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THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

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APRIL 2011 NEWSLETTER

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“When people described their personal-best leadership experiences, they told of times when they had dreams of what could be. They had absolute, total personal belief in those dreams and confidence in their abilities to make extraordinary things happen.”

—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.

Stay in touch with The Leadership Challenge Community!

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Thoughts on the Model

A dream-come-true experience for Certified Master Craig Haptonstall proves to be a compelling example of The Five Practices in action as The Leadership Challenge arrives in Japan. [More](#)

Tips and Techniques

Cher Holton shares a team-focused skill building exercise, adapted from *The 2011 Pfeiffer Annual: Consulting*, which provides any group of aspiring leaders the opportunity for hands-on practice identifying team values and working collaboratively to achieve the group's goals. [More](#)

Ask an Expert

When clients change direction—before an engagement even begins—the need for flexibility might be what saves the day. Certified Master Beverley Simpson sets the example with advice from her own experience and, along the way, shows how a blending of Appreciative Inquiry and The Five Practices can create a dynamic one-day development agenda that addresses both present needs and future direction. [More](#)

Rants and Raves

The much-anticipated second edition of **The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership®** article has arrived! Completely revised and updated, this 24-page overview to The Five Practices also includes an explanation of the LPI assessment tool and the model's evidence-based fundamentals, plus plenty of examples of the power of The Leadership Challenge to increase employee engagement and sustain high-performing teams. [More](#)

What We're Reading

[PsyBlog](#) is one of my favorite websites. It covers scientific research that has been published in reputable academic journals, in different areas of psychology. And with its focus into how

the mind works, it looks at a fascinating range of topics—from the psychology of money and why we buy to the ‘right’ kind of visualization.

A recent posting, titled [How to Commit to a Goal](#), caught my eye and got me thinking about what we do to put into practice the Ten Commitments of Exemplary Leadership. We all know that it sometimes seems difficult to achieve our goals. Is it that we lack commitment? Or is it that life just gets in the way? This particular article looks at a very simple technique for committing to goals, one that involves mental contrasting or, in our more common vernacular, a ‘reality check’. It also describes a series of different psychological experiments that suggest that it can be effective in getting ourselves and others to commit to goals that could truly change our lives.

The technique the author of PsychBlog describes is one called **Contrast** where research participants are asked to first imagine a positive vision of a problem that they have solved; then they are asked to compare their ‘fantasy’ vision with the negative aspects of the reality. Researchers found that the contrast technique was successful in encouraging people to make action plans and to take responsibility for carrying them out. There was one caveat, however—this seemed to be true only when expectations of success were high. In other words, when we *think* we can succeed we are more likely to take action, make plans, and truly commit to making our goals reality. Additional research found that using this technique people became more emotionally committed, more energized, and more actively engaged in the pursuit.

As we strive to all become the best leaders we can be, there are many reasons why we may go out of our way to avoid coming face-to-face with what it will take to make our dreams come true. Psychologists call it cognitive dissonance. We may call it “life”. But the truth is that if we don’t fully commit to our goals—to Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart—we will almost surely never become a better leader. Believe in yourself. Expect success. And commit your minds and hearts to the endeavor.

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