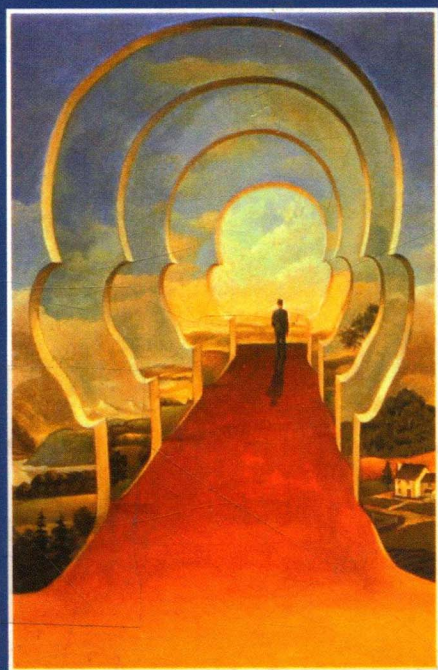


REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP

HOW ROBERT K. GREENLEAF'S THEORY
OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP INFLUENCED
TODAY'S TOP MANAGEMENT THINKERS



INCLUDES
ESSAYS BY

M. SCOTT PECK

AND

PETER SENGE

WITH

A FOREWORD BY

MAX DEPREE

EDITED BY

LARRY C. SPEARS

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Top Management Thinkers

Contributors Include:

Robert K. Greenleaf • M. Scott Peck

Peter Senge • Ann McGee-Cooper

Sheila Murray Bethel • Walter Kiechel III

Plus Twenty-One Additional Essays and Articles on Servant-Leadership
by Authors, Executives, Consultants, and Journalists

Plus a Newly-Discovered Essay by Robert K. Greenleaf

And a Foreword by Max DePree

Edited by Larry C. Spears, Executive Director
The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership



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REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP

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Top Management Thinkers**

Foreword

In a changing society, in our transition to a knowledge-based economy and facing the need to compete globally, one needs to ask: Is servant-leadership pertinent? Is it essential to our task? I believe it is. And I believe there is a building momentum for enlightened leadership in the for-profit world, the non-profit sector, and in many areas of government today. In a number of areas, it has the marks of a movement.

Good books that deal with the beliefs and convictions that nurture this movement are not easy to find. This is one. *Reflections on Leadership* is a worthy and worthwhile gift to all those who attach high value both to their responsibilities and to the people with whom they work. It is a book for people who feel the responsibility to lead in the areas of society beyond the commitments of their specific job.

The essays herein build effectively on the principles of good leadership—leadership that relies primarily on building competence in relationships with people who, together with the leader, produce the required results and conditions. Together, they continually reach for both personal and organizational potential.

These essays teach us that servant-leadership is not a skilled response to ratios and policies. Its fidelity lies in an enticing and workable vision, in beliefs about persons, in enabling values, in actions taken on reflection—all rooted in what can be learned from research, from experience, and from worthy mentors.

This book illustrates beautifully how servant-leadership has at its heart a working sense of moral purpose. To be a servant-leader is a deeper and better way to lead, but it is never easy. Sailing without wind, it isn't. Problems of ambiguity, discomfort, and contrary opinion seem natural to servant-leaders; they help us achieve better results.

Servant-leadership is never permissive. It always sets high standards of being and doing. It is an idea and a process that follows a

path of study, reflection, practice, and evaluation. It is the one setting in which the mystery of potential can be adequately plumbed.

We know that leadership is a serious meddling in other peoples' lives. This book never trivializes that fact. It makes clear that crucial to good practice in leadership is the understanding that what we intend to be determines what we are able to do. *Reflections on Leadership* is a book Bob Greenleaf could endorse.

Max DePree

Acknowledgments

I am particularly indebted to several of my colleagues at the Greenleaf Center—Don Frick, Richard Smith, and Geneva Loudd, for their encouragement and able assistance on various aspects of this book. I also wish to express my appreciation to my other colleagues at the Center: Anne Fraker, Michele Lawrence, Marcia Newman, Jim Robinson, and Kelly Tobe for their support. My own journey in servant-leadership has also been enriched through my partnership with the following past-and-present Greenleaf Center Trustees: Bill Bottum, Linda Chezem, Diane Cory, Joyce DeShano SSJ, Joe DiStefano, Harley Flack, Newcomb Greenleaf, Carole Hamm, Jack Lowe, Jr., Jeff McCollum, Andy Morikawa, Jim Morris, Paul Olson, Bob Payton, Sr. Joel Read, and most especially Jim Tatum.

I am most grateful to two institutions—the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (especially Larraine Matusak, John Burkhardt, and Stephanie Clohessey) and Lilly Endowment Inc. (particularly Craig Dykstra) for their unwavering support of servant-leadership and The Greenleaf Center.

My special thanks go to Ruth Mills, my editor at John Wiley & Sons, and to Janice Borzendowski, Johanna Zucaro, Nancy Land, and Kim Nir for their editorial assistance. I am also grateful to Karl Weber and Neal Maillet for initially suggesting that I do this book.

I also want to thank my family and friends for their love and encouragement along the way, especially my wife, Beth Lafferty, and my sons, James and Matthew.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the many women and men everywhere who are striving to become servant-leaders. Your efforts at building spirit in the workplace truly inspires others to servant-leadership.

Preface

This collection of 27 essays brings together into one volume some of the most recent and significant pieces on servant-leadership and the growing influence of Robert K. Greenleaf's legacy.

These essays were written by some of the leading thinkers and practitioners of servant-leadership.

Part One, Robert K. Greenleaf—Grandfather of New Paradigm Thinking, begins with two essays written by Robert Greenleaf. *Life's Choices and Markers* recounts five significant influences in Greenleaf's life which led him to focus on servant-leadership. *Reflections from Experience* marks the first appearance of this previously unpublished essay from the Greenleaf Archives, and the first new essay by Greenleaf to appear since 1987. It is but one of several dozen previously unpublished essays, written by Greenleaf over a 50-year period, which the Greenleaf Center plans to publish over the next few years. The third essay in Part One, RKGK archivist Anne Fraker's, *Robert Greenleaf and Business Ethics: There Is No Code*, also draws upon some of the rich, unpublished materials contained in the Greenleaf Archives. Business Writer Carl Rieser's essay, *Claiming Servant-Leadership as Your Heritage*, is an adaptation of a talk given to a meeting of AT&T employees in 1987. *Tracing the Vision and Impact of Robert K. Greenleaf* was written by a former student and friend of Robert Greenleaf's for nearly 30 years, Joe DiStefano. Educator and consultant Dennis Tarr has contributed *The Strategic Toughness of Servant-Leadership*.

Part Two, The Emerging Model of Servant-Leadership, begins with an edited talk given at the Greenleaf Center's 1993 servant-leadership conference by M. Scott Peck, the noted author of *The Road Less Traveled* and *A World Waiting to be Born*. Peck's address is titled *Servant-Leadership Training and Discipline in Authentic Community*. *The Search for Spirit in the Workplace*, by Ron Zemke and Chris Lee, originally

appeared in *Training* magazine and superbly traces back to Greenleaf much of the current emphasis on the emerging model of business management and leadership. Ann McGee-Cooper and Duane Trammell, coauthors of the best-selling *You Don't Have to Go Home from Work Exhausted!*, have contributed *Servant-Leadership: Is There Really Time for It? The Leader as Servant*, by Walter Kiechel III, originally appeared in *Fortune* magazine. Edward Iwata's *Some Executives Are Trying to Make Companies Heed a Higher Authority* first appeared as a nationally syndicated newspaper article from *The Orange County Register* in California. Deborah Brody's *First Among Equals* was published in *Foundation News*.

Part Three, Growing as Servant-Leaders/Managers, starts with *Servant-Leadership and Corporate Risk Taking: When Risk Taking Makes a Difference*, an original essay by Sheila Murray Bethel, business consultant and author of *Making a Difference*. Isabel Lopez has written *Becoming a Servant-Leader: The Personal Development Path* for this book. *Managing Toward the Millenium* by James Hennessy, John Killian, and Suki Robins originally appeared as a chapter in the book of the same title. Indiana University professor Phil Chamberlain has contributed *Team-Building and Servant-Leadership*. Juana Bordas, of the Center for Creative Leadership, has written *Passion and Power: Finding Personal Purpose. The New Leadership*, written by newspaper reporter Michael Kelley, originally appeared as a nationally syndicated newspaper article, via *The Commercial Appeal* in Nashville. Richard W. Smith, of the Greenleaf Center's staff, closes out this section with *Servant-Leadership: A Pathway to the Emerging Territory*.

Part Four, Greenleaf's Legacy commences with *Robert Greenleaf's Legacy: A New Foundation for 21st Century Institutions*, by Peter M. Senge, author of the best-selling book *The Fifth Discipline*. This essay is an adaptation of Peter's 1992 keynote address at the Greenleaf Center's annual servant-leadership conference. *Chaos, Complexity and Servant-Leadership*, by RKGK Trustee Jeff McCollum, shows the powerful relationship between servant-leadership and some of the leadership lessons emerging from the newer sciences. Don Frick, of the Greenleaf Center's staff, takes a look at the experiences of several institutions in their corporate practice of servant-leadership in *Pyramids, Circles, and Gardens: Stories of Implementing Servant-Leadership*. Tina Rasmussen, Management Development Manager at the Nestlé Beverage Company, has written *Creating a Culture of Servant-Leadership: A Real Life Story. Servant-Leadership and the Future* by Robert

Vanourek, President and CEO of Recognition International Inc., in Dallas, provides encouraging insights into the circular nature of institutional structures. Missouri businessman and former RKGC Chairman Jim Tatum has contributed *Meditations on Servant-Leadership*. Newcomb Greenleaf, Robert Greenleaf's son, closes this collection with a personal remembrance of his father in an Afterword titled, *Reflections on Robert K. Greenleaf*.

As you read these essays, I invite you to reflect upon the deep meaning and growing significance of servant-leadership. If you are intrigued, inspired, or moved by what you are about to discover, I encourage you to contact me for more information concerning the wide array of servant-leadership programs and resources at:

The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership
921 E. 86th St., Suite 200
Indianapolis, IN 46240
(317) 259-1241 (phone)
(317) 259-0560 (fax)

—Larry Spears
January, 1995

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Introduction

Servant-Leadership and The Greenleaf Legacy

Larry Spears

Caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, is the rock upon which a good society is built.

Robert K. Greenleaf

Societal change may be either *revolutionary* or *evolutionary* in nature. Generally, revolutionary change is something that is achieved in a short span of time and is often political in nature. Evolutionary change usually occurs over a long period of time and often involves personal growth and change by individuals. One can reasonably argue that evolutionary change is more likely to last than is revolutionary change. Servant-leadership, now in its third decade as a specific leadership and management approach, is clearly in the category of organic, personal, evolutionary change. This book brings together, for the first time, an overview of the growing influence this unique concept of servant-leadership is having upon people and their workplace.

As we near the end of the twentieth century, we are beginning to see that traditional autocratic and hierarchical modes of leadership are slowly yielding to a newer model—one that attempts to simultaneously enhance the personal growth of workers and improve the quality and caring of our many institutions through a combination of teamwork and community, personal involvement in decision making, and ethical and caring behavior. This emerging approach to leadership and service is called *servant-leadership*.

The words servant and leader are usually thought of as opposites. When opposites are brought together in a creative and meaningful way, a paradox emerges. Here, the words servant and leader have been brought together to create the paradoxical idea of servant-leadership. Its seeds have been planted, and have begun to sprout in many institutions, as well as in the hearts of individuals who long to improve the human condition. Servant-leadership is providing a framework within which many individuals are helping to improve the way in which we treat those who do the work within our many institutions. Servant-leadership truly offers hope and guidance for a new era in human development.

Despite all the buzz about modern leadership techniques, no one knows better than Greenleaf what really matters.

Working Woman magazine

The term servant-leadership was first coined in a 1970 essay by Robert K. Greenleaf (1904–1990) entitled, *The Servant as Leader*. Greenleaf, who was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, spent most of his organizational life in the field of management research, development, and education at AT&T. Following a 40-year career at AT&T, Greenleaf enjoyed a second career that lasted 25 years. During that time he served as an influential consultant to a number of major institutions, including Ohio University, MIT, Ford Foundation, R.K. Mellon Foundation, the Mead Corporation, the American Foundation for Management Research, and Lilly Endowment, Inc. In 1964 Greenleaf founded the Center for Applied Ethics. The Center, which was renamed the Robert K. Greenleaf Center in 1985, is now headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana.

A lifelong student of how things get done in organizations, Greenleaf distilled his observations in a series of essays and books on

the theme of “The Servant as Leader.” His objective was to stimulate thought and action for building a better, more caring society.

The Servant-as-Leader Idea

The idea of the servant-as-leader came partly out of Greenleaf’s half-century of experience in working to shape large institutions. However, the event that crystallized Greenleaf’s thinking came in the 1960s, when he read Herman Hesse’s short novel, *Journey to the East*, an account of a mythical journey by a group of people on a spiritual quest. The central figure of the story is Leo, who accompanies the party as the servant and who sustains them with his caring spirit. All goes well with the journey until one day Leo disappears. The group quickly falls into disarray, and the journey is abandoned; the group cannot manage without Leo. After many years of searching, the narrator of the story stumbles upon Leo and is taken into the religious order that sponsored the original journey. There, he discovers that Leo, whom he had known as a servant, was in fact the head and guiding spirit of the order—a great and noble leader.

Greenleaf concluded that the central meaning of this story is that great leaders must first serve others, and that this simple fact is central to his or her greatness. True leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a desire to help others.

In 1970, at the age of 66, Greenleaf published *The Servant as Leader*, the first of a dozen essays and books on servant-leadership. Since that time, more than 500,000 copies of his books and essays have been sold worldwide. Slowly but surely, Greenleaf’s servant-leadership writings have made a deep, lasting impression on leaders, educators, and many others who are concerned with issues of leadership, management, service, and personal growth.

What Is Servant-Leadership?

In all of these works, Greenleaf discusses the need for a new kind of leadership model, a model that puts serving others—including employees, customers, and community—as the number one priority. Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic

approach to work, a sense of community, and shared decision-making power.

Who Is a Servant-Leader?

Who *is* a servant-leader? Greenleaf said that a servant-leader is one who is a servant first. In *The Servant as Leader* he wrote: "It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. 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 served. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"

It is important to stress that servant-leadership is *not* a "quick-fix" approach. Nor is it something that can be quickly instilled within an institution. At its core, servant-leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work, in essence, a way of being that has the potential to create positive change throughout our society.

Ten Characteristics of the Servant-Leader

Servant leadership deals with the reality of power in everyday life—its legitimacy, the ethical restraints upon it and the beneficial results that can be attained through the appropriate use of power.

The New York Times

After some years of carefully considering Greenleaf's original writings, I have identified the following 10 critical characteristics of the servant-leader:

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 being said!). Listening also encompasses getting in touch with one's own inner voice, and seeking to understand what one's body, spirit, and mind are communicating.