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The Dark Side of Servant Leadership

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THE DARK SIDE OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP
— THOMAS W. CAMM

"*The shadow is a living part of the personality . . . It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness.*" (Jung, 1959, p. 20)

In *Servant Leadership*, Greenleaf (1977) asked: Who is the enemy responsible for the mediocre performance of so many institutions? "The real enemy is fuzzy thinking on the part of good, intelligent, vital people, and their failure to lead. . ." (p. 45). Part of this fuzzy thinking is the failure to recognize what Jung called the shadow aspect of who we are. For this paper, I will look at three ways this can appear: the dark side (naïve/unaware), the darker side (paternalistic), and the darkest side (authoritarian).

One of the challenges applying any leadership model is evaluating how effectively it works. Greenleaf (1977) pointed out the best test is also one of the most difficult to administer: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (pp. 13-14). What type of health are we talking about—physical, mental, emotional?

Being more autonomous sounds great when I am talking about my own work, but how much autonomy makes sense for each individual in my organization before it starts looking like anarchy or chaos? Philosophers have wrestled with the dilemma of defining and acquiring wisdom since before Plato, in addition to all the religious traditions that admonish us to be wise. How are we going to measure if someone has become wiser as a result of our leadership?

This brings us to the "fuzzy thinking" Greenleaf saw as the real enemy of servant-leadership. One result is the selection of leaders who lack self-awareness, are naïve about their own shortcomings, and unaware of where improvement is needed (what I am calling a dark side of servant-leadership). A darker side of this fuzzy thinking is the leader who might have a little more awareness and understanding of the organization, but their method of leadership is heavy on the paternalistic/benevolent father-figure vibe. And finally, the darkest aspect is the authoritarian leader who tries to mask a control-centric approach with a "veneer of niceness," using the vocabulary of servant-leadership in the framework of a rigid leadership style. Let's take a look at each of these aspects.

DARK

Dealing with someone who thinks they are better at their job than they are can be annoying. People who are bad at judging their skill set is such a common occurrence there is a name for it: The Dunning-Kruger effect (Dunning, 2017;

Lopez, 2017). As described by the namesake psychologists for this effect, people who lack knowledge and skill in a particular area suffer a double curse: they make mistakes and poor decisions; and those same knowledge gaps prevent them from catching errors. One of the most frustrating aspects of this dynamic is that knowledgeable people tend to be the most self-aware and critical of themselves, and those with a serious knowledge gap are the least likely to recognize their own foibles—they do not know what they do not know.

A person can also be naïve in their understanding of the responsibilities and requirements of leadership. Whether deliberately or subliminally, there can be a disconnect from learning about leadership and actually modelling and implementing what has been learned. I think a great example from pop culture (although it is a little dated) is the Michael Scott fictional character on NBC's *The Office* (portrayed by Steve Carell). It was often cringe-worthy to watch how inept he was, while blissfully unaware of his many shortcomings. He thought he was a great, insightful manager.

It is common for people to attain leadership positions without the proper skills or training. Often, they take the job for only the increased status and wages. They do not ask the question Warren Bennis suggested in an interview with Larry Spears (2018): "The question I would really have to ask, first, is do you really want to lead? That is a very big question. Do you really want to do this?" (p. 54). Particularly in an organization trying to instill a servant-leader model, this is a critical question.

One solution is to seek feedback from others. Pay attention to the feedback. Keep learning—the more knowledgeable you become, the more likely you are to fill in whatever gaps exist in your skill set. Ask "how might I surrender to the learning? How might I listen deeply enough—listening being the first characteristic of servant-leadership" (Ferch, 2015, p. 232).

DARKER

Servant-leadership is one of many leadership theories. In his book *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Northouse (2007) makes the point that there are many ways to finish the sentence "Leadership is . . ." (p. 2). Despite the challenge, he does provide a definition: "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3). He goes on to make the point that this definition has nothing to do with personality or character traits unique to the leader. The focus is on the process that will accomplish the goals, implying both leader and followers are affecting and affected by the process. Influence on the group is key—leadership occurs in the context of a group or community. Both the leader and followers are involved together in the leadership process.

Servant-leadership puts the focus of leadership on those being led. The focus for Greenleaf was the effect a leader had on those being led: "Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (Greenleaf, 1977, pp. 13-14). The appeal of this approach is easy to see—the devil is in the

implementation. Greenleaf himself warned about the dangers of coercive power. It is important for leaders to surround themselves with others of equal organizational power to curb the tendency toward coercive (rather than persuasive) power. Thought leaders in servant-leadership often write about the necessity of true servant-leaders to live authentic lives (including many articles published in this journal). An example of writing about this clear sense of personal meaning and self-knowledge is described by the editor of *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*: "The discipline involved in growing the interior of the self, the heart and the soul, creates a complex, often unwieldy set of circumstances for all who aspire to lead" (Ferch, 2005, p. 3).

This description places a high expectation on personal development for those who think they will lead from a servant-leadership perspective. Many fall short of this expectation. One manifestation of falling short is demonstrated by leading from a paternalistic perspective, while thinking you are personifying Greenleaf's ideal of a servant-leader (Laub, 2005). It is rare for a leader to characterize themselves as paternalistic; but often workers in organizations experience their leader's attempts at servant-leadership as paternalistic leadership. This paternalistic approach can seduce the leader into thinking they are exercising servant-leadership, and can produce child-like responses in the followers (exactly the opposite result that servant-leadership aspires to accomplish). This can result in a type of self-deception on the part of leaders and followers (Argyris & Schön, 1974; May, 1972). A result of this dynamic

is both the leader and followers trying to implement servant-leadership, but neither being self-aware enough to let go of old autocratic models of authority (Camm, 2016).

DARKEST

People seeking power will use whatever the "flavor of the month" leadership model is popular to gain power. Beyond the paternalistic approach described earlier, the person concerned only with gaining more power will use whatever means necessary, including assuming a "veneer of niceness/servanthood" if necessary. Servant-leadership places a high priority in the reciprocal relationship between the leader and followers (Spears, 2018). Unfortunately, there are situations where someone highly skilled in manipulation, and very low on empathy, can use this organizational structure in a very dysfunctional, unhealthy way.

Despite our best efforts in the servant-leadership model, there is sometimes a tendency to place a high priority on the personality traits of leaders. Often an emphasis on charisma, confidence, strong values and desire to influence are accompanied with the associated traits of dominance (Northouse, 2007).

One manifestation of this dynamic is a lack of conceptual clarity. A pseudo servant-leader can use the jargon of servant-leadership, and think of themselves as dynamic, charismatic leaders; but if their goal is only their own self-promotion, and the jargon they use does not provide clear direction, it is difficult for followers to define exactly what is expected. A

related tendency is for the pseudo leader to assume an elitist attitude, acting independently of followers by putting his or her interests above the needs of followers. It can also be difficult to measure satisfaction and motivation in workers, and consequently difficult to assess the effectiveness of the leader (Camm, 2016).

Warren Bennis had strong opinions on the prevalence of dark leaders in organizations:

> I don't think in general . . . we've paid enough attention to the range of leaders, especially bad leadership . . . they tend to deify and lionize certain exemplary leaders. . . [they] ignored the fact that some of these leaders are destructive narcissists that put themselves first. (Spears, 2018, pp. 49-50)

So, let's take a closer look at narcissists and their effect in modern organizations.

NARCISSISTS

This section on narcissists is adapted/condensed from: "The Dark Side of Leadership: Dealing with a Narcissistic Boss" (Camm, 2014).

A narcissist is motivated by a continuous need to feed a grandiose conception of self. Masterson (1988) characterized this motivation as a constant need for "supplies," which he defined as those activities and relationships that reinforce this sense of grandiosity. This often leads to a narcissist being a restless person, often displaying workaholic tendencies to constantly reinforce the sense of grandeur and achievement.

Preoccupation with the self makes it impossible to form connections with others, the origins of the personality go back to childhood, and the characteristics of the personality inevitably lead to conflicts.

Narcissism is a personality trait that encompasses grandiosity, self-absorption, a sense of entitlement, and fragile self-esteem. Often coupled with an exploitative and even hostile attitude, narcissism is a trait often found in powerful leaders (Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). In the current literature on good and bad/destructive leadership (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007; Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012; Shaw, Erickson, & Harvey, 2011), narcissism is often identified as a dominant cause of 'bad' leadership behaviors (Higgs, 2009). At its extreme, narcissism manifests as a diagnosable personality disorder. A long-standing pattern of grandiosity (either actual or in fantasy), coupled with an overwhelming need for admiration and a complete lack of empathy, characterize narcissistic personality disorder (Psych Central, 2013).

There is no shortage of terms for the adverse side of leadership, and the frequency of narcissistic personality traits found in undesirable leaders (Chatterjee & Hambrick, 2007; Harrison & Clough, 2006).

Higgs (2009) performed a review of the literature and explored the extent to which leader narcissism explained 'bad' leadership behaviors. In addition to the term 'bad' leadership, other terms noted by Higgs found in the academic literature include:

- Leadership derailment
- Toxic leadership
- Negative leadership
- Evil leadership
- 'Dark-side' leadership
- Abusive leadership
- Destructive leadership

A number of central themes occur in these descriptions. Abuse of power occurs to serve personal goals, reinforce self-image, and to conceal personal inadequacies. Inflicting damage on subordinates includes bullying, coercion, damage to their psychological well-being, and inconsistent or arbitrary treatment of subordinates. Over-exercise of control and rule breaking to serve the leader's own purposes are also recurring themes that describe "bad" leaders (Higgs, 2009, p. 168), and are consistent with narcissistic personality types.

It is not unusual to experience narcissistic personalities in top management positions. One critical component of the orientation of leaders is the degree of intensity their narcissistic tendencies has been developed (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1985). Hostility toward any perceived rivals and a corresponding fragility of self-esteem are often hallmarks of narcissism in a leadership context.

> Indeed, it is only to be expected that many narcissistic people, with their need for power, prestige, and glamour, eventually end up in leadership positions. Their sense of drama, their ability to manipulate others, their knack for establishing quick, superficial relationships serve them

well in organizational life. (Kets de Vries, 2003, p. 23)

While there is often a sense of excitement from the superficial charisma of a narcissistic leader initially, the darker side of their excessively narcissistic personality is eventually revealed. Something is lacking: an integrated sense of self (Kets de Vries, 2003).

An additional aspect of the dark side of narcissist leadership is the drive for power, often in a dysfunctional or even destructive way (Camm, 2013). Hubris is a predictable characteristic in uncontrolled narcissism. Such leaders often retreat into their own world, where they are opinionated, myopic, and unwilling to seek or accept advice from others. "Hubris is a recurring theme in leadership, for the obvious reason that excessive pride and arrogance often accompany power" (Kets de Vries, 2003, p. 60).

Narcissistic personalities cannot exercise power without the willingness of followers. Padilla, et al. (2007) describes the toxic triangle of destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and a conducive environment. Characteristics of destructive leaders include charisma, personalized use of power, and narcissism. Given the right environment, the willingness and desire of subordinates for direction and authority makes them particularly susceptible to the influence of charismatic, manipulative leaders. May (1972) characterizes this as pseudoinnocence, the practice of abdicating responsibility by giving power and authority to another.

There are characteristics of narcissistic leaders that tend to be rewarded in the corporate world (Harrison & Clough, 2006).

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When channeled in a constructive manner, they can accomplish results that are admired. Maccoby (2000), in an often-cited Harvard Business Review article, emphasizes several potentially positive characteristics of narcissistic leaders.

The preoccupation with fantasies that characterize many narcissists can be channeled to present a vision for the future of a company. A sense of self-importance, while often seen as obnoxious, can also be a strength in having the perseverance to follow a vision through despite resistance from others.

As already mentioned, narcissistic leaders are often skillful orators and persuasive, charismatic personalities. In addition, they crave attention, even adulation, which makes them particularly adept at gathering followers. While this can often be a dysfunctional or even destructive relationship, in a positive manifestation it is necessary to follow through on a vision for the future of an organization.

All of us have a certain amount of narcissism; the desire to be admired as a unique individual is a normal human drive. However, as that desire manifests itself closer to the symptoms/characteristics of narcissistic personality disorder, it begins to have a destructive effect on others. Because many of the personality characteristics of highly-narcissistic leaders are rewarded in organizations, it is quite likely that we will encounter this personality type in our professional life. Understanding what drives them is a first step in dealing with narcissists in a constructive way. For each of us personally, understanding the darker aspects of ourselves, whether it leads to unhealthy acts of leadership or as followers, can go a long

way toward minimizing the likelihood of dark manifestations in our goal of attaining the positive aspects of servant-leadership. Carl Jung provided a useful framework for us in his description of the shadow.

THE SHADOW

According to Jung, the shadow is a part of our personal unconscious that is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality. The contents of our personal unconscious are acquired over a lifetime, but are manifest from archetypes that are common to all of us as contents of the collective unconscious. According to Jung, the most common archetypes that have frequent (and often disturbing) influence on the ego are the *shadow, anima* and *animus*. While a detailed look at the anima and animus is beyond the scope of this paper, a succinct description: the anima is the personification of the feminine nature of the man's unconscious, and the animus the personification of the masculine nature of a woman's unconscious (Jung, 1961, p. 391). For those interested, excellent discussions of both are found in two of my main sources for this discussion of the shadow: *Aion* (Jung, 1969), and *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Jung, 1959).

The shadow is the most accessible and the easiest of these three archetypes to experience. That being said, it is not an easy task coming to terms with your shadow. Closer examination of the dark characteristics of the shadow reveal an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy, and a possessive quality. "To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark

aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance" (Jung, 1969, p. 8). Jung goes on to emphasize this self-knowledge often requires painstaking work over a long time.

The shadow can, to some extent be assimilated into the conscious personality. There are certain features of the shadow, however, that can be very resistant. These features are usually bound up in *projections* of the unconscious involving not only the shadow, but also the anima/animus. Projections are when we assign unpleasant characteristics to others that are actually a part of our own unconscious—an emotional approach to dealing with a characteristic in our unconscious that we are not addressing in a conscious/healthy manner. It is often obvious to neutral observers that we are projecting our own darkness on others, even when there is little hope we will see the dynamic in ourselves. Jung (1969) says we must be convinced we are throwing a "very long shadow" before we can be willing to withdraw these "emotionally-toned projections from their object" (p. 9).

This helps explain some of the dark aspects that we see in servant-leadership. For the first dark aspect, it should be obvious how being unaware of the shadow plays a key role in the behavior of someone who is naïve or unaware of their shortcomings in attempting to lead as a servant-leader. For the darker, paternalistic leader it is easy to see how unresolved issues in the unconscious could lead to projections of an overbearing or condescending father figure, all the while

thinking they are the epitome of the effective servant-leader. As noted, others can often see the leader is projecting this dark character except the person doing the projecting.

And, of course, the darkest manifestation is displayed in the narcissistic/authoritarian leader, who nonetheless makes an outward show of leading from a servant-leader style. Narcissistic leaders are characterized by lack of empathy and a need for glory, and are neither self-reflective or given to seeking constructive input from others (they do crave input that consists of being told how magnificent they are). They are strongly resistant to the kind of self-analysis and insight Jung said is necessary to deal with your shadow in a healthy manner. Consequently, the darkest and most destructive aspects of the shadow archetype in these individuals remains in the unconscious and manifests itself in often surprising and destructive ways.

One approach to dealing with our shadow is to increase our awareness. While for most of us we are (supposedly) blissfully unaware the shadow operates in our unconscious, there are steps that help us deal with this aspect of our character. Greenleaf talked about the importance of awareness—opening wide the doors of perception to strengthen our effectiveness as a leader. Most of us have very narrow perception, and miss most of the grandeur around us. If we pay attention to what is happening around us, we are much more likely to recognize projections and manifestations of both our shadow, and the shadow of others. The qualified leader needs to tolerate a sustained wide span of awareness to see things as they are.

"The opening of awareness stocks both the conscious and unconscious minds with a richness of resources for future need" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 27).

Greenleaf also had a lot to say about power dynamics in modern organizations. There will always be large and small concentrations of power; whether a servant's power of persuasion and example, or coercive power to manipulate and dominate. From a servant-leadership perspective, the intent of servant power is to create opportunity and alternatives to provide a framework for individuals to choose and build autonomy.

So why does it seem so rare to find true servant-leadership in organizations? This is where the often-subtle manifestation of the dark side of the shadow appears. A manager can present themselves as exercising servant power, and may actually believe what they are saying, but in actuality they are using a combination of coercion and manipulation. This is often self-justified because the ultimate aim for their followers is "good for them," even if they do not know better, and ultimately their autonomy is diminished. Coercive power can be overt and brutal, but it can also be covert and manipulative. "The former is open and acknowledged, the latter is insidious and hard to detect. Most of us are more coerced than we know" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 42).

Rollo May, in his book *Power and Innocence*, also recognized the prevalence of both coercive and manipulative power. May called the use of coercion *exploitive power*, the simplest most destructive kind of power. This type of control identifies power with force, slavery being the most extreme

example. As mentioned previously, this type of power can be overt, but also subtle. This is where the aspiring servant-leader needs to be self-aware. May states this type of power is often exercised by those who have been radically rejected, whose lives are so barren they know no way of relating to other people other than by exploitation. This is often rationalized as the "masculine" way of dealing with people (May, 1972, p. 105). An often-subtle way this happens is through the implied threat of violence by someone who is physically strong. This dynamic is particularly apparent in situations where a physically strong male is the boss of a female. I highly recommend the essay *Logos and Eros* by Ray (n.d.) for more on this topic.

Manipulative power is the term used by May (1972) for manipulation/coercion without force. This power over another person may have originally been invited by the person's own desperation or anxiety. A con artist is an example of this type of power. Another example is the use of behavior modification (operant conditioning) made famous by B. F. Skinner. Skinner thought much of human life is manipulative, and proposed that manipulation for socially justifiable aims was appropriate. The error lies in applying a system developed from animal experiments to the realm of human experience. May points out that Skinner's arbitrary choice to use data obtained from rats and pigeons "rules out human freedom and dignity." The behaviorist recognizes the smile but not the smiler—the human who not only smiles but frowns, weeps, kills and loves.

For the aspiring servant-leader, manipulative power can be particularly alluring, enticing even the unaware individual with

its many charms. Whether operating from the dark, darker, or darkest perspective, being promoted to a position of responsibility confers an implicit acknowledgement of skill and capability that the leader is expected to exercise. It can be very seductive to use manipulation to "do the right thing," to lead your followers where they need to go. It is easy to convince yourself that it is for their own good, and to frame it in the dogma of something as altruistic as "servant-leadership" to justify the manipulation. After all, your followers will thank you once they see the "wisdom" of your methods. And speaking of followers, we do not want to let them off the hook. If we buy into the charisma of a leader, let them do all the heavy lifting, it alleviates us of the burden of self-reflection and responsibility that is also part of a servant-leadership model. This is described by May as a type of innocence that does not lead to spirituality, but rather consists of blinders. He calls this *pseudoinnocence*—childishness rather than childlikeness. Pseudoinnocence can lead to utopianism; with unconscious purpose we close our eyes to reality. It does not lead to clarity of thought—instead it makes things seem simple and easy. This innocence cannot come to terms with evil, with the destructiveness in ourselves or others, and can become self-destructive. "Innocence that cannot include the daimonic becomes evil" (May, 1972, p. 50). Returning to Jung's archetypes, it is easy to see the parallel with May's term *daimonic* and the *shadow* in each of us. Pseudoinnocence is an all-to-common way many of us avoid admitting or confronting our own power, and allow a leader to manipulate us into

believing the delusion we are in a servant-leadership style organization.

The best servant-leaders understand there is a deep shadow to leadership.

> [W]e can't just say "Yes, let's all be servant-leaders," and suddenly it happens. . . there's going to be a deep knowledge of the fact that leadership involves an attendant long-term necessity to deal with the darkness or shadow of leadership, and the darkness or the shadow of serving. (Ferch, 2015, p. 232)

When we deny our faults, we are consumed by our shadow. This leads to not only harm to ourselves, but also to our projecting our shadow into the world where we do harm to others (Ray, n.d.). Recognition of the shadow can lead to the modesty necessary to integrate our shadow into consciousness in a healthy, constructive manner (Jung, 1957).

KNOW THYSELF—LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Fortunately, the shadow is not the only aspect of our personality. By finding "a beautiful nexus of those shadows and their corresponding light" (Ferch, 2015, p. 233), the effective leader can strike a balance between power and service.

Greenleaf also recognized the need for power, even from the perspective of the servant-leadership model. The abuse of power is curbed by the influence of equals who are strong, and rely on persuasion and example to lead (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 85). We all have blind spots, character traits that guide who we

are and our behavior that we may not be aware of (Camm, 2016; Jung, 1957). This difference between our espoused theory (what we think we believe and do) and our theory-in-use (what we actually believe and do) was described by Argyris and Schön (1974). Most people are unaware of the affect their attitudes have on their behavior, and how this can have a negative impact on others. "Blindness to incongruity between espoused theory and theory-in-use may be culturally as well as individually caused and maintained" (p. xxix).

Internal consistency (no self-contradiction) is a valued trait of a leader people trust. This type of leader displays a congruence between their espoused theory (what they say) and their theory-in-use (what they actual do, actions that match espoused values). What Argyris and Schön (1974) discovered in their research was troubling but not surprising, given what we know about the Dunning-Kruger effect: leaders claimed to practice contemporary leadership skills including empathy for workers, acceptance of feedback, and high listening skills, but they found that none of their research subjects actually practiced these skills (p. xxii). What these leaders did commonly demonstrate was defensiveness, manipulative behavior, a competitive win/lose attitude, group behavior dysfunction, and a tenuous equilibrium maintained through Machiavellian safety valves (pp. 80-81). Argyris and Schön go on to recommend that these often-destructive characteristics will not change until the leaders learn to embrace and maximize the uniqueness of each individual, to deal with conflict in a healthy, open manner, and to be open to a culture

of continual learning (pp. 102-103).

Returning to May, there are sources of power that can bring light and growth, that bring out the best in the servant-leader model. *Nutrient power* is power for the other, illustrated by a parent's love for their children and a teacher using their influence to facilitate the growth of their students. This is power that is used for the benefit of others, that takes responsibility for the welfare of others. For someone with tendencies toward paternalism, this is the positive, nurturing manifestation of this characteristic. If, as we get in touch with our shadow, we find aspects of our character that seeks authority or desires respect, embracing the role of the best qualities of teaching can be a positive application.

The final aspect of influence May describes is *integrative power*—power with the other, my power then abets my neighbor's power. To exercise this type of power, one needs to have a high degree of self-knowledge, what Jung referred to as *individuation*. Integrative power requires not just tolerating opposing views, but actively seeking them out. We need to seek the strongest arguments to test what we regard as true—a skillful devil's advocate. This is antithetical to the narcissistic personality. According to May, integrative power can lead to growth by Hegel's dialectic process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. He uses Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gandhi as examples. In both cases, they use nonviolence and moral persuasion to exercise integrative power. By holding up a mirror to their oppressors, they worked on the conscience of their opponents to bring about change. This power relies on the

moral framework of those who need to be influenced, by holding them accountable to follow their own beliefs. This tension of beliefs requires each of us to make sure our actions are consistent with our espoused beliefs.

Understanding what we truly believe brings us back to Jung's concept of individuation. Self-knowledge cannot be based on theoretical assumptions; the object of this knowledge is the individual. The paradox is that theoretical knowledge can sometimes work to the disadvantage of understanding. Coming to terms with our shadow is part of the individuation process. Consciousness is a precondition of being, but part of this process is coming to terms with our shadow, which is found in the unconscious. We are often an enigma to ourselves (Jung, 1957). The individuation process is when we become a psychological individual—a separate, indivisible unity or "whole." It means becoming a single, homogeneous being, embracing our innermost uniqueness and becoming one's own self (Jung, 1961, p. 395).

Symbolism can be a powerful tool when discussing the dark aspects of who we are. I find an image from Annie Dillard (1982) to be quite descriptive: In the deeps are violence and terror, but if you ride these monsters deeper down, you find that "which gives goodness its power for good, and evil its power for evil, the unified field: our complex and inexplicable caring for each other, and for our life together here. This is given. It is not learned" (pp. 19-20).

In *Psychology and Alchemy*, Jung (1953) spends a great deal of time discussing symbolism, including the dragon/snake

in the context of wholeness. To paraphrase Dillard, the symbol I often use is that of *wrestling the dragon (my shadow) to the deepest depths of the abyss.* The goal is not to defeat or destroy the dragon—it is a part of who I am—but to come to terms with it, to integrate my shadow into my consciousness, to make it a part of who I am in a healthy, cooperative relationship. Jung (1953) calls the corresponding archetype to convey the essence of human wholeness the *self.* "The paradoxical qualities of the term are a reflection of the fact that wholeness consists partly of the conscious man and partly of the unconscious man" (p. 18). Jung also refers to the thesis, antithesis, synthesis concept when describing the paradoxical nature of the self. Part of this paradox recognizes the nature of wholeness, and the natural anxiety associated with the shadow that is cast by each of us. Another symbol is the *Uroboros*, the dragon biting its own tail/devouring itself. This image from alchemy symbolizes, among other things, the death and renewal involved in attaining wholeness.

Regardless of which aspect of darkness we might be struggling with, increased self-knowledge is critical to growth into a true servant-leader (Nakai & Seale, 2018). In my own personal experience, and the experience of those I know well, true personal growth does not occur in a vacuum—the presence of wiser and caring individuals in our lives in necessary. "Servant-leadership makes itself known in the deep quiet known to the soul, in the interactions, graceful and profound, between people, and in the mystery of existence, unseen, that is embodied in a profound balance between love and power"

(Ferch, 2018, p. 23).

As with the beginning of this article, I will let Dr. Jung (1957) have the last word: "Ultimately, everything depends on the quality of the individual" (p. 31).

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