Book Review: *Encouraging the Heart*

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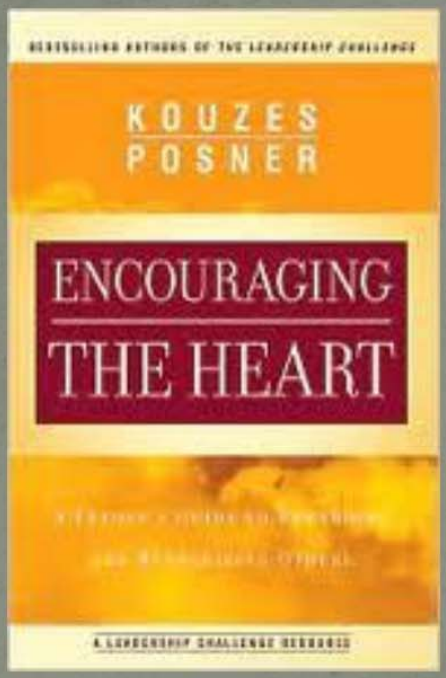
The Book



Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2003). *Encouraging the heart*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

The Reasons

I chose to read and review *Encouraging the Heart* for two reasons:

- I enjoy encouraging others and receiving encouragement.
- My employer Wake Forest Baptist Health utilizes Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Theory in the nursing leadership model and practice of the hospital.

The Assistance

Leadership Assignments: I found that one of my leadership strengths is relationship building. *Encouraging the Heart* provided many principles and suggestions for building effective and genuine relationships.

Organizational Analysis: *Encouraging the Heart* gave me a broader understanding of the nursing leadership style of Wake Forest Baptist Health.

- Quality Improvement: *Encouraging the Heart* provided insight for engaging individuals and ensuring sustained commitment.

The Key Points

Encouraging the Heart…

Addresses an inherent human need for gratitude of who we are and what we do.

Offers leaders principles and practical methods to incorporate into daily endeavors.

Consists of seven essential actions.

The Key Points

Essential #1: Set clear standards

Clear standards enable individuals to know what they are committing to and working towards and provide leaders a means to provide feedback to the individuals.

Congruent values of the individual and organization elicit individual commitment.

Goals provide direction.

Feedback and goals sustain engaged individuals.

Feedback = Encouragement

The Key Points

Essential #2: Expect the best

The expression "self-fulfilling prophecy," coined by Robert K. Merton, means that an expectation of a particular occurrence modifies a person's behavior and increases the likelihood of the occurrence.

High and positive expectations yield high performance and positive outcomes.

High and Positive Expectations = Encouragement

The Key Points

Essential #3: Pay attention

Mingle with a purpose looking for the positive to encourage.

Use both your heart and your eyes to listen to others.

Place others before yourself trying to see from their viewpoint.

Be open with others.

The Key Points

Essential #4: Personalize recognition

If you pay attention, you will know what people like or dislike and how you can show them that they are appreciated.

"Be Thoughtful."

Recognition that is not personalized **does not** encourage the heart and can hurt the one receiving the recognition.

The Key Points

Essential #5: Tell the story

Stories bring everyone around the "campfire" for learning and fun.

Telling a story educates, excites, and activates people.

- Educates: Stories help people recall information more than facts, figures, or bulleted points.
- Excites: Stories connect standards of practice to profitable real-life events and people and elicits hope within others of flourishing too.
- Activates: Well-told stories ENCOURAGE people to persevere into a challenging future by communicating progress being achieved to accomplish goals.

Stories are best told in person; but voicemail, e-mail, newsletters, and other technologies are also effective.

The Key Points

Essential #6: Celebrate together

A celebration culture stimulates cohesiveness within teams and organizations.

People want and need community.

Social support boosts performance and yields healthier lifestyles.

Suggested Reasons to Celebrate

Organizational change/transition

Success

Loss

People

Events

The Key Points

Essential #7: Set the example

Be credible.

Your words and actions will be judged for consistency.

DWYSYWD: Do what you say you will do

Leaders must think collectively.

DWWSWWD: Do what we say we will do

Be purposeful.

Keep a list of ways to encourage.

Remind yourself to encourage someone every day.

Be first.

You are the leader.

What leaders give they receive back.

The Relationship to Leadership

- True leadership comes from your own experience.
- Leadership development occurs in stages.
- Take time to dig deep into yourself and find your voice; otherwise, your leadership will be mechanical and appear fake.

Stages of Leadership

Exploration of who you really are

The Relationship to Organizational Systems & Change

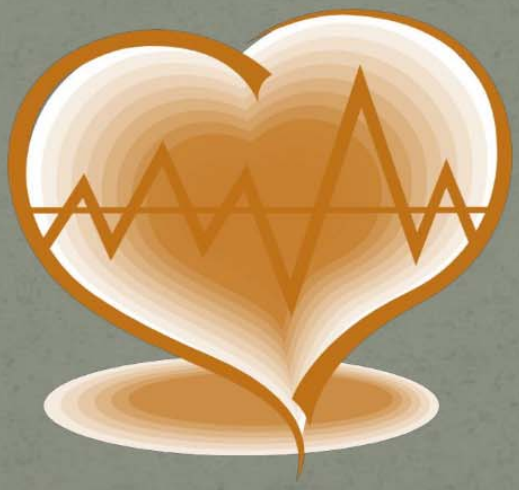
Clear standards and precise feedback enable microsystems to understand their part in the macrosystem.

An organizational culture of encouragement and caring becomes a reality when everyone accepts responsibility for encouraging the heart.

Encouraging the Heart principles help leaders motivate and gain commitment from people which are necessary for change.

The Take-home Message

The heart of leadership is caring.



Encouraging the heart shows how much you really care.