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### The Leader as Servant: Followership to Leadership

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# The Leader as Servant: Followership to Leadership

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Franklin University, October 2018

FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY

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LEADERSHIP & LEARNING

## Abstract

- A paradigm change has been occurring in leadership theory over the last 40 years since Servant Leadership was introduced in the 1970's by Robert Greenleaf. For many years academia looked away from including this theory as foundational. In recent years the theory has gained strong attention in academic journals, textbooks and course instruction. Pivotal to the underpinnings of this theory is the concept of the leader as a developer of his or her followers. The challenge for any leader is how to mentor, develop and coach his or her followers through leadership practices that truly develop others. The practice of this involves these behaviors: empowerment, ethical actions, mentoring others, community-wide thinking, trust, humility, and stewardship.

Servant leadership is a form of leadership art that requires a change in typical leadership approaches. The theory ultimately focuses on organizational outcomes that facilitate and realize; 1. increased follower growth; 2. measurable individual and organizational performance and effectiveness; and 3. positive social and community outcomes.

## Leadership Predictions

- Servant leadership allows followers to be fully developed into leaders.
- Servant leadership results in the growth of organizational performance.
- Servant leadership produces a positive affect on society.



## Servant Leader Characteristics

- **Listening** – Listen first and acknowledge the viewpoint of others.
- **Empathy** – “Standing in the shoes” of another person to confirm, validate and understand them.
- **Healing** – Support followers by helping followers to become whole.
- **Awareness** – Understand oneself and the impact one has on others and followers.
- **Persuasion** – Using clear, consistent and non-judgmental communication with an emphasis on persuasion versus coercion.
- **Conceptualization** – Providing a clear vision and sense of direction that fosters long-term commitment and thinking.
- **Foresight** – Learning from the past to ensure effective leadership today.
- **Stewardship** – Taking full responsibility for the leadership entrusted to themselves and additionally upholding the trust of all stakeholders for the greater good of the organization.
- **Commitment to the Growth of People** - Helping every person in the organization grow personally and professionally.
- **Building Community** – Cultivating a sense of unity and connectedness.

*Servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, -- to serve first...*

*by --- Robert Greenleaf, 1970*

## Primary Theoretical Outcomes and Strengths

- #1. Facilitates Follower Performance and Growth** –
  - Help individuals realize their full human potential
  - Cultivate self-actualization in followers
  - Provide control and nurturing to individuals.
- #2. Increases Organizational Performance** -
  - Realize follower performance and behaviors that move beyond expectations.
  - Cause overall organizational outcomes exceeding goals.
- #3. Produces a Positive Social Impact**
  - Result in positive social outcomes caused by exemplary organizational values and behaviors.

## Key Terms

- **Servant Leading** – Act of placing the development of followers foremost in leadership.
- **Followership** – Act of recognizing followers as organizational leaders.
- **Stewardship** – Act of cultivating trust and growth of others.
- **Empowerment** – Act of shifting leadership power to hands of followers.
- **Empathetic** – Act of confirming and validating follower views.
- **Healing** – Act of placing the personal well-being of followers foremost.

## Definition & Underpinnings

**Servant leadership places the well-being of followers over the leader's self-interests with an emphasis on follower development.**

- **One wishes to serve first.....**
- **One aspires to lead and care for others....**
- **One has a goal for the growth of others....**
- **One places good of others over self....**
- **One has goal for betterment of society....**

## Credits

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