

Servant leadership what is it?

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Servant Leadership What is it? The phrase “ Servant Leadership” was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as a Leader*, an essay he first published in 1970 (“ What is servant,”). The servant leader serves first, while aspiring to lead second. The servant leader serves the people that he or she leads, implying employees are an end in themselves rather than a means to organizational purpose or bottom-line. Servant leadership is meant to replace a command and control, top-down, model of management. Servant leadership encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment.

A few famous examples of servant leaders are George Washington, Gandhi and Cesar Chavez. Key Principles In a publication released by Nova Southeastern University, 10 principle characteristics were identified of servant leadership (“ Leadership development -,” 2007). 1. Listening Listening skills are vital for all leadership styles. Servant leaders make a deep commitment to intently listen to others. They seek to identify the will of a group or individual and listen to what is being said. 2. Empathy It is important to understand and have compassion for others.

People need to feel accepted and recognized for their unique qualities. Leaders must assume the good intentions and not reject them as people. 3. Healing Learning to heal is a powerful force for transformation and integration. A greatest strength of servant leaders is the potential to heal one’s self and others. 4. Awareness General awareness, especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant leaders. 5. Persuasion Leaders rely on persuasion rather than positional, authoritative, decision making. Seeking to convince others, rather than coerce, is a goal of the leader. 6. Conceptualize

Dreaming great dreams” is an ability that must be self-nurtured in a leader. The ability to look at a quandary from a conceptualizing perspective means a leader must think beyond everyday realities. Leaders must seek balance conceptualization and day to day focus. 7. Foresight Foresight enables a leader to capitalize on lessons learned from the past, realities of the present and a likely outcome of a decision. 8. Stewardship Greenleaf’s view of all institutions was one in which CEO’s, staff, directors and trustees all play significant roles in holding institutions in trust for the greater good of society. . Commitment to the Growth of People Leaders believe people have an intrinsic value beyond tangible contributions as workers. As a result, genuine interest in the spiritual, professional and personal growth of all employees is demonstrated. 10. Building Community Leaders seek to identify a means for building a sense of community among those who work in a given institution. Differences from Other Styles In the approach on general leadership characteristics, the fundamental difference is authentic leaderships strive to be “ real”, whereas servant leaders strive to be “ right. Servant leadership is a style that lays down a set of characteristics that all leaders are supposed to emulate to attain success, and tries to shape the character and personality of the leader. On the other hand, authentic leaders tend to rely on their own unique set of experiences and style that has been learned and developed throughout their career. The main difference between servant and authentic styles, when applying into practice, is the serving of others. One of the primary applications is to give priority to the interest of others.

Servant leaders exercise their duty by fulfilling needs, aspirations and duties of those in their organization. Authentic leaders don’t put much emphasis in

responding to the needs or desires of others. Servant leaders' style recommends listening, persuading, and empathy when approaching difficult situations, even in times of crisis. Authentic leaders are proactive and adapt their style to the situation. These leaders can be inspiring in one situation and tough about people related issues in another (Nayab, 2010). Strengths/Weaknesses (Nayab, 2011) Strengths 1. Contribution to organizational development.

Leaders proactively set the way, and will inspire subordinates to perform by empowering them to follow. Such inspiration leads to collective efforts, creating a synergy. 2. Contribution to the all-around development of the employee. The leader helps employees attain physical and intellectual vitality and fitness, allowing them to lead balance lives. 3. Servant leadership's value based approach helps organizations in the business environment where values, empowerment, and commitment play a big role in success. Weaknesses 1. The soft approach does not fit well into a competitive environment.

Servant leaders may lag behind those other styles better suited for a competitive environment. Accountability and responsibility may get diluted. 2. Does not always work or resolve issues related to employee-organization fit. A primary function of all leaders is to match candidates with organization objectives. Servant leaders put the individual's goals/needs as the primary concern. 3. Building a sense of "community" among team members may not fit well for all members. Many wish not to share personal lives or aspirations with others at work. Personal Reflection

Servant leadership may apply best in certain situations such as politics or association management. But in its purest theory, I am not convinced servant leadership is a practical leadership style 100% of the time, for any type of business. It does have many qualities that I agree with, and practice a large extent of the time. For example, I view everyone I work with as a customer. I see it as my responsibility to help them achieve success in their role. It is my duty to provide them with every resource needed in order to succeed, and it is their duty to tell me what they need.

Sometimes, that includes a holistic approach, and sometimes it is as simple as acquiring a printer for them. I tread lightly when personal life problems present themselves, however. I will assist in providing direction for an employee to get the help they need, such as an EAP program, or a Pastor in our ministry development initiative. On the other hand, it is also my duty to provide corrective action, redirection, or other forms of performance feedback when employees stray from goals, objectives, vision, mission or values. As I mentioned, a part of my management style is to serve the needs of subordinates.

I can't deny it isn't entirely for unselfish reasons. I use it as a motivational tactic to achieve positive outcomes. However, I am sincere in my communications in order to build trust. Good managers put the needs of others ahead of their own. However, good managers cannot put subordinate needs ahead of customers, organizational needs or stakeholder needs. Blending all styles of leadership and adapting to unique situations or people will produce positive outcomes in the long run. However, it is my opinion

holding true to only one style of leadership may cause problems for the organization, or an individual manager.

References: 1. What is servant leadership?. (n. d.). Retrieved from [http://www. greenleaf. org/whatiss/](http://www.greenleaf.org/whatiss/) 2. Leadership development - Servant Leadership. (2007, August 1). Retrieved from [http://www. nova. edu/studentleadership/development/servant_leadership. html](http://www.nova.edu/studentleadership/development/servant_leadership.html) 3. Nayab, N. (2010, June 8). Servant leadership vs. authentic leadership: What are the differences?. Retrieved from [http://www. brighthub. com/office/home/articles/73574. aspx](http://www.brighthub.com/office/home/articles/73574.aspx) 4. Nayab, N. (2011, May 25). Servant leadership theory - strengths and weaknesses. Retrieved from [http://www. brighthub. com/office/home/articles/73511. aspx? cid= parsely_rec](http://www.brighthub.com/office/home/articles/73511.aspx?cid=parsely_rec)