



### The Practicing Change Series Four Books in Total

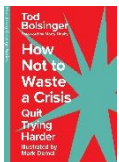
August 13, 2024 | \$16, 112 pages, casebound

*"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."*

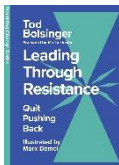
Wendy Nolasco, general supervisor and vice president of US Mission for the Foursquare Church

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

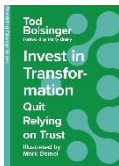
The **Practicing Change Series** offers the latest leadership wisdom from Tod Bolsinger, founder and principal at AE Sloan Leadership, Inc., executive director of the DePree Center Church Leadership Institute, and associate professor of leadership formation at Fuller Seminary. In this new series, Tod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



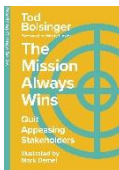
**How Not to Waste a Crisis: Quit Trying Harder**—Crisis is an opportunity to stop trying harder and begin embracing adaptability. In this first volume in the Practicing Change Series, Tod Bolsinger explores how the upheaval you find yourself in can reframe your leadership and revive your team. When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

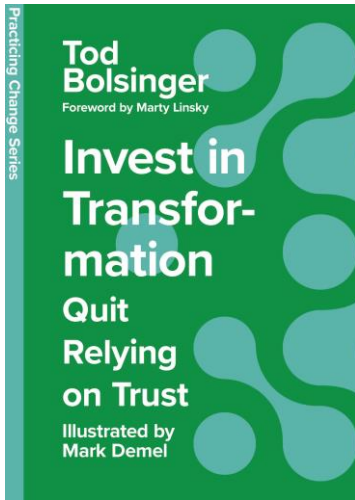


**The Mission Always Wins: Quit Appeasing Stakeholders**—Change requires tough decisions. But when the focus is blurred, how can we stay on track? It's time to further the mission—not the boss, not the team, not the stakeholders. In this volume in the Practicing Change Series, Tod Bolsinger guides us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



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EXCERPT



## *Invest in Transformation* Quit Relying on Trust

August 13, 2024 | \$16, 112 pages, casebound | 978-1-5140-0872-0

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 Crux of All Leadership Challenges is Trust

When trust is gone, the transformational journey is over.

Adaptive change requires leaders to face the challenges of a changing world or disrupted environment with hard decisions around core values, with hard questions about what we need to learn (and unlearn!), and with hard truths about the necessity of our own transformation. Adaptive change requires leaders to become what they are not yet already.

*Transformation* is what makes adaptive leadership *adaptive*.

Adaptive leadership inspires and equips people to see beyond their own personal goals, security, and visions of success to collaborate to bring about the change necessary for the organization to thrive in a different (and often disruptive) environment.

Since this is not at all natural, the transformation process requires leaders to “keep the work at the center of people’s attention,” and to pace and structure the change process so there is time for the members of the organization to absorb the changes, the losses they must face, and the transformation needed.

A group facing challenges requires deep transformation into the very best version of who they can possibly be. “Leadership is disappointing your own people at a rate they can absorb,” Marty Linsky told an interviewer when describing the challenges of adaptive leadership. And whenever I quote the line in a seminar or speaking engagement, it always gets a laugh and a lot of nodding heads.

Leaders recognize themselves—and the challenges confronting them—in this statement. They understand now, if they didn’t when they took the job, that unlike being a manager who fixes problems, sorts out solutions, and makes plans that align and allocate resources (and thus make people happy!), leaders often are faced with taking people through a process of personal and organizational transformation in order to face these disruptive challenges in front of them.

It is a process that they often resist and a reality that makes leading any group of people really hard. To be sure, when we took on a leadership challenge, we naturally assumed that there would be challenges and that some days would be hard. (“It’s the hard that makes it great!” as Tom Hanks’s gruff baseball manager character in *A League of Their Own* said.) But what most of us didn’t expect is how hard it would become to *lead the very people who asked you to step into the leadership role*. We didn’t really expect to have to face resistance and even opposition from the staff, partners, and board members who asked us to take on the challenge. We figured they would have our backs and that they were ready for the rough road ahead.

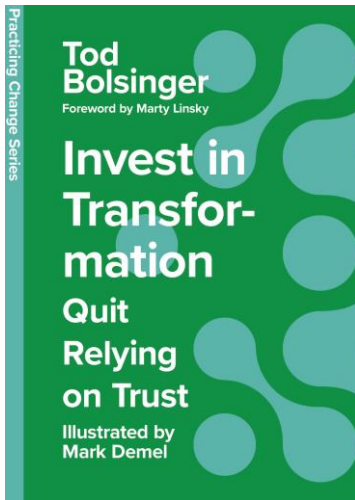


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*“Concisely accessible. Imminently practical. Immediately actionable. And built on solid theory tested in the real world. My own life and leadership have been profoundly impacted by having Tod Bolsinger as a trusted guide in navigating the complexity of leading adaptive change.”*

**Barry D. Jones**, senior pastor of Irving Bible Church and author of *Dwell: Life with God for the World*

Until we realized that they weren't.

The expectation of our people was that we would make things better *for them*. We would “right the ship” or “trim the sails” or get us going “full steam ahead.” They may have expected that there would be some rough seas, but mostly they assumed that our leadership would make an organization (one they belong to and have invested in) a more efficient and effective version of what it already is. The hard news to deliver is that a group facing challenges requires deep transformation into the very best version of who they can possibly be—transformation that requires people to endure *loss*.

Those losses are not just cosmetic but go to the level of personal and organizational identity.

- Reevaluating legacy commitments
- Reconsidering unspoken loyalties
- Shifting unquestioned behaviors and attitudes
- Especially: naming and navigating competing values

Adaptive leadership confronts the gaps in what we say we believe and what we actually *do* each day. It queries people on where they need to grow and what they need to learn.

And most painfully, adaptive leadership asks people to face what they must leave behind in order to move the organization forward into uncharted territory.

To bring about transformation without losing all trust from your people, to pace the transformation in a way that will enable you to invest the trust you have in the process, ultimately leads your organization to becoming people who can face the necessary losses and take on the challenges in front of them.

That's what this book is about. It is about learning the skill set and developing the *adaptive* mindset that moves from trust to transformation.

—adapted from the introduction



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Q & A



## ***Invest in Transformation*** Quit Relying on Trust

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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 Trying Harder**

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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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