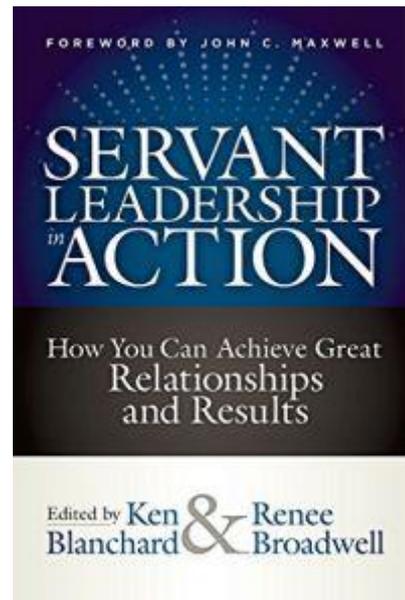


Servant Leadership in Action

How You Can Achieve Great Relationships and Results

Ken Blanchard and Renee Broadwell



Recommendation

The beguiling concept of servant leadership has confused people ever since Robert K. Greenleaf first coined the term in his influential 1970 essay, “The Servant as Leader.” Many people mistakenly think that servant leaders are subservient cream puffs. Not true: Servant leaders have to be tough-minded people with impressive discipline, personal strength and enough backbone to decide to put others first. In their enlightening book, editors Ken Blanchard and Renee Broadwell showcase insightful and inspirational essays on servant leadership, often with a strong Christian perspective. If you find spiritual approaches to management issues helpful and interesting – and especially if you share the authors’ faith – you’ll find this leadership manual uplifting and useful.

Take-Aways

- Servant leaders serve others – not themselves.
- They commit to their employees’ professional and personal growth.
- The fundamental principle of servant leadership is to place others first.
- Servant leaders work to make the world better for everyone.
- They are persuasive and visionary community builders.
- Servant leaders are responsible stewards.

Summary

Servant leaders serve others – not themselves.

The current leadership model is egregiously flawed. Many leaders today care only about dominance and power. They serve themselves – not others. The business world needs a different model of leadership in which leaders strive to serve a higher purpose. Servant leaders can positively change the world and make things better for everyone. Servant leadership represents “the power of love rather than the love of power.”

Servant leadership has two essential aspects:

1. **A purposeful direction** – The leadership component of servant leadership.
2. **A carefully conceived implementation** – The servant component of servant leadership.

Servant leaders influence their followers and help them attain their goals. However, servant leadership doesn't only concern achieving goals; it rests on a meaningful vision.

It connotes a corporate purpose, but, even more, it manifests the values that drive you. None of this works with self-serving leaders. By definition, they care only about themselves.

“Successful people often are used to being served rather than serving.” (Ken Blanchard)

As a servant leader, your purpose is meaningful and elevated. It resonates emotionally with others and inspires them. Entertainment legend Walt Disney understood this well. Disney said that he wasn't in the theme-park business. As he put it, “We're in the happiness business.” You must possess an equally clear understanding of your leadership purpose.

“The actual practice of servant leadership is...a life-giving, life-freeing mind-set that releases people.” (Datron World Communications CEO Art Barter)

Servant leaders commit to their employees' professional and personal growth.

The traditional pyramid-shaped hierarchy enables conventional leadership. People at the lower levels serve those in the higher levels. At the top is a responsible, powerful boss who calls all the shots. In this arrangement, lower-level functionaries engage in serious – but not productive – “boss-watching,” trying to figure out how to serve their supervisors and barely able to focus on serving their firm's customers.

“In corporate America, the gap between ‘servant’ and ‘leader’ is about the size of the Grand Canyon.” (businessman Dave Ramsey)

This arrangement is clearly counterproductive. Servant leaders turn the pyramid upside down and are responsive to the people they lead. They don't ask to be catered to; instead, they aim to serve others and develop long-lasting relationships. Servant leaders exercise 10 notable behaviours:

1. **“Listening”** – Servant leaders are great listeners. They pay attention to what people say and what they don’t say. Servant leaders also honour their guiding inner voices.
2. **“Empathy”** – Servant leaders care about others. They accept the people they lead as unique individuals who deserve recognition and respect.
3. **“Healing”** – Too many people suffer from “broken spirits” and “emotional hurts.” Servant leaders can often help others heal and regain their motivation.
4. **“Awareness”** – To lead others, servant leaders must be alert to the challenges their workforce faces. Servant leaders aren’t merely externally aware; they are self-aware. They understand their people and understand themselves.
5. **“Persuasion”** – Servant leaders don’t rely on their status or authority to coerce others. Instead, they persuade the people they lead and establish consensus.
6. **“Conceptualization”** – While servant leaders are capable experts in managing day-to-day details, they must also be visionaries about the purpose of their work.
7. **“Foresight”** – Servant leaders draw insightful lessons from the past to manage the present and plan for the future.
8. **“Stewardship”** – Servant leaders preserve today’s highest values for future generations.
9. **“Commitment to the growth of people”** – Employees aren’t merely functionaries. They are singular individuals with special promise. Servant leaders help their employees become all they can be, professionally and personally.
10. **“Building community”** – Large, faceless organizations can be scary places when people face emotional battles. Servant leaders bring people together in sustainable communities that nourish their members.

Like any other rigorous discipline, servant leadership requires constant commitment on a daily and sometimes even hourly basis.

“Trust isn’t an instruction. We can’t just tell people to trust us. Leaders can’t simply order their employees to trust them. It doesn’t work that way.” (Simon Sinek)

You can learn to maintain the intense focus that this kind of leadership requires. Servant leaders use the AIWATT (which rhymes with “say what”) mnemonic device to stay in touch with the values that should matter most to them. The acronym means: “Am/ I/ Willing/ At this time/ To make the investment required/ To make a positive difference on this topic?”

The fundamental principle of servant leadership is to place others first.

Phyllis Hennecey Hendry, president and CEO of the Lead Like Jesus ministry, learned about servant leadership from her father, who became a pastor at age 48. When she was eight years old, Hendry and her father would spend Saturday mornings visiting with people. During these visits, he would check in with his neighbours to make sure they were in good shape and to share religious teachings with them.

“For the servant leader, behaviour isn’t just what gets done but how it gets done.” (Stephen Covey)

Each Saturday, Hendry and her father visited Mr. Lunn, a “crotchety old man” who seldom smiled. Lunn appreciated the visits but said he would never attend Hendry’s father’s church or any church. This didn’t deter Hendry’s father, who came to see Lunn every Saturday morning. After the first visit, the minister never again brought up the subject of Lunn attending church. Instead, the men talked about fishing and world news.

One day, Hendry asked her father, “Why do we keep visiting Mr. Lunn since he said he is not coming to church?” Her father replied, “We are washing Mr. Lunn’s feet” – reminding his daughter that Jesus washed his disciples’ feet to teach them the importance of serving others. Hendry’s father taught his daughter that nothing is more important than serving others.

Many months went by. Then, during one Sunday service, Hendry was surprised to see her father cry at the lectern. She turned around to see what he was staring at. There was Lunn, in the back of the church, dressed nicely for the service. Later, Lunn told the congregation that as a result of Hendry’s father’s Saturday visits, he decided that he wanted to learn all about his faith.

Servant leaders work to make the world better for everyone.

The figure of the servant leader is prominent in religious teaching and history. Renowned servant leaders from modern history include Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi.

“Good shepherds care for sheep...Similarly effective servant leaders care for team members or family, providing...resources to sustain them.” (Presence Point CEO Holly Culhane)

Among religious figures, Jesus Christ is an example of an effective leader and a role model of servant leadership. His disciples were 12 common men whom he shaped into a “first generation of leaders” some 2,000 years ago. At the time, Rome was the world’s dominant power, and he was an itinerant teacher and preacher. Today, the Roman Empire is an ancient memory, and Christianity is a vibrant modern belief system with millions of adherents. In his role as a servant leader, Jesus is said to have taught that “whoever wants

to become great among you must be your servant.” On another occasion, he said that “anyone who wants to be first must be the very last – and the servant of all.”

Servant leaders are persuasive and visionary community builders.

As an amateur athlete and later as one of the world’s greatest female basketball players, Tamika Catchings was a four-time All-American star for the University of Tennessee (UT) Lady Volunteers. After college, she spent 15 years as a superstar player for the Indiana Fever in the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) and was named the WNBA’s Most Valuable Player in 2011.

Catchings founded the Catch the Stars Foundation for under-served youth. She learned about serving others from legendary UT basketball coach Pat Summitt, who coached the Lady Vols for 38 years. During that time, the team played in 18 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Final Four tournaments, and it won eight national championships. Summitt won 1,098 games at UT, the most victories of any Division 1 college basketball coach – male or female. Among other honours, she received a Presidential Medal of Freedom. Catchings writes, “She continually pressed all of us to be great players, great students and great people... she wanted me to be the best me I could be.”

“Leaders who cannot paint a compelling picture of a preferred future are in jeopardy of forfeiting their leadership.” (Chick-fil-A executive Mark Miller)

Catchings has suffered a hearing disability since birth, and she wore hearing aids as a child. Other children constantly teased her about her disability, her hearing aids and the strained way in which she spoke.

During second grade, Catchings removed her hearing aids and threw them away. She lived without hearing aids after that, all the way through grade school, high school and college. Summitt learned about Catching’s hearing disability from the young woman’s mother and summoned Catchings to her office. She asked that Catchings begin to wear hearing aids again, not just for herself, but to serve as a role model for young children with their disabilities.

“Trust cannot exist in a culture in which people fear...that their leaders would sooner announce a round of layoffs to protect the numbers than sacrifice the numbers to protect the people.” (Simon Sinek)

Summitt told Catchings, “You’ll be able to encourage parents who have a child with a disability...One day, by using your voice, you will make a difference in so many lives. You need to start preparing for that right now.” Summitt essentially asked Catchings to serve others. Catchings agreed, and began wearing hearing aids again. She began speech therapy. She put aside her hesitation and served as an exemplary role model – a servant leader – for children with disabilities.

Catchings knew Summitt was a humble person, someone who turned the big spotlight shining brightly on her toward her players instead. Catchings saw Summitt as a role model and a great leader – always “a servant first.” She told her coach, “We all are where we are and have had the success we’ve had because of you.”

Servant leaders are responsible stewards.

Money management guru and popular national radio personality Dave Ramsey is a servant leader, educator and teacher. His firm, Ramsey Solutions, “provides biblically based common sense education and empowerment that give hope to everyone in every walk of life.” Ramsey believes in the concept of servant leadership and adheres to the advice to “put other people first.” He employs 550 people and, as a servant leader, he feels a deep sense of responsibility to each of them and their family members.

“Over time, a servant leader’s authentic intent will eventually materialize in behavioural norms, and then ultimately in systems and structures.” (Stephen Covey)

At one company picnic, Ramsey hosted nearly 100 youngsters – all 10 years old or younger and all children of his employees. The children were running around, playing games and having fun. Ramsey told his young son, Daniel, what his job as a servant leader meant in terms of his employees and their kids. Ramsey said, “Those kids’ parents make a living...and those kids have a future partly because of how I act. If I misbehave in my personal life, if I fail in areas of integrity...it will mess up a ton of lives.” Taking care of others by the way you live is the essence of servant leadership.

About the Authors

Leadership expert **Ken Blanchard** co-authored the best-selling *The One Minute Manager*. His books have combined book sales of more than 21 million copies in 42 languages. **Renee Broadwell** has been an editor with The Ken Blanchard Companies for more than 10 years.