

## THE LEADER'S EDGE

*“Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.”  
(Proverbs 9:9)*

### Category:

Growing Leaders

### Rating:

Content: B+

Style: B

### Memorable Quotes:

*“Leave the campsite a little better than you found it.”*

*“The best way to learn is to teach.”*

*“Pity the leader caught between unloving critics and uncritical lovers.”*

*“The question for each of us, then, is not do I matter? But how do I matter?”*

*“Do people know who you are, what you care about, and why they ought to be following you?”*

*Leaders should desire to be both respected and liked.*

*“Promote constructive insubordination. If both of us are always agreeing, then one of us is redundant.”*

*“Trust is the social glue that binds human relationships.”*

*“Leadership is first and foremost self-development. Becoming a leader begins with an exploration of the inner territory as we search for our authentic voice.”*

## BOOK SUMMARY

*A Leader's Legacy* by James Kouzes and Barry Posner, Jossey-Bass, 2006.

### Core Content

This tandem of leadership sages team up to share polished gems of wisdom forged in the crucible of practical experience. Memorable insights are presented for leaving a lasting impression. The authors' concepts are grouped around 4 categories: Significance, Relationships, Aspirations and Courage. Many of the ideas contained in this book are counterintuitive, provoking thoughtful consideration. Church leaders will need to shift the principles shared through the filter of biblical truth.

Here's an outline of the book's content:

#### 1. SIGNIFICANCE

- Leaders serve and sacrifice (“passion” = to suffer with)
- The best leaders are teachers
- Legacies are passed on in the stories we tell
- We all need loving critics (“If you want feedback, you will have to work at it”)
- To your direct reports, *You* are the most important leader in your organization
- No one likes to be an assumption, taken for granted

#### 2. RELATIONSHIPS

- Leadership is personal
- Leaders should want to be liked (“We will harder and more effectively for people we like. And we will like them in direct proportion to how they make us feel.”)
- When you don't see eye to eye, seek to understand (Focus on the purpose, not the person)
- You can't take trust for granted
- Let your people go (Develop leaders at every level of the organization)

*“Leaders must decide on what matters in life, before they can live a life that matters.”*

*“Leadership is not the private property of a few at the top. Leadership is a common area that’s accessible to everyone. The best leaders turn their followers into leaders. Exemplary leaders also have the confidence to turn themselves into followers.”*

*“Spend less time on daily operations and more time on future possibilities.”*

*“People are like tea bags. You never know how strong they’ll be until you put them into hot water.”*

*“Courage is the disposition that gives one the capacity to persist under highly adverse circumstances. It’s not about being fearless so much as it is the ability to control fear.”*

### **3. ASPIRATIONS**

- Lead from the inside out
- Forward-looking is a leadership prerequisite (Get everyone involved in asking, What’s next? and What’s better?)
- It’s not just the leader’s vision (People want to see themselves in the picture the leader is painting.)
- Liberate the leader in everyone (Leadership is not a secret code that can’t be deciphered by ordinary people. It is an observable set of skills and abilities to be developed)
- Leaders are followers too (Leaders ask, Who is the best person at the moment to lead the process? They look around to find the best fit between people and task)

### **4. COURAGE**

- There’s courage in all of us (Ask people to finish this statement: “It took courage for me to . . .”)
- You can’t plan to be courageous, but you can choose it
- It takes courage to make a life (Little acts can have a huge impact)
- We need the courage to be human and humble. *“The word human and humble share a common origin. They both come from the Latin humus, meaning earth. To be human and humble is to be down-to-earth, both feet planted firmly on the ground.”*
- Failure is always an option (you never get it right the first time, so reward intelligent failures to increase innovation) “I’ve missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I’ve lost 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.” (Michael Jordan)
- There is no money-back-guarantee (leadership is messy)

### **Discussion Starters**

1. What kind of legacy do you want to leave behind? What are you doing now to build that legacy?
2. In what specific ways are you strengthening the relational dimensions of your leadership?
3. How are you involving others in clarifying and refining your church’s vision for the future?
4. How would you finish this statement: “It took courage for me to . . .”

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|  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. From this book summary, what leadership principles are most relevant for you?</li><li>6. What steps could you take to apply these principles to your context?</li></ol> |
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