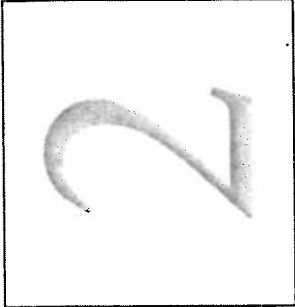







1.1

TABLE THE FIVE PRACTICES AND TEN COMMITMENTS OF LEADERSHIP.



Practice	Commitment
Model the Way 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared ideals. 2. Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.
Inspire a Shared Vision 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities. 4. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
Challenge the Process 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Search for opportunities by seizing the initiative and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve. 6. Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from experience.
Enable Others to Act 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships. 8. Strengthen others by increasing self-determination and developing competence.
Encourage the Heart 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. 10. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.

CREDIBILITY IS THE FOUNDATION OF LEADERSHIP

"Leadership is in the eyes of other people; it is they who proclaim you as a leader."

Carrie Gilstrap, Hewlett-Packard

Model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable other act, and encourage the heart: these are the leadership practices that emerge from thousands of personal-best cases. But they paint only a partial picture. Leaders don't get extraordinary things done all by themselves! The portrait

can be completed only when we add in what constituents expect from their leaders. With these brush strokes the picture takes on depth and vitality.

What leaders say they do is one thing; what constituents say they want and how well leaders meet these expectations is another. Because leadership is a reciprocal process between leaders and their constituents, any discussion of leadership must attend to the dynamics of this relationship. Strategies, tactics, skills, and practices are empty without an understanding of the fundamental human aspirations that connect leaders and constituents.

To balance our understanding of leadership, we investigated the expectations that constituents have of leaders. We asked constituents to tell us what they look for in a person that they would be *willing* to follow, someone who had the personal traits, characteristics, and attributes they wanted in a leader. Their responses both affirm and enrich the picture that emerged from our studies of personal leadership bests.

WHAT PEOPLE LOOK FOR AND ADMIRE IN LEADERS

We began our research on what constituents expect of leaders more than twenty-five years ago by surveying thousands of business and government executives. We asked the following *open-ended* question: "What values, personal traits, or characteristics do you look for and admire in a leader?"¹ In response to that question, respondents identified several hundred different values, traits, and characteristics. Subsequent content analysis by several independent judges, followed by further empirical analyses, reduced these items to a list of twenty characteristics (each grouped with several synonyms for clarification and completeness).

From this list of twenty characteristics, we developed a survey questionnaire called "Characteristics of Admired Leaders." We've administered this questionnaire to over seventy-five thousand people around the globe, and we update the findings continuously. We distribute a one-page checklist and ask respondents to select the seven qualities that they "most look for and admire

in a leader, someone whose direction they would willingly follow." We tell them that the key word in this question is *willingly*. What do they expect from a leader they would follow, not because they have to, but because they want to?

The results have been striking in their regularity over the years, and they do not significantly vary by demographic, organizational, or cultural differences. Wherever we've asked the question, it's clear, as the data in Table 2.1 illustrate, that there are a few essential "character tests" someone must pass before others are willing to grant the designation *leader*.

Although every characteristic receives some votes, and therefore each is important to some people, what is most striking and most evident is that only four over time (with the exception of Inspiring in 1987) have always received over 60 percent of the votes. And these same four have consistently been ranked at the top *across different countries*, as shown by the data in Table 2.2.

What people most look for in a leader (a person that they would be willing to follow) has been constant over time. And our research documents this consistent pattern across countries, cultures, ethnicities, organizational functions and hierarchies, gender, educational, and age groups. For people to follow someone willingly, the majority of constituents believe the leader must be

- Honest
- Forward-looking
- Inspiring
- Competent

These investigations of desired leader attributes demonstrate consistent and clear relationships with the stories we heard people tell us about their personal-best leadership experiences. The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership and the behaviors of people whom others think of as exemplary leaders are complementary perspectives on the same subject. When they're

What people most look for in a leader has been constant over time.

2.1

TABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF ADMIRE LEADERS.

Characteristic	Percentage of Respondents Selecting Each Characteristic			
	2007 edition	2002 edition	1995 edition	1987 edition
HONEST	89	88	88	83
FORWARD-LOOKING	71	71	75	62
INSPIRING	69	65	68	58
COMPETENT	68	66	63	67
Intelligent	48	47	40	43
Fair-minded	39	42	49	40
Straightforward	36	34	33	34
Broad-minded	35	40	40	37
Supportive	35	35	41	32
Dependable	34	33	32	33
Cooperative	25	28	28	25
Courageous	25	20	29	27
Determined	25	23	17	17
Caring	22	20	23	26
Imaginative	17	23	28	34
Mature	15	21	13	23
Ambitious	16	17	13	21
Loyal	18	14	11	11
Self-Controlled	10	8	5	13
Independent	4	6	5	10

Note: These percentages represent respondents from six continents: Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Europe, and Australia. The majority of respondents are from the United States. Since we asked people to select seven characteristics, the total adds up to more than 100 percent.

2.2

TABLE CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISONS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ADMIRE LEADERS.

Country	Percentage of Respondents Selecting Each Characteristic			
	Honest	Forward-Looking	Inspiring	Competent
Australia	93	83	73	59
Canada	88	88	73	60
Japan	67	83	51	61
Korea	74	82	55	62
Malaysia	95	78	60	62
Mexico	85	82	71	62
New Zealand	86	86	71	68
Singapore	72	76	69	76
Sweden, Denmark	84	86	90	53
United States	89	71	69	68

performing at their peak, leaders are doing more than just getting results. They're also responding to the expectations of their constituents.²

As we weave the themes of being honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent into the text of the subsequent chapters on The Five Practices, you'll see in more detail how exemplary leaders respond to the expectations of their constituents. For example, leaders cannot Model the Way without being seen as honest. The leadership practice of Inspire a Shared Vision involves being forward-looking and inspiring. When leaders Challenge the Process, they also enhance the perception that they're dynamic. Trustworthiness, often a synonym for honesty, plays a major role in how leaders Enable Others to Act, as does the leader's own competency. Likewise, leaders who recognize and celebrate significant accomplishments—who Encourage the Heart—show inspiration and positive energy, which increases their constituents'

understanding of the commitment to the vision and values. When leaders demonstrate capacity in all of The Five Practices, they show others they have the competence to get extraordinary things done.

Let's take a closer look at each of the four attributes that have been selected by the majority of respondents since the early 1980s.

Honest

In almost every survey we've conducted, honesty has been selected more often than any other leadership characteristic; overall, it emerges as the single most important factor in the leader-constituent relationship. The percentages vary, but the final ranking does not. Since the very first time we conducted our studies honesty has been at the top of the list.

It's clear that if people anywhere are to willingly follow someone—whether it's into battle or into the boardroom, the front office or the front lines—they first want to assure themselves that the person is worthy of their trust. They want to know that the person is truthful, ethical, and principled. When people talk to us about the qualities they admire in leaders, they often use the terms *integrity* and *character* as synonymous with honesty. No matter what the setting, everyone wants to be fully confident in their leaders, and to be fully confident they have to believe that their leaders are individuals of strong character and solid integrity.³

We—all of us—don't want to be lied to or deceived. We want to be told the truth. We want a leader who knows right from wrong. Sure, we want our team to win, but we don't want to be led—better to say, *misled*—by someone who cheats in the process of attaining victory. It lowers our current and future motivational levels; we just won't work as hard for a person or a cause once we've been tricked.

We want our leaders to be honest because their honesty is also a reflection upon our own honesty. Of all the qualities that people look for and admire in a leader, honesty is by far the most personal. More than likely this is also why it consistently ranks number one. It's the quality that can most en-

hance or most damage our own personal reputations. If we follow someone who's universally viewed as having an impeccable character and strong integrity, then we're likely to be viewed the same. But if we willingly follow someone who's considered dishonest, our own images are tarnished. And there's perhaps another, more subtle, reason why honesty is at the top. When we follow someone we believe to be dishonest, we come to realize that we've compromised our own integrity. Over time, we not only lose respect for the leader, we lose respect for ourselves.

Honesty is strongly tied to values and ethics. We appreciate people who know where they stand on important principles. We resolutely refuse to follow those who lack confidence in their own beliefs. We simply don't trust people who can't or won't disclose a clear set of values, ethics, and standards and live by them.

Forward-Looking

A little more than 70 percent of our most recent respondents selected the ability to look ahead as one of their most sought-after leadership traits. People expect leaders to have a sense of direction and a concern for the future of the organization. This expectation directly corresponds to the ability to envision the future that leaders described in their personal-best cases. Whether we call that ability vision, a dream, a calling, a goal, or a personal agenda, the message is clear: leaders must know where they're going if they expect others to willingly join them on the journey. They have to have a point of view about the future envisioned for their organizations, and they need to be able to connect that point of view to the hopes and dreams of their constituents.

By *forward-looking*, people don't mean the magical power of a prescient visionary. The reality is far more down to earth. It's the ability to imagine or discover a desirable destination toward which the company, agency, congregation, or community should head. Vision reveals the beckoning summit that provides others with the capacity to chart their course toward the future. As constituents, we ask that a leader have a well-defined orientation toward the

future. We want to know what the organization will look like, feel like, and be like when it arrives at its destination in six quarters or six years. We want to have it described to us in rich detail so that we can select the proper route for getting there and know when we've arrived.

Clarity of vision into the distant future may be difficult to attain, but it's essential that leaders seek the knowledge and master the skills necessary to envision what's across the horizon. Compared to all the other leadership qualities constituents expect, this is the one that most distinguishes leaders from other credible people. Expecting leaders to be forward-looking doesn't mean constituents want their leaders to set out on a solitary vision quest; people want to be engaged in the search for a meaningful future, as we will discuss in Chapters Five and Six. But this expectation does mean that leaders have a special responsibility to attend to the future of their organizations.⁴

Inspiring

People expect their leaders to be enthusiastic, energetic, and positive about the future. It's not enough for a leader to have a dream. A leader must be able to communicate the vision in ways that encourage people to sign on for the duration and excite them about the cause. Although the enthusiasm, energy, and positive attitude of an exemplary leader may not change the content of work, they certainly can make the context more meaningful. Whatever the circumstances, when leaders breathe life into peoples' dreams and aspirations, those people are much more willing to enlist in the movement.

Leaders must uplift their constituents' spirits and give them hope if they're to voluntarily engage in challenging pursuits. Enthusiasm and excitement are essential, and they signal the leader's personal commitment to pursuing a dream. If a leader displays no passion for a cause, why should anyone else?

Inspiring leadership also speaks to constituents' need to have meaning and purpose in their lives. Being upbeat, positive, and optimistic about the future offers people hope. This is crucial at any time, but in times of great uncertainty, leading with positive emotions is absolutely essential to moving

people upward and forward.⁵ When people are worried, discouraged, frightened, and uncertain about the future, the last thing needed is a leader who feeds those negative emotions. Instead, they need leaders who communicate in words, demeanor, and actions that they believe their constituents will overcome. Emotions are contagious, and positive emotions resonate throughout an organization and into relationships with other constituents. To get extraordinary things done in extraordinary times, leaders must inspire optimal performance—and that can only be fueled with positive emotions.

Competent

To enlist in a common cause, people must believe that the leader is competent to guide them where they're headed. They must see the leader as having relevant experience and sound judgment. If they doubt the person's abilities, they're unlikely to join in the crusade.

Leadership competence refers to the leader's track record and ability to get things done. This kind of competence inspires confidence that the leader will be able to guide the entire organization, large or small, in the direction in which it needs to go. It doesn't refer specifically to the leader's abilities in the core technology of the operation. In fact, the type of competence demanded seems to vary more with the leader's position and the condition of the organization. Although people demand a base level of understanding of the fundamentals of the industry, market, or professional service environment, they also know that leaders can't be expected to be the most technically competent in their fields. Organizations are too complex and multifunctional for that ever to be the case. This is particularly true as people reach the more senior levels. For example, those who hold officer positions are definitely expected to demonstrate abilities in strategic planning and policymaking. If a company desperately needs to clarify its core competence and market position, a CEO who is savvy in competitive marketing may be perceived as a fine leader. But in the line function, where people expect guidance in technical areas, these same strategic marketing abilities will be insufficient. A leader on

the line or at the point of customer or client contact will typically have to be more technically competent than someone less engaged in providing services or making products. What's often most significant is that the leader takes the time to learn the business and to know the current operation.

Relevant experience is a dimension of competence, one that is different from technical expertise. Experience is about active participation in situational, functional, and industry events and activities and the accumulation of knowledge derived from participation. Experience correlates with one's track record, and the broader one's experience, the more likely he or she is to be successful across organizations and industries. An effective leader in a high-technology company, for example, may not need to be a master programmer but must understand the business implications of electronic data interchange, networking, and the Internet. A health care administrator with experience only in the insurance industry is more than likely doomed; the job needs extensive experience in the delivery of human services. There may be notable exceptions, but it is highly unlikely that a leader can succeed without both relevant experience and, most important, exceptionally good people skills.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: CREDIBILITY IS THE FOUNDATION

Honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent: these are the characteristics that have remained constant over more than twenty years of economic growth and recession, the surge in new technology enterprises, the birth of the World Wide Web, the further globalization of business and industry, the ever-changing political environment, and the expansion, bursting, and re-generation of the Internet economy. The relative importance of the most desired qualities has varied somewhat over time, but there has been no change in the fact that these are the four qualities people want most in their leaders. Whether they believe their leaders are true to these values is another matter, but what they would like from them has remained constant.

This list of four consistent findings is useful in and of itself—but there's a more profound implication revealed by our research. Three of these four key characteristics make up what communications experts refer to as “source credibility.” In assessing the believability of sources of communication—whether newscasters, salespeople, physicians, or priests; whether business managers, military officers, politicians, or civic leaders—researchers typically evaluate them on three criteria: their perceived *trustworthiness*, their *expertise*, and their *dynamism*. Those who are rated more highly on these dimensions are considered to be more credible sources of information.⁶

Notice how strikingly similar these three characteristics are to the essential leader qualities of being honest, competent, and inspiring—three of the top four items selected in our survey. What we found in our investigation of admired leadership qualities is that more than anything, people want to follow leaders who are credible. *Credibility is the foundation of leadership.*

Above all else, we as constituents must be able to believe in our leaders. We must believe that their word can be trusted, that they're personally passionate and enthusiastic about the work that they're doing, and that they have the knowledge and skill to lead.

We also must believe that they know where we're headed and have a vision for the future. Adding *forward-looking* to what we expect from our leaders is what sets leaders apart from other credible individuals. Compared to other sources of information (for example, news anchors), leaders must do more than be reliable reporters of the news. Leaders make the news interpret the news, and make sense of the news. We expect our leaders to have a point of view about the future. We expect them to articulate exciting possibilities. We want to be confident that our leaders know where they're going.

Even so, although compelling visions are necessary for leadership, if the leader is not credible the message rests on a weak and precarious foundation

Leaders therefore must be ever-diligent in guarding their credibility. Their ability to take strong stands, to challenge the status quo, and to point us in new directions depends on their being highly credible. Leaders must never take their credibility for granted, regardless of the times or their positions. If leaders ask others to follow them to some uncertain future—a future that may not be realized in their lifetime—and if the journey is going to require sacrifice, isn't it reasonable that constituents should believe in them? To believe in the exciting future possibilities leaders present, constituents must first believe in their leaders.

Because these findings about the characteristics of admired leaders—people we would willingly follow—have been so pervasive and so consistent, we've come to call this "The Kouzes-Posner First Law of Leadership":

If you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe the message.

Credibility Matters

At this point, some people might well say, "So what? I know people who are in positions of power, and I know people who are enormously wealthy, and I don't find them credible. Does credibility really matter? Does it make a difference?"

It's a legitimate concern, so we decided to study the question of whether or not credibility mattered. But rather than ask about the credibility of "top management" or "elected officials," we decided to ask questions about people closer to home. We asked people to rate their immediate managers. As part of our quantitative research, using a behavioral measure of credibility, we asked organization members to think about the extent to which their immediate manager exhibited credibility-enhancing behaviors. In our studies we found that when people perceive their *immediate manager* 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 of the organization

When people perceive their manager to have low credibility, however, 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

This evidence of the significant impact of leadership credibility on employee attitudes and behavior certainly provides clear dictates for organizational leaders. Credibility makes a difference, and leaders must take it personally. Loyalty, commitment, energy, and productivity depend on it.

Credibility goes far beyond employee attitudes. It influences customer and investor loyalty as well as employee loyalty. In an extensive study of the economic value of business loyalty, Frederick Reichheld and his Bain & Company colleagues found that businesses concentrating on customer, employee, and investor loyalty generate superior results compared with those engendering disloyalty. They found further that disloyalty can dampen performance by a stunning 25–50 percent.⁷ Loyalty is clearly responsible for extraordinary value creation. So what accounts for business loyalty? When they investigated this question, the researchers found that "The center of gravity for business loyalty—whether it be the loyalty of customers, employees, investors, suppliers, or dealers—is the personal integrity of the senior leadership team and its ability to put its principles into practice."⁸ And what's true for bricks-and-mortar companies is just as true for the clicks companies. "In fact, when Web shoppers were asked to name the attributes of e-tailers that were most important in earning their business, the number one answer was 'a Web site I

know and trust.' All other attributes, including lowest cost and broadest selection, lagged far behind. Price does not rule the Web; trust does."⁹

What Is Credibility Behaviorally?

The data confirm that credibility is the foundation of leadership. But what is credibility behaviorally? How do you know it when you see it?

We've asked this question of tens of thousands of people around the globe, and the response we get is essentially the same, regardless of how it may be phrased in one company versus another or one country versus another. Here are some of the common phrases people use to describe how they know credibility when they see it:

- "They practice what they preach."
- "They walk the talk."
- "Their actions are consistent with their words."
- "They put their money where their mouth is."
- "They follow through on their promises."
- "They do what they say they will do."

The last is the most frequent response. When it comes to deciding whether a leader is believable, people first listen to the words, then they watch the actions. They listen to the talk, and then they watch the walk. They listen to the promises of resources to support change initiatives, and then they wait to see if the money and materials follow. They hear the promises to deliver, and then they look for evidence that the commitments are met. A judgment of "credible" is handed down when words and deeds are consonant. If people don't see consistency, they conclude that the leader is, at best, not really serious, or, at worst, an outright hypocrite. If leaders espouse one set of values but personally practice another, people find them to be duplicitous. If leaders practice what they preach, people are more willing to entrust them with their livelihood and even their lives.

This realization leads to a straightforward prescription for leaders on how to establish credibility. This is "The Kouzes-Posner Second Law of Leadership":

DWYSYWD: Do What You Say You Will Do

This commonsense definition of credibility corresponds directly to one of The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership identified in the personal-best cases. DWYSYWD has two essential elements: say and do. To be credible in action, leaders must be clear about their beliefs; they must know what they stand for. That's the "say" part. Then they must put what they say into practice: they must act on their beliefs and "do." The practice of Model the Way links directly to these two dimensions of people's behavioral definition of credibility. This practice includes the clarification of a set of values and being an example of those values to others. This consistent living out of values is a behavioral way of demonstrating honesty and trustworthiness. People trust leaders when their deeds and words match.

To gain and sustain the moral authority to lead, it's essential to Model the Way. Because of this important connection between words and actions, we've chosen to start our discussion of The Five Practices with a thorough examination of the principles and behaviors that bring Model the Way to life.