



**THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
SERVANT-LEADERSHIP**

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

*in collaboration with*

THE GREENLEAF CENTER FOR SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

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## A JOURNAL OF DEVOTION

—LARRY SPEARS

This inaugural issue of *The International Journal of Servant-leadership* marks a significant step forward in the ongoing evolution of servant-leadership. In the thirty-five years since retired AT&T executive Robert K. Greenleaf first coined the term in his 1970 essay, “The Servant as Leader,” interest in the study and practice of servant-leadership has grown steadily. Countless individuals and organizations around the world have been influenced by the idea of the servant-as-leader, and the pace is quickening. Examples of this may be found in many places, including:

- Hundreds of books, essays, audio-visual resources, and the like published on servant-leadership since 1970.
- Hundreds of articles published in a wide variety of journals and magazines.
- Over one hundred doctoral dissertations produced on servant-leadership.
- Greenleaf’s books and essays translated into a dozen different languages and available around the world.
- Greenleaf Center locations in eleven countries.
- Graduate and undergraduate courses taught on servant-leadership, and many other courses now including books and other resources on servant-leadership as text readings.
- The presence of servant-leadership in education: in leadership and management courses; as part of service-learning programs; and in other areas. There are even a handful of residential living units at colleges that have been inspired by Greenleaf’s *Teacher as Servant* (contained in *The Servant-leader Within*, 2003, Paulist Press).
- A great many businesses, not-for-profits, community leadership



groups, and other kinds of institutions today seeking to faithfully practice servant-leadership. Some of the better known business practitioners of servant-leadership include Starbucks, The Men's Wearhouse, The Toro Company, Synovus, Southwest Airlines, US Cellular, and TDIndustries.

With the publication of this first academic journal devoted to research and writing on servant-leadership, we hope to take another significant step forward. This journal is the result of a wonderful and growing collaboration between Gonzaga University and The Greenleaf Center. It has been my pleasure to get to know a number of folks at Gonzaga as this joint project has evolved, chief among them: Michael Carey, Mary McFarland, Fr. Robert Spitzer, and Shann Ferch. I am particularly pleased that this premier issue includes Shann's own groundbreaking essay, "Servant-leadership, Forgiveness, and Social Justice."

I believe that the development and study of servant-leadership is likely to grow significantly in the years and decades to come. Much as the burgeoning field of philanthropic studies was some ten or fifteen years ago, the study of servant-leadership is now poised for a similar kind of development. *The International Journal of Servant-leadership* has been established to help lead the way in the further development of servant-leadership as a legitimate and powerful field for study, research, teaching and publishing.

Welcome.

Larry C. Spears  
President & CEO, The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership  
Senior Advisory Editor, *The International Journal  
of Servant-Leadership*



## SERVANT-LEADERSHIP, A WAY OF LIFE

—SHANN FERCH

What is it about a child's voice, a child's smiling face and exuberant laughter, that reminds us of the mystery and wonder of existence? Something of freedom is found in that smile, and peace, the simple unburdened essence of being young and alive. Yet so often this essence is clouded in adulthood, becoming increasingly more elusive, and for some seemingly unreachable. At times our lives can be so filled with rapid motion, entanglements, pressure, and confusion we find it difficult to breathe.

Here, in the center of our humanity, the opportunity to live differently presents itself. The discipline involved in growing the interior of the self, the heart and the soul, creates a complex, often unwieldy set of circumstances for all who aspire to lead. Greenleaf's reversal of the aspiration to lead forms a first step for many in the pursuit of a more compassionate and appropriately powerful interior. He stated that the true leader aspires first to serve, and this simple revolutionary thought has unseated the entire historical foundation of most leadership traditions. The person who has lived and grown up under the fast-paced command and control mentality finds it very difficult to turn toward quietness, contemplation, and the thoughtful action of servanthood. Even so, the underlying premise of servant-leadership becomes apparent whenever and wherever it appears. The essence of servant-leadership, shown in the subtle and graceful interactions between people, often takes us unaware, heals us, and draws us to a deeper sense of ourselves.

Consider again the life of a child. There is something wonderful to be noticed in our children, something resilient, perhaps even invincible. I'm speaking of how they are so full of joy. It is difficult to find a depressed child, unless basic needs are not taken care of, and even then their resilience



is disarming. I remember a time when my daughter was 4 years old. She was sleeping in our bed. She loves to get up early in the morning. I don't love to get up early in the morning. I like to sleep in the morning. That's gone now. But she loves to get up early in the morning, and you recognize that if a child is on your bed and stands up, she might walk a little bit close to the edge of the bed. It's a sixth sense with parents; even if we are half-asleep there is a heightened awareness; we are always ready to grab her ankle if we need to, to keep her safe, to save her if we need to, to catch her, or hold her. So she's walking kind of precariously on our bed on that day, it's pitch black, dark, and she leans over to the window. There are some Venetian blinds there and when she parts the blinds, sunlight pierces the room. She turns around and says in a loud voice, "It's a sunny day!" Just like that and I'm still thinking, *Well I'm not ready for the sunny day. I want to sleep.* She walks back to the middle of the bed and at that point, it's June, the height of summer for us, very hot. December and winter are a long way off. She walks back to the middle of the bed, and she stands in the middle of the bed and I have half an eye on her. She puts both hands in the air above her head and shouts in total happiness, "Christmas presents!"

She's like that. That's joy.

Now consider the counterpart to joy: despair. To live with the legitimate power involved in servant-leadership, not a power that dominates or controls, but a power that heals, restores, and reconciles, humility is necessary. The servant-leader submits to the subtle forces of life that lead away from self-embeddedness and toward the kind of transcendence that is capable of leading and healing the self and beloved others. Herman Hesse's elegant call from *Journey to the East* gives a telling description of this process:

Children live on one side of despair, the awakened on the other.

Joy is a unique and courageous entity, a significant mover in our society, and one of the great engines of humanity. Earlier this year I had the honor of going to the Philippines to interview former President of the Phil-



ippines, Corazon “Cory” Aquino, a woman so filled with joy merely her presence brings joy to others. A couple of decades ago, only a few short years after her husband Ninoy’s martyrdom, her spiritual, non-violent, and love-imbued leadership rallied the great spirit of the Filipino people and toppled the Marcos regime. In many ways, I believe this set the stage for nonviolent movements that ensued in the following years, worldwide. Joy is something that Ninoy and Cory Aquino brought to the world—a great joy in the possibilities, the deep possibilities of life. Some things are worth fighting for, our children, our joy, the fulfillment of a whole life. . . these are worth fighting for, which brings to mind the arresting and graceful sentence Ninoy uttered before returning to the Philippines from exile in the U.S., only to be shot and killed immediately upon his arrival in Manila. The image of his body, dead on the tarmac, became a touchstone of justice and liberty for oppressed people everywhere. Before his arrival, before facing the death he imagined he might face, Ninoy said, “The Filipino is worth dying for.”

You see real joy in Ninoy and Cory Aquino. You see boldness and even the willingness to die so that others may have a better life. These are great dreams. Others too have generated great dreams, and in America, someone whom I would call a spiritual brother of President Aquino, Martin Luther King, Jr., also dreamed a great dream, and began to unseat the power abuses, privilege, and elitism that have tended to surround circles of economic, political, and religious leadership in every society. Martin Luther King, Jr., a man of dignity for all people, led through service, action, and a resounding voice of strength, intelligence, and hope. He stated: “Everyone can be great because everyone can serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”

Like Ninoy and Cory Aquino, and like Martin Luther King, Robert Greenleaf too was a person unafraid to dream a great dream; he is the founder of servant-leadership and his life and thought have richly influenced our ideas of leadership worldwide. One of the things we notice about America today, is that Americans often consciously and unconsciously pro-



mote leadership that is egocentric, overly market- and consumer-driven, and harmful or even violent to ourselves and others. It is an area in which we need both much help and deep healing in our nation. Servant-leadership, from nation to nation, within nations, and internationally within our individual and communal lives, is drawing us to a better, more whole way of being.

Robert Greenleaf said, “For something great to happen there must be a great dream. Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams.”

Consider Vincent Van Gogh, the meditative and vibrant iconoclast. He was not known for his art in his lifetime, yet one of his paintings recently sold for more than eighty million dollars. Though Van Gogh was a brave and deeply perceptive man, full of hope for the world and delight in God, he was also very troubled at times, and in fact he died in despair. Yet his truth lives on. He said, “The most difficult and true work of art is to love someone.”

Yes, the most difficult and true work of art is to love someone.

Johann Sebastian Bach, the musician and composer, is another who was largely unknown. His music did not gain a legitimate audience until nearly 100 years after his death. If one of us set out right now to script Bach’s music, if we wrote down each note he wrote in his lifetime, it would take more than a decade. Because of this fluid and prolific quality and the unique nuances of his music, he is considered a genius. He could compose entire orchestral arrangements in his head, the entire musical notation for every instrument, without even going to the piano.

George Frideric Handel was alienated, alone even in the midst of the great dream he dreamed. Consider this: he was at the bottom of his career, disrespected in society, dejected, living in obscurity, and at the low point of his life when a deep moment of grace came to him and he wrote *The Messiah*, the music that forms the glorious landscape of so many of our lives today.

My wife, Jennifer, just finished reading William Shirer’s *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, a scholarly and shocking book about the rise of



Hitler to power and then the tremendous fall. She has relayed to me so many accounts of people showing love and care for each other even in the face of the most atrocious conditions the Nazis had forced on them. Earlier this year, before I flew to the Philippines, she said to me, “You know, I believe it is possible for us to get better in chaos, suffering, and difficulty, rather than getting worse.” That’s a profound sentence. That’s something that heals me as a person just to hear her say it and heals our family just to have her as a part of our family saying it, living it. That we can get better in chaos, suffering and difficulty rather than getting worse: this is what Ninoy and Cory Aquino exemplify. This is what Martin Luther King, Jr. exemplifies. This is what Robert Greenleaf and servant-leadership exemplify.

In the leadership that rose from the Aquinos, MLK, and Robert Greenleaf, we see two significant qualities: deep spirituality and deep love. Their interior fortitude, the strength of their love for people, work, and life, is reflective of one of the vital truths from the scriptures of the Old Testament:

Many waters cannot quench love. Love is stronger than death.

Robert Greenleaf was a businessman in America who devoted himself to silence and to reflective quietness from his own spiritual tradition, which is a Quaker tradition, and out of that he started to form this idea of servant-leadership. His definition remains an important compass for all who desire to lead. He listened with awakened purpose. He spoke a lasting vision:

The true test of a servant-leader is this: Do others around the servant-leader become wiser, freer, more autonomous, healthier, and better able themselves to become servants? Will the least privileged of the society be benefited or at least not further deprived?

In lives such as the Aquinos, MLK, and Greenleaf, it becomes very clear, the core of courage and love that is central to servant-leadership. The same courage, the same love is so evident in the beautiful poems, interviews, essays, and science that make up this inaugural edition of *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*. I want to say how grateful I am to



each author whose work appears here. Individually and collectively, their work points through the center of the human endeavor, into the interior, and from there out to the world. I want to thank the directors of the Greenleaf Centers worldwide for their life-giving and heartfelt though usually unheralded role in expanding international goodwill. Notably, the editorial board is made up of scholars who represent the work of servant-leadership in 11 different countries. The journal is designed to keep its finger on the pulse of servant-leadership throughout the world, socially, politically, economically, in science, in the scholarly world, and foremost, in the heart of our humanity. I hope you find the work presented here enlightening, critically rich, and yes, full of joy!

The servant-leader lives a life of significance and others are drawn to their own great significance by being in the presence of the servant-leader. May a discerning love surround us in the pursuit of this great dream.

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## SERVANT-LEADERSHIP IN THE PRESENT DAY

“Servant-leadership is now part of the vocabulary of enlightened leadership. Bob Greenleaf, along with other notables such as McGregor, Drucker, and Follett, has created a new thought-world of leadership that contains such virtues as growth, responsibility and love.”

**Warren Bennis**, Distinguished Professor, Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California; *On Leadership*

“I truly believe that servant-leadership has never been more applicable to the world of leadership than it is today.”

**Ken Blanchard**, *The Heart of Leadership*

“We are each indebted to Greenleaf for bringing spirit and values into the workplace. His ideas will have enduring value for every generation of leaders.”

**Peter Block**, *Stewardship*

“Anyone can be a servant-leader. Any one of us can take initiative; it doesn’t require that we be appointed a leader; but it does require that we operate from moral authority. The spirit of servant-leadership is the spirit of moral authority. . . . I congratulate the Greenleaf Center for its invaluable service to society, and for carrying the torch of servant-leadership over the years.”

**Stephen R. Covey**, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

“The servant-leader is servant first. Becoming a servant-leader begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first.”

**Robert K. Greenleaf**, *The Servant as Leader*



“With its deeper resonances in our spiritual traditions, Greenleaf reminds us that the essence of leadership is service, and therefore the welfare of people. Anchored in this way, we can distinguish between the tools of influence, persuasion, and power from the orienting values defining leadership to which these tools are applied.”

**Ronald Heifetz**, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*

“The most difficult step, Greenleaf has written, that any developing servant-leader must take, is to begin the personal journey toward wholeness and self-discovery.”

**Joseph Jaworski**, *Synchronicity*

“After thirty years Robert K. Greenleaf’s work has struck a resonant chord in the minds and hearts of scholars and practitioners alike. His message lives through others, the true legacy of a servant-leader.”

**Jim Kouzes**, *The Leadership Challenge*

“Robert Greenleaf takes us beyond cynicism and cheap tricks and simplified techniques into the heart of the matter, into the spiritual lives of those who lead.”

**Parker Palmer**, *The Courage to Teach*

“Servant-leadership is more than a concept. As far as I’m concerned, it is a fact. I would simply define it by saying that any great leader, by which I also mean an ethical leader of any group, will see herself or himself primarily as a servant of that group and will act accordingly.”

**M. Scott Peck**, *The Road Less Traveled*

“No one in the past 30 years has had a more profound impact on thinking about leadership than Robert Greenleaf. If we sought an objective measure of the quality of leadership available to society, there would be none better than the number of people reading and studying his writings.”

**Peter M. Senge**, *The Fifth Discipline*



“Servant-leadership offers hope and wisdom for a new era in human development, and for the creation of better, more caring institutions.”

**Larry C. Spears**, President & CEO, The Greenleaf Center for  
Servant-Leadership; editor/contributing author,  
*Insights on Leadership*

“I believe that Greenleaf knew so much when he said the criterion of successful servant-leadership is that those we serve are healthier and wiser and freer and more autonomous, and perhaps they even loved our leadership so much that they also want to serve others.”

**Margaret Wheatley**, *Leadership and the New Science*

“Despite all the buzz about modern leadership techniques, no one knows better than Greenleaf what really matters.”

**Working Woman** magazine





## GREENLEAF ON SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

Robert K. Greenleaf coined the term *servant-leadership* in his seminal 1970 essay, “The Servant as Leader.” The servant-leader concept has had a deep and lasting influence over the past three decades on many modern leadership ideas and practices. Greenleaf spent his first career of 40 years at AT&T, retiring as director of management research in 1964. That same year Greenleaf founded The Center for Applied Ethics (later renamed The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership). He went on to have an illustrious 25-year second career as an author, a teacher, and a consultant. Greenleaf, who died in 1990, was the author of numerous books and essays on the theme of the servant as leader. His available published books now include *The Servant-Leader Within* (2003), *Servant-Leadership* (2002, 1977), *The Power of Servant-Leadership* (1998), *On Becoming a Servant-Leader* (1996), and *Seeker and Servant* (1996), along with many other separately published essays that are available through The Greenleaf Center.

This short excerpt from Greenleaf’s essay “The Servant as Leader” contains an essential understanding of the origin of the term and definition of *servant-leader*. Here Greenleaf relates how his reading of Hermann Hesse’s *Journey to the East* led to his developing the servant-as-leader terminology.





## WHO IS THE SERVANT-LEADER?

—ROBERT K. GREENLEAF

Servant and leader—can these two roles be fused in one real person, in all levels of status or calling? If so, can that person live and be productive in the real world of the present? My sense of the present leads me to say yes to both questions. This chapter is an attempt to explain why and to suggest how.

The idea of the servant as leader came out of reading Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East*. In this story we see a band of men on a mythical journey, probably also Hesse's own journey. The central figure of the story is Leo, who accompanies the party as the servant who does their menial chores, but who also sustains them with his spirit and his song. He is a person of extraordinary presence. All goes well until Leo disappears. Then the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without the servant Leo. The narrator, one of the party, after some years of wandering, finds Leo and is taken into the Order that had sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo, whom he had known first as servant, was in fact the titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit, a great and noble leader.

One can muse on what Hesse was trying to say when he wrote this story. We know that most of his fiction was autobiographical, that he led a tortured life, and that *Journey to the East* suggests a turn toward the serenity he achieved in his old age. There has been much speculation by critics on Hesse's life and work, some of it centering on this story, which they find the most puzzling. But to me, this story clearly says that the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness. Leo was actually the leader all of the time, but he was servant first because that was what he was, deep down inside. Leadership was bestowed on a man



who was by nature a servant. It was something given, or assumed, that could be taken away. His servant nature was the real man, not bestowed, not assumed, and not to be taken away. He was servant first.

I mention Hesse and *Journey to the East* for two reasons. First, I want to acknowledge the source of the idea of *the servant as leader*. Then I want to use this reference as an introduction to a brief discussion of prophecy.

In 1958 when I first read about Leo, if I had been listening to contemporary prophecy as intently as I do now, the first draft of this piece might have been written then. As it was, the idea lay dormant for 11 years during which I came to believe that we in this country were in a leadership crisis and that I should do what I could about it. I became painfully aware of how dull my sense of contemporary prophecy had been. And I have reflected much on why we do not hear and heed the prophetic voices in our midst (not a new question in our times, nor more critical than heretofore).

I now embrace the theory of prophecy which holds that prophetic voices of great clarity, and with a quality of insight equal to that of any age, are speaking cogently all of the time. Men and women of a stature equal to the greatest prophets of the past are with us now, addressing the problems of the day and pointing to a better way to live fully and serenely in these times.

The variable that marks some periods as barren and some as rich in prophetic vision is in the interest, the level of seeking, and the responsiveness of the bearers. The variable is not in the presence or absence or the relative quality and force of the prophetic voices. Prophets grow in stature as people respond to their message. If their early attempts are ignored or spurned, their talent may wither away.

It is seekers, then, who make prophets, and the initiative of any one of us in searching for and responding to the voice of contemporary prophets may mark the turning point in their growth and service. But since we are the product of our own history, we see current prophecy within the context of past wisdom. We listen to as wide a range of contemporary thought as we can attend to. Then we choose those we elect to heed as prophets—both



old and new—and meld their advice with our own leadings. This we test in real-life experiences to establish our own position.

One does not, of course, ignore the great voices of the past. One does not awaken each morning with the compulsion to reinvent the wheel. But if one is servant, either leader or follower, one is always searching, listening, expecting that a better wheel for these times is in the making. It may emerge any day. Any one of us may discover it from personal experience. I am hopeful.

I am hopeful for these times, despite the tension and conflict, because more natural servants are trying to see clearly the world as it is and are listening carefully to prophetic voices that are speaking now. They are challenging the pervasive injustice with greater force, and they are taking sharper issue with the wide disparity between the quality of society they know is reasonable and possible with available resources and the actual performance of the institutions that exist to serve society.

A fresh, critical look is being taken at the issues of power and authority, and people are beginning to learn, however haltingly, to relate to one another in less coercive and more creatively supporting ways. A new moral principle is emerging, which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader. Those who choose to follow this principle will not casually accept the authority of existing institutions. Rather, they will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants. To the extent that this principle prevails in the future, the only truly viable institutions will be those that are predominantly servant-led.

I am mindful of the long road ahead before these trends, which I see so clearly, become a major society-shaping force. We are not there yet. But I see encouraging movement on the horizon.

What direction will the movement take? Much depends on whether those who stir the ferment will come to grips with the age-old problem of



how to live in a human society. I say this because so many, having made their awesome decision for autonomy and independence from tradition, and having taken their firm stand against injustice and hypocrisy, find it hard to convert themselves into affirmative builders of a better society. How many of them will seek their personal fulfillment by making the hard choices, and by undertaking the rigorous preparation that building a better society requires? It all depends on what kind of leaders emerge and how they—we—respond to them.

My thesis, that more servants should emerge as leaders, or should follow only servant-leaders, is not a popular one. It is much more comfortable to go with a less-demanding point of view about what is expected of one now. There are several undemanding, plausibly argued alternatives from which to choose. One, since society seems corrupt, is to seek to avoid the center of it by retreating to an idyllic existence that minimizes involvement with the “system” (with the system that makes such withdrawal possible). Then there is the assumption that since the effort to reform existing institutions has not brought instant perfection, the remedy is to destroy them completely so that fresh, new, perfect ones can grow. Not much thought seems to be given to the problem of where the new seed will come from or who the gardener to tend them will be. The concept of the servant-leader stands in sharp contrast to this kind of thinking.

Yet it is understandable that the easier alternatives would be chosen, especially by young people. By extending education for so many so far into the adult years, normal participation in society is effectively denied when young people are ready for it. With education that is preponderantly abstract and analytical it is no wonder that a preoccupation with criticism exists and that not much thought is given to “What can I do about it?”

Criticism has its place, but as a total preoccupation it is sterile. In a time of crisis, like the leadership crisis we are now in, if too many potential builders are completely absorbed with dissecting the wrong and striving for instant perfection, then the movement so many of us want to see will be set



back. The danger, perhaps, is to hear the analyst too much and the artist too little.

Albert Camus stands apart from other great artists of his time, in my view, and deserves the title of prophet, because of his unrelenting demand that each of us confront the exacting terms of our own existence, and, like Sisyphus, accept our rock and find our happiness by dealing with it. Camus sums up the relevance of his position to our concern for the servant as leader in the last paragraph of his last published lecture, entitled *Create Dangerously*:

One may long, as I do, for a gentler flame, a respite, a pause for musing. But perhaps there is no other peace for the artist than what he finds in the heat of combat. "Every wall is a door," Emerson correctly said. Let us not look for the door, and the way out, anywhere but in the wall against which we are living. Instead, let us seek the respite where it is—in the very thick of battle. For in my opinion, and this is where I shall close, it is there. Great ideas, it has been said, come into the world as gently as doves. Perhaps, then, if we listen attentively, we shall hear, amid the uproar of empires and nations, a faint flutter of wings, the gentle stirring of life and hope. Some will say that this hope lies in a nation; others, in a man. I believe rather that it is awakened, revived, nourished by millions of solitary individuals whose deeds and works every day negate frontiers and the crudest implications of history. As a result, there shines forth fleetingly the ever-threatened truth that each and every man, on the foundations of his own sufferings and joys, builds for them all.

#### WHO IS THE SERVANT-LEADER?

The servant-leader is servant first—as Leo was portrayed. Becoming a servant-leader begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such people, it will be a later choice to serve—after leadership is estab-



lished. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them are the shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and most difficult to administer, is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?

All of this rests on the assumption that the only way to change a society (or just make it go) is to produce people, enough people, who will change it (or make it go). The urgent problems of our day—the disposition to venture into immoral and senseless wars, destruction of the environment, poverty, alienation, discrimination, overpopulation—exist because of human failures, individual failures, one-person-at-a-time, one-action-at-a-time failures.

If we make it out of all of this (and this is written in the belief that we will), the system will be whatever works best. The builders will find the useful pieces wherever they are, and invent new ones when needed, all without reference to ideological coloration. “How do we get the right things done?” will be the watchword of the day, every day. And the context of those who bring it on will be: All men and women who are touched by the effort grow taller, and become healthier, stronger, more autonomous, and more disposed to serve.

Leo the servant, and the exemplar of the servant-leader, has one further portent for us. If we assume that Hermann Hesse is the narrator in *Journey to the East* (not a difficult assumption to make), at the end of the story he establishes his identity. His final confrontation at the close of his initiation into the Order is with a small transparent sculpture: two figures joined together. One is Leo, the other is the narrator. The narrator notes that a movement of substance is taking place within the transparent sculpture.



I perceived that my image was in the process of adding to and flowing into Leo's, nourishing and strengthening it. It seemed that, in time. . . only one would remain: Leo. He must grow, I must disappear. As I stood there and looked and tried to understand what I saw, I recalled a short conversation that I had once had with Leo during the festive days at Bremgarten. We had talked about the creations of poetry being more vivid and real than the poets themselves.

What Hesse may be telling us here is that Leo is the symbolic personification of Hesse's aspiration to serve through his literary creations—creations that are greater than Hesse himself—and that his work, for which he was but the channel, will carry on and serve and lead in a way that he, a twisted and tormented man, could not—as he created.

Does not Hesse dramatize, in extreme form, the dilemma of us all? Except as we venture to create, we cannot project ourselves beyond ourselves to serve and lead.

To which Camus would add: *Create dangerously!*





FROM PATERNALISM TO THE SERVANT ORGANIZATION:  
EXPANDING THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT  
(OLA) MODEL

—JIM LAUB  
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*Servant-leadership* is becoming an increasingly accepted term in the leadership and organizational literature. When the likes of Peter Senge (1997), Stephen Covey (1994), Margaret Wheatley (1994), and Ronald Heifetz (1994) give credence to and promote the term, we notice that the *idea* of servant-leadership is gaining a profound and wide audience. Leaders, writers and researchers who have espoused this idea of leadership have done so for many reasons. Some do so because they believe that it is the *right* way to view leadership. Those with this view are drawn to servant-leadership because of its moral and ethical moorings or its roots in multiple religious traditions. These leaders are less concerned with the pragmatic side of the concept, the question of “Does it work?”, since the philosophical “rightness” of their belief is sufficient to maintain commitment. Other leaders are pursuing the concept because it *works*. They see the pragmatic benefits of the servant-leader model worked out in successful companies. Among many examples of effective servant-led companies, they point to the fact that Southwest Airlines is the only airline to maintain consistent profit while boldly caring for and maintaining all of its employees, even after the devastation of September 11. This impressive accomplishment is often attributed to Southwest’s commitment to servant-leadership. *Fortune* magazine’s annual 100 Best Companies list lends support to the idea that servant-led organizations may be more successful than non-servant-led companies. Millard combined the two rationales for his support of servant-



leadership in his article “Servant-leadership—It’s Right and It Works!” (1995).

In the past few years, The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership has opened up eight international offices, in Canada, the Netherlands, Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Australia. This crossing of cultural borders shows that the message of servant-leadership is expanding and gaining an increased level of acceptance. What does all this tell us? It would seem that the *idea* of servant-leadership resonates with a growing number of multicultural leaders, and that more are espousing the concept as being representative of their organizations. This brings a refreshing sense of international dialogue, growth, and community to the forefront in understanding servant-leadership.

Considering these positive signs, more research-oriented questions can be given greater room for development. Can we begin to operationalize some of the thought surrounding the term *servant-leadership*? Can we scientifically and humbly try to identify it within organizations? Do we know what it means when an organization is not servant-led? How do we diagnose servant-mindedness in organizations, and how do we help leaders to develop this mindset if they are so inclined? Finally, can we speak and contribute to the research base to support servant-leadership?

One of the most interesting questions, and one to be addressed in this paper, is, Do we know what servant-leadership is not? In other words, when leaders or organizations are not servant-minded, what are they? Normally, we have contrasted the servant-leader with the autocratic leader. This is a useful contrast. The term *autocratic* is used as a label for leaders who use a power-and-authority, control-oriented leadership *over* others. It is, in many ways, what servant-leadership is not. When you break the English word down to its Latin root you find that “auto” means *self*, while “cratic” means *rule*. Self-rule. It would appear then that autocratic leadership may stand as the antithesis of servant-leadership. So, where is the concern? It is not that autocratic leadership is *not* the opposite of servant-



leadership; rather, it is that these two terms are insufficient to explain how most organizational leadership is practiced today.

Many discussions of these two opposing viewpoints of leadership draw them in sharp contrast to each other and, to be sure, there is much to learn from this exercise. However, most organizational leadership appears to be neither autocratic nor servant. By focusing on only these two extremes of leadership, we may be missing the reality in which most workers experience their organizations. Research is beginning to suggest that most organizations today operate within a paternalistic view of leadership and that this, more than any other reason, hinders them from becoming true servant organizations. This perspective began to emerge once the technology was developed to measure servant-leadership within organizations through the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA).

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT (OLA)

The OLA was developed through a research study I completed in 1999 that attempted to answer three key questions: *How is servant-leadership defined? What are the characteristics of servant-leadership? Can the presence of these characteristics within organizations be assessed through a written instrument?* The first question was pursued on the basis that servant-leadership as a ground of scientific inquiry, theory, and practice is fertile for further development. Robert Greenleaf (1970) founded the concept in contemporary leadership. He and others have deeply influenced thought and practice regarding leadership, but operational definitions useful for research before 1999 had not yet been established; from a scientific perspective these are needed to begin to empirically address critical questions surrounding the concept.

There were two main parts to the study I completed in 1999. Part one involved a Delphi survey to determine the characteristics of servant-leadership, leading to a definition; and part two used these characteristics to construct the *Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA)* instrument.



A three-part Delphi survey was conducted with fourteen authorities from the field of servant-leadership. The experts were chosen based upon their having written on servant-leadership or having taught at the university level on the subject. Fourteen of the original 25 experts who were asked to participate completed all three parts of the Delphi. These participants included: Larry Spears, The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership; Jim Kouzes, Learning Systems, Inc./The Tom Peters Group; Ann McGee-Cooper and Duane Trammell, Ann McGee-Cooper & Associates (note: these two worked together on a single response for each part of the survey and were therefore counted as one respondent); Dr. Bill Millard, Life Discovery and Indiana Wesleyan University; Lea Williams, Bennett College; Dr. Joe Roberts, Suncoast Church of Christ; Jack Lowe, Jr., TDIndustries; Dr. Pam Walker, Cerritos College; Grace Barnes, Azusa Pacific University; Ann Liprie-Spence, McMurray University; Deborah Campbell, Servant-Leadership Community of West Ohio; Dr. Ted Ward, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Michigan State University; and Bishop Bennett Sims, The Institute for Servant-Leadership.

The results from this Delphi process became the basis for the development of an OLA model of servant organizations (see figure 1). According to this model, servant-leadership is defined as an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. In addition, servant-leadership promotes the valuing and developing of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led, and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization, and those served by the organization.

This model provides one useful way of looking at organizations through a lens of servant-leadership understanding. Notably, there are other models of servant-leadership (Wong & Page, 2003; Sendjaya, 2003; Patterson, 2003), including the excellent foundational work of Spears (1994) and his list of the ten characteristics of the servant-leader drawn from the work of Robert Greenleaf. Each of these models offers a unique lens, a way of



seeing that provides us with a means to operationalize and apply this concept of servant-leadership.

The expert panel was asked to name and rate the characteristics of the servant-leader. A thorough review of the literature was also provided to them in the process. All characteristics that were rated from *Necessary* to *Essential* in the final survey were used in the construction of the *OLA* instrument. A significant ( $p < .05$ ) decrease was found in the interquartile range between round two and round three of the Delphi process, indicating a move toward consensus. This research process provided strong construct validity for the instrument. The original 80-item *OLA* was field tested with 828 individuals from 41 organizations. All of these organizations were from the United States, with the exception of one from the Netherlands, and they represented a wide variety of organizational types: corporate, government, educational, and religious. Estimated reliability of the *OLA*, using the Cronbach-Alpha coefficient, was .98.

The *OLA* was then revised to 60 total items plus six items to measure Job Satisfaction. The high reliability was maintained while making the instrument easier to complete. The average time to complete the *OLA* is 15 minutes. One way ANOVA and correlation tests were run with demographic data and the *OLA* score and also with the job satisfaction score. A significant ( $p < .01$ ) positive correlation of .653 was found between the *OLA* score and the job satisfaction score. A factor analysis revealed a two-factor solution composed of organization assessment items and leadership assessment items. Potential subscores were considered, but there was a high correlation between the scales; therefore use of the overall *OLA* score is recommended for research purposes.

The *OLA* has shown itself to be highly reliable with strong construct and face validity. It has been used in multiple research projects as well as for organizational diagnosis and consulting. The instrument has been translated into Spanish, Dutch, and Japanese.



Figure 1: Servant-leadership and a servant organization (OLA) model

<b>Servant-leadership is ...</b>	
<p>an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Servant-leadership promotes the valuing and developing of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led, and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization, and those served by the organization.</p>	
<b>The Servant-Leader ...</b>	
Values People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By trusting &amp; believing in people</li> <li>• By serving others' needs before his or her own</li> <li>• By receptive, non-judgmental listening</li> </ul>
Develops People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By providing opportunities for learning and growth</li> <li>• By modeling appropriate behavior</li> <li>• By building up others through encouragement and affirmation</li> </ul>
Builds Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By building strong personal relationships</li> <li>• By working collaboratively with others</li> <li>• By valuing the differences of others</li> </ul>
Displays Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By being open and accountable to others</li> <li>• By a willingness to learn from others</li> <li>• By maintaining integrity and trust</li> </ul>
Provides Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By envisioning the future</li> <li>• By taking initiative</li> <li>• By clarifying goals</li> </ul>
Shares Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By facilitating a shared vision</li> <li>• By sharing power and releasing control</li> <li>• By sharing status and promoting others</li> </ul>
<b>The Servant Organization is ...</b>	
<p>an organization in which the characteristics of servant-leadership are displayed through the organizational culture, and are valued and practiced by the leadership and workforce.</p>	



## UTILIZING THE OLA WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS: DISCOVERING THE PATERNALISTIC ORGANIZATION

The average score on the OLA is 3.64 on a 5-point scale. The score of 4.0 indicates the level of “Agreement” and is the breakpoint score for identifying an organization as Servant. Therefore the average response on the OLA is below that of Servant. But, what does it mean for an organization to score below agreement on the OLA? Does it mean that it is a totally non-servant (Autocratic) entity? How does an organization deal with this information and work with it to improve and become more of a servant-minded organization?

It was clear that the original OLA model needed to be expanded to provide a better description of what the various scores might mean. It was in this process that the Paternalistic Leadership view was discovered as the most meaningful way of describing how most workers experience leadership within their organizations.

What is paternalism in leadership? It is the view the leader has of him- or herself as parent *over* the led. This parental view of leadership has far-reaching effects, as we will see later in this paper. The paternalistic view of leadership is not new. James O’Toole observed that

rule by a few wise and virtuous men has been the preferred mode since 400 B.C., the era of two influential near contemporaries, Plato in the West and Confucius in the East. Both believed that chaos is the enemy of efficiency and that it can be averted only by the strong leadership of an enlightened elite. (1995, p. 185)

The kind of benevolent rule described here has the effect of producing a child-like response in the followers. The led readily accept that the leaders know more, are wiser, and that the led must simply follow, even if it means abdicating their own responsibility to lead.

O’Toole describes two contemporary organizational leaders who understand that paternalism in leadership is limiting to the success of their



organizations. Ricardo Semler, CEO of Brazil's Semco, when describing the success of his organization, states that "It's all very simple; all we are doing is treating people like adults." This attitude is all the more remarkable when considering Brazil's history of political authoritarianism. O'Toole's response was, "so much for arguments . . . that paternalism is 'necessary' in the developing world." Gordon Forward, president of Chaparral Steel of Texas, believes in a system in which all employees are viewed as grown-ups capable of accepting real responsibilities, a system he cleverly calls "management by adultery" (p. 61).

The reality and pervasiveness of paternalistic leadership has not been well explored in the leadership literature, but according to the research conducted with the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA), paternalistic organizations represent the majority of organizations. The ability to identify organizations as paternalistic began with the application of the A-P-S model to the existing OLA Model.

#### *The A-P-S Model*

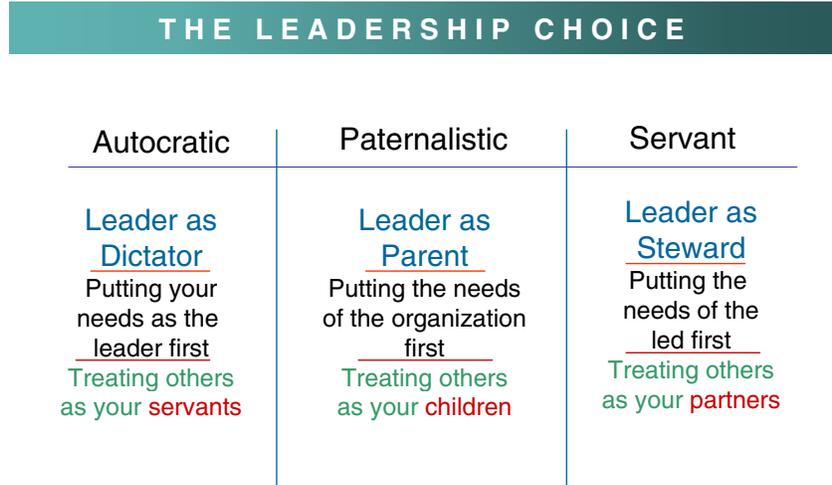
The A-P-S Model (Autocratic-Paternalistic-Servant) (see figure 2) provides the framework for developing the six levels of organizational health as measured by the OLA. The model provides three distinct paradigms of leadership. Within these paradigms, leaders choose how they will view themselves as leaders, how they will view those led, and how they will view the role and purpose of leadership.

The servant-leader sees him or herself as a steward of the organization and its people. These individuals put the needs of the led first, before their own self-interest, and they treat workers as partners. The autocratic leader sees him- or herself as a dictator. They put their own needs as leader first and treat their workers as their servants. To be sure, they would not use these terms, but the reality still exists as perceived by the workforce.

The paternalistic leader sees him- or herself as a parent. Such leaders normally will put the needs of the organization first and will treat the workers as children. The paternalistic leader can be either negative or positive,



Figure 2: The A-P-S Model



but still remains firmly in the parent role. It is the contention of this author that many of the organizations that view themselves as servant organizations may be, in fact, a positive version of a paternalistic organization. Servant-leadership is so much more than people being treated well within an organization. Getting to the level of servant organization requires a mind-shift in which the leaders see themselves differently, view the led differently, and reshape their whole view of the purpose and meaning of leadership. This notion will become clearer as we consider the six power levels of organizational health as assessed by the OLA.

*Identifying Organizational Power Levels*

The OLA identifies six levels of organizational health, each designated by a power level. These power levels are determined by the extent to which the six key areas (figure 1—OLA Model) of servant-leadership are present in the organization. In an Org<sup>5</sup> and Org<sup>6</sup> these characteristics are perceived



to be present within the leadership and throughout the organization. In an Org<sup>1</sup> and Org<sup>2</sup>, these characteristics are mostly absent. The Org<sup>3</sup> and Org<sup>4</sup> levels represent organizations with a varied mix of these characteristics.

The power levels are presented exponentially to represent an important reality. An Org<sup>5</sup> (to the 5th power) is incredibly more powerful than an Org<sup>2</sup> (to the 2nd power). This is done intentionally to represent three very different ways of looking at growth and change within organizations.

First, there is *inertia* or the inability to move or change (Org<sup>1</sup> – Org<sup>2</sup>). This lack of growth will keep the organization from moving toward greater health and performance. The organization still functions, but it operates only on the energy of the past. It lacks the organizational health to move positively toward the future.

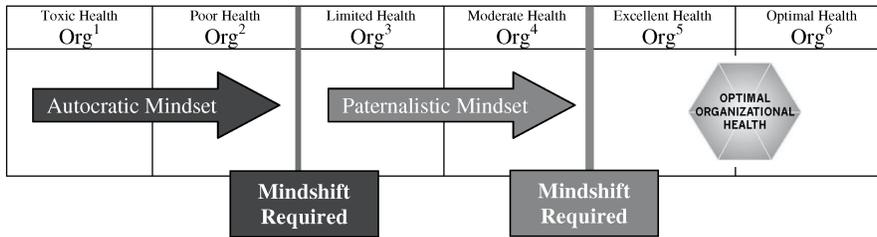
Second, there is gradual or *incremental* change (Org<sup>3</sup> – Org<sup>4</sup>). This kind of growth requires a steady, measured energy—the ability for an organization to better what it has done in the past in order to make improvements over time. This organization can and will improve, but it will begin to rest on a plateau of “good enough,” dulled by its own achievement and success with an ever-growing contentment with being just a little better than the rest.

Third, there is exponential or *quantum* change (Org<sup>5</sup> – Org<sup>6</sup>). This kind of change requires something very different from what has been done in the past. It requires a totally new way of thinking about organizations and leadership. It requires a true paradigm change, a mind-shift that sees all in the organization as potential leaders and refuses to measure itself against anything less than its own incredible potential. An organization cannot simply move from inertia to incremental change to quantum growth. Moving from one of these levels to the next requires a major shift in thinking and behaving (figure 3). Such changes are never easy, but must be made, or the organization will continue to merely perpetuate itself without generating the power or energy to move to the next level. A mindshift of this nature first requires a new awareness. The OLA provides a place to begin this awareness by graphically presenting and contrasting the perception of the



top leaders, the managers, and the workforce. The power level of the organization is determined by the workforce perception, because the workforce is the largest group and the one that is closest to the core business of the organization. The reality of the lack of perception match between top leaders and workforce also make this necessary. This perception match issue will be presented later in this paper.

*Figure 3: Required Mindshift Points Leading to Optimal Organizational Health*



This is the servant organization, the powerful organization. Power is the ability to do—to act. In an organization it provides the capacity to fulfill a compelling vision, to meet goals, to develop the highest quality workers and to deal effectively and creatively with ever-present change.

An interesting paradox is that we are the most powerful when we give our power away. Shared power within a healthy organizational environment provides for an exponential growth in the ability to act. The healthy organization is in the best position to leverage its resources, its strategies, and its dreams. Figure 4 shows the relationship of the A-P-S model to the six organizational power levels.

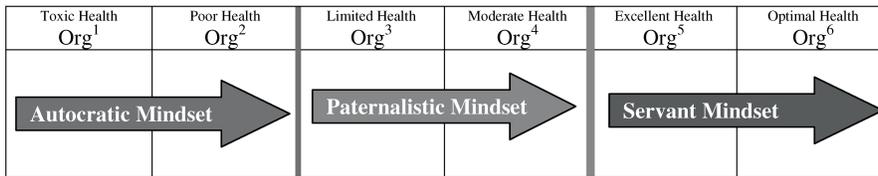
*Autocratic* is the leadership paradigm most connected with Org<sup>1</sup> (Toxic health) and Org<sup>2</sup> (Poor health). This kind of leadership is one of “self-rule” in which the organization exists to serve the needs and interests of the leader first. This often leads to the oppression of the worker to satisfy the whims of the leader.



*Paternalistic* is the leadership paradigm most connected with Org<sup>3</sup> (Limited health) and Org<sup>4</sup> (Moderate health). This kind of leadership is one of leaders seeing themselves as parent to those led. This parental view of leadership encourages the led to take on the role of children. This leads to an unhealthy transactional leadership that operates more on compliance than on true individual motivation.

*Servant* is the leadership paradigm most connected with Org<sup>5</sup> (Excellent health) and Org<sup>6</sup> (Optimal health). It is the view of leadership characterized by the six key areas of servant-leadership defined in the OLA. This view sees leadership as serving the needs of those led over the self-interest of the leader. In this kind of organization *all* people are encouraged to lead and serve. This produces a community of care in which the needs of all are served, and the organization is able to put its energy into fulfilling its shared mission.

*Figure 4: Relation of the A-P-S model to the Six Levels of Organizational Health*



*Testing the Accuracy of the Six Organizational Level Descriptions*

A full-page description was written for each of the six organizational levels (see Appendix). The description of Levels 5 and 6 (Servant Mindset) utilized the six key areas of Servant-leadership (OLA Model) as these characteristics relate to the worker, the leadership, the culture, teams, and the outlook for the organization. Levels 1 and 2 (Autocratic) were written based on the absence of the servant characteristics. Levels 3 and 4 (Paternalistic) were written based on the limited presence of the servant character-



istics as shaped by a parental leadership environment. These six descriptions were then tested with 136 adult students from various courses in the Adult and Professional Studies program of Indiana Wesleyan University. Each adult student took the OLA on his or her organization. The OLA was then scored and the appropriate full-page description brought back to the student for review. Table 1 provides the total number of adult students/organizations participating in the study, along with the different organizational power levels determined.

TABLE 1: *Organizational Levels Identified*

Org Level	Adult students/ organizations	% of total		Adult students/ organizations	% of total
1	10	7.36%	Autocratic	42	30.88%
2	32	23.53%			
3	46	33.82%	Paternalistic	78	57.35%
4	32	23.53%			
5	13	9.55%	Servant	16	11.77%
6	3	2.21%			
Total	136	100%		136	100%

Table 2 provides the results of their assessment of the accuracy of the organizational descriptions. Each adult student rated the organizational description on the following scale and then the indicated values were assigned to each response.

- Very inaccurate = 1
- Inaccurate = 2
- Somewhat inaccurate = 3
- Somewhat accurate = 4
- Accurate = 5
- Very accurate = 6



The students first read the entire description through and provided an accuracy rating. They then were asked to read each section and provide an accuracy rating for each section.

TABLE 2: *Accuracy responses*

Org Level	Entire Description	Workers Section	Leaders Section	Team Section	Culture Section	Outlook Section
1	5.30	5.20	5.60	5.60	5.00	5.50
2	4.88	5.00	5.09	4.47	4.75	5.09
3	4.87	4.91	4.98	4.70	5.13	4.96
4	5.06	4.75	5.25	4.58	4.97	5.34
5	5.31	5.38	5.23	5.38	5.23	5.38
6	5.67	5.67	6.00	5.33	6.00	6.00
Total	5.18	5.15	5.35	5.01	5.18	5.37

The overall conclusion is that the organizational level descriptions are seen as accurate, and therefore useful for providing a description of what it means to be at the various scoring levels of the OLA. These descriptions are presented not as objective truth, but as a description that most people in the organization will find accurate. This description then becomes a starting point for a discussion on how the organization is being experienced by its people: workforce, managers, and top leadership. This discussion is important to begin to address the implications of the autocratic and paternalistic leadership that is most prevalent in our organizations today.

Admittedly, the research referred to here is a single study with a relatively small sample taken from a limited cultural perspective. However, if, as this study suggests, paternalistic organizations account for 57% of total organizations, then another important vista presents itself for helping people and organizations become more whole. Seeing the difference between paternalistic and servant characteristics and their impact on organizational health and success can open important doorways in personal and organiza-



tional life. A dialogue then becomes possible in beginning to discuss the results of a parental style of leadership. Parent-Adult-Child dynamics applied to organizational life provide a way of entering this critical discussion.

*Understanding the Nature of Paternalistic Leadership*

Since most organizations operate within a paternalistic understanding and practice of leadership, is it important that we know what that means, and what an organization can do to improve. Parent-Adult-Child dynamics, based on the concept of Transactional Analysis (Harris, 1969) suggests that when a leader acts in the role of parent, the workers tend to react in the role of child. This is an unhealthy situation that accurately describes the communication and interactions within paternalistic (parental-led) organizations.



**The Leader as Parent** can exhibit two very different parental behaviors:

The critical parent ... (Negative Paternalistic – Org<sup>3</sup>)

The nurturing parent ... (Positive Paternalistic – Org<sup>4</sup>)

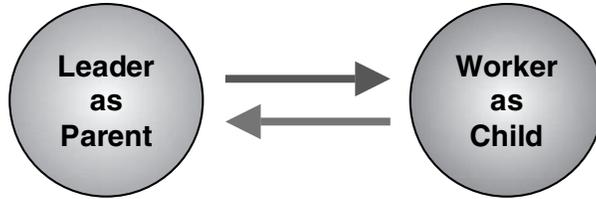


**The Worker as Child** can exhibit two very different child behaviors:

The rebellious child ... (Negative Paternalistic – Org<sup>3</sup>)

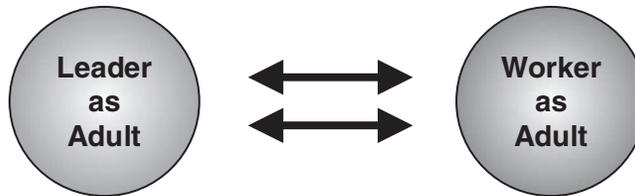
The dependent/compliant child ... (Positive Paternalistic – Org<sup>4</sup>)

In a paternalistic organization, leaders operate in the role of Parent. Within an Org<sup>3</sup> (Negative Paternalistic) environment, the leaders often view the workers as less than capable children who need strong guidance and control from the leadership. Within an Org<sup>4</sup> (Positive Paternalistic) environment, the leaders view the workers as very capable children who continue to need the wisdom and foresight of the leader (a “Father knows best” mentality).



This relationship becomes self-perpetuating, as each role tends to draw out and encourage the opposite role. This is an unhealthy situation for any organization that desires to develop leadership throughout the organization, empower others to act, and build a community of capable partners to fulfill an agreed-upon mission and vision.

The answer to this dilemma is to foster adult roles that emphasize open, direct communication, partnership, receptive listening, and mutual respect. When a leader operates in the role of Adult and relates to the worker in this way, the worker tends then to react in the role of Adult. This is the healthiest scenario—when people at all levels of the organization trust and respect one another and encourage active participation and leadership, the organization as a whole prospers.



This is a healthy organization, one in which people serve the interests of others above their own self-interest for the good of the organization as a whole. This is a servant organization in which all people talk and act as adults and partners for the good of each person and the organization as a whole. When an organization integrates the six key areas (OLA Model) of a healthy organization and works to achieve a healthy adult maturity in relationships, in light of the concepts defined in the OLA this organization is likely moving toward optimal organizational health.



Paternalistic organizations share another key characteristic. Research has revealed a lack of perception match among top leaders, management, and the workforce related to how the organization exhibits servant-leadership characteristics. This perception gap is most pronounced between the top leadership and the workforce.

*Identifying the Perception Match*

Research utilizing the OLA has revealed a common phenomenon within organizations.

A significant difference,  $F(2,807) = 9.611, p < .05$ , was found in OLA scores between top leadership, and the categories of management/supervision and workforce, with top leadership scoring higher. No significant ( $p > .05$ ) difference was found in the OLA scores of management/supervision and workforce. A significant ( $p < .01$ ) negative relationship of  $-.139$  existed between position/role and the total instrument score, indicating that the higher the position in the organization, the higher the scores on the instrument. Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations for each category.

TABLE 3. *OLA Means and Standard Deviations by Position/Role*

<i>Position/role</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Top Leadership	102	297.78	35.01
Management/Supervision	197	278.59	46.76
Workforce	511	274.88	50.89
Total	810	278.67	48.69

This finding, of a significant difference between top leadership perceptions and those of the workforce, has been confirmed through later research in an American cultural context (Horsman, 2001; Thompson, 2002; Ledbetter, 2003). Osburn’s study, utilizing the OLA within a Japanese cultural con-



text, found that “overall ratings seem to decline with status. While the Top Leaders respondent has a combined mean of 3.9, the averages were 3.3, 3.1, and 2.9 for the Teachers, Managers, and Workforce, respectively” (2004, p.12). Certainly, more study needs to occur within various cultural contexts to see if this result continues to hold true across cultures.

A clear lack of perception match exists between the top leadership in an organization and the workforce in terms of how the organization is viewed. Top leaders frequently see the organization more positively (in terms of the OLA’s six key areas of servant-leadership) than do the members of the workforce. In other words, when an organization, as perceived by the workforce, sees itself as an Org<sup>4</sup>, it is quite common to see the top leadership of this organization perceiving it as an Org<sup>5</sup>.

Does this lack of perception match make a difference? Does it affect how different workers and leaders work together in the organization? Does it affect the performance of an organization in any way? More research needs to be done on these critical questions, but it would seem that this lack of congruent perception does make a difference.

When a low perception match exists between leaders and workers, it is clear that they are *experiencing* the organization in very different ways. Some, commonly the leadership, may be assuming that the organization is healthier than it really is, and therefore do not see the need for addressing unhealthy aspects of the organization. This is not surprising, since top leaders often find themselves insulated from the reality of the day-to-day functioning of the organization. This lack of awareness is dangerous and tends to perpetuate an “us-and-them” mentality that works against true community.

Others, commonly members of the workforce, know that the things that they are experiencing often are not understood by the leadership, and communication suffers. An effective, healthy organization tends to share an accurate awareness of its strengths and weaknesses so that a healthy and positive consensus begins to emerge in terms of organizational improvement. These two critical issues—shared awareness and open communica-



tion—may be more essential than we imagine for establishing and growing the trust needed to create an organization that is healthy and growing.

### *Foundations and Limitations*

The addition of the A-P-S model to the existing OLA model of servant-leadership and the creation of the six levels of organizational health can be a strong foundation from which to assist organizations in their development toward greater health. Here is a summary of what can be affirmed in this expanding area of servant-leadership research and servant organizational development. The OLA model hopes to provide the following for ongoing servant-leadership research:

1. An operational definition of servant-leadership.
2. A description of what servant-leadership is not through a model of contrasting mindsets of leadership.
3. The ability to measure the perception of servant-leadership characteristics in organizations.
4. The ability to determine whether a perception match exists between top leaders and the workforce within organizations.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The OLA and the research that produced it emerged out of an American cultural perspective, and this Western cultural bias should caution researchers to avoid generalizing these findings to other cultures. Will this model find application within other cultures and viewpoints? More study remains to be done, and ideally new studies will emerge out of multiple world cultures to provide a balance and a challenge to the concepts presented here. Also, there is a diversity of cultures within the American experience, and each of these cultures brings unique insights and experiences into the understanding of leadership and organizational life. In the OLA, I am not claiming that there is one definition and one model of servant-leadership that will be applied to all. This paper provides one model,



one that remains to be tested, challenged, and ultimately improved or changed altogether.

There certainly are inherent limitations to the scientific study of such concepts. Servant-leadership involves issues of the heart and of the soul, topics that don't fit well within the cold analysis of the scientific model. We must be careful not to obscure the truth by attempting to categorize and fully explain it. Servant-leadership calls for a process of listening over speaking, of reflection over thoughtless action, and of inquiry over certainty. In light of this, it is important that we continue to seek a strong research base for the concept and application of servant-leadership. This kind of process will never give us the complete picture, but it can provide significant insights that are not available through other means.

#### *Ongoing Research Possibilities*

More questions than answers remain. Here are several research questions that can be considered and pursued. It is hoped that the OLA instrument will provide a resource to address these questions, and others, to promote servant-leadership research in the years to come.

- What is the relationship between the OLA score and organizational health factors? Are servant organizations healthier than paternalistic or autocratic organizations?
- How can we better understand the Paternalistic Organization? What are the limitations of this mindset and practice?
- How can we improve communication within Paternalistic Organizations utilizing the Parent-Adult-Child dynamics model?
- What is the significance of the Perception Match within organizations? What does it mean for organizational communication and shared awareness?
- How can we better assist organizational leadership in navigating the necessary mindshifts needed to move toward a healthier, more servant-minded organization?
- To what level do these concepts translate to other cultures and world-views?



- What training programs can be developed to assist organizations to develop toward becoming true servant organizations?

## CONCLUSION

What is a healthy organization? Why do organizations so often fall short of their potential? Why do workers report that they are working at low levels of productivity? What would it take for our organizations to fulfill their mission and reach their vision while developing healthy, productive workers? What kind of leadership could make this happen?

World history is written around the use and abuse of leadership power. This type of leadership, even when revealed to be harmful and counter-productive, does not die easily. This is not surprising, since positional leadership has always brought with it the perks and benefits that can be hard to turn away from. Autocratic rule has always been around and is firmly with us today.

However, this research suggests that paternalistic leadership may hold the strongest influence in our organizations, more pervasive even than autocratic leadership. This model needs to be further explored and explained so that organizations can begin to accept their limitations and move beyond them toward a servant-minded paradigm of leadership.

The healthy organization is an organization in which the characteristics of servant-leadership are displayed through the organizational culture and are valued and practiced by the leadership and workforce. This is a healthy, servant organization—one that puts the needs of others first and, through so doing, gains profound and pervasive power. Leaders can choose this kind of an organization. They can choose a different way of thinking about leadership and how it impacts their organizations.

What might happen if that were to take place? What vision could be realized? What might the future of organizational life become? Within this vision:



1. Workers, Managers and Top Leaders will be working together in a committed partnership based on common awareness, vision, and open, honest communication.
2. People throughout all organizations will be valued and developed toward their full potential.
3. Leadership will be shared and developed at all levels of the organization, providing for continual improvement and rapid response to changing needs.
4. Creativity will be unleashed, providing new products, better services, and dynamic solutions to societal needs.
5. The health of the workplace will overflow into the homes and neighborhoods of our communities, allowing for engagement of citizens in the remaking of their communities.
6. Organizations of all types and sizes—for-profit business, education, non-profit community organizations, government, medical, and associations of various kinds—will be challenged to improve the way they lead and serve within their organizations.

Through the accumulation of these changes, a critical mass of organizations will begin to take seriously their responsibility to lead and serve their communities, their workers, and their world who will, through the power of their example, create a new model of leadership that will literally transform the way organizations are experienced, and invigorate the influence of such organizations throughout the world.

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APPENDIX

Six Organizational Health Level Descriptions . . . . . Page 180  
Org<sup>1</sup> Description – Toxic Organizational Health . . . . . Page 181  
Org<sup>2</sup> Description – Poor Organizational Health . . . . . Page 182  
Org<sup>3</sup> Description – Limited Organizational Health . . . . . Page 183  
Org<sup>4</sup> Description – Moderate Organizational Health . . . . . Page 184  
Org<sup>5</sup> Description – Excellent Organizational Health . . . . . Page 185  
Org<sup>6</sup> Description – Optimal Organizational Health . . . . . Page 186



### SIX ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

Servant-leadership	Org <sup>6</sup>	<b>Optimal Health</b>	Workers experience this organization as a servant-minded organization characterized by authenticity, the valuing and developing of people, the building of community, and the providing and sharing of positive leadership. These characteristics are evident throughout the entire organization. People are trusted and are trustworthy throughout the organization. They are motivated to serve the interests of each other before their own self-interest and are open to learning from each other. Leaders and workers view each other as partners working in a spirit of collaboration.
	Org <sup>5</sup>	<b>Excellent Health</b>	Workers experience this organization as a servant-oriented organization characterized by authenticity, the valuing and developing of people, the building of community, and the providing and sharing of positive leadership. These characteristics are evident throughout much of the organization. People are trusted and are trustworthy. They are motivated to serve the interests of each other before their own self-interest and are open to learning from each other. Leaders and workers view each other as partners working in a spirit of collaboration.
Paternalistic Leadership	Org <sup>4</sup>	<b>Moderate Health</b>	Workers experience this organization as a positively paternalistic (parental-led) organization characterized by a moderate level of trust and trustworthiness along with occasional uncertainty and fear. Creativity is encouraged as long as it doesn't move the organization too far beyond the status quo. Risks can be taken, but failure is sometimes feared. Goals are mostly clear, though the overall direction of the organization is sometimes confused. Leaders often take the role of nurturing parent while workers assume the role of the cared-for child.
	Org <sup>3</sup>	<b>Limited Health</b>	Workers experience this organization as a negatively paternalistic (parental-led) organization characterized by minimal to moderate levels of trust and trustworthiness along with an underlying uncertainty and fear. People feel that they must prove themselves and that they are only as good as their last performance. Workers are sometimes listened to, but only when they speak in line with the values and priorities of the leaders. Conformity is expected, while individual expression is discouraged. Leaders often take the role of critical parent while workers assume the role of the cautious child.
Autocratic Leadership	Org <sup>2</sup>	<b>Poor Health</b>	Workers experience this organization as an autocratic-led organization characterized by low levels of trust and trustworthiness and high levels of uncertainty and fear. People lack motivation to serve the organization because they do not feel that it is <i>their</i> organization or <i>their</i> goals. Leadership is autocratic in style and is imposed from the top levels of the organization. It is an environment where risks are seldom taken, failure is often punished, and creativity is discouraged. Most workers do not feel valued and often feel <i>used</i> by those in leadership. Change is needed but is very difficult to achieve.
	Org <sup>1</sup>	<b>Toxic</b>	Workers experience this organization as a dangerous place to work--a place characterized by dishonesty and a deep lack of integrity among its workers and leaders. Workers are devalued, <i>used</i> and sometimes <i>abused</i> . Positive leadership is missing at all levels and power is used in ways that are harmful to workers and the mission of the organization. There is almost no trust and an extremely high level of fear. This organization will find it nearly impossible to locate, develop, and maintain healthy workers who can assist in producing positive organizational change.



## Description

### Toxic Organizational Health

*This organization is now operating with **Toxic Organizational Health** in terms of its workers, leadership, and organizational culture and it exhibits these characteristics throughout all levels of operation.*

#### **The Workers:** Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks

Workers are devalued here. They are not believed in and in turn do not believe in one another. Workers are *used* and even *abused* in this work setting. There is no opportunity for personal development. Workers are not listened to. Their ideas are never sought or considered. All decisions are made at the top levels of the organization. Relationships are dysfunctional and people are valued only for conformity to the dominant culture. Diversity is seen as a threat and differences are cause for suspicion.

#### **The Leadership:** Power, decision making, goals & direction

True leadership is missing at all levels of the organization. Power is used by leaders in ways that are harmful to workers and to the organization's mission. Workers do not have the power to act to initiate change. Goals are unclear and people do not know where the organization is going.

#### **The Team:** Community, collaboration and team learning

People are out for themselves and a highly political climate exists. People are manipulated and pitted against each other in order to motivate performance. Focus is placed on punishing non-performers.

#### **The Culture:** Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication

This is an environment characterized by dishonesty and a deep lack of integrity among its workers, supervisors and senior leaders. It is an environment in which failure is punished, creativity is stifled, and risks are never taken. People are suspicious of each other and feel manipulated and used. There is almost no trust level and an extremely high level of fear because people, especially leadership, are seen as untrustworthy. At all levels of the organization, people serve their own self-interest before the interest of others. This is an environment that is characterized by totally closed communication.

#### **The Outlook:** Type of workers attracted, action needed

This is an organization in name only that will find it impossible to find, develop, and maintain healthy productive workers who can navigate the changes necessary to improve. The outlook for this organization is doubtful. Extreme measures must be instituted in order for this organization to establish the necessary health to survive.



## Poor Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with **Poor Organizational Health** in terms of its workers, leadership, and organizational culture and it exhibits these characteristics throughout most levels of operation

### **The Workers:** *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

Most workers do not feel valued or believed in here. They often feel *used* and do not feel that they have the opportunity of being developed either personally or professionally. Workers are rarely listened to and only when they speak in line with the values and priorities of the leaders. Their ideas are rarely sought and almost never used. Almost all decisions are made at the top levels of the organization. Relationships are not encouraged and the tasks of the organization come before people. Diversity is not valued or appreciated.

### **The Leadership:** *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

Leadership is autocratic in style and is imposed from the top levels of the organization. Power is held at the highest positions only and is used to force compliance with the leader's wishes. Workers do not feel empowered to create change. Goals are often unclear and the overall direction of the organization is confused.

### **The Team:** *Community, collaboration and team learning*

This is a highly individualistic and competitive environment. Almost no collaboration exists. Teams are sometimes utilized, but often are put in competition with each other in order to motivate performance.

### **The Culture:** *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

This is an environment often characterized by the lack of honesty and integrity among its workers, supervisors, and senior leaders. It is an environment in which risks are seldom taken, failure is often punished, and creativity is discouraged. There is a very low level of trust and trustworthiness along with a high level of uncertainty and fear. Leaders do not trust the workers and the workers view the leaders as untrustworthy. People lack motivation to serve the organization because they do not feel that it is *their* organization or *their* goals. This is an environment that is characterized by closed communication.

### **The Outlook:** *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is an autocratic organization which will find it very difficult to find, develop, and maintain healthy productive workers. Change is needed but very difficult to achieve. The outlook is not positive for this organization. Serious measures must be instituted in order for this organization to establish the necessary improvements to move toward positive organizational health.



## Description

### Limited Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with **Limited Organizational Health** in terms of its workers, leadership, and organizational culture, and it exhibits these characteristics throughout most levels of operation.

#### **The Workers:** *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

Most workers sense they are valued more for what they can contribute than for who they are. When they receive training in this organization it is primarily to increase their performance and their value to the company, not to develop personally. Workers are sometimes listened to, but only when they speak in line with the values and priorities of the leaders. Their ideas are sometimes sought but seldom used, while the *important* decisions remain at the top levels of the organization. Relationships tend to be functional and the organizational tasks almost always come first. Conformity is expected, while individual expression is discouraged.

#### **The Leadership:** *Power, decision-making, goals & direction*

Leadership is negatively paternalistic in style and is focused at the top levels of the organization. Power is delegated for specific tasks and for specific positions within the organization. Workers provide some decision-making when it is appropriate to their position. Goals are sometimes unclear and the overall direction of the organization is often confused.

#### **The Team:** *Community, collaboration and team learning*

This is mostly an individualistic environment. Some level of cooperative work exists, but little true collaboration. Teams are utilized but often are characterized by an unproductive competitive spirit.

#### **The Culture:** *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

Workers are unsure of where they stand and how open they can be with one another, and especially with those in leadership over them. This is an environment where limited risks are taken, failure is not allowed, and creativity is encouraged only when it fits within the organization's existing guidelines. There is a minimal to moderate level of trust and trustworthiness along with an underlying uncertainty and fear. People feel that they must prove themselves and that they are only as good as their last performance. People are sometimes motivated to serve the organization, but are not sure that the organization is committed to them. This is an environment that is characterized by a guarded, cautious openness.

#### **The Outlook:** *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is a negatively paternalistic organization. The compliant worker will find this a safe place in which to settle. The best and most creative workers will look elsewhere. Change here is long-term and incremental, and improvement is desired but difficult to achieve. The outlook for this organization is uncertain. Decisions need to be made to move toward healthier organizational life. In times of organizational stress, there will be a tendency to move backwards toward a more autocratic organizational environment.



## org<sup>4</sup> Description

### Moderate Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with **Moderate Organizational Health** in terms of its workers, leadership, and organizational culture, and it exhibits these characteristics throughout most levels of operation.

#### **The Workers:** *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

Many workers sense they are valued, while others are uncertain. People receive training in this organization in order to equip them to fulfill company goals. Workers are listened to, but usually it is when they speak in line with the values and priorities of the leaders. Their ideas are often sought and sometimes used, but the *important* decisions remain at the top levels of the organization. Relationships are valued as they benefit company goals, but organizational tasks often come first. There is a tension between the expectation of conformity and encouragement of diversity.

#### **The Leadership:** *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

Leadership is positively paternalistic in style and mostly comes from the top levels of the organization. Power is delegated for specific tasks and for specific positions within the organization. Workers are encouraged to share ideas for improving the organization. Goals are mostly clear though the overall direction of the organization is sometimes confused.

#### **The Team:** *Community, collaboration and team learning*

Some level of cooperative work exists, and some true collaboration. Teams are utilized but often compete against one another for scarce resources.

#### **The Culture:** *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

Workers are sometimes unsure of where they stand and how open they can be with one another, and especially with those in leadership over them. This is an environment where some risks can be taken but failure is sometimes feared. Creativity is encouraged as long as it doesn't move the organization too much beyond the status quo. There is a moderate level of trust and trustworthiness along with occasional uncertainty and fear. People feel trusted but know that that trust can be lost very easily. People are motivated to serve the organization because it is their job to do so and they are committed to doing good work. This is an environment characterized by openness between select groups of people.

#### **The Outlook:** *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is a positively paternalistic organization that will attract good motivated workers but may find that the "best and brightest" will seek professional challenges elsewhere. Change here is ongoing but often forced by outside circumstances. Improvement is desired but difficult to maintain over time. The outlook for this organization is positive. Decisions need to be made to move toward healthier organizational life. This organization is in a good position to move toward optimal health in the future.



## Description

### Excellent Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with **Excellent Organizational Health** in terms of its workers, leadership, and organizational culture, and it exhibits these characteristics throughout most levels of operation.

#### **The Workers:** *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

Most workers are valued here, for who they are as well as for what they contribute to the organization. They are believed in and are encouraged to develop to their full potential as workers and as individuals. Most leaders and workers listen receptively to one another and are involved together in some of the *important* decisions of the organization. Most relationships are strong and healthy, and diversity is valued and celebrated.

#### **The Leadership:** *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

People are encouraged to provide leadership at all levels of the organization. Power and leadership are shared so that most workers are empowered to contribute to important decisions, including the direction that the organization is taking. Appropriate action is taken, goals are clear, and vision is shared throughout most of the organization.

#### **The Team:** *Community, collaboration and team learning*

A high level of community characterizes this positive work environment. People work together well in teams and prefer collaborative work over competition against one another.

#### **The Culture:** *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

This is an environment mostly characterized by the authenticity of its workers, supervisors, and senior leaders. People are open and accountable to others. They operate with honesty and integrity. This is a "people first" environment in which risks are encouraged, failure can be learned from, and creativity is encouraged and rewarded. People are trusted and are trustworthy throughout the organization. Fear is not used as a motivation. People are motivated to serve the interests of each other before their own self-interest and are open to learning from each other. This is an environment that is characterized by open and effective communication.

#### **The Outlook:** *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is a servant-oriented organization, which will continue to attract some of the best and most motivated workers who can welcome positive change and continuous improvement. It is a place where energy and motivation are continually renewed to provide for the challenges of the future. The outlook is very positive. Ongoing attention should be given to building on existing strengths and continuing to learn and develop toward an optimally healthy organization.



## Description

### Optimal Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with *Optimal Organizational Health* in terms of its workers, leadership, and organizational culture, and it exhibits these characteristics to a very high level throughout all levels of operation.

#### **The Workers:** *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

All workers are valued here, for who they are as well as for what they contribute to the organization. They are believed in and are encouraged to develop to their full potential as workers and as individuals. All leaders and workers listen receptively to one another and are involved together in many of the *important* decisions of the organization. Relationships are strong and healthy, and diversity is valued and celebrated.

#### **The Leadership:** *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

People provide dynamic and effective leadership at all levels of the organization. Power and leadership are shared so that all workers are empowered to contribute to important decisions, including the direction that the organization is taking. Appropriate action is taken, goals are clear, and vision is shared throughout the entire organization.

#### **The Team:** *Community, collaboration and team learning*

An extremely high level of community characterizes this positive work environment. People work together well in teams and choose collaborative work over competition against one another.

#### **The Culture:** *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

This is an environment characterized by the authenticity of its workers, supervisors, and executive leaders. People are very open and accountable to others. They operate with complete honesty and integrity. This is a "people first" environment in which risks are taken, failure is learned from, and creativity is encouraged and rewarded. People throughout the entire organization are highly trusted and are highly trustworthy. Fear does not exist as a motivation. People are highly motivated to serve the interests of each other before their own self-interest and are open to learning from each other. This is an environment that is characterized by open and effective communication throughout the organization.

#### **The Outlook:** *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is a servant-minded organization throughout, and will continue to attract the very best and most motivated workers who can welcome positive change and continuous improvement. It is a place where energy and motivation are continually renewed to provide for the challenges of the future. The outlook is extremely positive. Ongoing attention should be given to building new strengths and continuing to maintain and develop as an optimally healthy organization.



## RE-IMAGINING POWER IN LEADERSHIP: REFLECTION, INTEGRATION, AND SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

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Leadership is imbued with the idea of power. Think about leadership, and soon after you will think of power as well. This is because power is a compelling aspect of leadership. Think about power—and you evoke several images. Power is a different and an independent phenomenon. It surrounds our everyday life in a ubiquitous and pervasive way—physical power, solar power, social power, spiritual power, and so on. It elicits impressions of greatness and grandeur, strength and stamina, energy and engagement. It evokes ideas like force, control, persuasion, authority, influence, impact, and charisma.

It is, therefore, not surprising to see that power is perhaps one of the most studied phenomena in the world. There is a preponderance of literature on power from several disciplines, such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, and organizational studies. Power is defined by a multiplicity of perspectives, making it a concept that is idiosyncratic, “essentially-contested” (Wrong, 1995), and highly “privileged” (Wartenberg, 1990). The several theories that explain power indicate a variety of usages of the term, each usage carrying its own unique “language game” (from the philosopher Wittgenstein), making the search for a single concept of power elusive and “intrinsically illusory” (Haugaard, 2002).

Power is thus defined in ways differing in complexity and scope. Pfeffer (1997) notes that we are “profoundly ambivalent about power, and that ambivalence has led to recurrent questioning of the concept and its definition” (p. 137). The simplest definitions I found most acceptable are the following: “Power is the potential one individual has to change the thinking



and behavior of other people” (Zaleznik & Kets de Vries, 1985, p. xiii); and Bertrand Russell’s definition of power as “the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others” (Wrong, 1995, p. 10). These definitions allow us to see power generically in the diversity of its applications, like political power or mental power, social or organizational power.

How has the field of leadership studies framed the phenomenon of power? Taking Rost’s (1993) definition of leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 102), power becomes part of the process of influence that is integral to leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Yukl, 2002). Power is involved in the relationship of leader and follower, primarily in terms of the power of the leader over the follower. According to the often-quoted French and Raven’s 1959 study (Yukl, 2002), the leader’s power is mainly derived from and based on the leader’s position (legitimate authority, reward, coercion, information, environment) as well as the leader’s very person (referent, expertise).

Power is also seen as a psychological orientation, need, or motivation that drives leaders toward its use and misuse (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Burns, 1978; Kets de Vries, 1993; Zaleznik & Kets de Vries, 1985). The problem and potential power of leaders in different settings like politics and business have intensified interest in rethinking and recasting leadership power in terms of follower and organizational empowerment (Appelbaum, Hebert, & Leroux, 1999; Hardy & Clegg, 1996; Gordon, 2002), sharing and distribution (Hollander & Offerman, 1990; Bass & Stogdill, 1990), stewardship (Block, 1996), and transformation (Burns, 1978).

#### SERVANT-LEADERSHIP AND THE QUESTION OF POWER

Robert K. Greenleaf’s (1977) servant-leadership proposes a new paradigm of power in leadership. As early as the 1970s Greenleaf discerned an emerging trend toward a rethinking of the idea and practice of power in leadership and in institutions. Power is reinvented from its highly perva-



sive, coercive nature toward the servant-leader's power of persuasion and example. This "legitimized" form of power has become an ethical imperative in our times (pp. 5, 41). It challenges the traditional conception of power as status, manipulation, control, and domination. It re-appropriates the concept of power as a moral principle that can imbue a leader with a deeply respectable "servant stature."

A fresh critical look is being taken at the issues of power and authority, and people are beginning to learn, however haltingly, to relate to one another in less coercive and more creatively supporting ways. A new moral principle is emerging which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader. Those who choose to follow this principle will not casually accept the authority of existing institutions. *Rather, they will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants.* To the extent that this principle prevails in the future, the only truly viable institutions will be those that are predominantly servant-led. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 10)

### *Addressing the Gap*

Scholars have pointed out the insufficiency of research and literature on power in the social sciences in general (Pfeffer, 1997) as well as in the field of organizational studies (Pfeffer, 1997; Hardy & Clegg, 1996; Mumby, 2001). There has also been recognition of limited research on power in leadership studies, particularly in terms of in-depth exploration of the dynamics of power in leadership processes (Yukl, 2002; Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Hollander & Offermann, 1990). Gordon (2002), in a major leadership journal, observes that leadership theories have largely failed to address the phenomenon of power, particularly at the level of what he calls "deep structures." He describes "deep structures" as codes of behavioral order that are typically covert and implicit, but have profound influence in organizational relationships and outcomes. Such deep structures may be



manifested in perceptions and actions of participants in the diverse settings of leadership—organization, community, society, and culture. How these participants in these settings experience and understand the phenomenon of power in leadership situations presents an important area of development—a gap—in leadership studies (Gordon, 2002; Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Ryan, 1984).

I would like to address this gap in leadership research and reflection. I notice the breadth and depth of thought given to power in socio-political and psychological theories. Very little, however, has been done in terms of integrating them with the phenomenon of leadership. In light of this, an exploration into socio-political and psychological conceptions of power can be useful to leadership. The essay presents a re-imagining of conceptions of power in the following ways: one, by looking at the context of leadership from the prism of socio-political understanding of power; two, by looking at the leader’s self and person from the prism of psychological and philosophical understanding of power; and three, by integrating these perspectives through the challenge of reflection, integration, and servant-leadership.

*“Power Without”: The Power Dynamics of Leadership*

The phenomenon of leadership does not exist in a vacuum; it operates in different domains, settings, or contexts. It may be the group, organization, society, environment, or culture. It embraces realities like relationships, structures, systems, and institutions. Power is embedded in these contexts and realities. Leadership, through the aid of social theory, is challenged to understand the dynamics of power at work in the diversity of settings and contexts in which it finds itself. These social realities constitute the external environment of leadership. Thus, leadership needs a “power without” perspective.



*Power as understood in context*

How can leadership develop this perspective of looking at the dynamics of power in settings and contexts? Perhaps a fundamental step is to ask an ontological question: How do we look at social reality? Berger and Luckmann (1966) provide us with a classic thought in contemporary sociological theory. Their theory of social construction looks at social reality as a human product. Social order is not derived from “laws of nature.” The social order is a product of human activity through a process called “externalization.” This theory explains how institutions arise. Human activity repeated frequently is cast into a pattern of actions and decisions, which Berger and Luckmann call “habitualization.” For example, habitualization of the activity of learning results in institutions of learning—the educational system. Habitualization of the activity of decision-making results in political institutions. The world of institutions then becomes experienced as an objective social reality.

The institutions, as historical and objective facticities, confront the individual as undeniable facts. The institutions are there, external to him, persistent in their reality, whether he likes it or not. He cannot wish them away. They resist his attempts to change or evade them. They have coercive power over him. . . The objective reality of institutions is not diminished if the individual does not understand their purpose or their mode of operation. He may experience large sectors of the social world as incomprehensible, perhaps oppressive in their opaqueness, but real nonetheless. Since institutions exist as external reality the individual cannot understand them by introspection. He must “go out” and learn about them, just as he must to learn about nature. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 60)

This ontological understanding of social reality frames our first fundamental perspective: leadership needs to “go out and learn” about its setting. Focusing on human activities connected with power, a purposeful discernment accompanies leadership and creates an opportunity to more fully



understand institutions, systems, and structures of power. Leadership needs to be sensitive to the dynamics of power in its environment.

### *Power as situated*

Discerning leadership imagines power as existing in what Wartenberg (1990) describes as a “social field.” Wartenberg imagines this social field as constituted not merely by a dyadic power relationship between two agents (the power wielder and the one affected by power), but also by a “broad social context” consisting of a “vast field of social forces” of structures and processes of power. Conceiving power in terms of persons A and B, in an equation like: “power of A over B is equal to maximum force which A can induce on B minus the maximum resisting force which B can mobilize in the opposite direction” is criticized by Burns (1978) as a formula that is “more physics than power.”

Wartenberg (1990) gives an example of the power relationship that characterizes the teacher and student in a small classroom setting. While the exercise of power may be localized in the dyad, the whole power dynamic extends beyond it: into the broader social field consisting of power structures in the grading system, into the academic profession, and into the school environment as a whole. Hence, educational leadership confronting the issue of power becomes aware of this picture of power as situated in a broader social matrix of power relationships at different levels of social reality.

### *Power as heterogeneous*

With this view of power as situated in a social field, the next level of imagination is to see the heterogeneity and diversity of these power relationships and institutions existing in this field:

Situated power does not reside exclusively in a single site or institution of society. The situated conception of power shows that social power is a



heterogeneous presence that spreads across an entire set of agents and practices, although its exercise depends upon the actions of the dominant agent. Such heterogeneity is constituted by a complex coordination among agents located in diverse sites and institutions, all of whose presence in a social alignment is necessary to constitute a situated power relationship. (Wartenberg, 1990, p. 151)

This view can be used in analyzing the power behind the act of grading that exists in Wartenberg's (1990) example of the dyadic relationship of teacher and student. The teacher's power over the student through the power of grading affects and is affected by diverse social forces surrounding this central dyadic relationship of teacher and student. These include not only the students' parents, who might be expecting high grades from their child, but also the principal, an honor society, an athletic club, or a fraternity. Poor grades will affect prospects of entrance into law, business, or medical schools, as well as future careers. Even a romantic relationship may affect or be affected by the power of the grade.

Leadership is challenged to see the diversity of these settings, and the diversity of the power dynamic in each of these settings. Diversity of power dynamics may come in many forms, depending on the peculiarity of the leadership context. Diversity may be in terms of type or nature of organizations. There are power dynamics inherent in groups or "tribes" within an organization (Schmookler, 1994). There are power dynamics in family systems. The organization is a vast arena for the exercise of power, and the leader or executive in an organization is always challenged to see the inherent and inescapable power dynamics in organizational life (Kotter, 1985; Morgan, 1997; Pfeffer, 1981, 1992). In a business organization, for example, executive power relates with other power centers like the board, labor, suppliers, customers, and other stakeholders, through influence and power strategies like negotiations, conflict management, alliances, and networks (Greenleaf, 1977; Morgan, 1997; Pfeffer, 1997).

Power in different organizational forms is studied by different academic disciplines: political science tends to focus on government and politi-



cal organizations, management studies on business organizations, and sociology on community and other social organizations (family, church, indigenous groups).

Aside from understanding the diversity of power in different organizational forms, leadership must also see the dynamics of power framed in specific terms by interest or cause-oriented groups. A great deal of thought has been given to looking at power from the perspective of marginalized and oppressed social classes, and specific disciplines focus on issues of power as expressed by specific sectors in society. Feminist theory focuses on gender relations and the power of women. Marxist and critical theory focuses on empowering marginalized social classes and transforming power structures of economic and political domination. Cultural studies explore the dynamics of power among African Americans and other race-based and ethnic societies or cultures. Liberation theology reflects on the power of the poor and their struggle for freedom. The discourse on power is as diverse as the sectoral groups who grapple with it in their lives in two ways: one, as the recipients of power that is exercised as coercion and domination through structures of hierarchy and control; and two, as wielders of power exercised for transformation through structures of empowerment. The first function of power has been imagined as “power over,” and the second one, as “power to” (Hinze, 1995; Wrong, 1995).

Greenleaf (1977) speaks of essentially two types of power embedded in institutions, coercive power and the power of persuasion and example:

In a complex institution-centered society, which ours is likely to be into the indefinite future, there will be large and small concentrations of power. Sometimes it will be a servant’s power of persuasion and example. Sometimes it will be coercive power used to dominate and manipulate people. The difference is that, in the former, power is used to create opportunity and alternatives so that individuals may choose and build autonomy. In the latter, individuals are coerced into a predetermined path. Even if it is “good” for them, if they experience nothing else, ultimately their autonomy will be diminished. (pp. 41-42)



Greenleaf's vision of servant-leadership encompasses a deep concern for institutional quality and integrity. Caring for institutions includes sensitivity to the dynamics of power within them, the potential to abuse it, and the need for "countervailing power" which is "a necessary condition of all human arrangements" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 85). A new basis of trust among stakeholders in the institution can be founded on this renewed vision of power that is shared, a power that is nurtured by persuasion and example. As Greenleaf said, "No one should be powerless!"

*"Power Within": The Inner Dynamics of Power in Leadership*

We now shift our attention from the external environment of the leader toward the interiority of the leader. Just as power can be situated in the complex setting of leadership, power can also be located in the inner life of leaders. The need, desire, craving for power—a human tendency that is all too familiar to us—resides within the interior life of the individual leader. Psychology helps us understand this phenomenon, as well as the motives that drive it. It helps us imagine how individuals can be oriented or disposed toward power. Leadership has to be informed by this process of imagining power as a motive and as a capacity of individual leaders.

*Power as desire*

Leadership can benefit from empirical research done on personal power, particularly on the phenomenon of power as a need or motive. Early studies by Adler in 1927 and Horney in 1942 developed the concept of the "will to power," a craving, almost neurotic need for power due to one's feeling of inferiority and anxiety (Lips, 1981). The striving for power is central to Alfred Adler's (1966) psychology:

To be big! To be powerful! This is and has always been the longing of those who are little or feel they are little . . . Whatever men are striving for originates from their urgent attempts to overcome the impression of deficiency, insecurity, weakness . . . Our guiding ideal is concretized as



power over others . . . The striving for personal power is a disastrous delusion and poisons man's living together. (pp. 168-169)

In his book *The Power Motive*, Winter (1973) argues for recognition of this powerful driving force in people. He speaks of the tendency of individuals, especially those in public life, to mask their desire for power with more noble virtues like "service," "duty," and "responsibility." To acknowledge the existence of the power motive is essential in today's power-preoccupied world. Some psychologists have concluded that "just as sexuality was repressed and denied during the nineteenth century, so today power strivings are repressed and achieve only disguised expression through defense mechanisms such as distortion, displacement, projection, and rationalization" (p. 3).

How is the power motive manifested in action? Through projective tests that Winter (1973) developed to measure a person's level of need for power, or *n* Power, he drew out themes and imagery that indicate powerful actions and dispositions. Lips (1981) summarizes these themes and imagery as including

forceful behavior such as assaults, threats, or insults; sexual exploitation; taking advantage of another's weakness; giving unsolicited help, support, or protection; trying to control another person by regulating behavior or living conditions or by seeking information; trying to influence or persuade another; and trying to impress some other person or the world at large. (p. 27)

David McClelland (1975, pp. 10-12) builds on Winter's (1973) work by identifying four main actions correlated to men with high power motivation. These actions include: (1) power-oriented reading, or reading about sex, sports, and aggression; (2) accumulating prestige possessions like guns, cars, and credit cards; (3) participation in competitive sports; and (4) belonging to organizations and holding office in them. Men get power in different ways, but the same effect holds: a feeling of power.

McClelland (1975) further proposes a classification of these power



actions into “power orientations.” He makes the following distinctions: (1) the source of power as one’s self or others; and (2) the object of power as one’s self (to feel stronger) or others (to influence). He then identifies four stages in power orientation, which are synchronized with the psycho-sexual and psycho-social development framework originally proposed by Freud and Erikson. McClelland describes the four stages as follows: Stage I: “I strengthen, control, direct myself”; Stage II: “Others (God, my mother, my leader, food, etc.) strengthen me”; Stage III: “I have an impact on others”; and Stage IV: “It (religion, laws, my group) moves me to serve and influence others” (pp. 13-21).

McClelland (1975) frames the power motive within a continuum that describes levels of personal maturity and development. Stage I to Stage II moves the individual from external control to internal control. Stage III to Stage IV moves the person from self-assertion to selfless service to an ideal. The desire for power, therefore, exists at these different stages of psychological growth from self-centeredness to selflessness. Maturity, however, is seen not much in terms of progressing through the stages, but in terms of the “ability to use whatever mode is appropriate to the situation.” McClelland continues:

The developmental model we have in mind is not like the Freudian one in which early learnings are left behind or, if they persist, are viewed as immature abnormal fixations. Rather, the modes of experiencing power are learned in succession, more or less in the order given, each depending on the successful experiencing of the earlier ones. Yet the earlier modes should remain available to provide the opportunity for a richer, more varied life. (p. 24)

He gives the example of a young man who appropriately develops Stage II behavior to break his dependence on his mother, then gets married and develops a new sense of personal power in a Stage I manner. When he plays tennis and talks politics he assumes Stage III competitive behavior, and in church he lives out the service orientation of Stage IV (p. 24).

These empirical studies on the power motive in the mid ’70s still have



relevance today in terms of reflecting on the extent to which a leader needs and desires power. New studies may be needed to re-contextualize these questions on the power motive to the exigencies of the contemporary situation. New modes of power orientation and action need to be observed. One such observation is that of imagining power as a potential pathology among leaders.

### *Power as pathology*

Organization specialists Abraham Zaleznik and Manfred Kets de Vries (1985) wrote about the psychodynamics of leadership and power in organizations. They studied the phenomenon of leaders' using power not only constructively, but destructively as well. Unconscious motivation determines the actions and dispositions of leaders, and their positions can be used "as a stage for acting out their personal conflicts and insecurities" (p. xi). To study this unconscious motivation of leaders is to look into what Kets de Vries (1993) calls the leader's "intrapsychic theater." Clinical, psycho-analytical perspectives are used here:

People who aspire to power frequently operate on a borrowed ego, a corporate mind in place of a cohesive self and an awareness of who one is in the flow of history and time. Busily reaching for power, the individual attempts to cast off unacceptable self-images and remains divided and ill at ease. The orientation to power then becomes defensive, as a means for uniting a divided self and as a substitute for a sustaining ego ideal. (Zaleznik & Kets de Vries, 1985, p. vii)

The psychoanalytical lens can help in understanding how and why leaders deal with power. Early childhood experiences, relationships with parents and family, defining moments of identity and individuation—these and other factors influencing individual growth and development can assist in understanding the power dynamics within a leader's interior life. One factor that influences a leader's disposition toward power is the sense of individual potency, which is an attribute of leadership (Kets de Vries, 1993,



p. 16). This feeling of individual potency, or personal power, is nurtured through childhood experiences:

The degree of encouragement and frustration children experience as they grow up. . .has a lasting influence on their perception of themselves and others and the relationships they form throughout their lives. Any imbalance between their feelings of helplessness and the degree of protective nurturing they receive from their parents will be felt as a psychological injury. . .[and] will feed their natural sense of impotence. . .they will commonly respond with feelings of rage, a desire for vengeance, a hunger for personal power, and compensatory fantasies of omnipotence. This dynamic continues throughout life, and if it is not adequately resolved within individuals as they grow up, it is likely to be reactivated with devastating effect when they reach leadership positions and learn to play the game of power. (Kets de Vries, 1993, p. 16)

These psychological injuries render these individuals vulnerable to the pathologies of power and leadership. They develop narcissistic, grandiose, addictive, and compulsive patterns of behavior. They become power seekers, entering the arena of leadership and politics “to compensate for feelings of low self-esteem, unimportance, moral inferiority, weakness, mediocrity, and intellectual inferiority” (Post, 2004, p. 17). Greenleaf (1995) observes that common corruptions of power include personality distortion, arrogance, and impairment of imagination, or the sheer incapacity to form ideas and good judgment.

Leadership roles become the stage for acting out and reinforcing these personality disorders at the expense of others. The glitter and glamour of power and prestige blind them to their intoxication with and abuse of power. They sink into a spiral of ego-indulgence, self-perpetuation, and power arrogation, enacting Lord Acton’s dictum of absolute power corrupting absolutely. The world’s history of war, violence, and aggression is filled with leaders who have fallen into this pathological trap of power and leadership.



### *Power as being*

The inner dynamics of personal power include many other things aside from looking at power as desire and as pathology. Power resides in the very constitution of the person: mind, body and spirit. Hence, to imagine power from within is to imagine the power inherent in these faculties of a person's being. Power has been described in such terms: power of intelligence and imagination, power of soul and spirit, power of character and charisma, power of emotion and empathy, power of values and vision. Extensive research shows how emotional intelligence can unleash powerful energies that build resonance in the practice of leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).

Power can thus be imagined as a reality that encompasses the totality of a person's being. Power is the ontological reality of *being* itself. Power is not nothingness. To possess power is to be. To be, or to exist, is to possess power. This metaphysical, ontological description of power has been proposed by Paul Tillich (1954), an influential twentieth-century theologian, in his classic book, *Love, Power and Justice*. For Tillich, power is most fundamental to love and justice, "since being itself is the 'power of being,' a power ultimately identifiable as God" (Hinze, 1995, p. 187; Pasewark, 1993, pp. 245-246; Tillich, 1954, pp. 35-40). Power drives the essence of being, of reality as a whole—without which love and justice cannot exist. He calls for an integrated understanding of love, power and justice; a disconnected view of these three reduces love to pure emotion, and power and justice to compulsion (Tillich, 1954, p. 12).

Greenleaf (1977) lends credence to the same inner power of the person's being. The servant-leader's power originates from within. This power resides in the servant-leader's own humanity:

Servants, by definition, are fully human. Servant-leaders are functionally superior because they are closer to the ground—they hear things, see things, know things, and their intuitive insight is exceptional. Because of this they are dependable and trusted, they know the meaning of that line



from Shakespeare's sonnet: "They that have power to hurt and will do none. . . ." (p. 42)

Hence, Greenleaf shows that in the servant-leader's inner self is his or her "functional superiority" or power. This power includes distinctive qualities like intuition, empathy, acceptance, foresight, healing, creativity, and faith. The servant-leader has a "sense for the unknowable," and is able to "foresee the unforeseeable." This leader has a "feel for patterns" and is able to "listen *first*." These powers give leaders their "lead," as they are able to know with "discerning toughness" how to "go out ahead" and "show the way" to others.

*Integrating Inner and Outer Power Dynamics: The Challenge of Reflection, Integration, and Servant-leadership*

I have explored the inner and outer dynamics of power in leadership. In the "power without" perspective, power is situated in the leader's setting, which is socially constructed, heterogeneous, and diverse in its forms and manifestations. In the "power within" perspective, power is fulfilling a desire, motivation, and need in leaders. Unmanaged and uncontrolled, it becomes a pathology that makes for dysfunctional and destructive leadership. From an ontological perspective, power can be grasped as descriptive of the very constitution of human existence, as *being* itself.

Leaders are challenged to have both of these power perspectives: "power without," or *exteriority*, and "power within," or *interiority*. The sense of exteriority challenges the leader to know and comprehend the power dynamics of his or her environment and setting. Sociological and political tools of understanding are useful here. The sense of interiority challenges the leader to grasp and grapple with power within the self through psychological, philosophical, and spiritual frames of understanding. The leader needs *both* exteriority and interiority. Not to have one or the other leads to a limited view of power and reality that is bifurcated and



disjointed. A leader is called to attend to both internal and external realities, to both self and environment.

The challenge, however, goes beyond just *having* both perspectives, but also toward *integrating* both perspectives. The leader's tools and capacities are not only for awareness and analysis, but also for integration and action. Leaders have to make sense of power as manifested in complex structures of organization, society and culture, and integrate it with their personal psychology and spirit, within an equally complex reality of their interior life or self. We have glimpsed the complexity of these processes, and what is called for is a leadership that has the capacity to make sense of these through a process of reflection. Such reflective leadership would have the following characteristics: a deep understanding of the self, a relational view of power, and an inclination to work for change and transformation.

#### *A deep self-understanding*

The first challenge is a process of self-understanding among leaders. Leadership research has emphasized the need for self-awareness and understanding, as well as for other related themes like self-management and self-evaluation (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Yukl, 2002). Some leadership theories view the leader's values and principles as the very foundation of leadership (Covey, 1992; Greenleaf, 1977; O'Toole, 1996). Others call for a process of reflexive self-reflection on the very practice of leadership, a process which Heifetz (1994) calls "getting on the balcony" (p. 252). This habit of self-examination deepens self-knowledge, and increases capacity for the regulation and management of leaders' "hungers" and needs for "power and control, affirmation and importance, as well as intimacy and delight" (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002, p. 164). Such processes of deep self-understanding can integrate the dimension of power within the psyche and spirit:

As a precondition for acting on other people, the would-be leader must engage in self-reflection in order to heal the rifts within the psyche, tame



the urges of power and aggression. . . There is no greater need for self-understanding today than in the people who achieve positions of power. (Zaleznik & Kets de Vries, 1985, pp. xiii, xv)

Greenleaf's (1977) servant-leader develops such self-understanding by moving through life from two levels of consciousness. One is the actual, real world of activity, where the leader is "concerned, responsible, effective, value oriented." The other is on another level, where the leader is "detached, riding above it, seeing today's events, and seeing oneself deeply involved in today's events, in the perspective of a long sweep of history and projected into the indefinite future" (p. 26). This practice of detachment, withdrawal, and self-examination builds and clarifies values. It serves as "armor" against the stresses, uncertainties, and distractions of life situations. It safeguards the center and perspective of one's life, and provides constant grounding to what matters most: "Awareness is not a giver of solace—it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener" (pp. 27-28).

#### *A relational view of power*

The second challenge is to have a relational view of power that integrates the internal and the external, the subjective and the objective, interiority and exteriority. According to process theologian Bernard Loomer (1976), relational power is the alternative to what he calls "unilateral or linear power":

Linear power is the capacity to influence, guide, adjust, manipulate, shape, control, or transform the human or natural environment in order to advance one's purposes. This kind of power is essentially one-directional in its working. . . [Relational power] is the ability both to produce and to undergo an effect. It is the capacity both to influence and be influenced by others. Relational power involves both a giving and a receiving. (Loomer, 1976, pp. 8, 17)

According to Loomer, linear power negates the relational context of



power. Linear power has dominated Western thought and culture, and its effect is dominance, competition, curtailment of power over the other, and inequality in the relationship. Relational power affirms the communal dimension of power, along with its values of mutuality, accountability, equality, and interdependence. These values imbue relational power with a stature of integrity, strength of character—it is, then, a power which redefines the notion of “size.” Loomer, as cited in Keller (1986), says,

By size I mean the stature of a person’s soul, the range and depth of his love, his capacity for relationships. I mean the volume of life you can take into your being and still maintain your integrity and individuality, the intensity and variety of outlook you can entertain in the unity of your being without feeling defensive or insecure. I mean the strength of your spirit to encourage others to become freer in the development of their diversity and uniqueness. I mean the power to sustain more complex and enriching tensions. I mean the magnanimity of concern to provide conditions that enable others to increase in stature. (p. 143)

The “stature” here may very well be the same “servant stature” Greenleaf (1977) envisions in leadership. The power of servant-leaders is gauged in terms of their “net influence” on our lives. The “net influence” may be neutral, or it may be one of enrichment, or one of diminishment. The servant stature enriches, rather than diminishing or depleting our lives (pp. 42-43). Servant-leaders enrich us by their sheer presence. This is where the relational power of the servant-leader comes from.

Leaders are thus challenged to reflect on power and re-imagine it in terms of relationships and community. To conceive of power this way is to see one’s self as deeply connected to one’s matrix of relationships. To imagine power this way is to see one’s self as integrated with, and accountable to, one’s environment, thereby magnified in spirit and love. Part of this integration and accountability is the openness to work for change and transformation, the third challenge.



### *A consciousness for change*

A leader who reflects on her self and her environment realizes the necessity of change occurring both in her self or consciousness, and in her environment and culture. The process of change happens internally, within one's self and consciousness. Leaders can sort out their personal "power issues" (Horner, 1995)—their motives and desires for power, their psychological dispositions for potential misuse and abuse of it. Reflective leaders then become aware that power can be both a problem and a potential to them, an energy that can be both corruptive and constructive. Such awareness is the foundation for changing their consciousness toward power.

Externally, leaders reflect on their setting and see how power can be used as an instrument for domination and oppression, and also as a means for transformation and empowerment. In this aspect leaders are called to take the role of change agents, aware of and acting for necessary changes in the structures and systems of power that govern their environment at different levels: relationships, groups, organizations, societies, and cultures.

A type of change that is called for is that of moving from compulsion to "centeredness" in power, as proposed by Tillich (1954). Leaders with power, as we have seen, are prone to compulsion and corruption. This downfall, however, can be avoided through the discipline of being centered in power as being, as integral to the self. Concretely, this idea entails a process of "self-integration, self-creativity, and self-transcendence." Leadership facilitates this process of achieving centeredness:

For without the centeredness given by leadership, no self-integration and self-creation of a group would be possible. . . The leader represents not only the power and justice of the group but also himself, his power of being, and the justice implied in it. (Tillich, 1963, p. 82)

The challenge of changing both consciousness and culture is the ethical imperative of power in leadership. It inspires leaders to integrate not just their sense of power, but also their entire selves consisting of mind,



body, and spirit. It commits them to the work of transforming culture and society toward building relationships and communities of justice and love. These are the strivings that nurture a new, spiritual, and transformative sense of power among reflective leaders.

### *The Vision of Servant-Leadership*

This picture of the reflective leader is integral to Greenleaf's (1977) vision of the servant-leader. The servant-leader embodies and integrates the aforementioned challenges of deep self-understanding, relational view of power, and consciousness for change. We can discern from this vision the essence and core of servant-leadership: leaders with the capacity for both interiority and exteriority, leaders who embrace the phenomenon of power as responsibility and service, and leaders who have the courage to face the imperative of personal and social transformation.

With these qualities, leaders not only will internalize the "servant stature" but also will be encouraged, and empowered to actually *lead*. This is the imperative of our times, as Greenleaf (1977) concludes in his seminal essay on servant-leadership:

The real enemy is fuzzy thinking on the part of good, intelligent, vital people, and their failure to lead, and to follow servants as leaders. . . *the enemy is strong natural servants who have the potential to lead but do not lead, or who choose to follow a non-servant*. They suffer. Society suffers. And so it may be in the future. (p. 45)

With a re-imagined, reinvented understanding of power in leadership, these leaders will choose to lead. They will be motivated, strengthened, and inspired to take on the cudgels of servant-leadership. They will lead from a platform that comes from within and flows toward the demands of change and transformation around us. These leaders will lead with integrity, authenticity, and spirituality.



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## THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF COACHING IN SERVANT-LEADER DEVELOPMENT

—PAUL NAKAI  
LEADERSHIP SPIRIT INTERNATIONAL

Servant-leadership is a way of life that brings with it refreshing simplicity to the seemingly complex, multi-layered nuances of relationship, and, centrally, a call toward the deepest regard for human dignity. The validity of a servant-led perspective is shown in one of the great and persevering dynamics of human nature: the ultimate truth demonstrated in humbling oneself in order to serve the most significant needs of another person. This idea, of the servant who leads, is as compelling today as it has been throughout history. Notably, in order to develop servant-leadership in the life of an organization, simplicity, not complexity, becomes very important. The simple notion of good thinking contains the power to change not only the individual person but also entire organizations, and accordingly, good thinking is the engine behind the kind of awareness and foresight that inform a servant-led way of life. One pathway from which to explore good thinking is in the daily life of the executive.

Awareness is not a giver of solace—it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity.

—Robert Greenleaf

Why would a chief executive seek to improve or change the leadership competency and organizational culture of the company?

The answers are numerous and complex. Some want to improve team and organizational performance, or solve specific issues standing in the way



of performance. Some want to bring greater alignment to the senior team and subsequently to the company itself. Or the organization may be facing a dramatic change, problem or crisis requiring a new way of doing business. For others, it may simply be that the organization is having difficulty getting traction on a strategic initiative such as improving quality or customer service.

Regardless of the business reason, many corporate leaders see enhancing the leadership capability of everyone in their organization as vital to the successful accomplishment of their goals and assuring the lasting viability of their organizations. To these executives, leadership embodies those traits that inspire deep care, compassion, and greatness in the people in their organizations.

Some of the capacities attributed to leadership are the ability to:

1. Create and enroll others in a compelling vision for the organization, to bring things into focus.
2. Bring out the best in others.
3. Create open and trusting relationships.
4. Awaken and bring forth in others the desire and courage to live a more values-based, ethical and fulfilled life.
5. Know what is the most important thing to do or address.
6. Bring “out-of-the-box” creativity to problems and issues.
7. Maintain calm and perspective in difficult times.
8. Create and to bring things into being that were not previously there.

The leadership capabilities executives seek are often the very abilities that create the above results. To be able to do this, executive coaches often focus on helping executives and organizations change or shift behavior to improve leadership abilities. My own work has gradually evolved into a different focus. Over the last couple of decades working with companies, my experience has shown that focusing on behavioral habits usually has very limited, short-term results in terms of actual improvement in leadership capacity. The illusion that this behavioral approach appears to work requires a shift in thinking. This shift in thinking, then, is the real deter-



miner of graceful, permanent and flexible change, both on personal and organizational levels.

General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader.

—Larry Spears

Without a shift in thinking, even if a behavioral change does occur, some have had difficulty applying this behavior to other situations or venues. For instance, executives who stop micromanaging their people may still act this way with their own families. Although such executives may see that overly tight scrutiny, judgment and correction stifle the type of behavior and attitude they want to see in their people, they may not see this phenomenon carrying over to their personal or family life. Even if they do see the connection, unless they can find and correct the source of their need to overmanage and overcontrol, maintaining this change takes energy, effort and vigilance. This adds additional “to do’s” to the already busy workload of executive life, as well as frequently causing the executive to be self-conscious about how he or she interacts with others. The executive ends up working twice as hard without the guarantee of sustained change.

#### A MORE PERSONAL AND SPECIFIC APPROACH

I believe the greatest impact in the field of corporate leadership development lies in helping leaders gain insight into the numerous ways they personally impact corporate performance. The most effective leadership goes beyond behavior. Even though effective leadership is realized through displayed actions, it can be neither totally mimicked nor copied. The things that leadership accomplishes cannot be achieved through badgering, cajoling, or threatening. Leadership is captured in being able to reach people at a deeper intrinsic level, i.e., a level of heart, thought and insight. It entails being able to maneuver in the intangible dimensions of vision, values and inspiration.

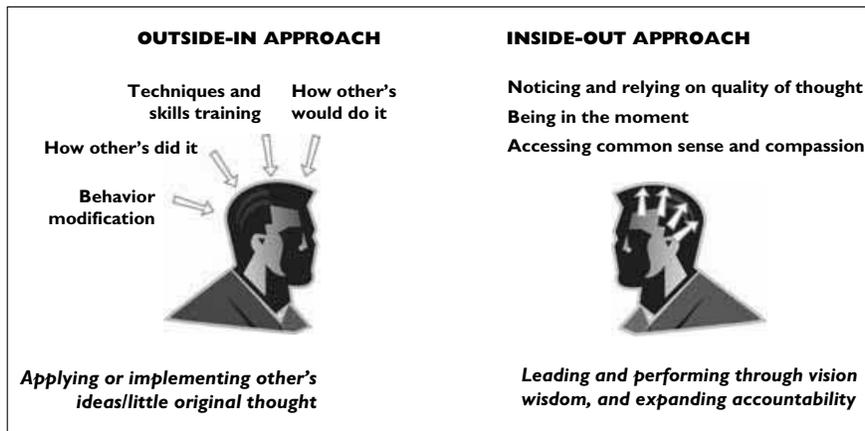


Effective leadership goes beyond even one’s intellectual capacity; rather, it is founded on a gifted ability to connect to the common sense of those with whom we live and work. This type of personal insight enhances the ability of senior corporate executives to lead their companies with character, calm, and a sense of inner resilience.

So what is the process for gaining this insight?

I believe it begins in recognizing that leadership is in fact an inside-out capacity, one based on deeper, more meaningful understandings of life—based on insight rather than solely on behavior. It then follows that there is no magical “outside-in” process for doing this in every situation, with every individual. In fact, there are probably as many processes as there are leaders. Interestingly enough, Steven Covey makes this point by listing 24 major theories of leadership in his book *The 8th Habit*.

OUTSIDE-IN APPROACH      INSIDE-OUT APPROACH



However, one thing we do know about this type of leadership development, which may be more accurately called leadership awakening, is that it is most effectively done when it is led by a coach who understands the relationship between heart, behavior, and thought.

One leader described the chain of logic this way:



The quality of my personal and our organizational performance is based on the quality of the actions and decisions I make as a leader. The quality of these actions and decisions is greatly influenced by the quality of my perspective, state of mind and attitude. The quality of my state of mind is greatly influenced by the quality of my thinking and my feelings in the moment. I feel that understanding how it works and being able to see this dimension of thought gives me and our company the definitive edge.

This leader felt it was the quality of his state of mind that determined which thoughts he would entertain and in what fashion. As his consciousness rose, so did the profundity and perspective of his thinking. This executive realized that how he thinks about the business and how he evaluates and leads the leadership of the company greatly affects the decisions and actions he takes. He can either bring wisdom and creativity to the mix, or patterns of emotion and thought that tend to block the development of the organization. He can either reduce the amount of stress in the system or be a source of it. Through this realization, he is able to improve one of the most powerful influences of how his company functions. . .himself.

I would further postulate that the perspective, wise words and good advice presented by effective executives, proven thought leaders and academicians, and sought-after consultants, are the results of their ability to access their own state of emotional discernment, wisdom, and insight. To solely try to implement suggestions is equal to dealing with the artifacts of thinking and overlooking where the real “magic” exists . . . in the state of mind that recognizes and articulates all great ideas.

Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams.

—Robert Greenleaf

Greenleaf’s principles of servant-leadership are a prime example of this wisdom. They are not solely intellectual constructs, but are a living understanding and an accurate explanation of how life appeared to Greenleaf, and how, in his estimation, life truly works—for everyone and in every situation. The creativity that his thoughts spawned and the many dif-



ferent iterations and theories born from this beginning are proof of the depth and profundity of his thoughts and words.

#### THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

When a leader further awakens his or her innate leadership ability, amazing results are achieved. When these individuals also hold positions of responsibility, organizational improvements abound as a direct result. By making the effort to improve their own leadership acumen, they bring tremendous integrity to the process of organizational transformation by modeling both their strengths as a leader and their humility as a learner. They occupy the seemingly diametrically opposed positions of “knowing what they know” and being truly open to seeing things differently.

These leaders realize that fulfillment and performing are innate and natural to every person. What frequently gets in the way of this natural desire to contribute and perform are dysfunctional thoughts that are ego-laden or worrisome. These thought habits wound and do harm to the person and to those around them. One of the services that leaders create for their people is to heal them by generating the ability to see troubled thoughts clearly. Such leaders realize people do not move forward from a troubled way of thinking to a better position, but people actually return to a natural state of peace and forgiveness. This desire to return to “wholeness” is an innate trait of both the servant-leader and the servant-led.

There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share.

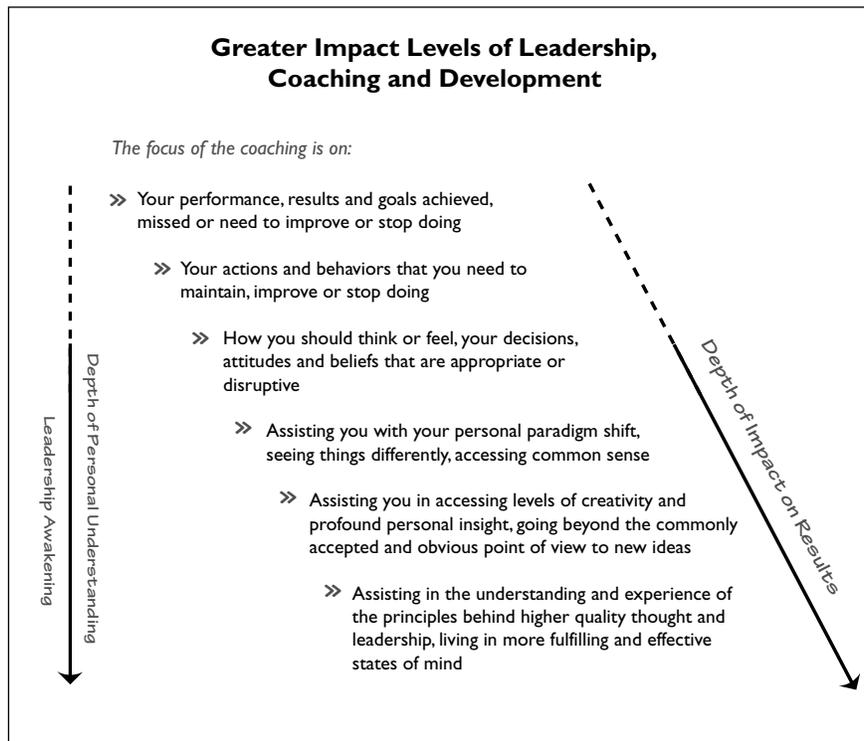
—Robert Greenleaf

Effective leaders are deeply committed to the professional, personal and spiritual growth of those around them. These executives take a personal interest in the coaching and development of their senior team and other high-potential individuals within their organization. As such execu-



tives personally grow through their insights into themselves and their business, and they find they have crucial new ideas to teach their people. They have a greater capacity to help their people become more fulfilled and more effective. They are better able to coach the individuals on their team to become even greater leaders in the company.

**GREATER IMPACT LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP, COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT**



I have often found that when leaders don't coach their people, it's not only that they are uncomfortable with coaching, but also that they don't see how to approach the situation with insight and wisdom. They sometimes fumble with taking their conversations beyond the "obvious" so that their people will gain a fuller vision of what needs to be done or what personal



and collective changes need to be made. They are sometimes disappointed that their words go unheeded or misunderstood, or they feel as if they are badgering or nagging their people.

However, through the formation of deeper levels of emotional discernment, mindful insight, and increased wisdom, they become open to more profound ways of understanding themselves and their organizations. Such leaders consistently have wiser, easier, and more meaningful ways to address situations and to communicate solutions.

#### A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE

Rich insight tends to accompany wonderful organizational leaders. In working with executives of companies ranging from Ford Financial to British Gas, from Navistar International to McDonald's, deep care for life and people is a common factor. The current article is based on conversations and work with Denny Litos, CEO of the Ingham Regional Medical Center in Lansing, Michigan. He has been a model of ethical, insightful, and accountable leadership, and has provided me with the opportunity to pursue leadership development with him and his management to further their values-based endeavors in continuing to grow their organization.

The last few years have been difficult for most U.S. businesses. The economy has been down, unemployment rampant, there has been a dangerous shortage of qualified labor, adversarial union-management relationships, a number of businesses disappearing or precariously downsizing, exposure of ethics failures, distrust and lack of confidence in leadership . . . in general, a mind-numbing malaise occasionally laced with uninformed optimism. This is all particularly true in healthcare and especially in running a hospital.

However, within this scenario, under Denny's leadership, he and his team have achieved the following results:

1. They have doubled their market share.
2. They have been profitable for ten straight years.



3. HealthGrades, a reputable and recognized industry quality ranking agency, has evaluated a number of their medical services to be in the top 5% nationally.
4. J.D. Powers and Associates has presented its Distinguished Hospital Award to Ingham for its outstanding level of customer satisfaction and service.
5. The organization has survived a difficult and complex reorganization and realignment of services with multiple constituencies in a fluid and collaborative fashion.
6. The quality of the leaders that are developed in their organization are identified and respected to the point that they are often spirited away to higher responsibilities within the larger corporation.
7. Ingham is viewed highly by community leadership and has received numerous awards recognizing their contribution to the overall welfare of the region's citizens.
8. The leadership consistently displays resilience in times of challenge, perspective in difficult situations, integrity under pressure, and collaboration and good-will born of inspiration and a personal adherence to a strong values set.

THE FOLLOWING COMMENTARY PROVIDES A VIEW OF HOW INGHAM  
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER HAS ACHIEVED SUCH RESULTS

**Nakai:** How do you measure the success of your organizational improvement/transformation?

**Litos:** In the final analysis, our achieving what we set out to do and in the fashion that we wanted to do it has to be the indicator of success or failure. Identifying the correct strategic goals as well as establishing the proper corporate culture to accomplish these goals is part of executive leadership. I also view our values as our way of defining the state of mind that we want our people to be in when they come to work. Taken collectively, it is how we achieve healthy and ethical high performance. Although we can get pretty granular about describing what the values may behaviorally look like, I also want our people and those who they touch to get the spirit and feeling



behind these words. I feel that if we can operate from a values-based foundation, we will achieve our results.

**Nakai:** How do you see this happening?

**Litos:** I feel that there is a time and place for different organization-wide initiatives. We've had a good start sharing our core values and strategic intentions with the organization. Now, I feel that we need to put more "form," substance and personal meaning to these sentiments so that everyone who chooses to work here can have a better understanding of what's required and expected of them. . .both in their performance and how they conduct themselves. The values form the foundation of our culture. How they are specifically manifested should be determined by the individual and by the situation. Our leadership definitely needs to be aligned with our values.

A very important dimension in this formula is to be able to facilitate a greater depth of understanding and more effective application of those leadership principles that are aligned with our core values. I don't think that this can be done in a general cascading fashion without a "personal touch."

I firmly believe that organizational transformation occurs as a result of personal transformation. I've come to realize that this shift occurs through personal insights, not because someone tells you how you need to change. In fact, when you rely too much on a "heavy hand," i.e., telling people how they need to be, unless you're talking to the "choir," you run the risk of engaging skepticism and resistance from the rest of the organization.

Because these values conversations eventually deal with the individual at such a personal level, I feel that they need to be in the privacy of a coaching arrangement. It is the most respectful way to have conversations that speak to the individual and at the pace that the individual wants to take it.

**Nakai:** When did your "vision" crystallize?

**Litos:** I'm not quite sure which insight came first, but I realized and, probably more importantly, accepted the fact that I needed to model what I



wanted to see from my people and my organization. I needed to do this by being open to examining and enhancing my personal effectiveness as a leader. I needed to build on what I've already learned. This insight put me on the path of personal growth and increased awareness.

Shortly after that, I recognized that I truly enjoyed learning how to access the "top of my game." I found myself being more curious about life and the new revelations waiting for me around every corner. Regardless of what faced me, I discovered that I was fascinated by the potential of learning something new about myself or about my company.

I realized that unless I allow personal insights into who I am, how I can be more effective, and how our business could function better, our hospital would be doomed to complacency. In addition, I believe that it is through these insights that I can bring both a freshness and creativity as to how leadership sees the organization and the role we play in its success. There is a difference between intellectual manipulation and insight management. Striving for a state of "leadership creativity" is a large part of the purpose and hope behind our coaching relationship.

I've also noticed that I've become more patient and curious about people and events. Instead of rushing in and trying to fix the problem, I differentiate between immediate action and deeper reflection. I find myself reading more and sharing what I feel are more pertinent lessons with my management team. I'm also interested in selectively gleaning input from other sources—from other chief executives in the industry, the senior team of our corporation, other leadership development opportunities, and so forth. In essence, the more I learn, the more I can properly blend knowledge with experience and insight.

In addition, I've become more aware of and sensitive to my own state of mind and how it impacts my effectiveness as a leader. In the past, I may have plowed ahead when I was distracted or agitated. Whenever possible, I try to make important decisions when I am in a clear and healthy state of mind. I've noticed that the quality of my decisions and actions seems to be



more on target and have a greater, more positive impact on those around me.

**Nakai:** What changes have you made because of this insight?

**Litos:** I felt that I needed to take a more proactive stance in the coaching and mentoring of my senior managers and directors. I regularly meet with all of them, discussing everything from job performance, to leadership development, to health and conditioning, to issues like family, vacations and other personal interests. Initially, when I first started, I only felt comfortable discussing performance agendas.

Today, I feel equally adept speaking with them about “leadership competency,” the effect of their thinking on their outlook on life, the principles behind developing stronger working relationships, and how to go about creating a broader and longer term vision for their professional and personal growth.

I think this combination of coaching and mentoring has contributed to many of my managers’ stepping onto a more assertive growth and development path. In addition to performing within the present system and dealing with today’s problems, many of them keep an eye out for ways to improve the situation . . . strategically, culturally, and systemically.

I’ve also offered leadership coaching to everyone on my senior team. At the very least, I wanted them all to “try it out” to see if they personally wanted to continue. That was the only request that I made of them. I realize that this form of coaching will not reach or appeal to 100% of the management team . . . but I am glad that half of them have chosen to continue in this endeavor beyond a basic level. I am seeing a difference in how they view themselves and others. Interestingly enough, it seems as though the ones who have continued with this form of coaching are also the ones who are open to coaching, open to entertaining new ideas, have more patience with each other and try to find better ways to do things.

They have also started offering leadership coaching to their people. This step is important in the development of next-generation leaders.



**Nakai:** I agree that being the “leadership role model” and then taking the time and effort to coach your team are critical. How else are you preparing your organization’s readiness for the future?

**Litos:** To make this more a way of life, I think people realize the potential behind our core values when they experience how difficult situations are more easily resolved. They also find that by acting with a clearer state of mind they are rewarded with positive results and attitudes.

We’ve addressed particularly “knotty” or potentially volatile situations in our organization by first helping people regain their perspective before they take critical action. Because so many of these situations have to do with negative or insecure feelings and/or dysfunctional personalities and attitudes, we provide a sound foundation for solution stimulation, which often results in a healthy response to the issues at hand. By treating our people as individuals, with respect and understanding, we avoid becoming too clever or manipulative. Just as important, the people involved experience another way of dealing with their problems and see the relevance of these ideas because of the results they achieve.

Interestingly enough, another operational benefit is that paying attention to our state of mind in resolving issues, visibly magnifies our intention to create a healthier, values-based organization. It takes our efforts out of the “theoretical and nice to have” realm and brings it home to a real-time, real-world dimension. It brings practicality to lofty sentiments.

It would be easier to only go where there is already goodwill, interest, and enthusiasm for our cultural intentions and strategy. But it appears that a lot of people notice when you go to areas in the company where things are difficult or adversarial. To make headway in those situations brings credibility and a sense of integrity to management’s statements and intentions.

I think that 20% to 25% of the people will quickly resonate with the commonsense message we’re communicating. They’ve been living their lives this way and are secure when both our message and actions are compatible with their character and their behavior. I also feel that, unfortunately, there are 15% to 20% of the people who will find the message



threatening or ridiculous. They can be the “loudest” critics, the most resistant to change, and hence the most divisive in our efforts to improve the company climate.

The remaining 60% of the people are frequently waiting to see which way to go. Is it “safe” or does it make sense to move more in the direction of greater accountability, goodwill, and healthy performance? I think that this is the essence of any culture shaping program. I also feel that this is one of the primary responsibilities of our leadership team. We can’t “make” anyone get on the bus . . . all we can do is get them to the bus stop. If we lead with integrity, common sense, accountability, respect, and compassion, I feel more people will get on board.

A fraction of the people can be reached through follow-up and reinforcing programs. But I also believe that the most effective way to reach the majority of our people is by example. In this regard, I am reminded of something that one of my early managers used to tell me: “The challenge is not in helping people change their thinking . . . the real challenge is to help them *keep* their thinking changed.”

Overall, we have one simple goal: to add fresh water in the “real” channels of communication (the rumor mills) in our company. When you walk through the doors of our organization, there is a “new” way to do business—not only with the customer, but with our colleagues and community as well.

One of the values that means so much to me personally is stewardship. To me, it means that while we are here, we are holding our organization in trust for everyone in our community—not only for those who are here today, but for future generations as well. My vision and sense of accountability for the future has provided me with tremendous perspective and courage in the present. The quote that continues to ring true for me is, “Many people feel as though we’ve *inherited* this life from our parents and past generations . . . I feel as though we are *borrowing* it from our children and their future.”



## CONCLUSION

The results achieved by Denny Litos and his team at Ingham Regional Medical Center are indeed exceptional, but are by no means singular. Their results have occurred because of the steady day-to-day attention to doing the right things. They accept the occasional grand event but, for the most part, they are all good people trying to do what they feel is right for the organization and for its people. This cumulative building of a culture of excellence, filled with care and compassion, results in an organizational culture that is imbued with courage, strength of soul, and good thinking. I believe the discipline of good thinking leads the servant-leader to the awareness and foresight necessary to generate greatness, wisdom, and healing in the heart of humanity.

Foresight is a characteristic that enables servant-leaders to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future. It is deeply rooted within the intuitive mind.

—Larry Spears

The culture created by Denny Litos and his leadership team is imaginative, freeing, and effective. More and more we see servant-led organizations with similar impact on people, industry, and community: Toro, TDIndustries, Starbucks, and Southwest Airlines, among so many others. Personally, I have been fortunate to witness similar results achieved by leaders such as Mary McFarland, Dean of the School of Professional Studies, Gonzaga University; David Roberson, COO and President of Hitachi Data Systems; John Ruch, CEO (retired) of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Utah and Idaho; and Richard Rudman, COO of EPRI (Electric Power Research Institute). My own understandings and ongoing learning in leadership have often come from my interactions with such leaders.

The reason for their success has been primarily the servant leader-led aspect of organizational transformation through leadership development. Because each leader is a unique individual, each of these transformations



has been quite different. However, the critical common element was the willingness of each to become the “leadership model” through open exploration into their thinking and beliefs about leadership, and then taking the time and effort to coach their own leadership team.

Not every corporate executive is willing to invest the time, effort or soul-searching involved in such an endeavor, but those who do report that they see uncommon results for themselves, their teams, and ultimately, the spirit and performance of their organizations.

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*The International Journal of Servant-Leadership* welcomes Paul’s understandings of corporate culture. We look forward to his ongoing editorials which can be found in each volume of the journal under the section entitled: “Servant-Leadership and the Executive.”



## AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS—GUARDIANS OF PUBLIC VALUES

—JUANA BORDAS  
MESTIZA LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

—AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES JOSEPH  
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### THE SERVANT-LEADER: BUILDER OF THE JUST AND LOVING SOCIETY

Robert Greenleaf (1970) defined servant-leaders as affirmative builders of a better society. He saw the rock upon which a good society would be built as people caring for and serving one another. While he noted that in previous times this was largely person-to-person, he expanded this thesis and charged large institutions with the task of building a just and loving society—one that would offer greater creative opportunities to its people.

While Greenleaf envisioned a good society, his own experience and his writings did not emphasize social change and movements, such as the Civil Rights and Women's Liberation struggles that surfaced during his life. A prophetic and compassionate man, he described the times he lived in thus: "The late twentieth century will be seen as revolutionary because, in this period, large numbers of influential men and women have come seriously to grips with the issue of power and authority," thereby "making power legitimate for the public good. . . as an ethical imperative" (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 26). Greenleaf saw the underlying power shift the social movements were advocating.



Such movements, he noted, implied far-reaching changes in leadership: “The signs of the times suggest that, to future historians, the next thirty years will be marked as the period when the dark skinned and the deprived and alienated of the world effectively asserted their claims to stature. And that they were not led by a privileged elite. . .but by exceptional people of their own kind.” He declared the last quarter of the twentieth century would be a time when the “dark skinned and the deprived and the alienated” would find their own enlightenment. In a prophetic and alarming statement he proposed that today’s privileged might best serve by “waiting and listening until the less favored define their own priority needs and *how* they want to be served” (Greenleaf, 1970, pp. 26-27). Greenleaf, a White male who spent his career in corporate America, had the foresight and humility to understand that authentic leadership rises from the people and community that are to be served.

As can be seen in his writings and teachings, Greenleaf’s life is living proof that *concepts and ideas* inspire people to think and then act in new ways. The change in leadership described above will be realized when the voices, ideas, and vision of what he called the “dark skinned” and “alienated” are introduced and then incorporated into mainstream leadership thought. The hope of this interview is to bring forth the voice of an exceptional African American, a servant-leader, who is “very right for the time and place” in which he lives—a synchronicity Greenleaf identified as critical to great leadership (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 27).

James Joseph was raised by his parents, teachers, and the many people in his village to believe that through the path of education he would uplift himself and his people. He obtained a doctorate, becoming a scholar and writer. He took the helm of the Council on Foundations in the eighties, prompting the organization to chart new ground. When Nelson Mandela was president, and a new nation was being born in South Africa, he served as the U.S. Ambassador to that country. Returning to the United States, he established the Center on Leadership and Public Values at Duke University, with a special emphasis on developing South African leaders.



Dr. Joseph urges Americans to re-embrace the public values on which this country was founded—values heralding common welfare, justice, and equality. Furthermore, he asserts that these values have been kept in trust by the African American community and are the foundation of the South African liberation movement. Joseph challenges Americans to shed the cloak of individualism and the current focus on personal morality, and look instead to re-establishing public values that will hold our society accountable for the welfare of all people.

On a broad spectrum of measures concerning quality of life, the U.S. ails from lack of attention to the public values and social responsibility that are the lifeblood of a democracy and the underpinnings of the good and just society. While individuals contemplate personal moral values, 45 million American citizens lack health insurance (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003), the unemployment ranks swell, the minimum wage continues to decline (Mishel, Bernstein, & Allegretto, 2004), and college costs continue to rise, topping 23% in the past two years (College Board, 2004). The preoccupation with personal instead of public morality was evident in the 2004 presidential election exit polls, which showed that 45% chose “moral values” as the priority issue that affected their voting. While the item most often mentioned was honesty (referring to the *personal* trait of the candidate), 17% chose protection of marriage, 15% opposition to abortion, and 13% looked to family values (Harris Polls, 2004).

Public values were not a theme highlighted by Greenleaf, yet inherent in his writing is a set of intrinsic values that are the wellspring of servant-leadership. In *Trustees as Servants* (1974), Greenleaf stated, “Perhaps the greatest threat is that we lack the *mechanism of consensus*, a way of making up our collective minds” (p. 34). It may be that the consensus Greenleaf sought can be found by taking to heart and then acting on Joseph’s call to re-establish our public values, and then forging servant-leadership that supports the common welfare. A look at the dynamics of the period that gave rise to the Civil Rights movement provides a framework for understanding



the influence and impact of Dr. Joseph's conceptual leadership and his call for social responsibility.

#### HEEDING THE CALLING OF THE TIMES

The social upheavals and Civil Rights struggle in the 1960s exposed the ugly face of racism, shattering the illusion that America was living up to its founding values. Images of ferocious police dogs and water hoses, police shooting Black demonstrators, people marching in the streets, and the burning and looting of cities, awakened the country from a deep 1950s slumber. The *White Father Knows Best* world laced with the values of the suburban middle class could no longer ignore the national turmoil that called for the reconfiguration of the American dream.

The nation trembled while President Lyndon Johnson assembled a distinguished commission headed by the Governor of Illinois, Otto Kerner, to find ways to heal the insidious and invasive disease of racism. The Kerner Report released in 1968 identified *institutional racism* as the mechanism that validated and perpetuated discrimination and economic disparity. It challenged Americans to go beyond addressing personal prejudice and the debilitating effects racism had on individuals to a more systemic and social view. Only by transforming the social, political, and economic institutions in which racism was embedded could America heal the schisms that existed. The Kerner Report shifted the debate from the traditional focus on individual values to one on public values, ethics, and responsibility (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968). As such, it was in step with a longstanding tradition of African American ministers and leaders who advocated for building a different kind of America, one that lived up to the founding values embedded in the Constitution.

A few years after the Kerner report was published, Robert Greenleaf would echo similar sentiments, declaring that servant-leaders were "challenging the pervasive injustice with greater force and . . . taking sharper issue with the wide disparity between the quality of society they know is reasonable and possible with available resources, and on the other hand, the



actual performance of the whole range of institutions that exist to serve society” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 3).

#### DEEP IN MY HEART I DO BELIEVE

The water fountains at Woolworth’s were marked Negro and White. At the lunch counter only White people could order the hot fries or the club sandwiches served on toasted white bread. When the bus pulled up, White people scurried on while Black mothers waited with their children, paid the same fare, and ambled slowly to the back. The bus jerked forward, passing trees draped with Spanish moss. Arriving at the nicely framed houses with expansive front porches, White mothers yanked the cord, gathered their children, and returned to segregated neighborhoods. The bus moved unhurriedly down the rural roads. Coming to the “other side of town,” Black folks got off and walked the lonely stretch home.

The South created a tradition that, like the heat and humidity of the Louisiana Delta, burned into people’s bones. The penalties inflicted on Black people for not conforming were severe, and sometimes deadly. Men in white sheets guarded this culture, dangling those who resisted on ropes from trees in a way that was meant to paralyze Black people from changing the *Southern* way. Whites believed Negroes were passive, simple, and apathetic. Some convinced themselves that Negroes were happy—*Why look how they sing as they wash laundry, work fields, cook food, clean houses, fix cars and shine shoes.* Many White ministers declared God had ordained segregation—this was the way things were “supposed to be.”

Many White people failed to see that behind the iron gates of segregation were intact communities sustaining the hope of freedom and equality. The stereotypes drilled into White Americans were blinders, keeping them from noticing the rising intellectual class among Black Americans, the activist ministers, and the growing unrest of the Black masses. Since the majority of White people did not understand the promise of liberation which was deeply embedded in the spiritual roots that had sustained Black people since they were slaves, many were stunned when the Civil Rights



movement “blew up” like a pressure cooker. The social and political revolution Black people marched for in the sixties was rooted in a faith and hope that had fermented for generations.

As the seeds of Civil Rights sprouted, the opportunities for Black intellectuals began to bloom. In those times a brilliant organizational leader emerged. James Joseph was born during the segregation period in Louisiana, the home of the Ku Klux Klan. His father was a minister, schooled in the tradition of spiritual activism, and a servant-leader. Understanding that education was one of the few entryways open to young Blacks, the teachers in the small rural school Joseph attended groomed and inspired him. They were so successful that of the 32 graduates of his high school, 27 went on to college—a record few privileged schools can boast even today!

Like spiritual grace that brings forth good from negativity and darkness, segregation allowed Black communities to stay intact and pass on their values. At the dinner table, in the classrooms, and from the pulpits, many Black youngsters were being instilled with hope and the belief they could achieve.

#### THE EARLY ROOTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

During the course of the interview, Joseph, who was a curious and questioning child, remembered long talks with his father about what was “right” and “wrong.” Looking back, envisioning his father’s leadership, he understood these conversations were about *ethics*. The following transcript contains Joseph’s articulation of African American leadership interspersed with my own servant-leadership oriented reflections. Joseph’s words relay many of the beliefs he developed through a rich experiential understanding of the roots of African American leadership from before the Civil Rights movement to the present day.

**Joseph:** Even as a young boy, I always wondered why “right” and “wrong” focused on the rules and behavior of what *individuals* should do. Growing up in the segregated South where the doors of political institutions and



social organizations were closed to Black people, I questioned why ethics concerned itself with individual behavior, but not how *institutions* acted. I witnessed how institutions mistreated Black people. So since my childhood I have been concerned about public values rather than just private virtues. America is preoccupied, even obsessed, with the private or individual virtues that build character—the micro ethics of personal behavior and morality.

**Bordas:** How do you see Black leaders as having a different focus?

**Joseph:** Unlike mainstream leaders, who primarily thought about private virtues and values, we had to be concerned with the behavior of systems and institutions, or macro ethics that focused on public morality and community values. Because those systems and institutions oppressed the freedom of our citizens, African American leaders have centered on how *public values and institutional ethics* limit our community as well as the micro ethics or private virtues of individuals. The initial group of African American leaders in the '50s and '60s were ministers who were totally independent with the freedom to act on the basis of their social conscience, without the threat of being terminated by some White-controlled structure. Their source of livelihood came from Black people and Black churches. A whole host of leaders were ministers first and then evolved into civil rights leaders: Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson, and Hosefa Joseph. These leaders came with a moral conscience that went beyond the notion of individual salvation to look at the institutions that barred Black people from equal participation.

**Bordas:** Greenleaf, in *The Institution as Servant*, supported a similar concept, stating that the role of cutting-edge churches should be “the chief nurturing force, conceptualizer of opportunity, value shaper, and morale sustainer of leadership” (Greenleaf, 1972, p. 28).

**Joseph:** This first generation of African American religious leaders sought to dismantle institutional racism. In a segregated society, there was *intentional underdevelopment* that expressed itself *in* and was held in place *by*



social institutions. Black leaders strove to humanize and sensitize these institutions in order to improve people's lives, incorporate the concept of our common humanity, and open the doors to all colors, cultures and religions. These leaders sought to appeal to the conscience of the nation through moral power.

Martin Luther King, Jr. began pointing out the contradiction—the clash between *powerless conscience* and *conscienceless power*. This called for a new awareness and commitment to public values—a return to the fundamental principles this country was founded on. When he said that Black people had come to *save America*, he meant that through their liberation they would rekindle the fire of the Bill of Rights, which is the heritage of *all* Americans.

The values eminent in the African American community are basically constitutional values. This country's founders wanted to form a more perfect union, so community was a high public value. They talked about establishing justice. African Americans are very concerned about community and equal justice. The constitution was based on promoting the common good and general welfare. So too, do African Americans aspire to a better life not only for their people, but to establish a society that cares for all people.

Today the dominant society has moved away from communal responsibility and concentrates instead on individual values. This approach blinds people to institutional racism and other social ills. It negates the mutual responsibility leaders have to create institutions that support the good society based on the values this country was founded on.

**Bordas:** Greenleaf concurred: “Unless the quality of large institutions can be raised, not much can be done to improve the total society” (Greenleaf, 1972, p. 2).

Once some of the barricades came down and voting rights were won, political participation exploded. While churches and ministers continued to have influential positions, what was the next phase of leadership that surfaced?



**Joseph:** Moral leadership will only take people so far. More and more leaders began emerging in the political sphere. Congressman Bill Grey is a leader from the religious tradition who found in politics a way to address public morality.

The second generation of Black leadership exercised power in a very different way. Yet political power contributed little to the improvement of the quality of life for most African Americans. Our leaders began to recognize that moral power and political power, while important, were insufficient without economic power. The next phase of leadership that is still emerging is in the economic sector.

Concurrently, African American leadership was transitioning from a highly visible and centralized form to a decentralized, community-based one. As this shifted, people felt there were no leaders in the Black community. The prominence of the “Big Six” who used to meet with the President and had high national visibility, the resounding voice of Martin Luther King, Jr., the other major organizations in the Black community, were no longer identified as *the* African American leadership. This type of leadership just wasn’t as visible any longer.

The seeds of leadership germinated from the Mississippi River to the California hills, from the North Carolina shores to the New Jersey turnpike. They sprouted in the churches, businesses, educational institutions, and the professions. There were many Black leaders in those areas across the country, but there was not any central, highly visible national leader who *spoke* for the community. Leadership dispersed into different sectors rather than being centered in one national voice and force.

**Bordas:** Greenleaf envisioned a similar structure in which leadership consisted of a group of equals, and cautioned institutions not to concentrate power atop a pyramid (Greenleaf, 1972, p. 15). During the period of diversification Joseph speaks of, individuals began to reflect the different stages people go through as they shed the skin of racism and segregation.

**Joseph:** Some people tried desperately to forget the past because it was painful. Others embraced their traditions and culture, immersing in the



Black experience, dressing in dashikis and sporting Afros. Due to the inherent nature of racism, when African Americans internalize negative stereotypes and are stripped of their identity, they go through cycles of wanting to escape their history and culture. Then they recognize this is who they are and come back. Dealing with these differences, the separation, the internalized oppression, and healing these issues continues to be a major challenge that leaders shoulder today.

During turbulent times, Black leaders were held together by common values. They had a set of intrinsic values that reflected their experience regardless of what sector or profession they worked in, or whether they were at a national or local level. Values such as a concern for fellow human beings, a keen sense of justice, an emphasis on the common good [and] not just individual attainment, sharing and interdependence are intricate parts of African American leadership and are the public values that shape individual behavior.

**Bordas:** These values are also the foundation for authentic servant-leadership that goes beyond individuals and institutions to build the just and loving society that Greenleaf envisioned. A major contribution of Martin Luther King, Jr. and other Civil Rights leaders was their focus on non-violence, love, and forgiveness.

**Joseph:** As leaders of people who did not have economic and political power, they became experts on the use of *soft power* instead of hard power. They only had a moral compass to guide and inspire people to take great risks. Hard power is the ability and resources to get people to do what you want, whereas soft power is convincing people to want the same thing you do. One focuses on military, economic muscle and other types of rewards and consequences, the other more on moral messages, inspiration, acts of generosity, and education. The world today is increasingly influenced by soft power rather than hard power.

**Bordas:** Soft power is akin to Greenleaf's reflection that servant-leaders are skilled at using the art of persuasion rather than utilizing authority to influ-



ence people's actions (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 12). As Ambassador to South Africa, Jim Joseph saw firsthand the transforming effects of soft power.

**Joseph:** The prototype of a leader who uses soft power is Nelson Mandela, whose stature in the world has little to do with the size of the Gross National Product or the military might in South Africa. His influence has to do with the elegance of his ideals and the merits of his ideas. Mandela was the major force behind the change in South Africa that demonstrated to the world the power of reconciliation. He did it through the power of his character from behind prison bars on a small, isolated island.

#### INDIVIDUAL VALUES AS A REFLECTION OF PUBLIC ETHICS

It is important to understand how public values become infused into society. Civil Rights leaders spoke in unison about the public values of justice and equal rights as an American birthright. Then laws were passed by the Johnson Administration that put some legal teeth into these values so they could become operational in society. Franklin Delano Roosevelt did the same thing with the New Deal. The power of his personality and vision for society convinced people that government had a public responsibility to the welfare of its people.

**Joseph:** For many Black leaders reconciliation is a public value. When Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about loving the enemy, he was talking about reconciliation. He used the word love, but it was the same notion as forgiveness. What does that mean for the African American experience in America? Black people had to come out of segregation and the pain of racism and work hand-in-hand with the communities that had oppressed them. So there had to be forgiveness. When King preached "love the enemy" he didn't say you had to like it, but this is a very different value than "get even" or "settle the score!"

A contemporary example of public values in society is the restorative justice process in South Africa. Restoring justice means that the humanity of both the perpetrator who violated humanity and the victim who has been



alienated need to be recognized. Only in this way can both be brought back into full community and society. The entire country of South Africa painfully and compassionately opened up the wound of Apartheid so that the open air of honesty and truth could heal the torn spirits of the people who had been abused, as well as those of the perpetrators.

Desmond Tutu says there can be no future without forgiveness. In South Africa, there is the philosophy of *ubuntu*. In *ubuntu* the course of progress is people to people through other people—one's humanity can only be defined through how one interacts with others. Therefore, if you damage the humanity of another person, then the whole of humanity is damaged in the process.

**Bordas:** How is this value reflected in the Black community in America?

**Joseph:** The African American community has always taught you forgive not only because it is ordained by the creator, but you live in this kind of relationship with other people because it is also in your self-interest. The value of restorative justice and *ubuntu*, where people are supposed to act with humaneness, compassion, and care, is an example of how a private value is reflected in society. The private aspect is how individuals act towards each other, and the public values are the behaviors that are condoned and sanctioned by society.

Instilling the general society with public ethics or values facilitates the *individual acceptance* of these. Values such as the need to forgive, to do one's best, to use one's talents for the common good, and to channel negative energy into constructive channels are all public values held in trust by the African-American community.

African Americans have been schooled on tolerating unacceptable behavior and continuing to work with the people who have inflicted wounds. One of the key contributions African Americans make to the world is reconciliation. The world today is integrated and fragmented at the same time. Yet the more interdependent people become, the more they are turning inward to smaller concerns, enclosing themselves in their homes, turning to the television or the internet. *The challenge of resolving conflict*



*through reconciliation and bringing people together may be as important in the twenty-first century as freedom was at the dawn of the nation states. In an interdependent world, one of the primary public values must be reconciliation based on tolerance and respect for others.*

**Bordas:** Like tightly woven yarn, these values were intertwined into the fiber of Joseph’s character and into others around him. Jim Joseph had a personal experience with forgiveness when working with the Civil Rights movement in Alabama.

**Joseph:** Every time George Wallace, the racist governor of Alabama who blocked the University doors to Black students, appeared on television, I felt enraged. One day, as I sat there steeping in my private rage I realized this was only damaging my own personality and I needed to find a way to transmute this into constructive channels. What African Americans have generally been good at is channeling individual and collective rage into a *constructive means* of opposition, protest or civic engagement. I decided to use the energy of my rage at Wallace to fuel an even greater determination to push open the doors he had tried to block.

**Bordas:** These seeds of strength and understanding were planted and nourished during Joseph’s childhood. Although he grew up in during the worst era of segregation, he said, “You can’t let this bring you down.” He could have been defeated, but instead he grew bold.

**Joseph:** I didn’t grow up with uncontrollable rage, but was driven by the desire to demonstrate that I could be as good as anybody. In fact, this became a passion—a drive that came out of defiance. The Black teachers in the segregated schools I attended weren’t only concerned with teaching mathematics, English or science; they cared about developing the whole person and instilling values. My mathematics teacher would stay after class and coach me as I began engaging in public speaking contests. Later in life I used this skill to teach and generate ideas that inspired people. My philosophy teacher recommended books, so I began to love to read and developed my conceptual skills. My teachers channeled my drive and anger into con-



structive opportunities. The leadership from the churches and schools instilled a belief that I would succeed!

**Bordas:** As a young child, when Joseph listened to his father preach, he thought his father talked about the afterlife in his sermons. As an adult, when Joseph came home to witness his father's leadership in protest circles, he realized his father was focused on *this* life.

**Joseph:** I realized my father was speaking not just of spiritual freedom, but freedom in the here and now. He encouraged people to get an education, and urged them to "Do what you need to do in this life and that is the way you overcome your troubles." Eventually he recognized the need to acquire economic and political power because without this an education doesn't mean very much.

The prominence of public values and not just individual ones was integral to the tradition, introducing the congregation to the conditions of the larger society, rather than just individual salvation. The impact is different in terms of leadership and engagement with life. The ministers were very conceptual, painting pictures with beautiful words and phrases about life as it could be, not life as it was. The slave masters and masters of segregation thought they were preaching about an afterlife, because there was a lot of rhetoric about the hereafter. But they were shaping people to be competitive and deal with the realities of *this* life. From the very beginning the slaves used to come together to worship and would use the language of religion, whereas allegorically they were sometimes plotting an escape. The Promised Land for the slave master was *by and by* when he got to heaven. The Promised Land for the slaves was the possibility to change their life circumstances. It has always been *both* this life and the hereafter.

**Bordas:** These ministers lived what Greenleaf called the central ethic of leadership: foresight (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 16). They were historians, contemporary analysts, and prophets. They were weaving a vision of the future based on intuitive insight and having the faith that this would be forthcoming. Institutional and social responsibility is one of the public values coming from the African American experience.



**Joseph:** African American progress has always been based on the concept that it is not just individuals who have a responsibility to get involved, help change things and make a difference, but it is also Black churches, institutions, and organizations.

**Bordas:** Greenleaf surmised that an immoral society stems from people's willingness to qualify as moral by caring *only for people*. To have a more moral *society*, he urged, moral humanity must also care for institutions (Greenleaf, 1972, p. 1). This institutional responsibility is also supported by the tradition of activism, of "voting with your feet" that drives the Black community.

**Joseph:** This active responsibility nourishes a sense of *hope*. Without this we would have remained economic slaves in the segregated south. This is a basic American value—active citizenship should be endeared in democracy.

Again, this comes out of the religious experience because every sermon always ended with something about hope. It never stopped with "things are so bad." It stopped with "things may be bad; *however*, there is always the possibility of a better life." Without the gift of hope the Black community couldn't have held on and had the courage to overcome. African American leaders have to dispense hope because without it people won't act to change things. It's not naïve optimism; it is a hopeful realism. Today far too many people trapped in central cities have lost hope. In that regard, the leadership has not remained as true to this central value. It's even more important today that Black leaders instill the belief things will get better—that they keep hope alive.

**Bordas:** To be moral, to be ethical, is not just about individual behavior or private virtues; it also has to incorporate *what is good for the whole*. The arena of public values should embrace such ideals as the significance of community, a commitment to work for justice, and equal opportunity.

**Joseph:** Today people no longer talk much about justice, and it has been banished from public conversation. Yet oppressed people have to be con-



cerned with justice because injustice holds them hostage. To change their situation, they have to re-ignite the spirit of justice in the general society so that their oppression begins to grate at the community conscience and inspire its soul.

That is what Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela did, and this is also what the founding fathers did during the formation of our nation. They rallied the people to seek “justice for all” as a public value. Desmond Tutu brought new light to this conversation and spoke about the restoration of the broken relationship in society—a relationship that was broken because of unequal treatment and violation of human rights. This type of justice requires forgiveness. It doesn’t necessarily imply the need to forget, but it does call for forgiveness.

**Bordas:** Today justice needs to be redefined and expanded to include not only contributive and distributive justice, but also the notion of restorative justice.

**Joseph:** Communities that have been oppressed are seeking distributive justice. This has not been able to be heard because distributive justice implies a *different balance of power*. The people who want to retain power, therefore, get their backs up and are not receptive. They are only interested in contributive justice.

**Bordas:** Greenleaf saw the need for making power legitimate for the public good (Greenleaf, 1972). This is in alignment with Joseph’s view of that which is beyond contributive justice, and enters distributive and then restorative justice, which implies a more holistic reconfiguring of relational, political and economic power.

**Joseph:** People do not want to talk about this, but that’s what African Americans really want—an equal playing field, not one where the values of one group define reality, the way things operate, and impose these on others. This means, for example, that an individual in a free market, capitalistic system can’t monopolize at the expense of the greater society or the exclusion of certain groups. There would be ways of tempering this, so that



there is sharing, rather than simply a monopoly or dominance where unequal distribution and poverty is built into the system. There can be no justice when the system or society fancies certain types of people and there are false absolutes or pre-determined values that positively discriminate in favor of one group.

**Bordas:** Greenleaf concurred, stating that for the servant-leader, “Power is used to create opportunity and alternatives so that the individual may choose and build autonomy” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 32).

In the sixties, many people joined with African Americans to protest against segregation and subsequently eliminated the barriers that existed. For progress to continue, this type of collaboration is needed today, particularly among oppressed groups.

**Joseph:** These groups have an affinity with each other because of their common history of being treated unjustly. By coming together they can work to bring greater justice and equality to society. This type of collaboration cannot be focused on individual progress, but on achieving a common good that benefits society as a whole.

**Bordas:** There are obstacles, however, that prevent oppressed people from cooperating with one another. African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other groups are first seeking a clear identity and a respect for their primary group. Until they get them, it is difficult to identify with other groups or the larger population.

**Joseph:** When a people’s history and heritage is respected they are more likely to identify with *both* their primary community and then society as a whole. To respect a people means honoring their history, traditions, and culture, but also acknowledging their contribution to the common culture. The incredible contributions Black people have made to the economic development of the U.S.; their cultural contributions in literature, the arts, science, and athletics; it means acknowledging all of this. Until Black Americans have an authentic sense of ourselves, to be able to network with others or build coalitions is another heavy burden to carry.



Without this respect people tend to isolate in their own groups, seeking a comfort zone where they are known and accepted. People see this separation and say, “Why is it that those folks stick together, live together, and don’t participate more in society?” Well, the larger society is not making them feel comfortable, wanted, or showing respect for their *primary identity*. People do not want to step out into the larger community when there is no respect.

There is a distinction between hierarchical pluralism, where this happens, and egalitarian pluralism. In hierarchical pluralism, dominant cultural values are at the top, are impermeable, and everyone has to conform to them. People who are different are included, but they must understand that their traditions don’t mean anything. Their values are subservient and they must adapt.

In egalitarian pluralism, attempts are made to include the values of the different people that make up the whole, but when these two different types of pluralism clash as they continue to clash today, some people choose to stay within their own group and not have to constantly adapt to the cultural framework and values of the dominant group. Others go back and forth. They get renewed by their own culture, which is so much a part of them, and then venture out to work or study in the dominant culture. But not everyone can do this successfully. Some cannot deal with the isolation, or constant adaptation; others choose not to pay the price. Regardless, in hierarchical pluralism their rich experience and total contribution is lost. The society does not reap the benefits of true equality. In hierarchical pluralism diverse people are invited in only if they can talk, dress, and communicate like the dominant group, whose underlying psychological message is, “We don’t have to change because our way is better and we rule!”

#### CONTINUING THE CLIMB UPWARD: PERSEVERANCE, EXCELLENCE, AND RACIAL STEREOTYPES

The spiritual values that anchored the Black community through the long seasons of adversity are also great contributions. Joseph said, “Inher-



ent in the Black world view is that one must turn adversity into strength, and perseverance is a mainstay to overcoming.” The saying, “If it doesn’t kill you it will make you stronger” indicates that adversity fortifies the individual to overcome limitation. Jim Joseph was taught to use his talents to strive to become better and to use hardship to fuel his passion for changing those things that stood in his way.

**Joseph:** While there has been much progress in the past forty years, there are still many steps left to climb. Perseverance and staying on course is the only way to keep advancing. Young people today have to be reminded about the gains we have made. This will instill hope and fire up the determination needed to stay the course to work for justice.

**Bordas:** As president of the Council on Foundations, because Joseph represented the members in critical areas such as government relations and membership, he was able to talk about diversity and focus on values like openness and societal accountability. If he did not complete the primary assignment well, he would not have been able to do the other things that he felt were the real opportunity for leadership. He explained, “For Black leaders to be able to reinforce and re-infuse the core values they were taught and to bring these values to institutions, they must first bring excellence and competency to the table. Excellence has got to be the primary motivation. Once a person does what they do very well, they create an opportunity to act on higher values.”

Joseph related that another social dimension African American leaders must address is racial stereotypes.

**Joseph:** Black leaders understand that certain qualities and characteristics are attached to them regardless of who they are. No matter what position an African American attains, they are still going to be seen as Black and other people are going to overlay stereotypes on them. It is not only that Black people are bound together—people together by skin color, tradition, and culture—it is also that externally they are seen as part of a group. It really doesn’t matter how they think of themselves, whether they grew up in a city



or a suburb; they still have to deal with the external social realities of being Black in America today.

When I lived in Washington, D.C., I got on the Metro in my three-piece suit, ready for high level meetings. In front of me a woman dropped a twenty-dollar bill. I picked it up, quickened my steps, and tapped her on shoulder. As she turned around to face me I saw fear and trepidation. All her conditioning and thoughts about Black men surfaced. What she saw was not an individual, but the history of a group.

In the sixties when colleges were first integrated, African Americans were vehicles for Whites to learn about racism and understand that not everyone was just like them—like Diversity 101. This was the first and necessary step to building a new covenant between Black and White people. Changes in consciousness come in stages. The initial encounter and learning about each other can lead to what Scott Peck calls “pseudo community,” the chaos that comes when people try to pretend they are alike and ignore differences. In the next stage, they realize they are different, and then the reaction is to try to change the other person. The Human Relations movement tried to do this and perhaps a few individuals changed, but this didn’t change society. Even the next stage of discovering commonalities and respecting differences was still an individualistic approach to healing racism.

Gradually in the last forty years as a result of Civil Rights, the integration of society, and immigration from across the globe, people are having direct experiences with individuals from many cultures and races. Even though when diverse people intersect their first reaction and impulse may include stereotypes of the “other group,” once people get to know each other they begin to transcend this. That first impulse which includes negative stereotypes of the other group melts away as relationships are built. So this is why the interaction and associations between groups is key to overcoming inherited stereotypes. Again, looking at this from a public values perspective from the viewpoint of people interested in changing society—the problem is more systemic.



This may be another cultural distinction—people of color involved in social change want to change institutions, whereas White people meet African Americans and want to have their *relationships expanded*. White people want to invite African Americans over for dinner, but don't want to put any effort into changing the policies that continue to favor the majority race in this country. They are still coming from the individualistic framework. That if you are Black and I am White and we get along, then I have done something to change the world, rather than I have to do something about the systems that keep racism intact. From a public values perspective, from the viewpoint of people of color, it is the *macro ethics* governing society and its institutions that must be changed.

**Bordas:** This tendency was recently confirmed by a Gallop survey that found the attitudes toward race in America had changed drastically in the last forty years. Over seventy percent of White Americans would accept neighbors of any color. Even more surprising, a majority approved of interracial marriage *even* for their own children. These findings spanned all racial groups. The difference between White Americans and those of Black or Hispanic descent was that minorities reported they still *experienced discrimination* and *economic disparity*. In fact, a majority of African Americans reported a racist incident within the last month (Ludwig, 2004). This survey underscores the White tendency to personalize values. “Yes, my daughter can marry a Black person and it is fine if they move into my neighborhood.” Meanwhile, African Americans cannot afford to buy a house in these neighborhoods, and the economic and educational gaps continue to separate young people by barricading them into different social classes. Thirty years after the Kerner Report, too many White Americans have not removed the social blinders to look discrimination straight in the eye and make the commitment to change the institutions and the economic system that continue to support racism.

#### THE CHOICE FOR SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

Greenleaf believed that society suffered when people who were strong,



natural servants with the potential to lead did not do so, and when others chose to follow a non-servant (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 35). The leadership crisis in America today might well be summed up in that premonition. Coming from an African American community that survived because of its traditions of collectiveness, spirituality, and servant-leadership, Dr. James Joseph urges people to re-establish the public values that have been espoused since this nation was formed and to renew their dedication to building the good and just society that Greenleaf envisioned.

#### Five Anchors of African American Leadership

*The following concepts are used at the Center on Public Values held in Cape Town, South Africa, where both Africans and Black Americans learn leadership together.*

1. *Leadership in context of culture* — This paradigm of leadership must begin with African concepts rather than the Western concepts. For example, Greenleaf's notion of servant-leadership is very similar to what South Africans say about *ubuntu*. He conceptualized a very indigenous concept about leadership and brought it to the table for contemporary audiences. Servant-leadership can be found in the Native American tribal chief who accumulated wealth to give it away, or in African American values of service, sharing, and community responsibility. Leadership theories and concepts can add to how African Americans understand leadership, *but from their own framework and cultural context*.

2. *Ethics* — Private values form the foundation for a leader's ethical base. For African Americans there are also public values that have been enumerated. For a leader to act responsibly means to act ethically and morally. What practices do leaders need that will keep them on track? What is the ethical framework from which a person leads? Reflecting on these questions and speaking with leaders who have kept their moral compass provides younger leaders with models to emulate.

3. *Communication* – In most leadership programs communication refers to how the individual leader relates to others. While this is important, a greater rubric is the communication between a leader and his or her com-



munity. Mobilizing constituents or responding to pressure groups are things a leader must do. Like the emphasis on public values, the focal point has to be on the collective and how communication is used to engage, inspire, and inform various stakeholders.

4. *Renewal* – What do leaders do for intellectual, physical, and spiritual renewal? Studying the political prisoners on Robben Island is a textbook on how leadership can develop and thrive under the most barren conditions. It was said that they (the prisoners) made the prison their university and left educated men. Nelson Mandela would do sit-ups and run in place in his jail cell. The men would sing inspirational songs as they worked in the quarry. Hearing about personal examples of how leaders keep their balance even in the line of fire is a way to gain an understanding of how this can be done and how it prepares leaders for “the long haul.”

5. *Experience-based* – People share experiences and lessons learned. Leaders learn from leaders, not merely from scholars, through leaders’ personal stories and experiences. What yardstick did they use to make decisions? What is the fuel and inspiration that keeps them on the path? Leadership has to be spoken out loud and values have to be intertwined into a person’s life as a living thing.

The external forces, great needs, and imminent crises that occur in the Black community as a result of institutional racism make it difficult to keep African American leaders focused on conceptual and organizational leadership. The day-to-day needs consume their time and energy. To be relevant and genuinely prepare African Americans for leadership, programs have to address issues such those espoused by Dr. James Joseph, as well as incorporate the standard curriculum and skill-building which mainstream programs offer.

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sulting firm for organizations to tap into the benefits of multicultural leadership. Juana has been at the forefront of diversity leadership issues since becoming the first president and CEO of the National Hispana Leadership Institute. She was also the first Latina faculty member at the Center for Creative Leadership, a center for training high level executives. Juana serves on the Board of the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, United States, and is a former advisor of the Kellogg Foundations National Fellows Program.

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FILM REVIEW———

“THUS HAVE WE MADE THE WORLD”:

USING THE FILM *THE MISSION* TO EXPLORE THE CHOICE  
FOR SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

—MICHAEL LIEBERMAN CAREY  
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

Early in my career as a teacher, I taught English and American literature to high school seniors. I loved teaching literature because the themes of great novels, short stories, drama, and poetry allowed me to discuss with my students things that mattered: birth, death, and all the many choices that humans make between those events. High school seniors are at the perfect age for such discussion because developmentally they are at a stage of questioning all that they have been taught and trying to figure out what they really believe.

Thirty years later, I teach leadership studies to graduate students, most of whom are in their thirties and forties. Mid-life is not too different from adolescence: my students are at a more advanced developmental stage, and they question all that they have been taught about leadership and try to figure out what they really believe. Sometimes I use great novels and plays in addition to the literature of leadership to trigger discussions among my students, but I find that more often I make use of extraordinary films.

#### FILMS AS LEADERSHIP CASE STUDIES

When exploring leadership, films can be used as case studies drawn in dramatic terms. Like a well-constructed case study, a good film allows students of leadership to experience vicariously the tribulations of conflict without also experiencing the actual consequences of the choices made.



Good case studies and films, even when fictional, are true, in that they give us insights into the way things really are. My experience is that as students consider what they see happening to the characters in a film, they are actually discussing what they see happening to themselves in their own lives. When I show the film *Gandhi* in class, students do not think that they are involved in liberating a country from colonial rule, but they do relate—sometimes viscerally—to dealing with being controlled by others or oppressed by an organization. When students watch the film *Strictly Ballroom*, they do not see it as an advertisement for “dancing your own steps” in ballroom dance competitions, but as a lesson on the difficulty of staying focused on the essence of leadership, rather than merely on its form. *Norma Rae* is not only a well-made film about the unionization of the textile factories, the last major industry in the United States to remain unorganized, but also a case study of empowerment, collaboration, and dialogue, and ultimately of transformational leadership.

No well-made film is unable to teach us something about leadership because leadership is about conflict, choices, and integrity. A well-written screenplay is great literature as surely as is a poem, play, short story, or novel. When the script is skillfully directed and acted, the result is not only a work of art, but also an incredible learning tool. In my experience, no screenwriter has done a better job of examining the essence of leadership than Robert Bolt in such highly acclaimed works as *A Man for All Seasons*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, and more recently, *The Mission*.

#### *THE MISSION AS A SERVANT-LEADERSHIP CASE STUDY*

*The Mission* was written by Robert Bolt, directed by Roland Joffe, and starred Jeremy Irons, Robert De Niro, and Ray McAnally. In 1986, the film was nominated for eight Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Director; the film won an Oscar for Chris Menges (Best Cinematography) as well as Golden Globes for Ennio Morricone (Best Original Score) and Robert Bolt (Best Screenplay).

What does this beautiful film have to tell us about leadership? I think



that *The Mission* ably presents Robert Greenleaf's concept that "the great leader is seen as a servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness" (Spears & Lawrence, 2004, p. 2). I also think that *The Mission* illustrates the ten characteristics of servant-leadership identified by Spears: *Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the growth of people, and Building community* (Spears & Lawrence, 2004, pp. 12-16).

The story of *The Mission* is relatively simple, although the history that serves as its backdrop is complex. It is set in eighteenth-century Paraguay, a society made up of Spanish, Portuguese, Jesuits, and aboriginal natives known as the Guarani. Spain and Portugal control specific colonial territories, and both are busily draining the region of its resources to satisfy an ever-increasing trade relationship with Europeans "back home." The Jesuits have created "reductions," or missions, that are planned communities of native Guarani constructed around a central church building. In these communities, the natives have created successful farming cooperatives, organizations which are problematic in that they represent obstacles to the economic control sought by the Spanish and Portuguese colonialists. Inevitably, conflict results, and the natives, as is usually the case, are caught in the middle.

In the preface to his play *A Man for All Seasons*, Robert Bolt reflects on the drama inherent in "inevitable conflicts." He writes about the main characters of his play, from King Henry VIII to Sir Thomas More:

The economy was very progressive, the religion was very reactionary. We say therefore that the collision was inevitable, setting Henry aside as a colorful accident. With Henry presumably we set aside as accidents Catherine and Wolsey and Anne and More and Cranmer and Cromwell and the Lord Mayor of London and the man who cleaned his windows; setting indeed everyone aside as an accident, we say that the collision was inevitable. But that, on reflection, seems only to repeat that it happened. What is of interest is the way it happened, the way it was lived. (Bolt, 1960, p. x)



Into the fractious relationship between the colonialists and the Guarani are thrown three men: Rodrigo Mendoza (Robert De Niro), a Spanish mercenary who captures natives to sell as slaves; Father Gabriel (Jeremy Irons), a Jesuit who works with the natives to create the farming communities mentioned above; and Cardinal Altimirano (Ray McAnally), who has been sent by the Pope to negotiate between the interests of the Spanish and Portuguese colonialists and those of the Jesuit missionaries.

Altimirano appears to have come to Paraguay on a “fact-finding” mission that will inform his recommendation to the Pope, but the viewer is soon aware that Altimirano has no illusions as to the actual purpose of his trip. The Jesuits in Europe are under attack by the rulers of Portugal and other countries, accused of undermining civil authority through their radical political ideas about justice. (Apparently, things haven’t changed much in 300 years!) Altimirano knows that if *individually* the Jesuits in Paraguay are seen as obstacles to the economic growth of the colonies, then *collectively* the Jesuits in Europe may need to be suppressed by the Pope in order to appease the Catholic monarchs of the European countries controlling those colonies. Altimirano’s attitude can be contrasted sharply with Greenleaf’s notion of *listening*, in which the servant-leader seeks to be open to the views of others, even to the point of having those ideas change the thinking of the servant-leader.

Gabriel is introduced at the very beginning of the film as the leader of a group of Jesuit missionaries. After discovering the body of a Jesuit who had earlier been sent to convert the Guarani to Christianity, Gabriel decides to journey to the natives himself. The martyred Jesuit was nailed to a cross by the natives and sent over a waterfall, an indication that his message of a crucified Christ had failed to appeal to the Guarani, who already harbored suspicions that the Spanish and Portuguese would like to crucify them as well. In Greenleaf’s terms, we can say that both this priest and the natives to whom he had been sent lacked *empathy*, the ability to project one’s consciousness onto another’s situation through imagination.

Gabriel is the example of the servant-leader as *empathetic listener*, and



through his openness and understanding of the natives he is able to *heal* the situation. In a key scene, Gabriel enters the jungle territory of the Guarani and begins to play an oboe he has brought with him. The natives surrounding him are intrigued by the music and ultimately drop their defenses to learn more about this person who has submitted himself to their power. The next scene shows Gabriel showing the other natives icons of Jesus, this time not of the crucified Christ, but of something to which they can more readily relate, namely the Christ-child in his mother's arms. The Guarani finally understand that Gabriel is not there to impose his ideas on them, and so they become interested in learning more about who he is, including what it means to be a Christian. The way in which the natives respond to Gabriel is an illustration of the power of *persuasion* versus the power of positional authority.

In the first part of the film, Mendoza is merely an instrument of the worst excesses of the colonists, murdering natives or capturing them to sell as slaves to the Spanish and Portuguese. His desire for control eventually leads him to kill his own brother over the love of a woman, an action that causes him to enter into a deep depression; it should be noted that he has felt no such emotion over the killing and enslavement of dozens of his native "brothers." The servant-leader Gabriel assists Mendoza in finding redemption through the *conceptualization* of his sins against others and an offer of the possibility of forgiveness. Mendoza is transformed by Gabriel's vision, and he journeys to the territory of the Guarani whom he had previously victimized to make reparations. Like Gabriel, he makes himself vulnerable to their power, and as with Gabriel, the natives accept him as a servant, not as a colonial "leader." Mendoza's conscious choice to serve first eventually brings him to aspire to lead, in keeping with the process outlined by Greenleaf. Mendoza joins the Jesuits and commits his life to the service of the natives in the mission community.

The entire film is presented as a flashback of Altimirano, who is writing a letter to the Pope explaining what has happened during his visit to Paraguay. Listening to him dictate his letter, the audience realizes at the



very beginning of the story that by its end the Guarani and their Jesuit friends have been either killed or imprisoned by the colonists. The viewers gradually become aware that Altimirano has decided against the mission communities in favor of the colonialists' interests; that Gabriel and Mendoza have stayed with the natives in their community even though Altimirano has ordered all the Jesuits to leave; and that Mendoza has chosen to lead some natives in a violent struggle with the colonialists while Gabriel has elected to join other Guarani in non-violent resistance to the colonists. Both Mendoza and Gabriel perish as a result of their choices.

Daniel Berrigan, a contemporary Jesuit who worked on *The Mission* as a consultant to the producers, director, and actors, wrote the following about the film:

No easy solutions, no cheap grace. Mendoza and Father Gabriel die, violently. The meekness of one is no protection, any more than is the fierce arrogance of the other. We have here in the decision of the filmmakers, in their unwillingness to play God, to create heroes or antiheroes, to stroke the one and damn the other, a rare and laudable wisdom. They have been true, as the saying goes, to the way life goes. Especially today.

But if the deaths of Mendoza and Gabriel run parallel, their lives do not; and therein lies a capital point. Gabriel dies. So did Martin Luther King and Gandhi and Stephen Biko and Archbishop Romero and uncounted thousands of others of our lifetime for whom retribution, even so-called defense, is equally anathema.

And others die like Mendoza. He stands with all who take up the sword as a matter of principle, of despair, of communism or anticommunism, of faith gone wrong, of chivalry, of plain worldly logic. His name is legion. It is ideology and power politics and "just war" theory and deterrence and the window of vulnerability. (Berrigan, 1986, p. 20)

Berrigan's insight into the meaning of the film's ending is at the heart of what I think servant-leadership proposes. Mendoza has a conversion



experience, turns away from his allegiance to the colonial oppressors, and allies himself with the Guarani who have chosen to fight. Yet, in the end, he is not a servant first—he is a leader. He battles with the Spanish soldiers, meeting colonial violence with native violence. In his lack of *awareness* of the message of love that is at the heart of servant-leadership, he engages the enemy on the enemy's own terms, and he and the natives ultimately lose.

What Mendoza lacks is the *foresight* to see any other possibility. Gabriel, on the other hand, struggles to understand the implications of past, present, and future in the reality of the advancing Spanish army. The film shows him in ongoing reflection on how to respond in a way that will truly reflect his *commitment to the growth of people*, that is, to find a way to allow the Guarani to grow as persons, to become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants. He struggles to find the way of *stewardship*, to flesh out the values he has taught the Guarani—even in the “no-win” situation in which they find themselves—and ends up leading them in non-violent resistance to the very brutal aggression of the colonialists.

Gabriel and the natives march out of the church building holding what they believe to be the real presence of the resurrected Christ—a consecrated host—in front of them as a banner. In this moral rejection of the evil of their day, Gabriel and the native community become stewards of the Gospel message of love, a message which is at the heart of servant-leadership.

Upon the destruction of the mission communities, along with the Jesuits and Guarani who formed them, Altimirano is irate. He demands of the Spanish governor, “Was this slaughter necessary?” The response is one that can be heard over and over again, both in climactic political situations and less dramatic organizational contexts: “We must work in the world; the world is thus.”

Altimirano hears this, knowing that he is a failure at both being a leader and being a servant, and for the first time he fully understands the choices that have been made: “No, thus have we made the world,” he says.



“Thus have *I* made it.” His final words in dictating the letter to the Pope are to affirm that the martyred Jesuits will live on in the memory of the natives who have escaped the destruction of their community. In the final images of the film, the viewer sees some of the surviving Guarani children picking through the remains of their burned-down homes; one young girl takes with her a violin, an act that suggests that the *community was built* by the natives and that the Jesuits will continue.

#### CONCLUSION

*The Mission* is a perfect film for discussion of servant-leadership because the story as told by Bolt and the filmmakers does not preach as much as it poses problems. Did Altimirano really make the only decision he could make, given the “bigger picture,” or did he lack imagination and moral integrity? Should Mendoza have resisted the invitation of the Guarani warriors to lead them into battle, or was his decision his only option to serve them? Can Gabriel’s non-violent resistance be deemed successful when nearly the entire native population of the mission has been killed? Finally, what does this story set three hundred years ago have to say about our present situation in the world? There are no easy answers, and my experience is that as a result the dialogue among students about these issues is deep and heartfelt.

In showing *The Mission* to students of leadership, my hope is that they will see in the epic events presented in the film some metaphors for their experiences in the more mundane realities of societal, organizational, and family life. I hope that Gabriel may be seen as the epitome of the servant-leader, whose greatness as a leader is due to his choice to be a servant first. I hope that non-violent action can be understood to be the only legitimate power base for a servant-leader. Finally, I hope that there will be a realization of the consequences of choosing to be a non-violent servant-leader: namely, that in the end, we may someday look upon a more peaceful landscape and say, “Thus have we made the world.”



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BOOK REVIEW—

PRACTICING SERVANT-LEADERSHIP: SUCCEEDING THROUGH  
TRUST, BRAVERY, AND FORGIVENESS

(EDITED BY LARRY SPEARS AND MICHELE LAWRENCE, JOSSEY BASS,  
2004. HARDBACK, \$28)

—MICHAEL LIEBERMAN CAREY  
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

In his seminal piece “The Servant as Leader,” Robert K. Greenleaf wrote:

A new moral principle is emerging, which holds that the only authority deserving one’s allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader.

Thirty-five years later, Greenleaf’s words appear again within a short excerpt from this essay entitled, “Who Is the Servant-Leader?”, which serves as the lead chapter in the recently published *Practicing Servant-Leadership: Succeeding Through Trust, Bravery, and Forgiveness*. For many years, those of us—practitioners, scholars, and teachers alike—who have been inspired by the writings of Greenleaf have looked to the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, and to the Center’s President and CEO, Larry Spears specifically, for resources to put the ideals of servant-leadership into practice. In this collection of essays, the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, Larry Spears and co-editor Michele Lawrence present us with a tremendous aid to both theory and practice.

The majority of the resources in this collection are from the *Voices of Servant-Leadership Series*, booklets published twice per year since 1991 by the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership. Provision of these booklets has been in the tradition of Greenleaf’s publication of his original essay on



servant-leadership in 1970, but the time has clearly come to make these writings accessible to a wider audience. Larry Spears and Michele Lawrence did not simply bind the booklets together; they placed them in a natural order for the reader, gradually widening the circle of servant-leadership's application from Greenleaf's theory to practice within a variety of organizational contexts.

The foreword to this new volume was written by Warren Bennis, and his sage remarks include references to our current war in Iraq and the evolving relationship between the United States and the international community. His final question, "Do you really want to lead?", is the perfect introduction to the content of the book, which provides guidance for those readers who answered "Yes!"

The first two chapters in the books are familiar to practitioners and teachers of servant-leadership: first is the short excerpt from Greenleaf's original essay noted above; second is Larry's Spears' foundational piece on the ten characteristics of servant-leadership. In the third chapter, John Carver draws upon his broad experience as a consultant for governing boards to present the qualities necessary for the board chair, the "servant-leader of the servant-leaders." The next chapter, by James Autry, builds upon this foundation to link his experience as a magazine editor with the practice of any servant-leader; both have as their fundamental objective "to bring out the best of people's work, not to impose [one's] own work on it."

Following Autry's reflections is a re-examination of the ten characteristics of servant-leadership by Larry Spears and John Burkhardt, who is the former program director for leadership and higher education at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. This chapter is an application of the ten characteristics to philanthropic institutions, but it broadens Spears' original concepts as well. John Bogle continues the focus of servant-leadership within specific organizational contexts in his chapter based upon experience in a major mutual funds company; he accomplishes a masterful distillation of Greenleaf's writing from a business perspective. The next chapter effectively examines the dynamics of servant-leadership as experienced in a col-



laborative effort between the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership and the National Association for Community Leadership, written from the perspective of the latter's president and CEO, Wendell J. Walls.

Don DeGraaf, Colin Tilley, and Larry Neal further expand on both the theory and practice of Spears' ten characteristics, especially in management and service delivery. Following their contributions, David Specht and Richard Broholm apply a theological lens to the portrait of institutions as both living systems and as servants. Daniel Kim expands this use of systems theory—especially “Total Quality” approaches—to present the concept of foresight as an ethical issue in light of the fact that, as Greenleaf wrote, “The failure (or refusal) of a leader to foresee may be viewed as an ethical failure.” Following this is the very moving chapter by Shann Ferch (included also in this inaugural edition of *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*) on our capacity as humans to be broken by our faults and to seek meaningful change as a result; he illustrates this concept with engaging stories both from his own life and from major political events of our times.

The final chapter is an interview by Larry Spears and John Noble with Margaret Wheatley, a piece which integrates many different threads of ideas into a coherent explanation of the essential importance of relationships to the practice of servant-leadership. In her concluding remarks, Wheatley says, “The concept of servant-leadership must move from an interesting idea in the public imagination toward the realization that this is the only way we can move forward.”

This interview provides a perfect ending to an essential collection of practical reflections on servant-leadership. All of the works showcased in this rich volume cast light upon the question posed in the preface: “Do you really want to lead?” In response to his own question, Bennis writes: “In the end, if you choose to lead others as a servant-leader, then my best advice is this: Be brave. Be kind.” These are much-needed words, shedding light on an indispensable vision not only of a leadership concept, but also, significantly, of a way of life for our time.



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Michael Lieberman Carey is Associate Professor of Organizational Leadership at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington, United States of America. He is the chair of Gonzaga's online Master's of Organizational Leadership program, a program that offers an emphasis in servant-leadership. He has written and taught about the ethical imperatives of transforming leadership and servant-leadership, often using films as a method of accessing the fundamental choice involved in the practice of leadership.

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James A. Autry retired in 1992 as president of the Meredith Magazine Group. In addition to *Love and Profit*, which won the Johnson, Smith and Knisely Award in 1992, Mr. Autry is the author of two previous books of poetry, *Nights Under a Tin Roof* and *Life After Mississippi*, and was one of the poets featured in Bill Moyers' PBS special series, *The Power of the Word*.

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Warren Bennis is distinguished professor of Business Administration at the University of Southern California. He is the author of *On Becoming a Leader* and *Why Leaders Can't Lead*, and has co-authored *Leaders: Strategies for Change*. He has served in an advisory position to four U.S. presidents, as a faculty member, as a consultant, and as a university president.

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Peter Block's work is about empowerment, stewardship, chosen accountability, and the reconciliation of community. He is the recipient of the first place 2004 Members' Choice Award by the Organization Development Network, which recognized *Flawless Consulting* (1999) as the most influential book for OD practitioners over the past 40 years. He helps create workplaces and communities that work for all. His books offer an alternative to the patriarchal beliefs that dominate our culture and his work brings change into the world through consent and connectedness rather than through mandate and force.

### ***David Cooperrider***

#### **Appreciative Inquiry Handbook**

Dr. David Cooperrider is professor and chair of the SIGMA Program for Human Cooperation and Global Action at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. He has served as researcher and consultant to a wide variety of organizations. These projects are inspired by the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology, of which he is co-originator. He has been recipient of *Best Paper of the Year Awards* at the Academy of Management.

### ***Stephen Covey***

#### **First Things First Every Day**

Stephen R. Covey is an internationally respected leadership authority and co-chairman of Franklin Covey Company. He holds an MBA from Harvard and a doctorate from Brigham Young University, where he was professor of organizational behavior and business management, and also served as director of university relations and assistant to the president. Dr. Covey is author of several acclaimed books, including *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, which has been on top of the bestseller lists.

### ***Max DePree***

#### **Leading without Power**

Max DePree writes from forty years of experience in the corporate world, almost as many in the non-profit world, and nineteen years as a grandparent. DePree is chairman emeritus of Herman Miller, Inc., a member of Fortune magazine's National Business Hall of Fame, and a recipient of the Business Enterprise Trust's Lifetime Achievement Award. He has served on the boards of Fuller Theological Seminary, Hope College, and Worlds of Hope. DePree is also a member of the Advisory Board of the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management.

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### **Practicing Servant-Leadership: Succeeding through trust, bravery, and forgiveness**

Shann R. Ferch is Professor of Leadership Studies with the Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University. His essay “Servant-Leadership, Forgiveness, and Social Justice” was selected for the nationally-acclaimed Voices of Servant-Leadership Series, and he is a contributing author to *Practicing Servant-Leadership: Succeeding through trust, bravery, and forgiveness*, edited by Larry Spears and Michele Lawrence. Dr. Ferch’s work in leadership and the human will to forgive and reconcile has appeared in scientific journals internationally.

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### **Leadership on the Line**

Ronald A. Heifetz, Cofounder of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, is renowned worldwide for his seminal work on the practice and teaching of leadership. His widely acclaimed book, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, has been translated into many languages and is currently in its twelfth printing. A graduate of Columbia University, Harvard Medical School, and the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Heifetz is both a physician and a cellist (he studied with Gregor Piatigorsky).

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### **Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership**

As founder of the American Leadership Forum, Joseph Jaworski espouses the value of servant leadership, which calls for leadership that is relationship-oriented, creative, and constructive. He began his professional career as an attorney, and was later invited to join the Royal Dutch/Shell group of companies in London, to lead Shell's renowned team of scenario planners. Thereafter he returned to the U.S. as a senior fellow and a member of the Board of Governors with the MIT Center for Organizational Learning. His current focus is on helping leaders and organizations develop the capacity for emergent futures.

## ***James M. Kouzes***

### **Credibility**

James Kouzes is president of the TPG/Learning Systems, a company in the Tom Peters group. Kouzes and his colleagues have developed such innovative programs as “The Leadership Challenge Workshop,” “The Credibility Factor Workshop,” “Leadership Is Everyone’s Business,” and “The Liberation Management Workshop.” Kouzes is author of numerous articles and chapters in edited volumes on management education, leadership, and organizational development. He also coauthored *The Leadership Challenge*.

## ***Ann McGee-Cooper***

### **You Don’t Have to Go Home from Work Exhausted**

Dr. Ann McGee-Cooper is heralded as “the Pied Piper of corporate America” and as a “prophet in the business wilderness” and is a widely sought-after speaker and business consultant. McGee-Cooper has authored two other books, *Time Management for Unmanageable People* and *Building Brain Power*. She has a doctorate from Columbia University based on a self-conceived, interdisciplinary program in creative problem solving.

## ***C. William Pollard***

### **The Soul of the Firm**

C. William Pollard is Chairman and CEO of the ServiceMaster Company. ServiceMaster has been recognized by Fortune, the Wall Street Journal, and The Financial Times as one of the most respected companies in the world, and is ranked the No. 1 service company among the Fortune 500. Pollard speaks, writes, and teaches on management and ethics, and is author of the best-selling *The Soul of the Firm*.

## ***Barry Posner***

### **Credibility**

Barry Z. Posner is Professor of Organizational Behavior at the Leavey School of Business and Administration at Santa Clara University. Posner is an internationally renowned scholar who has published more than eighty research and practitioner-oriented articles. In addition to coauthoring *Credibility*, he has also coauthored *The Leadership Challenge*, *Getting the Job Done* and *Managing Project Teams and Task Forces to Success*. Posner received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in organizational behavior and administrative theory.

## ***Peter Senge***

### **Schools that Learn**

Peter Senge is a senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Business. He is the author of *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. He has lectured extensively throughout the world and worked with leaders in business, education, health care, and government. He received his B.S. in engineering from Stanford, and an M.S. in social systems modeling and a Ph.D. in management from MIT.

## ***Larry Spears***

### **Practicing Servant-Leadership: Succeeding through Trust, Bravery, and Forgiveness**

Larry C. Spears has served as President & CEO of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership since 1990. He has edited or co-edited nine books on servant-leadership, as well as the contemporary essay series, *Voices of Servant-Leadership*. Under his leadership, The Greenleaf Center has experienced tremendous growth and influence, now with eleven offices located around the world, in Australia/New Zealand, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

## ***Robert Spitzer, SJ***

### **The Spirit of Leadership**

Robert Spitzer, SJ, is the president of Gonzaga University. Father Spitzer received a B.B.A. from Gonzaga University, an M.A. in philosophy from St. Louis University, an M.Div. in Theology from the Gregorian University in Rome, a Th.M. in scripture from the Weston School (Cambridge), and a Ph.D. in philosophy from the Catholic University of America. His recent books are: *The Spirit of Leadership: Optimizing Creativity and Change in Organizations* and *Healing the Culture: A Commonsense Philosophy of Happiness, Freedom, and The Life Issues*. His interests are ethics in organizations and the culture, [metaphysics](#), [ontology](#) of physics, and the dialogue between faith and reason.

## ***Margaret Wheatley***

### **Leadership and the New Science**

Margaret Wheatley has worked for organizations of all types, on all continents, and is a committed global citizen. Her aspiration is to help create organizations and communities where people are seen as the blessing, not the problem. She is president emeritus of The Berkana Institute ([www.berkana.org](http://www.berkana.org)), a charitable global foundation supporting life-affirming leaders around the world. Dr. Wheatley has been an organizational consultant since 1973, as well as a professor of management in two graduate business programs. She received an M.A. in systems thinking from New York University, and her doctorate in organizational behavior from Harvard University.

## ***Danah Zohar***

### **SQ—Spiritual Intelligence**

Danah Zohar was born and educated in the United States. She studied Physics and Philosophy at MIT, and then did her postgraduate work in Philosophy, Religion & Psychology at Harvard University. She is the author, with Ian Marshall, of the best-sellers *The Quantum Self* and *The Quantum Society*. In 1997 she and Ian Marshall published *Who's Afraid of Schrödinger's Cat?*, a survey of 20<sup>th</sup>-century scientific ideas, and her business book, *ReWiring the Corporate Brain*. Her latest book is *SQ--Spiritual Intelligence, the Ultimate Intelligence*. She teaches in the Oxford Strategic Leadership Program at Oxford University. She lives in Oxford, England.

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## A PLACE FOR POETRY \_\_\_\_\_

### WHAT PERSONNEL HANDBOOKS NEVER TELL YOU

—JAMES A. AUTRY, *Love and Profit: The Art of Caring Leadership*, 1991

They leave a lot out of the personnel handbooks.  
Dying, for instance.  
You can find funeral leave  
but you can't find dying.  
You can't find what to do  
when a guy you've worked with since you both  
were pups  
looks you in the eye  
and says something about hope and chemotherapy.  
No phrases,  
no triplicate forms,  
no rating systems.  
Seminars won't do it  
and it's too late for a new policy on sabbaticals.

They don't tell you about eye contact  
and how easily it slips away  
when a woman who lost a breast  
says, "They didn't get it at all."  
You can find essays on motivation  
but the business schools  
don't teach what the good manager says  
to keep people taking up the slack  
while someone steals a little more time  
at the hospital.  
There's no help from those tapes  
you pop into the player



while you drive or jog.  
They'd never get the voice right.

And this poem won't help either.  
You just have to figure it out for yourself,  
and don't ever expect to do it well.