



The Practicing Change Series Four Books in Total

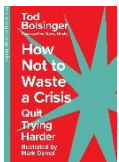
August 13, 2024 | \$16, 112 pages, casebound

"The Practicing Change Series is compelling and immediately applicable. Each book weaves us through story, illustration, and discussion to contextualize paradigm-shifting frameworks for thinking. Your leadership, but more importantly the impact through your leadership, will experience a trajectory change through the words penned. Today's era of leadership calls for continual, on-the-go growth, and this series offers solutions to today's demands."

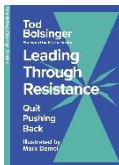
Wendy Nolasco, general supervisor and vice president of US Mission for the Foursquare Church

New Leadership Series from the Award-Winning Author of *Canoeing the Mountains*

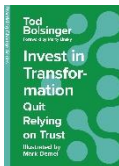
The **Practicing Change Series** offers the latest leadership wisdom from Tod Bolsinger, founder and principal at AE Sloan Leadership, Inc., executive director of the DePree Center Church Leadership Institute, and associate professor of leadership formation at Fuller Seminary. In this new series, Tod takes the adaptive leadership principles outlined in his previous award-winning books, *Canoeing the Mountains* and *Tempered Resilience*, to the next level. Change is inevitable. The four books in this series teach Christian leaders how to lead well through it, especially if and when you are in the midst of it.



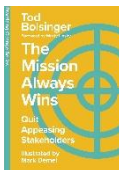
How Not to Waste a Crisis: Quit Trying Harder—Crisis is an opportunity to stop trying harder and begin embracing adaptability. In this first volume in the Practicing Change Series, Tod Bolsinger explores how the upheaval you find yourself in can reframe your leadership and revive your team. When your church or nonprofit needs fresh vision, take these steps to learn how to lead anew.



Leading Through Resistance: Quit Pushing Back—People don't resist change—they resist loss. Leading people who struggle to see the future feels impossible. As hesitancy overwhelms, we can't eliminate change, but we can chart a steady course through it. In this volume in the Practicing Change Series, Tod Bolsinger teaches courage and empathy for communities stuck in the loss of the past.



Invest in Transformation: Quit Relying on Trust—We must invest trust to experience transformation. Groups that have become skeptical need leadership to refuel a sense of community and continuity if change is going to happen. But trust can be easily hoarded or squandered. In this volume in the Practicing Change Series, Tod Bolsinger outlines steps to envision trust for the sake of growth.

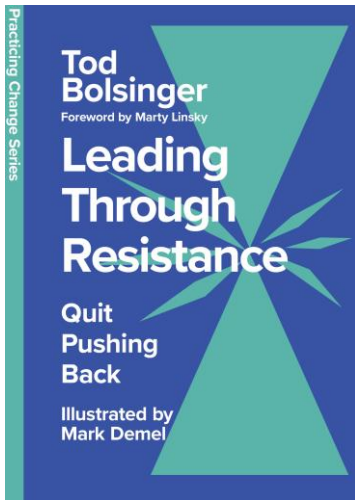


The Mission Always Wins: Quit Appeasing Stakeholders—Change requires tough decisions. But when the focus is blurred, how can we stay on track? It's time to further the mission—not the boss, not the team, not the stakeholders. In this volume in the Practicing Change Series, Tod Bolsinger guides us through naming competing values and realigning the driving purpose with missional clarity.



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EXCERPT



Leading Through Resistance Quit Pushing Back

August 13, 2024 | \$16, 112 pages, casebound | 978-1-5140-0870-6

People don't resist change—they resist loss. Leading people who struggle to see the future feels impossible. As hesitancy overwhelms, we can't eliminate change, but we can chart a steady course through it. In this volume in the Practicing Change Series, Tod Bolsinger teaches courage and empathy for communities stuck in the loss of the past.

Becoming a Self-Aware Leader

When the going gets tough . . . *most leaders freak out.*

We don't want to think it is so. We love the idea that if we are called on to call the shots, we will rise to the occasion and lead our teams through any challenge with creativity, poise, and patience. But mostly, the very same altruistic, visionary, compassionate, inspiring people we aspire to be become—when under fire—little Caesars determined to get our way.

Writing on research from the 1980s that defined what has been called "threat-rigidity" response, Columbia Business School professor Rita McGrath explains that the very experience of being "under threat" or even *just being criticized or questioned* tends to bring the worst out in most leaders. We "narrow [our] focus of attention, fall back on habits from the past, and simplify in a way that doesn't take account of the true challenge."

For McGrath, the real problem with the threat-rigidity response is that when threatened, leaders become jerks. We not only double-down on what we believe worked in the past, but we *insist on it* and use our authority to get others to fall into line. We become control freaks making rigid demands and passing new policies (like ordering everyone back to the office after they have become accustomed to remote and hybrid work) that are mostly about *feeling* in control.

Even more challenging, in situations that call for adaptive leadership—that is, situations where, by definition, leaders are out of control, where there are no best practices, where we will have to learn as we go, where we will have to let go of many of the strategies of the past, where we will have to experiment our way forward—it is *normal* for leaders to face resistance from our followers, and this makes our sense of feeling out of control even worse. At the very moment when we are trying to lead a new initiative, we get resistance from and even are sabotaged by our own people. And most of the time we have no idea how to respond to it—which just reinforces the cycle of feeling out of control, trying to control others, and getting more resistance from those who don't want to be controlled.

Sigh. No wonder there are times when we just want to either give up or fire everyone and start with a new team. At the same time, organizational resistance is not a reliable indicator of whether a new idea has merit. The new idea that we are trying to get our team to embrace may or may not be a good one—it is far too early to tell. But there will be resistance anyway!

Resistance is like water surrounding a fish. It is present all the time. And any time a leader brings new ideas or plans to an organization, resistance and sabotage is to be expected.

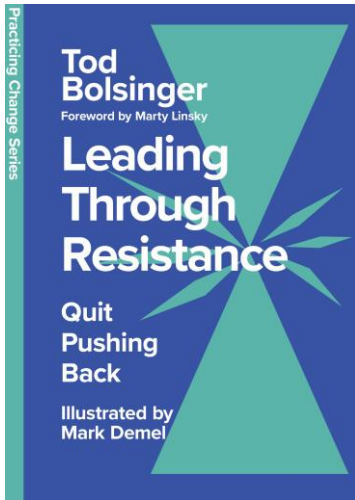


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Leading Through Resistance Quit Trying Harder

August 13, 2024 | \$16, 112 pages, casebound | 978-1-5140-0870-6 “*Tod teaches a combination of contemplative spirituality, family systems theory, and systems thinking in this very important book. If you’ve been wondering how to take the next step as a leader and grow in your proficiency, this book is a must.*”

John E. Stephens, senior pastor of Chapelwood United Methodist Church

Once leaders are able to understand that resistance to a new idea, plan, or project is a *normal response* to the change in the emotional balance in the group, healthy leaders can then adjust their own responses to keep the change process progressing. But for well-spoken, visionary leaders who are skilled at moving an organization forward through charisma, power, or sheer will, this insight is itself disruptive. It may require a much deeper process of personal formation to develop the tempered resilience to lead in the face of the resistance of your own people. At the very least, the old mindset and connected skill set for getting your group to go along with the change have to be set aside and a new way of leading must emerge.

This new way of leading is a capacity and set of skills that begins in a leader’s own self-awareness (like how insecure I become when I feel out of control!) and comes to fruition in an organization being transformed to come together and take on the challenges of a changing environment.

—adapted from the introduction



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Q & A



Leading Through Resistance Quit Pushing Back

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"The Practicing Change Series is like having Tod Bolsinger as a personal coach. He offers practical and powerful wisdom for anyone who is wrestling with the complex challenges of ministry leadership today."

Mike Bonem, consultant, coach, and author of *The Art of Leading Change*

A New Mindset Helps Grow a New Skillset

As you reflect on the previous books you have published, how does this new leadership series add to the previous leadership themes you have shared?

Tod Bolsinger: These little books were the direct result of over a hundred conversations and coaching sessions with leaders all over the country. When the coaching team of my company, AE Sloan Leadership, shared our notes about what we were learning, we found that really strong, skilled, experienced leaders kept making similar mistakes when leading change. Good leaders are respected and even admired because they work really hard, attune to all of the stakeholders, are firm when facing resistance, and are trustworthy. And those are really great attributes. The problem is that those strengths often become weaknesses when leading deep, adaptive change. These books help good leaders recognize and transform those old mindsets and habits into new more adaptive and effective leadership skills.

Change is inevitable. What is the number one thing you believe is necessary to lead well through it?

Tod: The most important thing necessary to lead change well is "adaptive capacity." This concept, first developed by Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, is the key to both protecting what is most dear and adapting to a changing environment wisely and well. (Marty Linsky wrote the forward to the series!) Adaptive capacity is about learning how to leverage challenges to grow both people and the whole organization to face whatever challenge comes their way. The underlying principle of adaptive leadership is that it's a process of learning and adapting to fulfill a missional purpose, not to fix the immediate issues. It is about developing the capacity of a group to wisely make shifts in their values, attitudes, or behaviors to find new solutions that are consistent with their mission and organizational identity.

In Your view, why is an adaptive leadership style perhaps the single most critical survival skill of the twenty-first century?

Tod: Adaptive Leadership is so powerful because it is based on three realities:

- 1) The most important thing about your congregation or organization are your values and your mission. What is most precious about you is what you believe and your reason for existing. That must be preserved.
- 2) The most powerful reality of every congregation and organization is the environment and context where you live out your values and mission. The social environment, the historical context, the geographical location and environment, and the denominational and institutional context are so powerful that our leadership is always contextual.
- 3) Adaptive leadership is about how healthy organizations make wise, strategic decisions in order to thrive in continually disrupted and changing environments so that they will fulfill their mission and thrive.



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Q & A



How Not to Waste a Crisis Quit Pushing Back

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“Leaders who know organizational change is needed but don’t know how to go about it will find accessible, practical, and wise guidance in Tod Bolsinger’s Practicing Change Series. Bolsinger helps us apply and practice these concepts in a way that will transform our organizations and ourselves as leaders.”

Teri McDowell Ott, editor and publisher of the Presbyterian Outlook and author of *Necessary Risks: Challenges Privileged People Need to Face*

What are some of the most common problems you see good leaders making and how do the books in this series offer solutions to addressing some of those problems?

Tod: These are all leadership habits that were once strengths that have been obstacles to leading change:

- Trying harder at what has been successful in the past.
- Focusing on pleasing our historical stakeholders.
- Doing whatever you can to eliminate resistance.
- Confusing trust with transformation.

The books all follow the same format. We start by meeting a good leader in a story who is struggling with one of the challenges above. Then we reflect on that challenge by naming the old mindset most of us learned that causes this obstacle, identify three new skills that train us in new leadership muscle-memory, and then end with the “adaptive reset”—the new embodied mindset and habit that you will apply when the old obstacles arise. Finally, we return to the leadership story to bring it all together.

How do you anticipate readers will flow through the material in the series? Is there a recommended order, why or why not?

Tod: Each book addresses a different common mistake that good leaders make. I wrote the books so that a good leader who recognizes herself in one of those mistakes can jump right in, find the tools to overcome the old mindset and then take her team through the learning together. When the whole team is learning together everyone—especially the leader—becomes stronger. And then, they can move onto the next one. It’s really a choose-your-own adventure approach where you start with slaying the “dragon” that you face the most often and then keep going until the whole team has grown in their leadership capacity.



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