



CENTER FOR  
CHARACTER &  
CITIZENSHIP

University of Missouri-St. Louis—College of Education

# Servant Leadership Serves Character Education

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Character-education: From Values to Virtuous Action



Character Education focused Emerging Leaders

# From Values to Virtuous Action

- We make rational decisions about what is good (good=true) based on values (cultural characteristics) and virtues (individual characteristics)
- **Virtues** are lived **values**, **values** in action, **values** which are achieved/demonstrated on a dependably regular basis
- Consider...leading **with virtuous actions, as a Servant Leader.**

# Overview - 4 Questions

1. What is **Servant Leadership (SL)**?
2. Does SL **make sense** for education? A **virtue-based model** theory of change.
3. What does research say about **outcomes in organizations** with Servant Leaders?
4. How are we **incorporating SL** into our character education efforts? Our latest work.

# What is Servant Leadership?

- This philosophical basis for leadership is consistent with good character and committed citizenship.
- The Servant as Leader” essay by Robert Greenleaf

# What is Servant Leadership?

- Starts with the motivation to serve.
- The Servant Leader asks: What can I do to make the people around me successful?
- Sandy McDonnell - A man who supported the goodness and contribution of others



# A Good and Just World

- In *The Servant as Leader* (1970), Greenleaf said: The servant-leader is servant first ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, **to serve first.** ...
- Then **conscious choice** brings one to aspire to **lead.**

- Robert Greenleaf (1970)

# Best Test for the Servant Leader

The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?

**And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit or, at least, not be further deprived.**

- Robert Greenleaf (1970)

# 11 Conceptual Dimensions of Servant Leadership

- Calling
- Stewardship
- Listening
- Empathy
- Healing attitude
- Awareness
- Persuasion
- Conceptualization
- Foresight
- Growth
- Community Building

Barbuto & Wheeler (2002)



# 5 Factors Defined in Servant Leadership

- Altruistic calling (Noble purpose)
- Emotional healing
- Persuasive mapping
- Wisdom
- Organizational stewardship

Barbuto & Wheeler (2006)

# Leader as Hero vs. Leader as Servant

Servant Leader is not...

- I (hero)
- Competitive
- Power Over

Servant Leader is...

- You (serving)
- Collaborative
- Empowerment

"It is amazing what you  
can accomplish when  
you do not care who  
gets the credit."

- Harry S. Truman



“Your gifts are not about you  
Leadership is not about you  
Your purpose is not about you

A life of significance is about serving  
Those who need your gifts, your  
leadership, your purpose”

-Kevin Hall, (2009). *Aspire: Discovering Your Purpose through the Power of Words*. New York: HarperCollins.



# Does the Servant Leadership Model Make Sense for Educators? CViL (Cultivating Virtues in Leadership)



Servant Leadership Model: Adapted from van Dierendonck & Patterson (2015)



# Servant Leader Virtues

## ATTITUDES (Be)

- Humility
- Gratitude
- Courage
- Forgiveness

## PRACTICE (Do)

- Authenticity
- Empowerment
- Stewardship
- Future-minded/  
Foresight



# Research on Follower/Collaborator Outcomes





# Building Strong Teams

- Servant-leaders gain team member trust and build long-term relationships
- Servant-leaders promote open and problem-driven communication within the team
- Servant-leaders cultivate personal integrity, and help team members to cooperate with and care about each other

-Dr. Robert Liden, University of Illinois at Chicago



# Creating Shared Value

- Article by Michael Porter and Mark Kramer in the January-February 2011 issue of HBR
- Companies are widely perceived to be prospering at the expense of the broader community; their legitimacy has fallen
- They should focus on “shared value” —creating economic value in a way that also creates value for society by addressing its needs/challenges



# Results in Business: More Helping and More Creative Employees

- Empirical research has revealed that employees of servant-leaders are more **helping** and **creative** than those working with leaders who scored lower on servant leadership.
  - Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2008





# More Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

- Servant-leader behaviors are related to organizational justice (fairness in decisions made regarding employees)
- In turn, leads employees to reciprocate by engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors.

—Ehrhart, *Personnel Psychology*, 2004



# Enhanced Self-efficacy

- Servant leadership encourages OCBs by enhancing self-efficacy (people's self confidence in their ability to perform specific tasks well), creating a service climate at work, and establishing a fair workplace.
  - Walumbwa, Hartnell & Oke, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2010



# Greater Job Satisfaction

- Servant leadership has been shown to be positively related to employee job satisfaction
  - Mayer, Bardes & Piccolo, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 2008.



## Case Study: Nurse Managers

- In a study at a hospital, nurses who perceived that their nurse managers had a higher servant leadership orientation demonstrated greater job satisfaction
  - Jenkins & Stewart, “The importance of a servant leader orientation,” *Health Care Management Review*, 2010





# Implementation Negative Factors

- Theory X and the power model of leadership are still dominant in most cultures
- Many people do not understand servant leadership, or will not support or reward it
- People in leadership positions may feel threatened by servant leadership
- Servant leadership is more effective in the long run but takes an up-front commitment to invest a lot of time and energy to grow people





# Implementation Positive Factors

- Servant-leaders get results in ways that serve individuals, organizations, and society at large
- The emphasis on growing people is strategic
- Servant leadership may be preferred by many Millennials
- Servant leadership can work in many cultures  
--it has a *worldwide* future

# Our Latest Work

\***C**reating **V**irtue **i**n **L**eaders (CViL)

*Curriculum-Emphasize Developing Virtues of the Servant Leader*

\*\***C**haracter **E**ducation-focused **E**merging **L**eaders (CEEL):  
*Mentoring Assistant Principals*

\**Can Virtue Be Taught? Research on whether capacity can be increased as an effective servant leader. Evaluating the CViL curriculum*

\*John Templeton Foundation funds this research.

\*\* Kern Family Foundation funds this project.

## Leadership **A**cademy in **C**haracter **E**ducation

- Creates a character education plan for implementation in their specific school
- Participates in workshops with inspirational and expert character educators
- Now gives school principals and assistant principals tools to establish a culture based on an explicit servant leader model.

# New Implementation

Leadership Academy in Character Education

+

CViL Servant Leader Virtue Practices

+

Mentoring = Character-focused Education for  
Emerging Leaders

(Prepared as Servant Leaders)



# Reflection: Servant Leader Behaviors

- How might practicing virtues, making them more regular and habitual, help you serve students?
- How can you...
  - Help staff and faculty embrace the virtues that support the organizational values?
  - Make meaningful connections between what they hold dear and their organizational good citizenship behaviors?
  - Use Servant Leadership to guide decisions about how you prioritize decisions and actions in your schools?

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## Websites:

The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. Greenleaf.org. <https://greenleaf.org/>

Center for Character and Citizenship. (2018). <https://cultivatingvirtue.com>

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