodes your credibility and your effectiveness as a role model faster than not being willing to acknowledge and take responsibility when you've made a mistake.
* Like the rest of us, leaders are only human. It's when you think that you're better than other people that you get yourself into such deep trouble that others don't even want to be in your presence, let alone follow you.
* … a willingness on your part to admit mistakes sets a positive example for others. By showing others that you're willing to acknowledge that you've screwed up, you make it easier and permissible for others to do the same. You're also sending the signal that it's okay to take chances, prosper from mistakes, and grow and develop in the process… If your mistakes create problems for others and not just for you, you also need to apologize. It’s an important step in rebuilding any damage done to your credibility.
* … The final thing that you need to do is to attend to reactions others are having to your efforts to restore your credibility. Attentiveness enables you to determine whether what you are doing is helping or is insufficient.
* Another way in which you can hold yourself accountable is to seek and accept feedback. Feedback is vital to every self-correcting system, and it's vital to the growth and development of leaders.
* Armed with information about how your behavior affects others, and with a willingness to acknowledge your shortcomings and mistakes, you will have the seed capital for growth and development.

**Chapter 9 - The Best Leaders Are The Best Learners**

* “Everything you need to be a successful leader you already have: your intelligence to see an issue and a way to fix it, your heart to stay motivated, and your courage not to give up. You can't look for the man behind the curtain to solve your concerns. Everything you need, you already have.” – Melissa Poe Hood
* Leadership is not preordained. It is not a gene, and it is not a trait. There is no hard evidence to support the assertion that leadership is imprinted in the DNA of only some individuals, and the rest of us missed out and are doomed to be clueless.
* Leadership can be learned. It is an observable pattern of practices and behaviors, and a definable set of skills and abilities.
* Here's the rub. While leadership can be learned, not everyone learns it, and not all those who learn leadership master it. Why? To master leadership, you have to have a strong desire to excel, you have to believe strongly that you can learn new skills and abilities, and you have to be willing to devote yourself to continuous learning and deliberate practice.
* …leadership can be learned in a variety of ways. It can be learned through active experimentation, observation of others, study in the classroom or reading books, or simply reflecting on one's own and other’s experiences.
* When people are predisposed to be curious and want to learn something new, they are much more likely to get better at it than those who don't become fully engaged.
* “Learning agility requires self-confidence to honestly examine oneself, self-awareness to seek feedback and suggestions, and self-discipline to engage new behaviors.” – Bob Eichinger, Mike Lombardo, and Dave Ulrich
* Not only do you have to be able to learn, but you have to learn how to learn, constantly absorbing and teaching yourself new ways of doing old things and new ways of doing new things.
* “Individuals who have a *growth mindset* believe people can learn to be better leaders-that they are made not.” – Carol Dweck
* Carol compares this to a *fixed mindset* – “believing that your qualities are carved in stone.” Those with a *fixed mindset* think leaders are born and that no amount of training is going to make you any better than you naturally are.
* Mindsets carry over into performance. In study after study, researchers have found that, when working on simulated business problems, those individuals with fixed mindsets gave up more quickly and performed more poorly than those with growth mindsets.
* When you believe that you can learn, then you will. And then, when you see that you can learn, you'll realize that others can also learn to lead. Your belief in your own capacity to lead not only benefits you; it also benefits all your constituents.
* What truly differentiates the expert performers from the good performers is the hours of practice. You've got to work at becoming the best.
* Researchers are clear that all practice makes perfect. Need a particular kind of practice –“deliberate practice” - to develop expertise.
* Deliberate practice has five elements:
	1. *It is designed specifically to improve performance*, there is a methodology, and there is a very clear goal
	2. *It has to be repeated a lot.* It must be done over and over again until it's automatic.
	3. *Feedback on results must be continuously available*. Every learner needs feedback. It's the only way you know whether or not you're getting close to your goal and whether or not you're executing properly.
	4. *It is highly demanding mentally*. Developing expertise requires intense concentration and focus. Practice sessions need to be free of those daily interruptions that are commonplace in everyone's day-to-day routines.
	5. *It isn't all that much fun*. You should absolutely love what you do, deliberate practice is not designed to be fun. What keeps the top performers going during the often-grueling practice sessions is not the fun that they're having, but the knowledge that they're improving and getting closer to their dream of superior performance.
* Studies of top performers strongly suggest that you have to have a supportive environment in order to develop expertise. A supportive family is very common in the stories of world-class performers. Supportive colleagues at work are critical. Leaders can't grow in a culture that isn't supportive of continuing development.
* Coaches, mentors, and teachers, while tough and demanding, are also common sources of support. Research shows that coaching is #2 on the list of the most effective strategies for accelerating the development of high potentials.

These days, you hear a lot about how you should ignore your weaknesses, or you should find someone else who's good at what you aren't good at and partner with him or her…Researchers have shown across a variety of occupations and professions, only by working at what you cannot do can you expect to become the experts you aspire to be. If you want to be the best leader you can be, you will have to attend to your weaknesses. You can't delegate or assign to others those skills you aren't good at. If you do, you'll only become as good as your weakest skill.

**Chapter 10 – Leadership Is An Affair of The Heart**

* Research indicates that the highest-performing managers are the most open and caring. The best leaders demonstrate more affection toward others and want others to be more open with them. They are more positive and passionate, more loving and compassionate, and more grateful and encouraging than their lower-performing counterparts.
* Nothing ever gets done without heart. Purely and simply, exemplary leaders excel in improving performance because they pay great attention to the human heart.
* Leaders are in love: in love with leading, in love with the organization's products and services, love with people.
* In an organizational context, management consultant Rodney Ferris defines love as “a feeling of caring or deep respect for yourself and others, evaluating and believing in yourself and others, and of helping to achieve the best of which everyone is capable. It means finding a sense of purpose, fulfillment, and fun in your work, and helping others to find these qualities in their work as well.”
* Exemplary leaders do not place themselves at the center; they place others there. They do not seek the attention of people; They give it to others. They do not focus on satisfying their own aims and desires; they look for ways to respond to the needs and interests of their constituents.
* While constituents may initially be dependent on you for some benefit or gain, your end objective is to make them independent of you. We have repeatedly observed that, when working at their personal best, leaders transform their followers into leaders.
* By understanding the needs and values of their constituents, exemplary leaders interact in ways that make others feel more confident and capable. They elevate people to a higher plane. They raise other’s moral and ethical behavior, heighten positive emotions, elevate strategic thinking, enhance physical well-being, and generate significantly improved performance.
* The primary way you show that you care for someone is by paying attention to them. Giving your appreciation is an active process. You have to reach out to others, listen to their words and emotions, be open to their experiences, ask them questions, and express your willingness to learn from them.
* Formal and informal recognitions are another visible way to show you care. They call attention to other's good work. This kind of appreciation is positive information that tells people they're making progress, are on the right track, and are living up to the standards.
* Recognitions don't need to come in the form of elaborate events or expensive awards. In fact, the more personal they are, the more impact they have.
* Storytelling is another powerful way to show you care… Researchers have found, for instance, that organizational members who were able to tell many stories, particularly positive stories, exhibited far more evidence of organizational commitment and resilience from hardship than those who told few stories.
* One of the most significant ways in which you can show others that you care and appreciate them is to be out there with them. Walk the halls, meander around the corridors, eat in the cafeteria, listen to their complaints, go to parties, attend organizational events (even when you are not on the program), and be able to tell stories about their successes. This type of visibility and availability makes you more real, more genuine, more approachable, and more human.
* “Creating a caring workplace - a place in which people have friendships and deep personal connections and can grow personally and emotionally, psychologically and spiritually, as well as financially and professionally – is an important aspect of creating profit.” – Jim Autry
* To become the best leader you can be, you have to fall in love with the work you are doing and with the reason you are doing it. You have to fall in love with leading and the purpose you are serving.
* “When it comes to choosing a life path, you should do what you love - because if you don't love it, you are unlikely to work hard enough to get very good.” – Stephen J. Dubner and Steven D. Levitt
* Loving leading means that you're passionate about values and visions that make a difference, that you look forward every day to devoting your time to strengthening others and building teams, that you relish the chance to take a daunting challenge and search for new possibilities, and that you truly enjoy recognizing others for their contributions to the success of the enterprise.
* “Enthusiasm is infectious.” – Claire Owen
* “Positivity broadens and builds, it stretches our minds, helps us to see new possibilities, and expands our worldviews.” – Barbara L. Frederickson
* When feeling positive, managers are more accurate and more careful in making decisions. They're also more interpersonally effective.
* In their field research, Marcial Losada and Emily Heaphy discovered that they could distinguish high-performing, medium-performing, and low-performing teams based on the ratio of positive to negative statements exchanged in team meetings. Positive statements are those that are supportive, appreciative, helpful, approving, and complimentary. Negative statements are those that are critical, disapproving, contradictory, cynical, and the like. For the high performers, the ratio of positive to negative was 5.61 to 1, for the median performers it was 1.14 to 1, and for the low performing teams it was .93 to 1.
* Positive energy is especially important in volatile times. When the news is worrisome and often downright scary, it's pretty easy for folks to become negative. People become negative even faster when they see it in their leaders, whether overtly in speeches or even if they just mope around a bit. Negative leadership breeds negative emotions. These negative emotions are far more damaging to organizations and an individual's health than doing nothing at all.

**Epilogue – Leaders Say Yes**

* … everything you do as a leader begins with one word: *yes*. Until you say yes, nothing great can happen.
* There are no shortages of problems to solve. Leadership is not about telling others that they ought to solve these problems. It’s about accepting personal responsibility for doing something about it. And it's about holding yourself accountable for the actions that you take. The next time you see a problem and say, “Why doesn't someone do something about this?” take a look in the mirror and say instead, “I'll be the someone to do something about it.”…This doesn't mean that you have to accept responsibility for every problem, and it doesn't mean that you should solve it by yourself. What it does mean is that leaders aren't bystanders in the parade of life.
* You have to say yes to begin things. You have to say yes to your beliefs, you have to say yes to big dreams, you have to say yes to difficult challenges, you have to say yes to collaboration, you have to say yes to trust, you have to say yes to learning, you have to say yes to setting the example, and you have to say yes to your heart