

# The context of servant leadership: the goals of a community

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



The concept of servant- leadership, although appearing to be a contradiction in terms, was developed by Robert Greenleaf in the 1970s. It emphasizes the sharing of power and the involvement of each member in a family type relationship. With this form of ethical and caring behavior, it encourages both the personal growth of workers as well as aids in the organization's development and growth. It includes the well-known attributes of listening, hearing, empathy, awareness, foresight, conceptualization, commitment to the growth of people and building a sense of community (Greenleaf, 1977). Leading from the front and standing for the principles on which your organization or community is based is an attribute of personal leadership that has been espoused by the greatest of leaders. Like Jesus Christ when he was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, He chose to accept the Cup of suffering that His Father deemed necessary in order to redeem all mankind. He stood firm and did not flinch when the guards of Herod and the High Priest came to arrest him, yet asked them to leave the Apostles well alone. In a similar manner, we see that Martin Luther King Jr. keenly followed the principle of non-violent resistance and ultimately created such tension that segregation was disallowed and the blacks won a great victory in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Although Dr. King was assassinated, his side eventually won a moral and civil victory over the suppression of equality and human rights called segregation that was cruel and unjust. A closer look at Robert Greenleaf's theory and principles of servant- leadership brings a realization that they are based on commonsensical and wise precepts. For instance, they incorporate features of Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid as well as Daniel Goleman's Theory of Emotional Intelligence. Self Awareness

means that the leader is acutely aware of what is happening in the environment around him. He is cognizant of the actions and reactions of his adversaries and is prepared with countermeasures that will force the opposition to stop and think. Leaders are not afraid of creating tension and facing the consequences- they know that something good will come out of it. Hence conflict or collective action is not resorted to for its own sake but for the concessions or negotiations that the counterparty will be forced to admit to and concede to in the process of bringing about a settlement to the issue. Goleman's idea of emotional intelligence covers both the individual and social aspects- it consists of understanding others and their feelings as well as understanding ourselves and our intentions, responses, and goals. When we know and understand the emotions of both ourselves and others, we can motivate ourselves as well as the others to action leading to the resolution of conflict and the settlement of differences. We have just seen how awareness and emotional intelligence can be used in the context of servant leadership to accomplish the goals of a community or an organization.