

Lesson 10

Servant Leader and Servant Leadership

I. A servant leader

- The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.
- The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?
- A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

II. Servant leadership

What is servant leadership?

- Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy built on the belief that the most effective leaders strive to serve others, rather than accrue power or take control. The aforementioned others can include customers, partners, fellow employees and the community at large.
- Servant leadership's emphasis on taking responsibility for the needs and desires of others is akin to ethical leadership, which urges leaders to show respect for the values and dignity of their subordinates. Greenleaf's approach also includes

elements of the participative leadership style, which requires leaders to involve subordinates in setting goals, building teams and solving problems but keeps the final decision-making in their own hands.

- Robert K. Greenleaf first coined the phrase "servant leadership" in his 1970 essay, "The Servant as a Leader." However, it's an approach that people have used for centuries.
- As a servant leader, you're a "servant first" – you focus on the needs of others, especially team members, before you consider your own. You acknowledge other people's perspectives, give them the support they need to meet their work and personal goals, involve them in decisions where appropriate, and build a sense of community within your team. This leads to higher engagement, more trust, and stronger relationships with team members and other stakeholders. It can also lead to increased innovation.
- Servant leadership is not a leadership style or technique as such. Rather it's a way of behaving that you adopt over the longer term. It complements **democratic leadership styles**, and it has similarities with **Transformational Leadership** – which is often the most effective style to use in business situations – and Level 5 Leadership – which is where leaders demonstrate humility in the way they work.
- However, servant leadership is problematic in hierarchical, autocratic cultures where managers and leaders are expected to make all the decisions. Here, servant leaders may struggle to earn respect.
- It starts with the rationale “you are a servant first.” When this statement sinks in to the aspiring leader, it necessitates the willingness to give ones best to others. It can be likened to the theological slogan “other-centered.”
- As suggested that this type of leadership leads to higher engagement, more trust, and stronger relationship not only with team members but eventually to a bigger community.
- Furthermore, this form of leadership is synonymous to one of the most appealing type – transformational leadership. A leadership that aims to change not only the leaders themselves but all the members of the community.