

## **Servant Leadership Reaction Paper**

In a servant leadership model, an altruistic leader puts servicing others as the number one priority. The leadership model takes a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community and sharing power in the decision making process. A leader leads effectively when he or she sincerely wants to help others, encourage greatness in followers, and indirectly bring organizational success (Northouse, 2013). Servant leadership works best when leaders are altruistic and have a strong motivation and deep-seated interest in helping others. In addition, for successful servant leadership to occur, it is important that followers are open and receptive to servant leaders who want to empower them and help them grow. Leaders should be altruistic and humanistic. Rather than using their power to dominate others, leaders should make every attempt to share their power and enable others to grow and become autonomous (Greenleaf, 1991). Leadership framed from this perspective downplays competition in the organization and promotes egalitarianism.

While there are other leadership approaches such as transformational and authentic leadership that include an ethical dimension, servant leadership is unique in the way it makes altruism the central component of the leadership process. Servant leadership argues unabashedly that leaders should put followers first, share control with followers, and embrace their growth. It is the only leadership approach that frames the leadership process around the principle of caring for others (Northouse, 2013).

One unique feature of Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership is the fact that he thought it is important that a potential leader take time to examine their reasons for wanting to lead. He felt it important that a leader have strong personal beliefs, values and principles (Greenleaf, 1991). Greenleaf identified ten attributes of a successful servant leader. These include listening for accurate communication, empathy so that a leader can accept others, healing, awareness, persuasion, which Greenleaf said should be "gentle and clear", conceptualization, foresight, stewardship which Greenleaf defined as concern for the organization as a whole and not just the individuals within the organization, commitment to other's growth defined as "demonstrated appreciation and encouragement of others and finally building community.

The Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) by Liden, Wayne, et al. (2008) is a 28-item scale that measures seven major dimensions of servant leadership: conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community. It is meant to demonstrate how servant leadership is measured and to give insight into where a leader stands on the different dimensions of servant leadership.

Two of my group members were each given the servant leadership questionnaire asking them to rate how much they agree that I demonstrate the seven behaviors characteristic of a servant leader. For the first behavior, emotional healing, I scored a 28 from each person. For the second behavior, creating value in the community, each person gave me a 25. For the third behavior, conceptual skills, I scored a 25 and a 26. The fourth behavior was empowering subordinates for which I scored a 27 and a 25. The fifth behavior, subordinate growth and success my scores were a 26 and a 28. The sixth behavior was putting subordinates first and I scored a 27 and a 26. The seventh and final behavior was behaving ethically for which I scored a

26 and a 28. After scoring these questions, I took the average of each response and the average scores for all seven servant leader behaviors fell within the high range. This indicates that I strongly exhibit each of the seven behaviors. Although my scores for each behavior were high, I did not have a perfect score for each one, which shows that I still have room for improvement in the areas of creating value in the community, conceptual skills, empowering subordinates and putting subordinates first. Although I believe it would be more accurate to make the questionnaire anonymous, and therefore not subject to bias and hopefully leading to more honest answers, I do agree with the results that indicate that I demonstrate many of the behaviors of a servant leader.

In conclusion, I feel that the many positive attributes of Servant Leadership can be summed up in this quote by Greenleaf: “the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness.” (Greenleaf 1991).

## References

Northouse, Peter G. (2012-02-02). *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (p. 432). SAGE Publications.

Greenleaf, R.K. (1991). *The servant as leader*. Indianapolis, IN: The Robert K. Greenleaf Center.

Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Zhao, H., & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment. *Leadership Quarterly*, 19, 161– 177.

### **Addendum**

After completing Multifunction Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) , I have scored highest in Transformational Leadership Style and lowest in Passive/Avoidance style. I totally agree with this result because I have an optimistic outlook and direct style of communication. I always keep in my mind the greater good of my group, help others to develop their strength and skills and consider the consequences of my actions.