

Is The Leadership Challenge® Relevant ?

There are two questions about The Leadership Challenge® that I've heard particularly in the part of the world where I deliver this globally-recognized leadership development program.

Sometimes people say "That's been around a long time but what's the latest research on leadership development ?"

I've also heard: "Is that a new program ?"

I'm really pleased to answer both these questions. Let's take the first one.

Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner set out to determine why some leaders are achieving outstanding results and others poor outcomes, at best. They sought to find out what makes exemplary leaders in 1983. They began an evidence-based rigorous research process. They began by asking leaders what they did when they were performing at their best. As a result, over the years they've collected close to 100,000 personal best stories.

They also surveyed thousands of people to find out what they wanted in a leader, the characteristics of leaders they admired, and the behaviors that had leaders stand out.

Through their research, common themes emerged.

In regard to what we now call the Characteristics of Admired Leaders, the top four characteristics that people want to see in their leaders are: honest, competent, inspiring and forward looking.

From the early research five common 'aspects' emerged among the best leaders. These 'aspects' were what the leaders 'did' – and the more often the leaders demonstrated these, the more effective they were as leaders. Because this was what leaders did and did often they were called practices. As a result they described these as **The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership®** :

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

The research led to Jim and Barry's clear definition of leadership :

Leadership is the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations.

So, yes, their leadership research was begun some 35 years ago. This evidence-based research continues to validate and support what has been the basis of their work showing how ordinary leaders can become extraordinary leaders. The first edition of their book, The Leadership Challenge, was published in 1987. The sixth edition was published in 2017.

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership continue to apply in all levels of leadership, in all cultures and in all contexts. Solid ongoing research backs that up. Over and over.

As for the question “Is this a new program?”, there is likely a chance that the person who is asking, because they may not have heard of it before, may be thinking this is some new, untested theory about leadership.

I’m really pleased to point out the extent of the research, over 35 years, and that The Five Practices continue to be validated.

The book has sold over 3 million copies in 6 editions. How many other leadership books can have that claim?

So is The Leadership Challenge® relevant?

Absolutely, for leaders everywhere and leaders at all levels.

Graham Moore
Certified Master –The Leadership Challenge®

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Moore Success M.E FZE is a Global Training Partner of The Leadership Challenge®.