**EMCS2400: Effective Leadership**

Post-Work: Leadership Development Plan

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I was chosen to be a Servant Leader at 17 when I became the MLK Scholar for Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. Morehouse remade me in the same mold as men like the [Rev. Dr. Adam Clayton Powell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_Clayton_Powell_Jr.), the [Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Thurman) and the [Rev. Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Mays). These men sacrificed a well justified stance of anger against social injustice for a greater cause rooted in Nonviolence and Love. The Servant Leadership framework allows us to serve people and serve ideals while contributing to our organizations in a meaningful way.  
  
As it relates to my followers, I chose Agape Love and treat them with the highest level of altruism, respect and humanity. I operate under an axiom of mutual empowerment. When people understand the principles of mutual empowerment, and see the leader is engaged in service **with** the people, **for** the people and **not just for the organization**, leading with fear becomes unnecessary. In this model subordinates become **partners in service to the ideals**, not just “human resources”.  
  
In this framework, managing change and conflict first means discovering the ideals we serve and then engaging the actors in service, even if these actors are aggressively negative toward the leaders or the organization. People like Dr. King and Congressman Powell stood courageously in the face of violence because they believed in the inherent worth of every person, even those who sought their destruction. Dealing with conflict requires a keen sense of timing and a willingness to enter the space of the opposing force with the intent of achieving safety for everyone involved. When people in organizations, especially leaders, spend time “entering the space” of the people they work with, to learn their perspective, it strengthens their understanding of operations and weaves a strong mesh of shared knowledge across teams.  
  
In this leadership model developing new leadership means rendering a call to leadership, and offering a transformative moment to those who want to join in service. The transformative moment usually comes long after the person is hired, and it is the job of Human Resources and Management to create an “Aha Moment” for the employee. The Aha moment being the moment when the employee experiences the core value proposition defined in the ideals of the company. Keeping leaders engaged means creating opportunities for employees to experience this moment again and again, fusing the written ideals of the organization with experiences in the workplace.  
  
Tracking and measuring the benefits of conflict resolution like agile sprint velocities and overall job satisfaction, seem like fair, honest qualitative measurements for Servant Leaders. If cooperation is the foundation, then organizational effectiveness is a direct result of that strong foundation. I choose to measure *my* effectiveness by monitoring the effectiveness of my team over time. Agile Burn Down rates, qualitative post mortem reports and satisfaction surveys can provide tangible measurements on how effective leadership is in an organization. “Can the team get work done and solve complex problems?” and “Do they enjoy working with each other?”; If we can answer with an emphatic YES to these two questions, we are headed in the right direction.   
  
I don’t have an expectation that I will be “remembered” by anyone outside my immediate family. I would love instead for people to remember what I have said to them, that they are important, loved and valuable. People who believe in themselves, do the right things, make good decisions and create value for themselves and others. I don’t have a way of “crafting” a persona like a modern day hero ( ie. Obama ), but ongoing self awareness goes a long way.

Applying these principles at NASA means consistently standing up for Servant Leader ideals in the face of challenging situations. I don’t occupy a leadership role at this time, but peer leadership can be just as powerful. One of my favorite verses from the Old Testament reads :  
  
*“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,  
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;*  
***And a little child shall lead them.***  
- Isaiah 11:6  
  
The symbolism here implies that powerful aggressors, vulnerable agents and individuals that may be considered natural adversaries can be led by someone as innocent and gentle as a child. Servant Leadership doesn’t require having power “over” people, it requires a willingness to enter the space of the people across the organization and recognizing the human factors involved in every decision an organization must make.