

HOW A **CULTURE OF
UNDERSTANDING** TRANSFORMS
TEAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

THE **CONNECTION**
QUOTIENT

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CHAPTER 43

POWERFUL LEADERSHIP

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

During our research into how we could make our collaboration work most effectively, my business partner Jaco and I talked extensively about our view of the world.

What is the importance of our work for society? What motivates us to dedicate ourselves to the human side of change? What are our common values, and where do we differ in our thoughts and actions? As part of this search, we spent a whole day with photo albums on our laps, sharing our life histories and personal stories with each other. It was a wonderful way of getting to know each other better and engaging in a genuine connection.

During this process, we decided that we would make it a condition for all future associates who joined COURIUS to dedicate time and knowledge to helping organizations and associations with a clear social goal to develop and increase their impact on society. And, it goes without saying, we expect the same from ourselves.

Additionally, every year we reserve a share of our profits to financially support these organizations and associations.

We have in fact set up a foundation, with a particular focus on these activities. Assuming that the company will continue to grow in terms of number of associates and turnover, this means that we will be contributing increasingly to achieving an inclusive society.

This too is a way of contributing to connection, not in our immediate environment, but in the lives of others. For me, this is what powerful leadership means.

RESEARCH BY KOUZES AND POSNER

According to the academics James Kouzes and Barry Posner, powerful leaders model the way, inspire through a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart (2007).

They identified these five leadership practices after conducting thorough research into what powerful leaders do within an organization. The nice thing about these practices is that they are not specifically about the personal traits of the leaders, but their regular day-to-day activities. These are activities that can be learned by doing, reflecting, adapting, more doing, and so on.

Kouzes and Posner linked two activities to each practice. As you read about them, you will see that all the practices and activities are interconnected and reinforce each other during their execution. And, they are logical and easy to understand so that they can be applied directly in your daily practice (insofar as you aren't doing that already, of course).

Following these practices will have a powerful impact on the functioning of your employees, teams and the organization as a whole. And, as such, you will automatically have an impact on society.

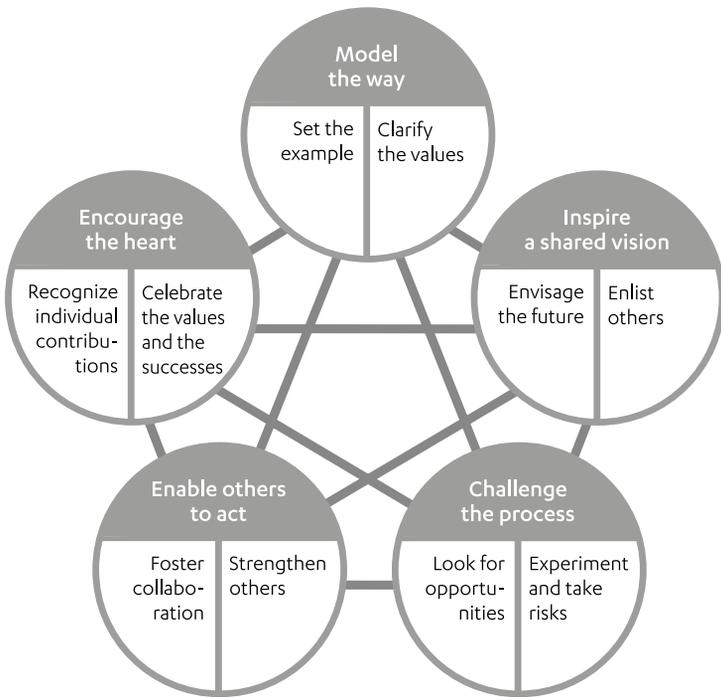


Figure 20: The five practices and ten activities according to Kouzes and Posner

Leadership practice 1: Model the way

Activity 1: Set the example. Children learn by observing and imitating. This principle continues to be valid when we become adults and we collaborate within organizations. What the leaders demonstrate in their day-to-day activities is imitated by the employees. So, instead of talking about the importance of trust and respect, for example, they set an example through execution. In other words, people first follow the person and then the plan.

Activity 2: Clarify the values. Powerful leaders act based on a deep belief in what is important to them. They are conscious of their personal values, make them explicit and act in accordance with them. They challenge their employees to act based on their own personal values. Additionally, they design the team and organization values that form the basis for the mutual connection and collaboration. If the leaders observe that the values are not being respected, they hold the employees to account, directly and visibly.

Leadership practice 2: Inspire a shared vision

Activity 3: Envisage the future. Powerful leaders dare to dream big about what is possible and have a deep-seated conviction that exceptional results can be achieved. Dreaming big involves organizational results (making a profit, maintaining continuity) and results for wider world (adding real value to society). Dreaming starts with letting go of limitation-based thinking (fixed mindset). Instead, the leaders continually ask themselves, “What if...” The dream (growth mindset) forms the organization’s right to exist.

Activity 4: Enlist others. The dream – in organizational terms, ambition or vision – is transformed into a story that can be told and re-told in order to inspire others. Instead of forcing employees to realize your dream, it’s about ‘seducing’ them to learn to see the potential of a vision and to internalize this vision. To achieve this, it’s important that you are aligned with your employees’ way of thinking. What do they consider important, what do they want to contribute to, what do they believe in? Then, the leader has to be able to link these insights to his own dream. Be careful not to be manipulative; try to exert this influence through inspiration and smart linking.

Leadership practice 3: Challenge the process

Activity 5: Look for opportunities. Powerful leaders are continually looking for how things can be improved. ‘Things’ refers here to both the rational side (results-based leadership) and the emotional side (connecting leadership) of organizations. Employees are encouraged to engage in contacts outside the organization. This forms the basis for new inspiration and new ideas.

Activity 6: Experiment and take risks. To be able to make this a continuously improving process, powerful leaders create a culture in which people encourage each other to innovate and take risks. Small changes are embraced, based on the notion that many small changes lead to big results. And, instead of penalizing employees for making a mistake, an attempt is made to identify what can be learned from it, both as an individual and as an organization.

Leadership practice 4: Enable others to act

Activity 7: Foster collaboration. Organizations consist of people whose actions lead to results that have been agreed upon. Powerful leaders realize all too well how important sincere collaboration based on a deep connection is. The basis for this is giving trust. The more trust that is given, the more trust is passed along through the organization. It’s an infectious virus.

Activity 8: Strengthen others. Powerful leaders have a deep belief in the potential of their employees and the faith that they want to be responsible for the processes and results that have been agreed upon. This is why employees are allowed the space to act with a certain degree of autonomy and put energy into activities that they consider to be important. Of course, frameworks are defined, for example with respect to what has to be achieved and what each person’s task is in realizing this. This basic attitude ensures that energy and pride on the part of the employees is released, leading to excellent results being achieved.

Leadership practice 5: Encourage the heart

Activity 9: Recognize individual contributions. Powerful leaders give abundant feedback to people they work with. This could be about what can be improved in terms of their actions, what is valued regarding their

contribution to reaching the goal, or acknowledging their qualities as human beings. Even when an employee's contribution does not yield the desired result, the leaders see the positive intention and can appreciate this. The importance of this way of thinking is demonstrated in the work of author and science journalist Daniel Goleman (1996), which suggests that just 15% of the work of a manager is IQ-related, and 85% is tied to the EQ (Emotional Quotient).

Activity 10: Celebrate the values and the successes. An important question that powerful leaders have asked themselves is: does it matter to me as a leader who gets the credit? Think of the results that can be achieved if nobody worries about whose ego gets most attention. Powerful leaders have answered the question and act on it on a daily basis: they give others the spotlight and applause, and accept responsibility when something goes wrong. During public occasions, they express their thanks and show respect to teams and individual employees.

Finally, as something for you to ponder, here's a conclusion that Kouzes and Posner have drawn: if you don't believe in the messenger, then you won't believe in the message either.

ASSIGNMENT: Become COURIUS

The name of our company is COURIUS. It's a word that doesn't actually exist on its own, but is derived from a number of existing words. You can link these words to the five leadership practices of Kouzes and Posner.

First of all, we have 'courage': you need courage to show the way. Second, COUR is built up from 'co' (together) 'u' (you) 'r' (are), which results in 'You are together': the key philosophy to inspire based on a shared vision. Third, 'curious': in order to challenge the process, an attitude of curiosity is a prerequisite. Fourth, IUS is built up from 'I' and 'us': starting from the connection, you can enable others to act. And finally, the French word 'coeur' (heart): which can be logically linked to encourage the heart.

So, the name of our company is an appropriate expression of how we as specialists in the human side of change think and act in the connection with our clients. It captures how we focus on creating powerful

connections with ourselves, the other, the team and the organization. And, it speaks to how we strive for a connected and inclusive world.

How do you apply the practices and activities identified by Kouzes and Posner in your work? Can you put them to use in an area that is beyond the boundaries of your organization to help improve the world? I would like to challenge you to reflect on this and to make a choice concerning what you intend to do more, less or differently from now on.

I also want to challenge you to make this intention known to people in your immediate environment. It has been proven that doing this will increase the chances of change actually happening. By expressing your intention, you increase your commitment.

**Employees are not inspired by grand statements,
but by sincere actions.**

ABOUT COURIUS

SPECIALISTS IN THE HUMAN SIDE OF CHANGE

Getting started with the Connection Quotient

Reading this book will get you thinking about what the Connection Quotient means for you. You will become aware of your connecting qualities, acquire new insights and start (or continue) to develop them. This way you will be contributing to building a lasting collaboration within the teams and organizations you work for. This in turn will lead to powerful results. This development – of yourself, your team and your organization – is an ongoing process of being curious, inspiring, reflecting, experimenting, failing, recovering, achieving goals and celebrating successes. COURIUS will support you throughout this journey.

Motivated team

We are specialists in the human side of change. Our team consists of enthusiastic and motivated individuals with a passion for their profession. We have many years of experience in the field as managers, advisers, trainers, executive coaches and team coaches. We have the knowledge and expertise required to optimally support you, your team and your organization.

Achieving impact through an experiential approach

Practice makes perfect. When designing and executing our programmes, we implement them in practice by making your challenges our priorities. Experiential learning is therefore our standard, but everyone has their own learning style, which is why we make use of different forms of teaching and ways of working. This means that we work in the here and now, allowing you to experience the learning principle. We do this based on the notion that when the focus is on the effectiveness of behaviour, it is important not to think in terms of ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ but of the impact it has on the other person. That’s why we provide confrontational yet respectful feedback, enabling you and your team and organization to change... and grow.

What can we do for you?

COURIUS offers a broad selection of leadership programmes, master classes, training courses, business coaching, team development and consultancy. We also provide interactive lectures at customer sites and during congresses. Call us on **+31 412 752633**, or mail us at **info@courius.com**. We hope to meet you soon!

WHY BRINGING HUMANITY INTO YOUR RELATIONS IS THE PATH TO BETTER BUSINESS RESULTS

"*The Connection Quotient* shows us that bringing humanity to our workplaces and our relationships creates sustainable business results – and, ultimately, a more positive world. Marco Buschman is a champion for all leaders who put humanity first, day after day, and a challenger of those who do not."

Mike Carson, Partner, McKinsey & Co, Founding Partner, Aberkyn, and author, *The Manager – Inside the Minds of Football's Leaders* (Winchester, UK)

"*The Connection Quotient* provides the reader with many references and practical tools to expand their leadership effectiveness. Starting with individual consciousness, Marco Buschman offers frameworks for reflection, exercises for personal discovery and shares his experience as a consultant and coach of executives and senior teams for those that want to lead teams, organizations and the larger context."

Felipe Paiva, Partner, Artisan Consultoria (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

"Being a good ancestor today demands us to connect to build better futures for tomorrow. In *The Connection Quotient*, Marco invites us into a structured conversation where we can explore what connection means as a practice. It's playful and sincere, emotional and rational, fun and hard work; like many of the best things life has to offer."

Charlie Ursell, Head of Advisory, Watershed Partners (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada)

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