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MARCH 2010 NEWSLETTER

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“There is solid evidence that the best leaders are highly attuned to what’s going on inside themselves as they are leading and to what’s going on with others. They’re very self-aware and very socially aware.”

--from *The Leadership Challenge, 4th Edition* by Jim Kouzes & Barry Posner

Welcome to The Leadership Challenge Newsletter!

This monthly publication shares stories, examples, and information about the impact of The Leadership Challenge in all kinds of organizations. As always, please let us **[know how we are doing](#)**; we may even contact you about featuring your ideas and stories in future editions of this newsletter.

Audio version of *The Student Leadership Challenge* now available at [iTunes](#) and [Audible.com](#).

Thoughts on the Model

From an article recently published in the *Journal of Leadership Educators* comes valuable insight from author and award-winner educator Barry Posner on the importance of creating opportunities for students of leadership to ‘do’ leadership—from the inside out. [More](#)

Tips and Techniques

Jo Bell and Renee Harness provide a sneak-peak at one of the many hands-on techniques featured in the just-released *The Leadership Challenge Values Cards Facilitator’s Guide*, co-authored with Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner. [More](#)

Ask an Expert

Steve Coats tackles the issue of trust in creating a safe and convenient environment in which colleagues and team members feel free to provide honest feedback about how a leader’s actions affect the performance of others. [More](#)

Rants and Raves

Responding to popular demand, two exciting new Leadership Challenge tools are being released this month to help coaches, facilitators, and other leadership development professionals get the most out of this powerful model and help aspiring leaders achieve their personal best. [▶ More](#)

What We're Reading

Four authors, each with a unique perspective on human nature and organizational learning, wrestled for 18 months with the topic of profound change: how it arises and how it can be used to alter the course of our "dangerously out of balance" world. The result is Peter Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski, and Betty Sue Flowers' book *Presence* in which they incorporate input from more than 150 leading scientists, and social and business entrepreneurs, all responding to the question, "What question lies at the heart of your work?" They describe the experience:

- "A theory started to come to life as we found ourselves drawn into a web of synchronous events that were difficult to explain. It seemed as though we too were becoming part of the future "seeking to emerge".

Presence presents stories of powerful changes that result from collective redirection or "turning our attention toward the source rather than the object." The authors explore the notion that developing the capacity for redirection can be threatening and counterintuitive in our current culture, and yet describe experiences where hundreds of people started to see things differently and act more in line with the health of the whole—resulting in profound change.

Reflections culled from the writings of Kabat-Zinn, who speaks of the "don't know mind"—of holding the whole in awareness, of not having to know anything—suggest that developing the capacity for the "don't know mind" takes courage and is the true inner work of redirection (almost the opposite of the conditioning of most managers). For those who choose to lead others, the implications of this theory are profound. As we align with the Five Practices, it engages us in the deeper question of how we are connected, and how we might see and learn and lead as part of the whole to great advantage.

The book's chapter dedicated to leadership, titled *Leadership: Becoming a Human Being*, explores the phenomenon of the shift in awareness of the self. Author Betty Sue Flowers writes: "...I think it's important to point out that while leadership cultivation has been the main part of wisdom traditions in the past, it will be different in the future. The leadership of the future will not be provided simply by individuals but by groups, institutions, communities, and networks. Becoming a real human being is the primary leadership issue of our time, but on a scale never required before. It's a very old idea that may actually hold the key to a new age of 'global democracy'."

This remarkable little book reveals a new theory about change and how it might be used to improve our world. *Presence* is an unusual combination of theory and story and, like many great reads, produces more questions than answers. The theory, or way of seeing, that eventually emerges is not fully defined yet these authors invite us to join in the exploration with curiosity, skepticism, and vulnerability. I'm in.

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