



Encouraging the Heart

A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

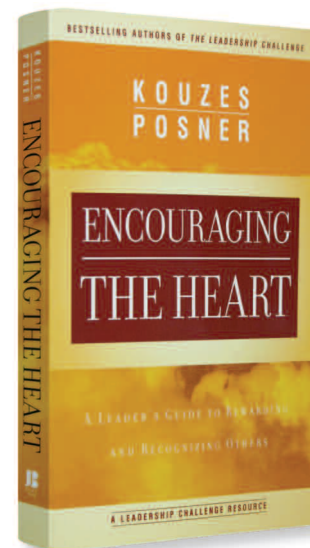
Encouraging the Heart is about the principles and practices that support the basic human need to be appreciated for who we are and what we do. It is not about glad-handing, back-slapping, gold stars and pay-offs. It's about the importance of linking rewards and appreciation to standards of excellence.

Encouraging the Heart has its origins in Jim Kouzes's and Barry Posner's research on the practices of individuals functioning at their personal best as leaders. Since their studies began more than two decades ago, the authors have collected thousands of best practice leadership case studies and analyzed tens of thousands of leadership assessment instruments. They have consistently found that when getting extraordinary things done, leaders follow five practices. One of the five practices is encouraging the heart.

Leaders create relationships, and one of these relationships is between individuals and their work. Ultimately, we all work for a purpose and that common purpose has to be served if we are to feel encouraged. Encouraging the heart only works if there is a fit between the person, the work and the organization.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Encouraging the heart requires a set of recognizable, learnable and repeatable actions that leaders can take to reinforce the standards of the enterprise.
- One way to show that you care is to pay attention to people, to what they're doing and how they're feeling.
- Learning to understand and see things from another's perspective is absolutely crucial to building trusting relations and to career success.
- Personalizing is about knowing someone so well that you know what's appropriate individually or culturally.
- Stories are better able to accomplish the objectives of motivation and mobilization than are bullet points on an overhead.



by Jim Kouzes and
Barry Posner

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: ENCOURAGING THE HEART

by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner

The authors: Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner are the authors of the award-winning and best-selling book, *The Leadership Challenge*, with over 1.8 million copies in print. They've co-authored a dozen other books on leadership and developed the highly acclaimed Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), the top-selling off-the-shelf 360-degree leadership assessment instrument in the world. They are the recipients of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) 2009 Distinguished Contribution to Workplace Learning and Performance Award. Jim Kouzes is a professional speaker and the Dean's Executive Professor of Leadership, Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University. Barry Posner, Ph.D., is Professor of Leadership and former Dean (1997-2009), the Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University. Jim and Barry have also co-authored the award-winning books *A Leader's Legacy*, *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It* and *Leadership Practices Inventory*.

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The Heart of Leadership

Ask yourself this question: Do I need encouragement to perform at my best? When this question was asked in leadership classes, only about 60 percent reported that they needed encouragement to do their best. The question was reframed: "When you get encouragement, does it help you perform at a higher level?" This time about 98 percent said yes, and only 2 percent said no.

These responses are in line with a study by the training and development company Kepner-Tregoe, in which researchers found that 96 percent of the North American workers they studied agreed with the statement "I get a lot of satisfaction out of knowing I've done a good job."

Starved for Recognition

So we get a lot of satisfaction from positive feedback, and encouragement helps if we get it. Why, then, do we think we don't need much positive affirmation? Perhaps it's because we don't experience enough encouragement to realize how important it is. Most workers don't get much recognition for a job well done, and most managers don't give it, according to the Kepner-Tregoe study.

Only about 40 percent of North American workers say they receive any recognition for a job well done, and about the same percentage report they never get recognized for outstanding individual performance.

Only 50 percent of managers say they give recognition for high-performance. Evidently, most assume that get-

ting extraordinary things done is just part of the job.

As the authors of the Kepner-Tregoe study put it, "Unless this issue is addressed, the goal of achieving a high-performance workplace will remain unattainable."

Just Say Thank-You

Opening up is harder for some people than for others, but major psychotherapy is not required here. It starts with what Robert Fulghum pointed out years ago in his book *Everything I Ever Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, the little reminder pinned to the wall where you're sure to see it every morning when you come to work, "Remember to say thank you!"

Study after study points out just how fundamental all this really is. For example, one survey examining employee turnover found that the chief reason people give for leaving is that they get "limited praise and recognition."

When asked what skills their managers might develop to be more effective, employees place at the top of the list "the ability to recognize and acknowledge the contributions of others."

Appreciation, acknowledgment, praise, thank-yous, some simple gesture that says, "I care about you and what you do." It's information that communicates, "You're on the right track. You're doing really well. Thanks." To deny each other this gift of positive feedback is to deny increased opportunities for success. At the heart of effective leadership is genuinely caring for people. ●



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The Seven Essentials of Encouraging

While he was president of North American Tool and Die (NATD), Tom Melohn enjoyed giving out Super Person of the Month awards to employees who went the extra mile to help the company move toward its goal of high quality and no product rejects. Melohn made himself highly visible to everyone in the workplace. But more than this, he personally presented the Super Person awards with a gregarious style that was his trademark.

Through the strength of his presence, Melohn revealed that he knew what was going on, cared about people, got a great deal of pleasure from his work and took pride in the accomplishments of others.

Underlying the practice of encouraging the heart there is a set of seven recognizable, learnable and repeatable actions leaders take that make people feel special and reinforce the standards of the enterprise. When leaders do their best to encourage the heart, they:

1. Set clear standards.
2. Expect the best.
3. Pay attention.
4. Personalize recognition.
5. Tell the story.
6. Celebrate together.
7. Set the example.

These seven essentials of encouraging the heart are core leadership skills. When striving to raise quality, recover from disaster, start up a new service or make dramatic change of any kind, leaders must make sure that people experience in their hearts that what they do matters.

Leaders ‘Know Thysel’

Leadership doesn’t depend on mystical qualities or inborn gifts but rather on the capacity of individuals to know themselves, their strengths and their weaknesses, and to learn from the feedback they get in their daily lives — in short, their capacity for self-improvement. Leadership scholars consistently note the high correlation between leadership skills and the capacity for self-improvement.

“Know thysel” is the inscription over the oracle at Delphi. And it’s still the most difficult task any of us faces. But until you truly know yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, what you want to do and why you want to do it, you cannot succeed in any but the most

Alice in Wonderland

When you were a kid, you probably read *Alice in Wonderland*. Remember the croquet match? The one where flamingos were the mallets, playing card soldiers were the wickets, and hedgehogs were the balls? Remember how all the pieces kept moving and the rules kept changing all the time?

Poor Alice, she became so frustrated. There was no way of knowing how to play the game to win. There seemed no reason even to play the game. It was rigged in favor of the Queen of Hearts, anyway. And for the queen, that was really the point.

We’ve all been Alice at one time or another in our lives. We’ve been unsure where we’re supposed to be going, what the ground rules are that govern how we behave or how we’re doing along the way. Just when we think we get the hang of it, the boss comes along and changes everything. This is a recipe for maddening frustration and pitiful performance. Our hearts just aren’t in it.

The first prerequisite for encouraging the heart is to set clear standards. By standards we mean both goals and values (or principles). They both have to do with what’s expected of us, but goals connote something short-term, whereas values and principles imply something more enduring.

superficial sense of the word.

There’s a rule in golf that applies equally to self-improvement: play it as it lies. For nongolfers, that simply means that you have to play the ball from wherever it lands, whether it’s in the rough or on the green 10 inches from the cup. Applied to self-improvement, the notion suggests that we have to be able to identify and look very honestly at where we are right now in terms of our skills.

The information we gather in this way tells us where to start correcting, where to start building our skills and how to make the most of our strengths. ●

The First Essential: Set Clear Standards

Tony Codianni, of Toshiba America, once said: “I have a need to be personal with my folks. To me there’s no difference between work and personal life. ... Encouraging comes from the heart. It’s heart-to-heart, not brain-to-heart. It has to be genuine.”

But don’t mistake Codianni’s love of people for a

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willingness to forget about standards.

Exemplary leadership is soft and demanding, caring and conscientious. As Codianni puts it, “I always tell trainers in my group that they have to master the program first, and then they’re free to change it.” To Codianni, having a clear set of expectations about what people will achieve is part and parcel of being caring.

We can learn a lot about leadership from the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. In these organizations, boys and girls learn and pledge to uphold certain principles. They earn advancement and recognition for their deeds. As they achieve specific goals they earn merit badges. The badges are symbols of living up to the standards.

Goals Concentrate Our Minds and Shape Who We Are

Values set the stage for action. Goals release the energy. University of Chicago professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has studied the state called “flow” for more than two decades. Flow experiences are those times when we feel pure enjoyment and effortlessness in what we do.

Among his findings, Csikszentmihalyi reports that “in order to experience flow, it helps to have clear goals — not because it is achieving the goals that is necessarily important, but because without a goal it is difficult to concentrate and avoid distractions. Thus a mountain climber sets as her goal to reach the summit not because she has some deep desire to achieve it, but because the goal makes the experience of climbing possible. If it were not for the summit, the climb would become pointless ambling that leaves one restless and apathetic.”

Though many of us perceive goals as the finish line, Csikszentmihalyi is suggesting that the important function of goals is to get us moving with purpose and energy. What’s really important to being our best is concentration and focus on something that is meaningful to us.

Goals Plus Feedback Keep Us Engaged

People need to know whether they’re making progress or marking time. Goals serve that function, but it’s not enough simply to know that we want to make it to the summit. We need to know if we’re still climbing or if we’re sliding downhill. There is revealing research about the impact that clear and positive communication has on internal motivation and physical stamina.

In one study, Stanford University’s Albert Bandura wanted to find out how people’s willingness to put forth effort to perform a task was influenced by the presence or absence of goals and feedback. He found that people’s motivation to increase productivity on a task increases

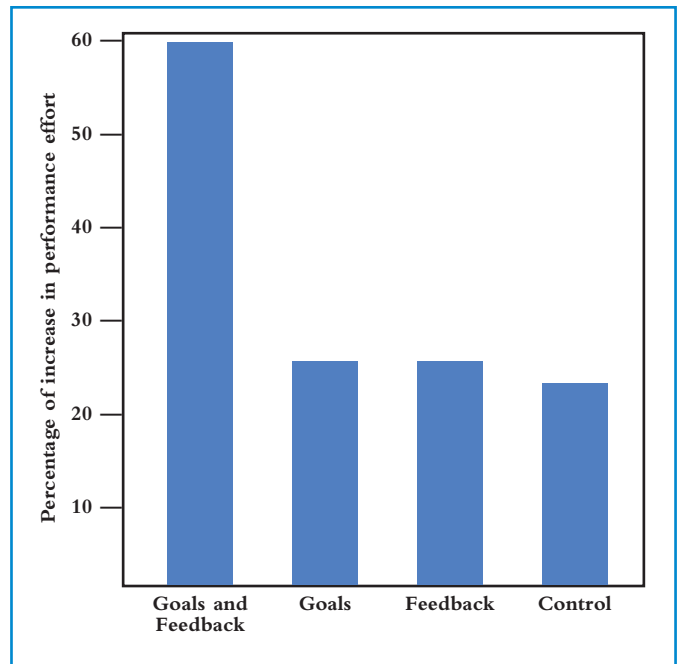


Figure 4.2

only when they have a challenging goal and receive feedback on their progress. (See Figure 4.2)

Encouragement Is Feedback

Encouragement, it can be said, is a form of feedback. It’s positive information that tells us that we’re making progress, we’re on the right track and we’re living up to the standards.

Encouragement requires us to get close to people, show that we care about them and demonstrate that we are interested in others. Because it’s more personal and positive, encouragement is more likely to accomplish something that other forms of feedback cannot.

Encouraging the heart strengthens trust between leaders and constituents, a relationship that is critical to getting extraordinary things done in organizations. ●

The Second Essential: Expect the Best

Harvard professor Robert Rosenthal and co-researchers discovered that if we expect others to succeed, they probably will. If we expect them to fail, they probably will. People tend to live up, or down, to our expectations of them.

Managers communicate expectations in a number of ways. Managers with positive expectations set a climate that makes people feel more at ease. They offer positive reinforcement, give others information, give others opportunity for input and resources to do their jobs, and

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are likely to lend them assistance and give them better assignments. The manager's attitude influences his or her behavior toward others, and the behavior influences the results.

Successful leaders have high expectations, both of themselves and of their constituents. The expectations that successful leaders hold provide the framework into which people fit their own realities.

People are often anxious or nervous when they are encouraged by people in leadership positions to deliver their personal best. However, surveys show that spurred on by their leaders' high expectations, they develop self-confidence that gives them the courage and volition to live up to those expectations.

Clearly, before we can encourage the heart, we have to believe in others, and in ourselves. Our belief in others has positive benefits for individual leaders, for their constituents and for the organizations they serve. High expectations matter.

Positive Images Create Positive Possibilities

Positive futures for self and others are first constructed in our minds. Unless we can see ourselves as being successful, it is very difficult to produce the behavior that leads to success. Positive images make groups more effective; relieve symptoms of illness; and enhance achievement in school, the military and business.

Exemplary leaders know how to purposefully hold in their minds high expectations for themselves and other people. ●

The Third Essential: Pay Attention

One way to show that you care is to pay attention to people, to what they're doing and to how they're feeling. If you are clear about the standards of behavior you're looking for and you believe and expect that people will perform like winners, then you're going to notice lots of examples of people doing things right and doing the right things. Paying attention is all about being curious, really. Your curiosity shows you care.

Listen With Your Eyes and Your Heart

Learning to understand and see things from another's perspective is absolutely crucial to building trusting relations and to career success. For example, studies from the Center for Creative Leadership revealed that successful executives derailed because of insensitivity and inability to understand the perspectives of other people.

They undervalued the contributions of others, making them feel inadequate. They listened poorly, acted dicta-

torially, played favorites and failed to give — or sometimes even share — credit with others.

The net result over time was that these traits and attitudes caught up with them. When these managers really needed the help of others around them, they were left to fend for themselves, ignored, isolated and on occasion purposely sabotaged.

Eyes-and-heart listening can't be from a distance, reading reports or hearing things secondhand. Our constituents want to know who we are, how we feel and whether we really care. They want to see us in living color. This means regularly walking the office hallways and plant floors; meeting often with small groups; and hitting the road for frequent visits with associates, key suppliers and customers.

When you really pay attention — when you're curious, when you look for the best, when you put others first, when you listen with eyes and heart, when you hang out, when you open up to and with others — then you find what you're seeking. You notice all kinds of examples of people living up to and exceeding the standards that have been set. You find lots of opportunities to recognize individuals for their contributions. ●

The Fourth Essential: Personalize Recognition

To truly recognize a person so that he or she is encouraged by your efforts, you absolutely have to know something about who he or she is — some likes and dislikes, whether the person enjoys public recognition or shirks from it, and even what he or she is or is not willing to take credit for. Failure to learn something about others can result in an act of recognition that has no meaning. In fact, it can even hurt.

Ann Cessariss of Key Communication reminds us all of another reason why it's essential to personalize, or should we say "culturalize," recognition.

"I had a client," she reported, "who was born in Asia, came to this country at age 12, and was very well acclimated to life in the United States. However, when his boss rewarded his exceptional contribution to a team project by giving him a delightful corner office, he was horrified. He felt it destroyed the feeling of teamwork and his future relations with his team members."

Cultural values run deep, says Cessariss, and she's absolutely correct. Personalizing is about knowing someone so well that you know what's appropriate individually or culturally. It's pretty arrogant for someone to assume that just because he or she is the leader he or she

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naturally knows what's right for others without even bothering to inquire or observe.

What it comes down to is thoughtfulness: how much effort you put into thinking about the other person and what makes the recognition special for that person. It means observing an individual and asking, "What would really make this special and unique for this person — make it a memorable, one-of-a-kind experience?" ●

The Fifth Essential: Tell the Story

We're inundated with bits and bytes of information every nano-second of every day. How can we possibly sort through it all and remember even a morsel? Research clearly demonstrates that information is more quickly and accurately remembered when it is first presented in the form of an example or story.

Researchers have found, for instance, that when American history textbooks were translated into the story-based style of *Time* and *Newsweek*, students were able to recall up to three times more information than they were after reading more typical school text.

Stories are better able to accomplish the objectives of motivation and mobilization than are bullet points on an overhead. Well-told stories reach inside us and pull us along. They give us the actual experience of being there and of learning what is really important about the experience.

Because storytelling has been found to be so crucial to learning, sense making, decision making, motivating and mobilizing, it's no wonder leadership researchers have stressed how effective storytelling is as a leadership tool.

How to Tell a Great Story

Use these practical guidelines to construct a story the next time you are about to engage in an act of recognition:

- 1. Identify the actors.** Make sure that you clearly have in mind a person (or team of people) you are trying to recognize. Name names.
- 2. State the predicament.** Present both the problem to be solved and the standard that is at stake. It's one thing to praise people for solving a problem, but it's more powerful to also praise them for living up to the organization's beliefs.
- 3. Clarify the actor's intentions.** In your recognition story, relate what went through the person's mind as he or she weighed the options.
- 4. Describe the actions.** Relate in as much detail as you can what happened. It's important to describe the

behaviors so the next time others are faced with a similar predicament they can have a framework for action.

5. Include the props. Like props in a play, objects are important to a story. They give detail and help people put themselves into the predicament. Objects may be inanimate or animate (as with people). There may be a protagonist and an antagonist.

6. Tell how it ended. Tell the listeners what happened in the end and why it was important.

7. Paint — or reenact — the scene. Be sure to place all of this in context. Relate when and where it happened. Talk about the surrounding circumstances.

8. Include a surprise. Every great story includes some kind of surprise. If at all possible, find a way to add an element of amazement. It adds interest, makes the story more memorable and produces more fun.

Recognition stories that include all these elements require time and preparation. Good storytelling is an art, and like any art it requires practice. But if you accept that storytelling is effective as a leadership tool, then the practice and preparation are well worth the investment. ●

The Sixth Essential: Celebrate Together

All individual recognitions can, in some way, be made group celebrations. When we think of celebrations, we often imagine very elaborate events. Though celebrations are often magnificent affairs, they can be very simple too. Broaden the definition of celebration to include the small as well as the grandiose. The critical ingredient is togetherness.

Celebrations Build Community

Celebrations — whether to recognize the accomplishment of one person or to cheer the achievements of many — are opportunities to promote individual health, but also opportunities for leaders to build healthier groups. Highly visible public recognition builds the self-esteem of the recipients, and it builds a sense of community and belonging, of working together to achieve shared goals and shared victories.

Terrence Deal and M.K. Key express it this way: "Celebrations infuse life with passion and purpose. ... They bond people together and connect us to shared values and myths. Ceremonies and rituals create community, fusing individual souls with the corporate spirit. When everything is going well, ritual occasions allow us to revel in our glory. When times are tough, ceremonies draw us together, kindling hope and faith that better

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times lie ahead.”

Celebrations increase the sense of belonging. By making achievements public, you build a culture in which people feel that their efforts are appreciated and even applauded. People who count themselves as members of this community can find meaning and purpose here. ●

The Seventh Essential: Set the Example

When Cary Turner took over the stores division of Pier 1 Imports, he personally called or wrote all the store managers in the company to introduce himself and thank them for their hard work. Now that he's been there for a while, according to those who work with him, he still says thank-you all the time and sends personal handwritten thank-you notes.

Small gestures, perhaps, but this is how cultures of celebration and recognition are built. One thank-you note at a time. One positive role model at a time.

Turner's also prone to the outrageous sometimes. He will accept almost any challenge to inspire and encourage associates. For instance, in December 1997, when the stores as a whole achieved a 10 percent comparative store gain, he walked barefoot on hot coals. The slogan: “We're so hot, we're cool. We're so cool, we're hot.” In 1996, he made a bet with his regional managers: he'd visit all of them dressed in a chicken suit if they'd significantly increase sales. They did and he did. When a Washington, D.C., store hit \$2 million in sales, and because the store manager asked him to, Turner arrived dressed as a bride to promote its bridal business. When the Northwest region increased its December sales by 11.1 percent and challenged him to do something outrageous, he parasailed over the Puget Sound and Seattle waterfront.

But it doesn't always take the outrageous to make a positive impact. Turner is well known for slapping “high fives” wherever he goes, in the stores, in the corporate office elevator and even with customers. It's his way of saying, “Thank you for everything you do.” It's this enthusiastic connection that makes him approachable to the people who look to him for encouragement and inspiration.

Over and over again, it's the same story. Wherever you find a strong culture built around strong values — whether they are about superior quality, innovation, customer service, distinctiveness in design, respect for others or just plain fun — you also find endless examples of leaders who personally live the values.

Yes, it may emanate from the top, but a culture is sustained over time because everyone becomes a leader; everyone sets the example.

Credibility Is the Foundation

The recurring lesson is that it all starts with credibility. In researching the qualities that people look for and admire in their leaders, it is revealed time and time again, more than anything, people want leaders who are credible. Credibility is the foundation of leadership. Period.

Above all, people want to believe in their leaders. They want to believe that the leaders' word can be trusted, that they do what they say. The findings are so consistent over such a long period of time that this can be referred to as the first law of leadership: If you don't believe in the messenger you won't believe the message.

Leadership credibility makes a huge difference in our performance and our commitment to an organization. When people perceive their immediate managers or senior managers to have 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
- Have a sense of ownership for the organization.

However, when people perceive their immediate managers to have low credibility, they're significantly more likely to:

- Produce only if they're watched carefully
- Be 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
- Feel unsupported and unappreciated.

Credibility makes a difference. Among other things, loyalty, commitment, energy and productivity depend upon it. When it comes to deciding whether a leader is believable, people first listen to the words and then watch the actions. Constituents are moved by deeds. Actions are the evidence of a leader's credibility. This observation leads to a straightforward prescription for leader modeling: Do what you say you will do.

This strategy has two essential elements: the first is *say* and the second is *do*. To set an example, leaders must be

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clear about their values; they must know what they stand for. Leaders must put what they say into practice. They must act on their beliefs and do.

Leaders Go First

Setting the example for encouraging the heart starts, in fact, by giving yourself permission to do so. It starts when you get personally involved.

When leaders do get personally involved in encouraging the heart, the results are always the same: the receiver and the giver both feel uplifted. ●

Finding Your Voice

You cannot lead out of someone else's experience. You can only lead out of your own.

In his witty book *Management of the Absurd*, psychologist and management consultant Richard Farson writes, "In both parenthood and management, it's not so much what we do as what we are that counts. ... There is no question that parents can and should do worthwhile things for their children, but it's what they are that will really matter. ... The same dynamic occurs in management and leadership. People learn — and respond to — what we are."

Max De Pree, former chairman and CEO of Herman Miller, the Michigan furniture maker, tells a moving story that well illustrates this point:

"Esther, my wife, and I have a granddaughter named Zoe, the Greek word for "life." She was born prematurely and weighed 1 pound, 7 ounces, so small that my wedding ring could slide up her arm to her shoulder. The neonatologist who first examined her told us that she had a 5 to 10 percent chance of living three days. ...

"To complicate matters, Zoe's biological father had jumped ship the month before Zoe was born. Realizing this, a wise and caring nurse named Ruth gave me my instructions: 'For the next several months, at least, you're the surrogate father. I want you to come to the hospital every day to visit Zoe, and when you come, I would like you to rub her body and her legs and her arms with the tip of your finger. While you're caressing her, you should tell her over and over how much you love her, because she has to be able to connect your voice to your touch.'

Ruth was doing exactly the right thing on Zoe's behalf (and, of course, on my behalf as well), and without realizing it she was giving me one of the best possible descriptions of the work of a leader. At the core of becoming a leader is the need always to connect one's voice to one's touch."

De Pree goes on to explain for leaders "a prior task — finding one's voice in the first place."

Beyond Tools and Techniques

Finding your voice is absolutely critical to becoming an authentic leader. If you can't find your own true voice, you end up with a vocabulary that belongs to someone else, mouthing words that were written by some speech writer who's nothing like you at all.

Finding one's voice is something that every artist understands, and every artist knows that finding a voice is most definitely not a matter of technique. It's a matter of time and searching — soul searching.

Poet David Whyte has written "the voice throws us back on what we want for our life. It forces us to ask ourselves, Who is speaking? Who came to work today? Who is working for what? What do I really care about?" Finding your voice begins by asking yourself Whyte's questions.

It's important to answer them for yourself — to find your true voice. Because you can't lead others to places you don't want to go yourself. If you don't feel a burning passion for something, how can you inspire and encourage others to share it?

There is one truth you absolutely must confront. Understanding that the heart of effective leadership is genuine caring for people, how much do you really care about the people you lead? The question must be confronted daily, because when you care deeply, the techniques described here present themselves as genuine expressions of your caring. When you care little, they're perceived as nothing more than gimmicks and you're thought of as a phony.

You can learn to lead, but don't confuse leadership with position and place. They're not what earn you the respect and commitment of your constituents. What earns you their respect in the end is whether you are what you say you are and whether what you are embodies what they want to become. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Encouraging the Heart*, you'll also like:

1. ***Leading With Character* by John J. Sosik.** This book offers a unique collection of essays on leadership from 25 famous names in business and culture.
2. ***Primal Leadership* by Daniel Goleman, Annie McKee and Richard E. Boyatzis.** Discover how good leaders use their Emotional Intelligence to get results. Learn how the four quadrants of EI impact your leadership.
3. ***The Enthusiastic Employee* by David Sirote, Louis A. Mischkind and Michael Irwin Meltzer.** Drawing on 30 years of research, the authors explain why high morale is good for the bottom line. Learn the specific management practices that can have the greatest impact on performance.