



# Servant Leadership

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Robert Stewart is a renowned author and expert in leadership, with a particular focus on servant leadership. Born and raised in the United States, Stewart developed a passion for leadership and personal development at a young age. He received his Bachelor's degree in Psychology from a prestigious university and went on to earn his Master's degree in Business Administration.*

## The Summary

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### Introduction

Human beings are inherently social and need to find belonging in causes larger than themselves. We are born in a little familial unit. We attend school, form friendship groups, and ultimately join the workforce where we discover ourselves as a part of several groups.

In every organization, a natural leader emerges to direct the group's activities. Even if there may be some disagreement, the leader ultimately chooses what everyone will do—what the group's objective will be. In various situations, the leader is either a dictatorial figure

who says, “Let's all do this” or “I don't want us to do that,” or a servant leader who considers the opinions of the group as a whole before making decisions.

In the end, a servant leader often achieves better and more fruitful outcomes than a dictatorial leader because the group is happy, everyone is working toward a shared goal, and everyone feels valued and supported in their responsibilities.

### Chapter 1: On Leadership

There is much more to becoming a leader than simply having charisma and charm. Not everyone who is sociable and surrounds themselves with others qualifies as a

leader. All one has to do to create a cult of personality is to be approachable and likable.

Unfortunately, this causes problems since people are unpredictable and prone to change; a leader who cannot keep up with this or who does not remain loyal to who they are and what they believe in will fail.

Transformational and transactional leaders are the two main categories of leaders. The most fundamental kind of leadership is transactional leadership, which entails a “trade” between the leader and their followers. Typically, a paycheck is used to complete this transaction.

Team members agree to follow their leader’s (or boss’s) instructions and complete all work “as given,” which has the benefit of establishing clear expectations for each team member. People who are typically ambitious and driven by external rewards often prosper in this model since the transactional is based on performance.

The drawback is that for many, this causes poor morale among followers and a high rate of group churn. One can only increase employee performance so much with this kind of leadership, which often stifles innovation and discourages personal development.

Transformational leadership is a trend that is gaining traction in business and other organizations. A transformational leader’s primary trait is a constant search for innovation and advancement. They attempt to push their people beyond what is anticipated.

A transformational leader sets an example for others to follow to improve themselves and their communities. A transformational model educates and guides followers on how to make decisions and take ownership of their actions.

There are also many other leadership philosophies such as:

- 1. Authoritarian Leadership**, which is referred to as a dictatorship when used by the government. In this

model, the leader retains total authority over every area of the business, often prescribing the precise procedures that must be followed to execute a task.

- 2. Democratic Leadership**, in which the followers participate more actively in the decision-making process. The leader is entrusted with selecting who joins the group and who gets to make decisions.

- 3. Affiliate Leadership**, where the leaders try to develop and strengthen emotional bonds with their followers by appealing to their emotions. This is accomplished through positive reinforcement with the focus of making everyone feel supported, valued, and heard.

## Chapter 2: Why Servant Leadership?

Anyone who has ever been a team member, whether in sports, business, or anything else, has encountered a variety of leadership styles, some of which were effective and others, not so much. We get knowledge from those who guide us as we mature and integrate into our societies. We discover the qualities of leaders we value and those we do not. More importantly, we discover how humans react to different leadership philosophies and which philosophies are the most effective.

In a leadership dynamic, authority and power are fundamentally separate concepts. A power leadership style is by its very nature a dictatorial one, which ignores the process and focuses on the outcome. While assuming control and forcing a team to conform to one’s way may be a quick solution, the outcome is often a poisonous atmosphere that promotes resentment and dread rather than teamwork and community.

This is where the idea of the servant leader comes in. Although it is not a new concept, servant leadership is a revolutionary action that flips conventional leadership paradigms on its head. Many models use a top-down style of leadership with the leader always at the top, but

the servant leadership approach aims for “leading from behind.”

In this paradigm, the group leader must have a service-first mentality rather than the team serving the leader. A servant leader strives to uplift and encourage people who report to them so they may realize their full potential. The purpose of the servant leader is for every member of the team or community to feel empowered to assist others, not for self-glorification.

In transitioning to this approach, leadership circles today use Robert Greenleaf’s essay collection “The Servant as Leader” (1971). Greenleaf argued that being a servant leader is a choice and one must choose to put the needs of others above their own. A leader must have patience and humility to do this. The leader is not ultimately the focus of attention. The demands of the team should come first in a servant leader’s approach; the whims of the leader are unimportant.

Greenleaf concluded that the most effective servant leaders had ten fundamental traits. We’ll discuss each one of them individually.

### Chapter 3: Listening

The ancient Greek philosopher Epictetus said that we have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak. Unfortunately, this lesson has been forgotten by a lot of individuals; this is particularly true among managers and supervisors in businesses.

Listening is one of the fundamental principles of servant leadership. Great servant leaders see the value of recognizing the opinions of others and listening to every member of their teams or communities. Everyone wants to be heard, but this desire is not mutual. The people doing the tasks at the bottom of an organization often feel ignored and undervalued.

The servant leader makes a deliberate choice to active-

ly listen to better help their communities. The following situations have a particular need for active listening: job interviews, roundtable discussions, arguments, counseling, and training. Active listening requires the listener to pay close attention, comprehend, react, and recall what is being said. The listener does not only sit and be quiet while engaging in active listening. They are reacting to the speaker’s words as well as their actions and nonverbal cues.

To have a more thorough knowledge of what is being said, active listening demands a leader to take into account both *what* is being said and *how* it is being delivered. Active listening uses both verbal and nonverbal listening strategies to show a listener is paying attention to the speaker and actively striving to grasp what is being said, as opposed to passive listening which requires little to no effort on the listener’s part.

Eye contact is necessary for nonverbal listening methods, and full attention should be given to the other person. Moreover, the other person can complete their opinion or comment without interjecting. An engaged listener will allow the other person time to reply to a question or remark while keeping in mind that communication is a two-way street and refrain from asking more questions or providing their answers.

Being an active listener allows the members of a team or community to develop trust in the leader and makes them feel that their wants and sentiments are dear to their leader. It is also proof of a leader’s positive attitude and willingness to adapt to a group’s needs. This creates an environment where everyone feels valued and validated.

### Chapter 4: Empathy

Empathy is one of the hardest qualities for a servant leader to master. Empathy is the emotional quality that enables one to perceive the feelings of other people around them. We need empathy to understand that oth-

er people's perspectives on the world are quite different from our own.

According to researchers, there are three distinct types of empathy. The first of them is perspective-taking empathy, which is fundamentally the capacity to imagine oneself in another person's situation. This kind of empathy enables a leader to comprehend another's viewpoint without having to interact with their emotions, making it especially helpful for managers or servant leaders in negotiations.

Perhaps the most important type of empathy is emotional empathy, which is the ability to experience the feelings of another person. It allows people to react correctly when friends, coworkers, and members of their community show signs of sadness or suffering.

Last but not least, compassionate empathy is the capacity to experience another's suffering, comprehend their feelings, and act to alleviate it. The most suitable kind of empathy is often compassionate empathy, which is what empathy is typically considered to be. The majority of people don't just want to be understood, they want a leader who will act on their behalf or work with them to do so to address their problems. Finding a balance is challenging for a servant leader since emotional empathy might be regarded as being too emotional, while cognitive empathy can be seen as not being emotional at all.

Empathy development is a challenging process. To experience another's feelings as if they were their own, one must dig deeply inside oneself. While empathy is often innate in most individuals, it may be strengthened and developed through effort. Servant leaders are aware of this challenge and are constantly honing their abilities.

Simply challenging oneself is an approach to building empathy. Servant leaders push themselves and engage in frightful situations. They are forced out of their comfort zones by this. It's okay to struggle with a notion or a task. The servant leader puts themselves in the same

situations as a struggling follower by striving.

Before speaking, a servant leader must learn to listen to others, taking in their experiences, worries, and problems. Sharing insights on similar experiences after a leader has listened greatly contributes to developing empathy. Both the leader and the follower gain insight and develop a sense of empathy for one another via the sharing of experiences.

It's important to keep in mind that everyone empathizes differently. Empathy is a talent that must be learned and is unique to each individual. Depending on their beliefs, education, social level, and prior experiences, people interpret events in various ways. In such situations, politely seeking clarification or further information might aid in understanding one another's viewpoints.

## Chapter 5: Healing

It's normal for everyone to have some emotional baggage. People encounter both the pleasures and the sorrows of life as they go through life. Unfortunately, this will have an impact on every element of life, both public and private, regardless of how hard or how much one tries to push it away. Whatever the cause of the pain, the misery that results will have an impact on every element of our lives.

Regardless of the cause of the suffering, the servant leader knows they must endeavor to create a culture of healing. They approach leadership with a philosophy of service first. The servant leader is aware that for productivity to be at its highest, each team member must feel complete.

Numerous internal and external forces have an impact on a person's emotional health. Without any kind of intervention, a troubled person will have an impact on the group's or organization's long-term health. The organizational leader in this situation must handle emotions rather than just control objective facts and statistics. In addition to attending to the demands of the mission or organization, servant leaders also need to be consider-

ate of and ready to handle the emotional needs of their subordinates.

## Chapter 6: Awareness

Being aware is a challenging and ever-evolving process for the servant leader since it affects both the team's overall and individual emotional health in addition to the success of their task. This implies that a leader has to spend time getting to know their followers as people, not merely gears in a machine. Awareness requires a leader to embrace both the positive and negative aspects of a situation and take the necessary action to increase the group's efficiency and cohesion. Two different forms of awareness exist: self-awareness (internal), and awareness of others (external).

The first stage of being fully aware starts with an awareness of ourselves. According to research, self-aware individuals tend to be more creative and confident. They also tend to make better judgments and can communicate more effectively. People who are aware of who they are and what they need to succeed often make better employees, team members, and leaders.

Internal self-awareness is all about how well we know ourselves as a person. This calls for intense self-reflection and uncovering our true selves by answering questions like:

1. Who am I?
2. Why am I here?
3. Where have I been?
4. Where am I going?
5. How am I going to get there?
6. What is success for me?
7. What are my morals and where do I get them?

External awareness is about being mindful of other people around us. This is the highest priority for the servant leader. It seems obvious that followers wouldn't want to follow a leader who is uncertain and oblivious to what is happening.

Contrary to common opinion, a servant leader's increased self-awareness is not usually a result of experience or authority. In reality, having a lot of experience sometimes makes it harder to be conscious of oneself. This is particularly true when a leader believes they are extremely experienced. Many people who have a lot of expertise develop a false feeling of assurance or overconfidence that might prevent them from growing personally and blind them to the needs of their followers.

A servant leader is constantly aware of the people around them. To do this, merely asking "why" for any behavior isn't enough because individuals can't access their unconscious ideas, beliefs, emotions, or motivations. Because subconscious motivations impact so much of what individuals do, they sometimes invent explanations for situations that seem genuine but could be false. For example, when a person exhibits behavior that is out of character, others may assume that they lack maturity and are unfit for the job while the real reason was just low blood sugar.

Servant leaders instead ask "what" or "how" questions as opposed to "why." As a result, it becomes easier to understand the other person and the reasons behind their behaviors or feelings.

## Chapter 7: Persuasion

Leadership by persuasion is often accompanied by threats and intimidation under the authoritarian leadership style. The ultimate result is always the main concern for the leader and all decisions are made by them with little to no input from others. This approach is unsustainable as people start to lose interest in the organization or the cause once they stop feeling respected.

The servant leader strives to make sure that each team member feels appreciated and respected. To ensure that each colleague has a say in the decision-making process, the servant leader attempts to build an understanding among teammates. This encourages people to improve themselves, thereby enhancing the team or community as a whole.

It is important to note that persuasion differs from compulsion. A leader who is serving to persuade understands that they must persuade everyone in the group to concur to work together towards a shared objective. A good leader never bullies or threatens their people into obedience. They don't overlook or minimize individuals who are struggling.

A leader works with their followers to help them develop and create possibilities to better their follower's lives and the group's intended goal. They try to convince everyone in the group to share the same purpose or vision. Many organizations adopt a mission or vision statement to achieve this. It is a straightforward declaration that establishes a shared understanding or expectations for all group members.

The main aim of a servant leader is to inspire their team members to perform at their highest level and accomplish more in practically every situation. This is what everyone in the group ought to ideally want, but we do not live in a perfect world. There will be times when one or more team members fall short of expectations.

A lack of training or an outside factor—such as a dispute with a spouse or money problems—that the leader and team are unaware of may be to blame. Usually, a low-performing employee would get counseling, a possible reminder of the expectations, or be fired and replaced with someone else. In other words, the fear of losing their job is what motivates a person to work more.

This strategy is rejected by the servant leadership paradigm. To motivate employees, threats and intimidation

are ineffective strategies. A servant leader collaborates with their followers to figure out the issues that the team or followers are facing. Before removing a team member from the group, a leader must take the time to get to know them properly and understand their motives to eliminate any obstacles that may be impeding the team's progress.

The majority of the time, the issues are structural: inadequate training, murky expectations, and frequent changes without warning. All of these problems are ones that the employee or follower cannot manage. It is the responsibility of a servant leader to first grasp the situation before taking action rather than the other way around.

A leader's goal is to develop others' trust and motivate them to take better care of themselves and their communities by using their persuasive abilities. This is a unique ability that servant leaders always strive to improve. A leader must create an environment that encourages lines of open and honest communication as well as a feeling of trust and integrity to urge people to take action. A leader must leave the workplace to develop a personal relationship with their followers to do this.

Make an effort to get to know them; show empathy for their problems and way of life; share in their successes; and provide support when they need it. Serving others and encouraging others to improve themselves are the foundation of the servant leader's life. A Servant leader instills a sense of belonging among their followers, making them feel like family.

## Chapter 8: Conceptualization and Foresight

Leaders are visionaries. At the core of every leader's motivation is the desire to take a concept and transform it into something real and effective. While the majority of leaders are excellent at developing broad ideas and



concepts, putting those ideas into action is often a completely different story. Many CEOs find that the day-to-day responsibilities of running a business cause their thoughts or visions to stagnate.

Any transactional leadership approach puts the group leader at the center of operations, coordinating activities, making decisions, micromanaging the actions of their followers, and leading their team in a vacuum—having eliminated all other voices.

Servant leaders have large dreams, but they also work to develop their capacity for having these big dreams. The servant leader goes beyond the ordinary circumstances to accomplish this. An effective servant leader may approach a situation, group, or concept from the goal—the final outcome—point of view. The servant leadership model focuses on letting the leader concentrate on directing the group’s overall course, as opposed to conventional leadership models that encourage leaders to prioritize short-term objectives. This calls for focus and repetition.

The servant leader paradigm starts by asking why, as opposed to how, before commencing the planning process. The planning process is forced to concentrate on the outcome by asking why. Big ideas and concepts may be found in why questions; this is what motivates the group. It is the group’s vision and purpose. These are the broad ideas that students are expected to understand; in the field of education, they are referred to as learning objectives.

For example, a math teacher may designate as a learning objective that pupils will recognize and comprehend basic equations. The instructor expects that the pupils will have learned this learning objective after the course. In community organizing, the why represents the desired outcome of the group’s activity.

The next logical step is figuring out how to fulfill the goal’s requirements after the why issue has been re-

solved. Now, a teacher thinks about the “pieces” of the whole as part of the backward planning process. They choose the components that are necessary to fulfill the learning objective. A teacher may divide a lesson into addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division if the learning objective is for the pupils to comprehend and recognize basic equations.

The groundwork for achieving the why is provided by those four issues. A teacher may then use that information to locate the materials required for their pupils to achieve the learning objective.

This same kind of mapping is used by servant leaders, much as by teachers. As the head of a company, you already have some kind of ultimate objective in mind. We’ve previously identified the fundamental reason why. Like a teacher, a servant leader reorients their attention to how to fulfill and exceed the requirements of the final project. All interested parties participate in this brainstorming process.

The leader motivates their followers to take ownership of the organization and the defined objectives by forging consensus and including everyone in the decision-making process.

## Chapter 9: Stewardship

The term “stewardship” is derived from the word “steward,” which is used to define someone who takes care of objects, people, events, processes, etc. Stewardship is the capacity to keep something in trust for another. In other words, servant leaders must ensure that their teams, businesses, and initiatives serve society as a whole. If a servant leader’s main objective is to serve their followers, then it stands to reason that their organization should help society as a whole.

At its core, servant leadership is about taking care of others. Stewardship, in the eyes of the servant leader, is all about advancing the welfare of each individual within

a team or company. Servant leaders care more and exercise less control in this way. As essential as the objective itself is, the servant leader places equal value on the welfare of their followers.

The goal of the servant leader is to strike a balance between fostering the professional and personal growth of their followers and maintaining the momentum of the current purpose. The adoption of this stewardship model by major tech companies like Google, Microsoft, and Apple has just recently occurred. Companies like Google have implemented internship programs that pair recruits with seasoned engineers and developers.

The experienced team members serve as team leads and give assistance and resources as required when the organization adopts a servant leadership model. Team members can take responsibility for their job and their expertise thanks to this “guide on the side” strategy while still acting as resources and motivators.

Outcomes are driven by the servant leader, but the team is given flexibility and assistance as required to decide how to get there. A leader also shows genuine concern and compassion for their followers by accepting responsibility for helping them flourish. This individual effort on the part of a leader fosters a feeling of community among followers as well as a desire to grow for the benefit of the team.

A leader has to continuously assess and reassess the organization’s progress toward the goal and make adjustments as needed to retain stewardship of the company. A leader must also have the vision to see trends and patterns that can enhance progress while avoiding typical mistakes and foreseeing possible roadblocks to success.

This requires the servant leader to use their judgment in addition to advice from colleagues and other specialists. The servant leader distributes the team’s success—or failure—among all members. Teams, leaders, and

followers are motivated to perform better and go above and beyond the requirements of the result by this shared responsibility.

## Chapter 10: Commitment to Growth of People and Community

Servant leadership presupposes first and foremost a commitment to servicing the needs of others. The purpose is to strike a healthy balance between showing dedication to the followers and the larger community. A servant leader is dedicated to the development of their followers, and this dedication is subsequently returned. The followers of a servant leader must care about the advancement of their leader and their company.

Chick-fil-A is a wonderful example of servant leadership in action because of its dedication to both its customers and the community. Chick-fil-A was a pioneer in the servant leadership movement, putting many of its tenets into practice years before the theory was ever conceived. Chick-fil-A hires individuals based on these three values: character, competence, and chemistry. Second, the business promotes an environment of integrity and decency. The creator of Chick-fil-A, S. Truett Cathy, thought that building a culture of trust and showing workers that a leader appreciates them required being open and honest with them about their performance and future with the company.

Last but not least, Chick-fil-A shares this culture with its patrons by devoting the same amount of attention to their cuisine as they do to their staff. Due to its expansion, Chick-fil-A has earned a reputation for serving up delicious food and valuing its relationships with customers and staff equally.

Going above and beyond the scope of the organization’s core goal is what it means to be a servant leader. A community is, by definition, a group of people who get along because they have similar values, aspirations, and interests. Ideally, when a group gets together to



create a common plan, everyone engaged has the same objective in mind, even if they have different strategies for getting there. The mission of a servant leader’s organization should simply be to strengthen the communities in which they operate.

## Chapter 11: Servant Leadership in the 21st Century

Thousands of years have passed since the first examples of servant leadership were recorded. However, academics in the field of leadership studies are just recently beginning to study the use of this concept in corporate or nonreligious/political groups.

In the twenty-first century and beyond, the servant leader’s position will grow, but it will also be enlarged. Some of these shifts have already been seen by people in professions that demand a servant-leader approach. Think about a teacher’s job. Reading, writing, science, and math were taught by teachers when the area of education was consolidated in one place. Let it be known that teachers are generally born servant leaders whose first motivation is to improve the lives of children and their communities, not their own. The function of the teacher changed along with the evolution of the educational system. A student’s academic development is no longer just the responsibility of the teacher.

The need for both parents to work outside the house has increased as a result of parents’ increased busyness in reaction to economic problems, leaving little support for a kid at home. Teachers must now operate “in loco parentis” (in the place of a parent) by providing their children with counseling and acting as a form of bank, all the while concentrating on teaching the youngster survival skills. If a youngster is upset, they cannot learn. Since they are aware of this, teachers now have to assist the entire kid.

The same is true for business as well. The servant leader approach emphasizes the leader’s efforts on the fol-

lower as a whole, rather than only on the abilities and problems linked to their position in the business. Managers who adhere to a servant leadership model find themselves in a similar position as teachers: encouraging their subordinates, supporting their willingness to advance professionally, and personally offering resources and mentoring when necessary.

The servant leader’s job will evolve with the development of technology. The World Wide Web and the Internet’s development have opened up markets that are far larger than those of conventional brick-and-mortar companies. A requirement for labor results from this change in the market’s size. More people from a wider range of backgrounds will be in the work force. They will need to be trained and developed.

A need for highly qualified individuals is knowledge capital. This makes it necessary for servant leaders to understand and empathize with their followers’ needs, including their need to grow. The servant leader, who serves as a mentor and motivator, recognizes the value of mentoring and has the tools necessary to gently encourage their followers to improve themselves. They support their people’s growth and development.

The need for servant leaders rises along with population change and expansion. Two of the ten pillars of the servant leadership concept are listening and empathy. The future servant leader must be exceptionally skilled at active listening, developing cognitive empathy, and comprehending the healing process. The servant leader supports and works to better the people and places they live and work in by actively listening and fostering an environment that values empathy and healing.