

Inquiry into Servant Leadership:

In the following four pages, I examine Robert Greenleaf's conceptualization of the Servant Leader as a leadership model. On pages one and two, I offer a summary of his work from a variety of sources. On pages three and four, I offer an original assessment that explores Servant Leadership through its multiple dimensions and through proposed stages of development. – Tony Zampella

The Meaning of Servant-Leadership

In his writing, Greenleaf asserts the need for a new kind of leadership model. He developed the Servant Leader model in the late 60's – one that puts serving others -- including employees, customers, and community -- as the number one priority. The central definition of servant-leadership, as defined by Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, is as follows:

“It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve ... Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.”

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being addressed. Though difficult to administer, the best test is to ask: 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?

Ten Key Precepts of Servant-Leadership

In my own reading of Greenleaf, I have identified a set of ten characteristics, which he ascribes to the servant leader. These include the following:

1. **Listen** receptively to what others have to say.
2. **Acceptance** of others, and having empathy for them.
3. **Foresight** and intuition.
4. **Awareness** and perception.
5. Having highly developed powers of **persuasion**.
6. An ability to **conceptualize** and to communicate concepts.
7. An ability to be a **healing influence** in the lives of individuals and institutions.
8. **Build community** in the workplace.
9. Practice the art of **contemplation**.
10. Recognize that servant-leadership begins with the **desire to change oneself**.

After carefully considering Greenleaf's original writings, Larry Spears, former CEO of the Greenleaf Center has expanded on these 10 precepts, presenting the following as critical to the development of servant-leaders:

1. **Listening:** Traditionally, leaders have been valued for their communication and decision making skills. Servant-leaders must reinforce these important skills by making a deep commitment to listening intently to others. Servant-leaders seek to identify and clarify the will of a group. They seek to listen receptively to what is being said (and not said). Listening also encompasses getting in touch with one's inner voice, and seeking to understand what one's body, spirit, and mind are communicating.

2. **Empathy:** Servant-leaders strive to understand and empathize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirit. One must assume the good intentions of coworkers and not reject them as people, even when forced to reject their behavior or performance.

3. **Healing:** Learning to heal is a powerful force for transformation and integration. One of the great strengths of servant-leadership is the potential for healing one's self and others.

4. **Awareness:** General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader. Making a commitment to foster awareness can be scary -- one never knows what one may discover! As Greenleaf observed, "Awareness is not a giver of solace - it's just the opposite. It disturbs. [Servant-leaders] are not seekers of solace. They have their own inner security."

5. **Persuasion:** Servant-leaders rely on persuasion rather than positional authority in making decisions. Servant-leaders seek to "enroll" others in a commitment, rather than coerce compliance. This particular element offers one of the clearest distinctions between the traditional authoritarian model and that of servant-leadership.

6. **Conceptualization:** Servant-leaders seek to nurture their abilities to "dream great dreams." The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. Servant-leaders must seek a delicate balance between conceptualization and day-to-day focus.

7. **Foresight:** Foresight is a characteristic that enables servant-leaders to understand lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision in the future. It is deeply rooted in the intuitive mind.

8. **Stewardship:** Greenleaf's view of all institutions was one in which CEOs, staff, directors, and trustees all play significance roles in holding their institutions in trust for the great good of society.

9. **Commitment to the Growth of People:** Servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As such, Servant-leaders are deeply committed to a personal, professional, and spiritual growth of each and every individual within the organization.

10. **Building Community:** Servant-leaders are aware that the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shaper of human lives has changed our perceptions and caused a sense of loss. Servant-leaders seek to identify a means for building community among those who work within a given institution.

Growing Applications of Servant-Leadership

The philosophy under the servant-leader model has influenced a number of sectors of the workforce, including:

- **For-profit corporations.** Servant Leadership is the foundation for what has come to be called "trustee education" that brings together of servant-leadership and contextual experiences in the off-shoot area of "service-learning."
- **Community leadership programs.** Greenleaf's writings are increasingly used in both formal management/leadership courses and by independent consultants working directly with institutions.
- **Personal growth, development and transformation.** We see Greenleaf's ideas being articulated to address diverse audiences within the Men's Movement, the Women's Movement, and Jungian psychology, among other contemporary models that emphasize spiritual evolution.

Dimensions of Servant Leadership

In these two pages, I offer two views to explore this model. First, we explore the dimensions of the servant leader model based on its original ten precepts. Visualize the dimensions on this page as five slices to a pie, each taking on a particular “edge,” revealing the robust nature of Servant Leadership. Then, on the following page find the stages of development of a Servant Leader. These appear as a hierarchy; however, as in all development, the actual path through the stages is more circular and non-linear.

– Tony Zampella

Spiritual: Servant leaders take inspiration from a moral authority that rests on a higher purpose or calling, inspired by acceptance rather than dogma. Models include Jesus Christ, Buddha, Mother Theresa and Nelson Mandela. In a secular manner, this model resembles a virtuous ethical model. These leaders feel a calling to serve a higher purpose, greater commitment and a need to connect to others through service.

Philosophical: The ideal for this model inherently involves a focus on values, such as building community through a strong sense of integrity, and a respect for others through building trust, listening, reflecting, and developing human potential. In addition, at a deeper level, it speaks of shared purpose, meaning and commitment. Finally, the philosophical focus is on the well-being of others and environments.

Emotional: The servant as leader is fully self-expressed. Servant leaders place a premium on self-awareness, transformational introspection and being attuned to emotions as a source of information. In addition, this leadership model rests on connecting with others through empathy, inspiration, passion and developing others aspirations.

Intellectual: This model demands a keen sense of foresight, the ability to articulate meaning, conceptualize vision, and to practice contemplation before acting. The leader works to enhance performance in others through coaching, persuasion, and articulation of ideas and ideals. Additionally, the servant leader has intellectual discipline devoted to anticipating and creating change to improve the status quo.

Practical: Action is fundamental to serving others and to leading. Action occurs as creative self-expression, learning and developing individual potential and environments. Action is tapping into your gift and to enable and empower others to tap into their gifts, as the source of contribution, service and leadership.

Stages of Development

This page outlines these 10 precepts inside of four stages of development.

1. **Listen** receptively to what others have to say.
2. **Acceptance** of others, and having empathy for them.
3. **Foresight** and intuition.
4. **Awareness** and perception.
5. Having highly developed powers of **persuasion**.
6. An ability to **conceptualize** and to communicate concepts.
7. An ability to be a **healing influence** in the lives of individuals and institutions.
8. **Build community** in the workplace.
9. Practice the art of **contemplation**.
10. Recognize that servant-leadership begins with the **desire to change oneself**.

Each developmental stage evolves by transcending *and* including (Wilber) the previous stage; rather than disassociating from any previous stage. This wholeness provides a healthy, directional development. That is, the emotional stage includes the physical; the mental phase includes both the physical and emotional, and the spiritual stage includes all previous stages. Moreover, in this model, consider the lower stages most fundamental to the whole, and the higher stages most significant as measured by level of integration (previous stages) complexity, and the variation of elements.

Finally, each stage, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, manifests as an ideal includes its own learning, capacity, and outcome that correlates with some of the ten precepts that best define the leader at that stage of development. For example: The **Spiritual** stage manifests in the ability to tap into purpose with a capacity for acceptance, resulting in humility. The **Mental** stage manifests in the ability to tap into ideas, with a capacity for vision and results in integration. The **Emotional** stage manifests in the ability to tap into listening with a capacity for presence, resulting in passion. The **Physical** stage manifests in increased awareness with a capacity for perception, resulting in will.

Below, find each *developmental stage* with correlating precepts (from list above).

Stage	Manifests	Capacity	Outcome	Precepts (with number)
Spiritual	Purpose	Acceptance	Humility	8) Build community in the workplace; 7) Generate healing influence ; 3) Foresight and intuition;
Mental	Ideas	Vision	Integration	5) Powers of persuasion ; 6) Conceptualize and communicate concepts;
Emotional	Listening	Presence	Passion	2) Acceptance and empathy for others; 1) Listen receptively to what others have to say;
Physical	Awareness	Perception	Will	9) Practice the art of contemplation ; 4) Awareness and perception; 10) Recognize that Servant-leadership begins with desire to change oneself .
Stage	Manifests	Capacity	Outcome	Precepts (with number)