



### The Practicing Change Series Four Books in Total

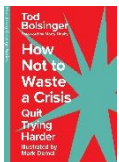
August 13, 2024 | \$16, 112 pages, casebound

*"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."*

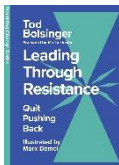
Wendy Nolasco, general supervisor and vice president of US Mission for the Foursquare Church

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

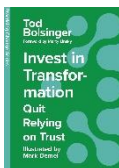
The **Practicing Change Series** offers the latest leadership wisdom from Tod Bolsinger, founder and principal at AE Sloan Leadership, Inc., executive director of the DePree Center Church Leadership Institute, and associate professor of leadership formation at Fuller Seminary. In this new series, Tod 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.



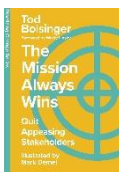
**How Not to Waste a Crisis: Quit Trying Harder**—Crisis is an opportunity to stop trying harder and begin embracing adaptability. In this first volume in the Practicing Change Series, Tod Bolsinger explores how the upheaval you find yourself in can reframe your leadership and revive your team. When 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.

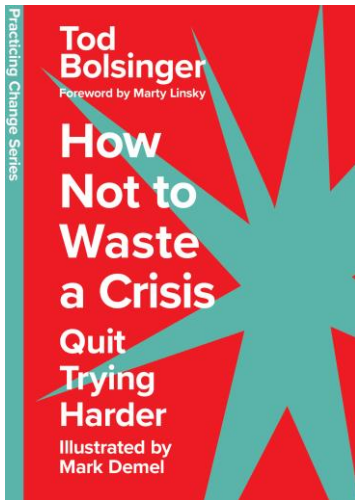


**The Mission Always Wins: Quit Appeasing Stakeholders**—Change requires tough decisions. But when the focus is blurred, how can we stay on track? It's time to further the mission—not the boss, not the team, not the stakeholders. In this volume in the Practicing Change Series, Tod Bolsinger guides us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



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## EXCERPT



### ***How Not to Waste a Crisis*** Quit Trying Harder

August 13, 2024 | \$16, 112 pages, casebound | 978-1-5140-0866-9

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.

## Learning to Lead in the Midst of a Crisis

For many leaders, especially the kinds of leaders who are asked to take on challenging companies, organizations, or congregations that are in the middle of change or weathering a crisis, it can be daunting to realize that *the very same experience that makes people trust you at the helm may have reinforced some habits that will keep you from being able to take on the challenges of the moment.*

This is what many of us in church leadership have been learning for the past twenty years as the culture around us has changed and as one crisis after another has tested the mettle of our leadership skills.

In the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, I heard a whisper for the first time. It was from a pastor who was deeply discouraged and trying to make sense of why so much effort and faithfulness seemed to bear such little fruit. Over the years I would hear it over and over again: "Seminary didn't train me for this, Tod."

In 2015 I published *Canoeing the Mountains*, a book that uses the metaphor of Lewis and Clark's expedition as a way of describing the kind of adaptive leadership that is needed when you go "off the map" and face challenges for which you have no expertise. Adaptive leadership teaches us to build trust through forming relational "holding environments," to expect to experience loss when we let go of deeply held behaviors and expectations, and to become people *who can learn as we go*. It teaches us that we have to learn to manage competing values and to deal with sabotage and resistance—by the very people we are called to lead.

Many leaders have begun to question their assumptions about leadership being defined by position, platforms, popularity, and personality. We have grown skeptical of leaders who seem more focused on their own control or charisma, their own "brands" and ideas, than on actually serving people, but we are unsure how the values and teachings of faith translate into vibrant, enduring communities and institutions.

Our old leadership practices are no longer working, and we don't know what to do.

As it turns out, we are in good company.

"We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."  
*2 Chronicles 20:12*

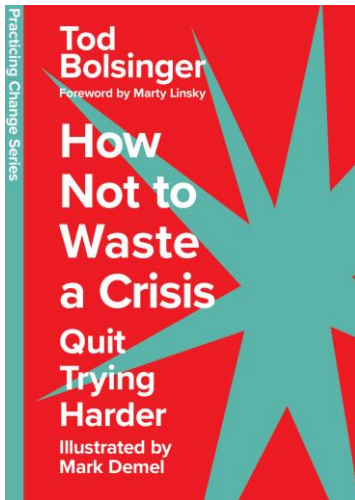


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*"This is one of the best real application leadership books I have read given the constantly changing environment we all are leading, managing, and living through. As a leader in the midst of constant change this book brings simplicity and a step-by-step practical process to incorporate into the fiber of problem solving."*

**Mack B. Rhoades IV**, vice president and director for intercollegiate athletics, Baylor University

In the biblical story, Jehoshaphat the ancient king of Judah gets word that an immense army made up of three enemy foes is massing against him. He gathers the families of Judah together in assembly and they cry out to God for help. The story of God's miraculous display of power in giving Judah victory is often and rightly told to assure the faithful that the biggest battles of life are "not yours but God's." But what is most instructive for us is what Jehoshaphat did *before* the battle, when the news was so frightening and the future so daunting. What Jehoshaphat does at that moment is breathtaking for its bold vulnerability.

He stands before his people and admits that *he doesn't know what to do*.

And this is a significant shift for both leaders and their people alike. So, the new mindset for leading through a world of "permanent crisis" is not how to bring your expertise, education, and mastery to bear on the challenges before you, *but training differently in how to learn to lead all over again—in real time—in the midst of the crisis*.

Whether you are facing a worldwide crisis or just the next challenge to come across your desk, *re-learning to lead—in the middle of that moment when your old ways don't work—is the only way forward*.

And it is hard and humbling.

—adaptated from the introduction



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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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*“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 on to 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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