

“Encouraging The Heart - A Leader’s Guide to Rewarding And Recognizing Others”

by Jim Kouzes And Barry Posner

**Reviewed by Sebastien Henry, Executive Coach & Trainer
Emotional Intelligence Expert for Progress-U Ltd.**



This book had been on my shelves for some time before I started reading it. I knew that it was probably worth reading, for I have seen good reviews of this book. I also knew Jim Kouzes from one of his previous books, "The Leadership Challenge", now a classic of leadership.

When I read it, I was not disappointed, and this is why I would like to introduce it to you. This is a book worth reading for several reasons.

First, the authors do a good job of explaining why "encouraging the heart" is not about a leader's being "as soft as you can get". They report that several of their clients asked them to drop the expression "encouraging the heart" because it was perceived as too soft, but they decided to stick with it.

"Encouraging the Heart" is about **helping our people achieve high-performance**. It talks about getting results.

The authors cite several surveys from reputable institutions to show that employees usually starve for feedback and recognition. Another comprehensive study by the Center for Creative Leadership found out that the highest 25% performing managers in the study "show more warmth and fondness towards others than the bottom 25%".

They also make a good point that **using our hearts doesn't only mean being gentle, caring, and cordial. It can also mean showing courage, strength, and toughness.**

Sometimes, **following our heart may even require us to be fierce.** Those familiar with the Harrison Assessment* would agree that one can be very enforcing and at the same time have high empathy.

*The Harrison Assessment is a comprehensive employment suitability assessment tool used by progressive companies.

Second, they give a **comprehensive view of what it takes to “encourage the heart”** of our team members. And it is not only about rewarding and recognizing. I was happily surprised to discover that the authors have a wider view of the topic. They identified **seven essentials of “encouraging the heart”**:

1. Set clear standards upfront.
2. Expect the best from our people. - Set high and challenging standards.
3. Pay attention – Make it a point not to focus only on seemingly more important business and to just “forget” about rewarding and recognizing.
4. Personalize recognition.
5. Tell related stories. - Use story-telling to create emotional bonds when rewarding and recognizing.
6. Celebrate together. Give public recognition.
7. Set the example.

As you can see, “encouraging the heart” means much more than giving regular feedback and rewards!

Each of these seven essentials is covered in one chapter of 10-15 pages, filled with examples, stories, and facts, and giving good value for the readers.

Some chapters may seem a bit basic to those of you who have a long experience of leadership or who have researched extensively on the subject. But the book could still be a useful reminder, especially the last part of each chapter, called “Reflecting on” which contains a series of questions that help you to reflect on your current practices.

Third, this is a well-written book, and as a leader myself, I found it quite **inspiring**. I particularly liked the following excerpt:

“Encouraging the Heart” is ultimately about keeping hope alive. Leaders keep hope alive when they set high standards and genuinely express their confidence on an individual’s capacity to meet them.

They keep hope alive when they give feedback and publicly recognize a job well done. They keep hope alive when they give their constituents the much needed internal support for them to feel that they and their work are important and have meaning.

They keep hope alive when then they train and coach their people to exceed their current capacities. Most importantly, they keep hope alive when they set an example.”

Finally, the authors remind us very effectively **that leadership is everyone’s business**. I particularly like this idea, as opposed to the view that leadership is only for the top people in our organization.

And, as the authors say, “Even if you don’t consider yourself to be in a leadership role now, you may find yourself in one soon.”

I wish you to find as much inspiration as I did in this book!

Warmly,

Sebastien



Sebastien Henry is **Progress-U's expert for Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and stress management**. He works with executives who want to:

- avoid feeling exhausted and uprooted as their career takes them to the top;
- become more inspiring leaders by developing their Emotional Intelligence (EQ) at work; and, as a consequence
- be able to motivate their people more and retain the best.

Having worked in an Asia-Pacific regional position at a multinational company, Sebastien has experimented extensively on how to develop Emotional Intelligence in his daily work life. He is currently writing a book on this topic. His articles on Emotional Intelligence in Leadership have been published in Human Resources and South China Morning Post.

He firmly believes in action, and the tools he uses and shares are derived from several areas of his life: his business experience as a corporate executive, of course, but also his intensive practice of mountaineering and rock climbing (7a on-sight and more than 50 alpine routes), his commitment to teach and coach prisoners, and his daily meditations for more than six years.

Positions of his clients as a one-to-one coach are: Asia/Pacific General Manager, Country General Manager, Department Head, etc.

Languages: Spoken and written Mandarin, Japanese, English, French (native language)

Credentials:

- MBA, BA in Psychology, BA in Philosophy
- Certified NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner
- Certified NLP Trainer (NLPUI, USA)
- Certified Coach (ICC)
- More than 40 days of training with the Gestalt approach at the Paris School of Gestalt
- Certified Trainer of the "EQ Impact Learning" program (Talentsmart, USA)

Services offered: 1:1 Executive Coaching, Group Seminars and Workshops, Key Note Speeches