

## The World's Most Powerful Leadership Principle How To Become A Servant Leader

People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed.

We are oblivious to the simple truth that people do not care what you know until they know that you care.

And that is the simple truth that leadership and life are about people and relationships.

You may gain information and insight into a subject by reading a book or sitting in a class, but application and practice is the key. No one ever learned to swim by reading a book.

If you believe in continuous improvement, then each of you must, by definition, be ready and willing to change.

In this book, one of the primary themes is that leadership development and character development are one. Building character requires change and therefore is much easier said than done.

Any time two or more people are gathered together for a purpose, an organization exists and there is opportunity for leadership.

We have found the single greatest predictor of organizational health or dysfunction to be leadership or lack thereof.

It has been suggested managers do things right while leaders do the right things.

Leadership defined; the skill of influencing people to enthusiastically work toward goals identified as being for the common good.

Today I define leadership as; the skills of influencing people to enthusiastically work towards goals identified as being for the common good, with character that inspires confidence.

Management is about the things we do; the planning, the budgeting, the organizing, the problem solving, being in control, maintaining order, developing strategies, and host of other things. Management is what we do, leadership is who we are.

Leadership involves getting people from the neck up. Leadership is influencing people to contribute their hearts, minds, spirits, creativity, and excellence and to give their all for their team. Leadership is getting people to commit to the mission, to take the hill, to be all they can be.

It is probably more accurate to say that the most effective teams are groups of all leaders in which everyone is taking personal responsibility for the success of their team.

When an organization is successful in getting its members to take leadership responsibility, to understand that every is responsible for the success of the team.

One need not have positional power in order to positively influence others. We all leave our mark on the organizations we choose to become a part of. The only question is, what kind of a mark will we leave?

Think about the role of a manager in an organization. Employees will spend half of their waking hours living and working in an environment created by this manager. Employees will spend more waking time with this manager and one another than they will with their families.

Will these people grow and develop as a result of the leader's influence? Will they be better human beings as a result of having contact with this leader? Will they be inspired to do the right thing and develop their character? Indeed, the ultimate test of leadership is this: Are the people better off when they leave than when they got here?

I believe this is where servant leadership begins. We need to reflect regularly on this awesome responsibility for which we signed up and recognize that our choices and behaviors are impacting lives.

Character is our moral maturity and commitment to doing the right thing regardless of the personal cost. Character involves the will to respond to stimuli according to values and principles rather than to appetites, urges, whims, or impulses. We are not animals.

The first duty of any leader is to create more leaders.

You won't remember when you retire what you did in the first quarter in 1994, or the third. What you'll remember is how many people you developed. How many people you have helped have a better career because of your interest and your dedication to their development. When confused as to how you're doing as a leader, find out how the people you lead are doing. You'll know the answer.

The leadership now becomes responsive to those being led by identifying and meeting their legitimate needs so they can become the best they are capable of becoming and effectively accomplish the stated mission.

The only two certainties in life are death and choices.

The quality of our lives, leadership, and character are determined by the quality of our daily choices.

Power is the ability to force or coerce others to do your will, even if they would choose not to, because of your position or might.

Authority on the other hand, is something quite different than power. Authority is the skill of getting others to willingly do your will because of your personal influence. A simple paraphrase of Weber's definition of authority would be "I'll die for you."

Power can be bought, sold, given away and taken away. Just because you happen to be my sister-in-law, I can put you in a position of power by making you vice-president.

Authority is never bought or sold, never given or taken away. Authority is about who you are as person. You inspire me, the person that you are. Authority is about character. Legitimate leadership must be built on authority.

The downside of power is that it damages relationships.

The US military learned this decades ago. They will put you in boot camp with some screaming drill instructor, but only for a season, perhaps six or eight weeks. Then they put you in a squadron or platoon headed up by a leader. Why? Because over time power will damage relationships.

How does one go about developing healthy relationships with these groups? By identifying and meeting their legitimate needs. Serving them. Not by doing what they want and being slaves-rather, by providing what they need for the long-term interest of all.

A power culture in the new millennium is simply unable to compete with a culture of excellence, speed, quality, innovation-in short, with a culture in which people are playing with their heads in the game. A power culture literally sucks the life "spirit" out of an organization.

Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, bluntly states, "While employees are looking up the food chain worshipping the king and queen, they've got their asses to the customer."

As Einstein put it, "You can not achieve a new goal by applying the same level of thinking that got you where you are today."

With leadership there is no cramming for the finals. Leadership requires that we develop the essential life skills of delaying gratification and being patient, trusting in the law of the harvest and having faith that if we do our part the fruit will come. We must be willing to bear the trial of not knowing when the fruit will arrive or even if the fruit will ever be evident in some people. This can be very difficult for task-minded managers who want results now.

There is an old saying in the Far East, “When the gods wish to destroy us, they first give us forty years of prosperity.”

Charles de Gaulle, the late French president, once said, “When times are good and people take life easily, people pay lip service to character and keep it at arm’s length. But the world clamors for it when danger threatens.”

Legitimate authority must be earned and does not come from a job title, nameplate, or special perks.

Leadership is for influencing people for mutual benefit. Leadership is the willingness to extend one self and meet the needs of another human being. The choice to seek the greatest good of those one leads is a choice that is freely made and freely given. Leadership the choice one makes because it is the right thing to do, regardless of the return that may or may not come one’s way as a result.

Anyone can be a servant leader. Any one of us can take initiative ourself; it doesn’t require that we be appointed a leader, but it does require that we operate from moral authority. The spirit of servant-leadership is the spirit of moral authority.

Anyone wanting to be a leader among you must first be the servant. If you choose to lead, you must serve. (Jesus Christ)

How were the great leaders in history able to get people willingly to do their will or commit to a cause even if it meant death?

The French general Napoleon Bonaparte put it this way: “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love, and at this hour, millions would die for him.”

“When the student is ready, the teacher arrives.”

Legitimate leadership, influence, is built upon serving, sacrificing, and seeking the greatest good of those being led.

It is simply the law of the harvest. You reap what you sow. You sow service and sacrifice; you extend yourselves for others and seek their greatest good; you will build influence with them.

I cannot understand why more leaders cannot grasp the simple truth that if you get your people what they need, they will get you everything you need.

Immediately get rid of the 10% of people in your organization who can’t or do not want to be led.

The good news is that anytime we extend ourselves, sacrifice, and serve others, we build authority and thereby influence.

To serve you only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

When we serve others, we will have to forgive, apologize, and give others credit even when we do not feel like it.

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” (Anne Frank)

My needs, my wants, my desires, my issues-my inner child-me, me, me! People totally consumed with me. These people are some of the most unhappy and miserable souls. It is another one of those strange paradoxes of life that when we break out of “me” and extend ourselves and meet their legitimate needs, our needs will also be met.

The most effective way to forge a winning team is to call on the players’ need to connect with something larger than themselves. It requires the individuals involved to surrender their self-interest for the greater good so that the whole adds up to more than the sum of the parts.

Before he died in 1990, he was asked what he would recommend to a person about to suffer a nervous breakdown. He replied, “Lock up your house, go across the railroad tracks, find someone in need, and do something for them.”

When we are feeling sorry for ourselves, the first thing we do is reach out to help someone else. And it’s amazing how you can start feeling better because of that.

Vince Lombardi, once commented, “I don’t necessarily have to like my associates, but as a man I must love them.”

Emotional love with its passion, romance and warm fuzzies, is the language of love. But it is now what love is.

Volitional love is the love of the will. Volitional love is the choice, the willingness of a person to be attentive to the legitimate needs, best interests, and welfare of another, regardless of how he or she happens to feel on certain days.

Love does not mean an emotion. It is a state not of the feelings but of the will; that state of the will which we have naturally about ourselves, and must learn to have about other people. It means that we wish to seek our own good.

Anyone can kiss up to important people. But loving people we do not like?

This is the type of love Vince Lombardi was talking about. Lombardi once said the he and his players might not like each other at times, but he was committed to demanding

excellence and pushing his players to the best they very could be. That is how much he cared. He said his love would be relentless.

Herb Kelleher, Southwest's founder, said, "A company is stronger if it is ruled by love rather than by fear."

Love will be defined as: The act of extending yourself for others by identifying and meeting their legitimate needs and seeking their greatest good.

**Nearly 800 years ago, Saint Francis of Assisi is said to have exhorted his followers to "preach the Gospel at all times, but only use words if necessary."**

What you are shouting so loudly I can't hear what you are saying. (Emerson)

Love is patient, love is kind, it is not puffed up or arrogant (humble), it does not act unbecomingly (respectful), it does not seek its own (selfless), it does not take into account a wrong suffered (forgiving), it does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth (honest), it bears all things, endures all things, it never fails (committed).

The definition of patience is to show self-control.

A habit must be developed by responding from principles rather than urges in order for us to be effective leaders. We must get the head (values) in charge of the heart (emotions).

Patience and self-control are essential to healthy relationships. If you doubt this, then ask yourself this question: Do you have good relationships with people who are out of control?

Now, I am not suggesting that we cannot be passionate in what we do or that we have no emotions. Passion (commitment) is an essential leadership quality that we will discuss later.

To which I respond, "Isn't it interesting that you can control yourself with your CEO or a customer but not with the people working for you? Why do you think that is?"

However, acting out on anger or passion and violating the rights of others is inappropriate and damages relationships.

Leadership requires kindness.

The dictionary defines kindness as "to give attention, appreciation, and encouragement to people." Kindness is an act of love (verb) because it requires us to reach out to others, to extend ourselves, even to people we may not be particularly fond of.

Effective leaders encourage those around them to be the best they can be. Effective leaders push, cajole, pull and encourage others to raise their level of play.

Humility is defined as displaying an absence of pride, arrogance, or pretense. Behaving authentically.

Humility like love is another word that has been butchered in the English language. Many people mistakenly associate being humble with being passive, overly modest, self-effacing, or even a poor pitiful me type.

To the contrary, humble leaders are not afflicted with some unbalanced sense of their inferiority. Humble leaders can be as bold as a lion when it comes to their sense of values, morality, and doing the right things.

Humble leaders are simply those who have stopped fooling themselves about who they really are. Humble leaders know that they put their pants on the same way as everyone else. They know that they are only a disaster or two away from the bottom of the pile. They know that they came into the world with nothing and will leave with nothing (you never see a funeral hearse pulling a U-Haul).

Humble leaders know they do not have to have all of the answers, and they are perfectly okay with that. Really great men have a curious feeling that the greatness is not in them, but through them. Therefore, they are humble.

Humble leaders are quick to give credit to others and do not seek out credit and adulation for themselves; they are secure in who and what they are.

Humble leaders are willing to be open and vulnerable because they have their egos under control and do not operate from delusions of grandeur, believing they are indispensable to their organizations.

They are well aware that cemeteries are full of indispensable people.

Humble leaders are secure in knowing they have strengths and limitations, knowing full well that there are many others who could do the job as well or better than they could.

Respect is defined as treating people like they are important.

If you don't think you have any behavior problems you need to work on, put arrogance at the top of your list.

An effective way that leaders can give respect and build trust is by developing the skill of delegating responsibilities to others so they can grow and develop.

Respect isn't earned why you are the leader-respect is given when you are the leader.

Effective leaders understand that everyone is important and adds value to an organization.

Selflessness is defined as meeting the needs of others. That is the definition of leadership. The will to serve and sacrifice for others, the willingness to set aside our wants and needs in seeking the greatest good for others-this is what it means to be selfless.

The road to servant leadership lies not in trying to fix or change others but in working on changing and improving ourselves.

Everyone wants to change the world but no one wants to change themselves. (Tolstoy)

Forgiveness is defined as letting go of resentment.

People are going to make mistakes, a lot of them. People will hurt you, sometimes deeply. Many will not make the efforts you believe they should or care as deeply as you do. Some will fail to respond to all the effort you have put in. A few will try to take advantage of you.

Which is why it is essential for the leader to develop the skill of accepting limitations in others and the capacity to tolerate imperfection. The leader must develop the skill of letting go of the resentment that often lingers when people hurt us or let us down. After all, anyone could lead perfect people, if only there were any.

Forgiveness involves going to people and communicating assertively how what they have done has affected you, dealing with it, and then letting go of any lingering resentment. Buddy Hackett put it well: "While you're carrying a grudge, they're out dancing!"

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. (Ghandi)

Forgiveness is the trait most strongly linked with happiness. It's the queen of all virtues and the hardest to come by.

How does one build trust? By being trustworthy, of course. Behaving with honesty and integrity builds trust.

A major aspect of honesty and being free from deception is in how we hold people accountable for their actions.

It is deceptive behavior because failure to hold people accountable creates an illusion that everything is ok, and everything is not okay.

Assertiveness looks just like aggressive behavior in that it is open, honest, and direct. The difference is that assertive people do not violate people's right in the process. Assertive people are willing to tell the truth whether that truth is good news or bad news. Their behavior is open and direct yet respectful.



One man cannot do right in one department of life whilst he is occupied in doing wrong in any other department. Life is one indivisible whole. (Ghandi)

Servant leadership requires commitment and passion for persona and organizational continuous improvement. It requires a passion for doing what you say you are going to do, following through on promises, and finishing what is started.

Commitment is having the moral courage to do the right thing regardless of friendships or other alliances.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy. (Martin Luther King)

Forget about feelings and focus on how we are treating each other. You will find that the feelings will follow later.

Peter Drucker was once asked how he would define people skills in the workplace. His simple reply? "Good manners."

Empathetic listening is the skill, the discipline, of extending yourself for others by really working to see it as they see it and feel it as they feel it.

Has anyone ever learned anything while he or she was talking? Empathetic listening is one of the best ways I know to build trust with another human being.

Forget about being interesting and work on being interested.

In fact, if we fail to hold people accountable in the workplace, we run the risk of being both thieves and liars.

Some day an honest leader may follow this self-serving manager, and now the employee can discount the truth: "They've told me I'm great around here for ten years, and now you're telling me I'm not? You must be the problem!"

We should never talk about how much we care for those we lead if we are avoiding the hassle of confronting them with any gaps between the set standard and their actual performance.

I often tell managers that they should feel insulted when someone performs below standard, breaks rules, or behaves irresponsibly in their presence. When employees do not perform according to set organizational standards, they are also expecting you to behave dishonestly by not doing anything about it.

Ironically by procrastinating on the difficult choices, by trying not to get anyone mad, and by treating everyone equally nicely regardless of their contributions, you'll simply ensure

that the only people you'll wind up angering are the most creative and productive people in the organization.

Think of the bad messages we send to everyone watching about our lack of commitment to excellence and our failure to do the right thing.

Discipline comes from the same root word as disciple. Disciple means to teach or to train, which is the proper view of discipline. Discipline is not about punishing or humiliating people. It is simple identifying the gaps between set standards and actual performance and developing a plan to close those gaps.

Discipline without love can easily become abuse, while love without discipline is not love at all.

The most effective servant leaders I know have the extraordinary ability to show unrelenting toughness and sincere affection for people. They can be extremely demanding in their quest for excellence but show equal passion for demonstrating care and love for their people. In short, effective leaders have developed the skill of hugging people when they need a hug and spanking them when they need a spanking.

One must believe in the leader and believe that his or her word can be trusted. Some have called this the First Law of Leadership: If you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe in the message.

Never forget, once the troops buy into the leader, they'll buy into whatever mission statement the leader's got.

Leadership is about choices. Leadership is choosing to do the right thing day by day, hour by hour, choice by choice-until it becomes habit.

It is the right thing to do to be patient, kind, humble, respectful, selfless, forgiving, honest and committed.

Chinese proverb: If you do not change your direction, you will end up exactly where you are headed- Where are you heading today?

When we serve and sacrifice for others, we build authority (influence), and when we build authority with people, we begin earning the right to be called the leader.

Human beings can choose to do what is not natural until it becomes second nature.

Leadership is character in action. Ninety-nine percent of leadership failures is failures of character.

As Socrates put it 2300 years ago, "The greatest way to live with honor in this world is to be the person we pretend to be."

Our true character is revealed when the price of doing the right thing is more than we are willing to pay.

There is an old saying that you can judge people's character by how they treat people who can do nothing for them. Leadership is doing the right thing even when we do not feel like it, perhaps especially when we do not feel like it.

Character is knowing the good, doing the good, and loving the good. The habits of the mind, the habits of the will, and the habits of the heart.

What is needed for change is the absolute commitment on the part of the student. This commitment includes the readiness to change and the willingness to make the efforts necessary to align intentions with concrete actions.

When working with a client, always attempt to discover the payoff for their illness.

When you improve a little bit each day, eventually big things occur. Don't look for big, quick improvement. Seek the small improvement one day at a time. John Wooden

When people begin to serve others and behave in healthy ways, they begin to see themselves differently and gain confidence as a result. There is ample evidence to support this claim.

Goodness like evil often begins in small steps. Heroes evolve; they are not born. Very often the rescuers made only a small commitment at the start, to hide someone for a day or two. But once they had taken that step, they began to see themselves differently, as someone who helps.

The first is to enlighten participants about the behaviors and poor habits that have become obstacles to their being more effective leaders. The second is to assist them not only eliminating the poor habits but replacing them with healthy habits. These new and healthier habits must be practiced over and over again, month in and month out, until the old habit has been extinguished and the healthy habit becomes the default behavior.

You get the best effort from others not by lighting a fire beneath them, but by building a fire within them.

True motivation is about lighting a fire within people. True motivation is influencing and inspiring people to action and getting their internal generator running. Motivation is people moved to action because they want to act. They want to give their best and their all for the team.

Motivators include recognition, praise, appreciation, opportunity for growth, challenge, meaningful work, and job satisfaction.

Gerald Graham found that the most powerful motivator is personal, instant recognition from managers. In fact, the study concluded that the most effective ways to motivate employees are, personal thanks from the manager, written thanks from the manager, promotion for performance, public praise, morale building meetings. Many have said that these results are just plain common sense.

People want to believe that what they are doing is important, that it serves a purpose and adds value to the world. People want to know that their organization stands for something important and is principled in its behavior.

One of the leaders main purposes, then, is to be a missionary of sorts, reminding people about what the organization stands for, what it values, what its trying to accomplish, and who is being served.

Major General James Ulio made this point when he told a class of newly commissioned officers, “Morale is when a soldier thinks his army is the best in the world, his regiment is the best in the army, his company is the finest in the regiment, his squad is the finest in the company, and he himself is the best damned soldier in the whole outfit.”

The Marine Corp is an exclusive club with high standards of which you are proud to be a part. You don't join the Marines, you become a Marine.

Finally, I would say the greatest motivator of all is the love and respect we marines have for one another.