

Servant Leadership Principles

Fostering a Culture of Agility



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All references unless noted: Robert K. Greenleaf; Larry C. Spears. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* 25th Anniversary Edition. Kindle Edition.

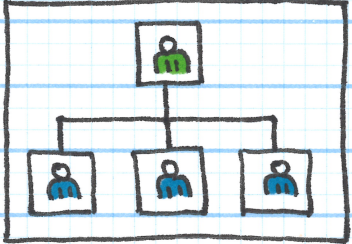
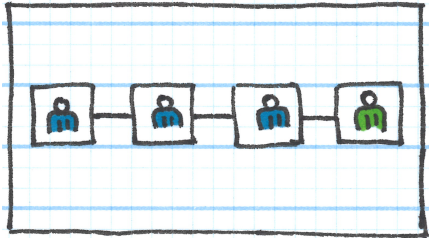
Elements of Servant Leadership

1) A Shift from “Formal Authority” to “Moral Authority”

“Moral authority is another way to define servant leadership because it represents a reciprocal choice between leader and follower. If the leader is principle centered, he or she will develop moral authority. If the follower is principle centered, he or she will follow the leader. In this sense, both leaders and followers are followers. Why? They follow truth. They follow natural law. They follow principles. They follow a common, agreed-upon vision. They share values. They grow to trust one another. Moral authority is mutually developed and shared.” (Kindle Locations 110-112).

Formal Authority (leading from ego)	Moral Authority (leading from conscience)
Micro-management	Empowerment
Selfish ambition	Sacrifice
Threatened by feedback	Welcoming feedback
Harsh	Gentle
Reactionary	Patience
Relationships viewed as “threat” or “no threat”	Reveres people and sees their potential
Myopic and sees only today	Capable of complex adaptation and foresight

2) “First Among Equals”

Top-Down Hierarchy	Leading as Peers
 <p>The leader is the one in position of authority. Followers are not given a choice to follow (other than leaving).</p>	 <p>The leader is the one with the greatest foresight and team building ability. Followers choose to follow.</p>

It is the form where the principal leader is *primus inter pares*-first among equals. There is still a "first," a leader, but that leader is not the chief. The difference may appear to be subtle, but it is important that the *primus* constantly test and prove that leadership among a group of able peers. (Kindle Locations 900-901).

Principle #1: Acceptance and Empathy

Theory from the Source:

The servant as leader always empathizes, always accepts the person but sometimes refuses to accept some of the person's effort or performance as good enough. (Kindle Locations 425-427).

Acceptance of the person, though, requires a tolerance of imperfection. Anybody could lead perfect people-if there were any. But there aren't any perfect people. (Kindle Locations 436-438).

Key Points	Tactics	Connects With
Accept everyone as they are.	Know your people and embrace their story . We are all on a journey and we often don't know what others are struggling with.	Listening Healing
	Welcome imperfection . Look for the best in everyone and appreciate our diversity and our uniqueness.	
You may sometimes reject the effort or performance.	Co-create development goals to close any gaps of competency for their role.	Awareness Growth of People
	Provide real-time intervention when effort or performance is lacking. Based on context, determine which leadership style is appropriate.	

Why Focus on This?

People grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are, even though their performance may be judged critically in terms of what they are capable of doing. Leaders who empathize and who fully accept those who go with them on this basis are more likely to be trusted.

Applying This Principle

- Connect daily with people. Ask about life outside of work and actively listen to the response.
- Avoid assumptions about people. Get to know them instead.
- Celebrate birthdays and work anniversaries.
- Setup time outside of the office to connect and socialize with your team.

Everyday Retrospective:

What did you learn about someone today?

What was your reaction when encountered by someone's "imperfection?"

Continued Study:

[Speed of Trust by Steven Covey](#)

[Leadership That Gets Results by Daniel Goleman](#)

Principle #2: Listening

Theory from the Source:

I have a bias about this which suggests that only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first. When one is a leader, this disposition causes one to be seen as servant first. (Kindle Locations 391-392)

The best test of whether we are communicating at this depth is to ask ourselves first: Are we really listening? Are we listening to the one with whom we want to communicate? Is our basic attitude, as we approach the confrontation, one of wanting to understand? (Kindle Locations 396-398)

This suggests that a non-servant who wants to be a servant might become a natural servant through a long arduous discipline of learning to listen, a discipline sufficiently sustained that the automatic response to any problem is to listen first. (Kindle Locations 392-394)

Key Points	Tactics	Connects With
First reaction to any situation is listening first.	Use "mirroring." Repeat a few of the salient points from the speaker to let them know you fully understand the situation.	Growth of People
	Open ended questions. Ask a probing question to see if they can solve the problem themselves.	
Become ok with a little silence.	Use effective pauses . Count to 5 before responding.	Awareness
	Ask yourself if what you are about to say will improve upon the silence.	

Why Focus on This?

It is because true listening builds strength in other people. (Kindle Locations 394-395)

Applying This Principle

- Practice asking powerful questions. The most powerful questions start with how, why, or what if.
- Attempt to turn off your inner voice while others are speaking. Stop guessing what you think people will say next and stop thinking about what you will say next.

Everyday Retrospective:

Where there situations today when I should have spent more time listening instead of solving?

Where you able to intently listen to at least one conversation today?

Continued Study:

[Crucial Conversations by Patterson and Grenny](#)

[Conversational Intelligence by Judith Glazer](#)

[The Power of Appreciative Inquiry by Diana Whitney](#)

Principle #3: Growth of People

Theory from the Source:

This has changed the role of manager from one who drives results and motivation from the outside in, to one who is a servant leader-one who seeks to draw out, inspire, and develop the best and highest within people from the inside out. The leader does this by engaging the entire team or organization in a process that creates a shared vision, which inspires each person to stretch and reach deeper within himself or herself, and to use everyone's unique talents in whatever way is necessary to achieve that shared vision. Introduction from Steven Covey (Kindle Locations 85-88).

Whereas the usual assumption about the firm is that it is in business to make a profit and serve its customers and that it does things for and to employees to get them to be productive, the new ethic requires that growth of those who do the work is the primary aim, and the workers then see to it that the customer is served and that the ink on the bottom line is black. It is their game. (Kindle Locations 1876-1879).

This requires a new type of leader, one who can generate enthusiasm so that many good and able people want to be a part of it and provide the strong focus of purpose that builds dynamic strength in many. Great things happen when able leaders create these conditions. (Kindle Locations 1888-1890).

Key Points	Tactics	Connects With
Fostering a shared vision.	Paint a picture of the future for your team. Where are we going? Why do we exist? What values are important to us?	Foresight Community and Healing
	Talk about the vision often and with vigor. Co-create and adjust the vision with your community.	
You are here to inspire.	Encourage often. Generate enthusiasm . Praise lavishly .	Persuasion
	Involve people in decision making . Growth occurs through learning and experiencing.	

Why Focus on This?

When the business manager who is fully committed to this ethic [growth of people] is asked, "What are you in business for?" the answer may be: "I am in the business of growing people-people who are stronger, healthier, more autonomous, more self-reliant, more competent. Incidentally, we also make and sell at a profit things that people want to buy so we can pay for all this. (Kindle Locations 1892-1894).

Applying This Principle

- Invest time, money, energy in others. [John Maxwell suggests](#) 20% of your time is spent on personal productivity while 80% should be spent on developing, encouraging, and leading others.
- Take a personal interest in the growth of others. This is your legacy.

Everyday Retrospective:

How much time did you spend developing, encouraging, and leading others?
Did you involve others in any decision-making today?

Principle #4: Community and Healing

Theory from the Source:

This is an interesting word, healing, with its meaning, "to make whole." 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. (Kindle Locations 621-622).

Only community can give the healing love that is essential for health. Love is an indefinable term, and its manifestations are both subtle and infinite. But it begins, I believe, with one absolute condition: unlimited liability! As soon as one's liability for another is qualified to any degree, love is diminished by that much. (Kindle Locations 636-637, 645-646).

All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group. (Kindle Locations 656-657).

Key Points	Tactics	Connects With
You are responsible (unlimited liability) for the health and welfare of the people who follow you.	Start with "people first." Are the people on your team healthy? Is someone dealing with things outside of work? Discover opportunities to help.	Acceptance and Empathy Growth of People
You are responsible for connecting people.	Change "I/me" language to "us/we" . Establish social cohesion throughout the community by seeking out triads . ¹	
The environment you create should feel like a safe harbor.	Drive out fear . Use positive language and reinforce the words used with your actions.	

Why Focus on This?

But any human service where the one who is served should be loved in the process requires community, a face-to-face group in which the liability of each for the other and all for one is unlimited, or as close to it as it is possible to get. Trust and respect are highest in this circumstance, and an accepted ethic that gives strength to all is reinforced. (Kindle Locations 648-650).

Applying This Principle

- Find common points of connection between people. Genuinely seek out more information about people.
- Be yourself. Share your own "humanness." Share your own development plan with others. Apologize when necessary.

Everyday Retrospective:

Did you "make someone whole" today?

Source and Continued Study:

¹ [Tribal Leadership by Dave Logan](#)

Principle #5: Awareness

Theory from the Source:

The cultivation of awareness gives one the basis for detachment, the ability to stand aside and see oneself in perspective in the context of one's own experience, amid the ever present dangers, threats, and alarms. (Kindle Locations 519-520).

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. (Kindle Locations 521-522).

Leaders must have more of an armor of confidence in facing the unknown-more than those who accept their leadership. This is partly anticipation and preparation, but it is also a very firm belief that in the stress of real life situations one can compose oneself in a way that permits the creative process to operate. (Kindle Locations 522-525).

Key Points	Tactics	Connects With
Awareness does not provide solace but should provide a jolt or an awakening.	Develop a straight-forward and honest understanding of what makes you tick and your reaction to events and stressors. Identify your emotional triggers.	Persuasion
	Receive and embrace feedback . Seek input from all angles – your boss, your peers, your team, your family, your friends. Use a Johari Window .	
Awareness is a viewing of yourself in the context of your own experience.	Become acutely aware of your current environment by observing and listening .	Listening Foresight
	Create a journal . Capture what you have observed and reflect continuously.	

Why Focus on This?

By cultivating awareness, your inner voice is quieted and your inner serenity grows allowing room for persuasion and foresight to take over.

Applying This Principle

- Default to action. Use feedback and awareness to jolt yourself to movement.

Everyday Retrospective:

How did you respond to periods of stress?

What dangers, threats, and alarms were you aware of today?

What actions did you take based on what you became aware of?

Continued Study:

[Emotional Intelligence 2.0 by Travis Bradberry and Jeanne Graves](#)

Principle #6: Persuasion

Theory from the Source:

Leadership by persuasion has the virtue of change by convincement rather than coercion. Its advantages are obvious. (Kindle Location 550).

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. (Kindle Locations 680-682).

The trouble with coercive power is that it only strengthens resistance. And, if successful, its controlling effect lasts only as long as the force is strong. It is not organic. Only persuasion and the consequent voluntary acceptance are organic. (Kindle Locations 687-688).

There are several kinds of power. One is coercive power, used principally to destroy. Not much that endures can be built with it. Even presumably autocratic institutions like businesses are learning that the value of coercive power is inverse to its use. Leadership by persuasion and example is the way to build-everywhere. (Kindle Locations 1175-1177).

Key Points	Tactics	Connects With
Provide alternatives not mandates.	Use clear messaging with a gentle tone . Instead of solving or telling, ask "What do you think we should do?"	Listening Awareness
Create an environment of opportunity.	Establish an atmosphere for individuals to choose autonomy – knowing they may "fail" but will grow in the experience.	Community and Healing Growth of People

Why Focus on This?

Coercive power creates a divide between the leader and follower. This divide can often never be closed or healed. Persuasion provides options and opportunities for something bigger and greater to emerge.

Applying This Principle

- Use coercion (command-and-control) only in times of emergency.
- Use other leadership styles as the context of the situation warrants.

Everyday Retrospective:

Based on situational context, did I attempt to "command and control" instead of persuade?

Continued Study:

[Influencer by Joseph Grenny and Kerry Patterson, et al.](#)

Principle #7: Foresight

Theory from the Source:

The leader needs two intellectual abilities that are usually not formally assessed in an academic way: the leader needs to have a sense for the unknowable and be able to foresee the unforeseeable. Leaders know some things and foresee some things that those they are presuming to lead do not know or foresee as clearly. This is partly what gives leaders their "lead," what puts them out ahead and qualifies them to show the way. (Kindle Locations 444-446).

The art of leadership rests, in part, on the ability to bridge that gap by intuition, that is, a judgment from the unconscious process. The person who is better at this than most is likely to emerge the leader because of the ability to contribute something of great value...Leaders, therefore, must be more creative than most; and creativity is largely discovery, a push into the uncharted and the unknown. (Kindle Locations 458-459).

Foresight is the "lead" that the leader has. Once leaders lose this lead and events start to force their hand, they are leaders in name only. They are not leading but are reacting to immediate events, and they probably will not long be leaders. (Kindle Locations 501-503).

Key Points	Tactics	Connects With
Use your intuition based on the experience of the past and the realities of the present.	<p>Stop. Put all your problems aside. Look. Take a look at the visible future and ask "What are the problems we're about to have? ...will my customers have?"</p> <p>Listen. To what your intuition is telling you about the future.¹</p> <p>Leverage the Stewhart Circle. PDSA (plan, do, study, act).²</p>	Listening Awareness
Knowing the unknowable.	Identify hard trends . Start with certainty. Become familiar with technology and demographic trends. What do we <i>know</i> will happen?	
	Identify soft trends . Soft trends are things that <i>might</i> happen. While hard trends allow us to see the future, soft trends allow us to change the future. ¹	

Why Focus on This?

Without foresight, you are a leader in name only. Without foresight, you are reacting, not leading.

Applying This Principle

- Solve tomorrow's predictable problems today by becoming anticipatory.
- If the future seems too vague, make small bets until you have more information.
- Don't provide foresight to an immediate situation as this could cause frustration.

Everyday Retrospective:

Did you make the time to stop, look and listen? What trends are you recognizing?

Source and Continued Study:

¹ [Flash Foresight by Daniel Burrus](#)

² [Four Days with Dr. Deming by William Latzko and Daniel Saunders](#)