

Leading and developing others

[Business](#), [Management](#)



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The first promotion I received was to lead a team of entry-level, non-management employees. I was terrified but wanted to make sure I was nothing like all of the terrible leaders that I had experienced up to that point in my young career. However, what did I know? I knew what I should not do and what did not work but I had no idea what I should do and what could work. I used some common sense, made a few phone calls to mentors and people I respected in leadership positions, took their advice and became an award winning manager that year for leading my team to do great things. The things I did then are the same things I do now but amped up, more refined because of more knowledge and tweaked based on experience.

There are three pillars I lead by and I use a fairly methodical process to accomplish and incorporate these three principles and values in my leadership style. First, I was born a servant leader, it is in my blueprint. Secondly, giving and showing respect to my direct reports, peers and other stakeholders in the organization goes a long way. Thirdly, taking risks to go from good to great is a key component to my effectiveness as a leader. Celebrating when things go well and learning from mistakes when they do not go so well is a crucial to finding the benefits of this core leadership value.

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Pillar One: Transformational Servant Leadership

According to Robert Greenleaf, “ a servant-leader is a servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. ” This is how I’ve felt since I was a young girl. I wanted to be in charge but do it in a responsible way where I could give back and help someone. Using my God-given talents, I worked hard to achieve great things in high school, college and into my adulthood in school and in my community. I felt the joy and benefits of helping others and knew it was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Not only did I want to help others, I wanted to make a difference, do it well and encourage others to do the same.

My influence on my team is deeply impacted by my relationship with each person on the team. The leader member exchange is a critical component to the success of any team but specifically a leader who practices servant leadership. In order to truly understand how to best serve your team, you have to have a relationship with each individual and know them well enough to meet their needs. Even with the antecedent of personality playing a key role in how the LMX theory works out (Antonakis & Day 2018), it is still an important element to truly and fully serving your team. Transforming how a team responds and performs is another element of leadership that is equally important to me. It is fruitless to lead a team and not make a difference, leave a legacy or inspire the team to be the best and do new things.

Transformational leaders help followers grow and become leaders by responding to individual team members’ needs and empowering them through inspiration and helping align their goals to the team and

organization (Bass & Riggio 2014). Is it possible to have a combined theory of transformational and servant leadership? I will keep it simple and call it transformational servant leadership. This theory is my guiding principal.

Pillar Two: Leadership Values

There are few things in life that bother and hearing people talk about how unhappy they are at work is one of them. Finding happiness in my career has always been a top priority and one way I have been able to ensure I remain happy is to stick to my values no matter what is going on around me. My top values include happiness, trust, respect, integrity and harmony. Early in my career, I didn't have the insight or self-awareness of my personal values and how they connected to work. With time, experience and wisdom, I now know what makes me tick and what keeps me ticking through all situations.

The newly acquired knowledge of my values and how it relates to work is extremely cherished and helps keep me grounded in what is important and what will allow me to confidently look in the mirror without shame. Knowing your values is one piece of this puzzle and the other part is what to do when your values are challenged or questioned at work. As a leader, your values will be tested constantly. I am currently in a situation at work and the dilemma has me baffled as I am happy in every aspect of my work, leading my team, working with my peers and my leader is amazing. The one aspect that has challenged my values is with one person in our legal department who is impossible to work with. He is not just a different person he is difficult, antagonistic and egotistical with limited to no conflict resolution skills and communication skills that make you question his law degree. He is

condescending and never provides background for crazy requests and is unapologetically bullying to everyone he comes into contact with thinking they should bow down to him because he is the legal guy who we all need to get contracts completed for our work. I have asked all of my peers how they work with him and all of them say they ignore him just so they can get their contracts completed.

Their unwillingness to address the negative way he treats everyone has created a monster. He has gotten away with treating everyone so poorly, that he has no clue or any incentive to treat anyone with respect. His attitude is that we all need him, he does not need us. My leader even stated this to me when I was put on a moratorium and could not submit any contract requests for over two weeks because he said I was submitting too many, needed them all expedited and he could not keep up with everyone else's requests because he had too many coming from Chicago. I could not believe my leader was asking me, no, telling me to conform to his way of communicating and accept how he treats me because I need him to do my job. This goes completely against my values and severely disrupts my happy place at work. I tried a few appreciative inquiry tactics with him and tried to rise above his borderline harassing comments but ultimately, I am compromising my values by sitting idle and allowing this to continue. As a leader with values and a doctoral student studying values-driven leadership, this is exactly the situation I need to address and fix without jeopardizing my professional reputation and my career. I am at a loss for tactics but know that I need to do something. It has to be strategic and impactful but not detrimental. My team is annoyed by the situation and notices how

disrespectful he is. They see that he is allowed to get away with mistreating others and they often ask is his leader involved. Sadly, the answer is yes and he has not been reprimanded in any way. How do I move pass this knowing he will not change and nobody will do anything to him? Am I not displaying humility? These questions cause me to stay awake at night. This is where my values and my faith come in.

Pillar Three: Working Beyond Good to be Great

I keep telling my team we will succeed in spite of the perceived obstacles of the difficult legal team. There are many great things happening in Chicago marketing because of what we are doing and while it takes more time to do what we need to do it does not necessarily have to stop us. I am taking heed to discipline number three of the Level 5 leadership seeds: the stockdale paradox (Collins 2001). This discipline states that you deal with the brutal facts of your current reality while maintaining absolute faith that you will prevail. I do not consider myself a level 5 leader but I strive to be one and will start implementing level 5 tactics at the team level, especially given my real-world work situation. The first thing I will implement is a mantra that mediocrity in any form is unacceptable. I will find a more appreciative inquiry way to say it but it will be something that I develop with my team so it resonates with them and they understand the seriousness of this mantra.

We are a good marketing team but I am looking for greatness and know that we have the ability to achieve it. This quest for greatness is beyond my current professional circumstances. I have the " Perfect Patty" syndrome where I desire to have everything as perfect as possible. This permeates

beyond work and actually starts at home and with me personally. I am not shy but I am fearless and will work on developing more humility. The levels in figure 1 illustrate how I may benefit from a revisit to Level 4 as my team and I create a no tolerance for mediocrity mantra. Getting to Level 5 is aspirational but achievable and almost necessary in order for me to over the obstacle in front of me with the legal team. The exercise of getting there will be a beneficial application of going from good to great with long-term advantages and the muscle building skills needed to continue developing myself and others to achieve greatness. I do not believe I have an ego but more humility and more determination are required to create the quiet storm needed for long-term enduring greatness.

My desire to be a great leader rests in how I impact those I lead and the legacy I leave. It is not to rise to certain position or status, but to leave each individual, team and organization in a better position than I found them. My Perfect Patty syndrome is not to make anything or anyone perfect but to do things perfectly to enhance each individual, team and organization. My overall happiness does not come from anything in this world but from my faith in God. I have been blessed to have worked at some amazing companies and met some phenomenal people. Happiness in my career is important and Frederick Herzberg's theory speaks directly to my beliefs (Christensen). He notes that the biggest motivator in our lives is not money but it is the opportunity to learn, grow in responsibilities, contribute to others, and be recognized for achievements. The other important tenet in my overall leadership philosophy is purpose. Having purpose is important and provides legs for why I do what I do and how I do it. Purpose brings my

values to the forefront and allows me to look at everything through a focused lens and question the worth and value of every second of every day that God gives me. I prefer that my purpose come out of my faith instead of somewhere else so I will continue to pray for God's guidance, direction, and answers. I know we do not typically include non-academic quotes in our paper but I have the perfect quote to summarize my leadership philosophy. There are several other quotes that I like to use but this one is a general sentiment of the legacy I would like to leave behind. Making my absence felt means I left the individual, team, and organization better than I found it.