The Levels of Leadership and Transcendent Servant Leadership Development

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Abstract

This paper addresses the challenges associated with defining and conceptualizing leadership amidst the plethora of theoretical constructs and definitions of leadership and proposes a model for developing transcendent servant-leaders. Based on a review of the literature, three categorical levels of leadership are outlined and discussed that describe the motives that drive leaders, their means of influence, and the outcomes they strive to achieve at each level. These levels include everyday leadership, effective organizational leadership, and transcendent servant leadership. Having delineated these leadership levels, a holistic model for leadership development and education that facilitates the transcendence of effective organizational leaders and ensures their sustaining power of influence is outlined and described.

The Levels of Leadership and Transcendent Servant Leadership Development

Few words in the English language are more ambiguous and evasive than leadership. Thompson (2000) declared, "for decades now, writers have tried to define leadership. Libraries are full of our attempts to decode this complex human phenomenon" (p. 9). While some of the difficulty associated with these attempts may arise from limitations resulting from our own linguistic imprecision (Zenger & Folkman, 2002, p. 16), some of the blame may also come to rest at the feet of those constructing the definitions. In attempting to define the nature of this phenomenon, scholars and practitioners often try "to reduce leadership to some formula or recipe or set of principles. It's as if we think that, consonant with the scientific method, we can find a sort of generic key that will unlock the whole mystery" (Thompson, 2000, pp. 9-10). The problem is no such key exists and attempting to understand the mystery in its fullness through science is futile.

Leadership, like any other form of creative expression, lies, at least partially, outside the realm of science. Thus, most science based attempts to solve the mystery of leadership usually leave the would-be expert devoid of valuable expression. Nonetheless, there is a need to understand the theory of leadership, just as there is a need to understand the theory of art, music, and other primarily creative endeavors, because while creative expression is indeed improvisational, it is not "random or arbitrary" (Nachmanovitch, 1990, p. 26). Instead, as Nachmanovitch wrote, "when we are totally faithful to our own individuality, we are actually following a very intricate design" (p. 26). This design is written deeply into the strands of the human soul as a result of "three billions years of organic evolution" complemented by our own individual internal dialogical self-construction process, which involves engagement with the past, the future, the environment, and "the divine within us" (Nachmanovitch, p. 27). Furthermore, just as is the case in art, there exists both good and bad leadership, and we know them when we see them.

With this in mind, it is likely that any attempt to define leadership must recognize, and even embrace its inherent complexity, while at the same time providing sufficient clarity and prescriptive guidelines to guide the creative process involved in leadership development and expression. Thompson (2000) may well be correct in his assertion that "perhaps the problem is that we have been searching by microscope for something that can be grasped only in panorama" (pp. 9-10). The intent of this paper is to convey, in what will obviously be an overly-simplistic manner, the panorama of leadership by identifying three concentric layers of leadership while at the same time providing an understanding of the strengths and limitations of each layer. In addition, the paper will attempt to define the means whereby leadership can be developed at all three levels.

Level One: Everyday Leadership

Within the panorama of leadership there exists a type of leadership that belongs to all human beings. Because it is possessed by everyone to some extent or another and is exercised daily. It is referred to in this paper as everyday leadership. The essence of this type of leadership is found in the statement by Drucker (1996) that "the only definition of a leader is someone who has followers" (p. xii). This definition, though intended to identify the distinction between effective leaders and those who are less effective, merely asserts that all human beings are leaders. This is because at a foundational level leadership is about influence. As Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy (1995) wrote, "leadership is a social influence process shared among all members of a group" (p. 43). Stone (2002) further explained this concept of influence in the following way. "Influence is inherent in communities, even communities of two. People are not free wheeling, freethinking atoms whose desires arise from spontaneous generations. Our ideas about what we want and the

choices we make are shaped by education, persuasion, and the general process of socialization" (p. 25).

Thus, at this level of influence, everyone is a leader because everyone has followers. Even a hermit who departs into the mountains to escape society influences others by his choice to depart. Through that influence he obtains followers either consciously or unconsciously, and is, therefore, a leader.

The following characteristics typify this level of leadership. First, leadership is a product of existence. If a person is living within a social network, then the individual is a leader.

Second, the means of attracting followers is through interaction based on what Axelrod and Cohen (1999) called tags. Tags are properties of the individual that "serve as a signal to other agents" (p. 95). The socially desirable or undesirable nature of such tags influences interaction patterns among agents and engenders neighborhoods or groups of individuals with certain tags. These tags become a means of facilitating social influence through proximity because "even if those in a neighborhood initially have nothing in common but their tags, the fact that they interact with each other can make a big difference" (Axelrod & Cohen, 1999, p. 95). This difference is based on influence and, therefore, implies leadership.

Third, as is evident from the previous example, influence at this level is derived from proximity and systemic interconnectedness. Consequently, position within a social stratum is significant because one has more influence over those with whom one engages most frequently. Thus, this type of leadership might also be referred to as positional leadership because a leader's capacity to influence others is based on the formal or informal position that one attains within the social structure in which one exists.

Finally, this level of leadership is focused on perception management because at this level it is what others think of the individual that determines to what extent they choose to follow, even if the individuals have nothing else in common beyond the perception of one another. Consequently, Northouse (2004) argued, "many individuals believe that leadership is a way to improve how they present themselves" (p. 1).

Everyday leadership represents the innermost of the three concentric circles of leadership. This inner circle of leadership is contained within the outer two circles because they are extensions of this foundational type of leadership. While from a conceptual standpoint this structure is perhaps unnecessary, from a developmental perspective it is significant. As one develops as a leader, one builds upon the foundation of the previous layer. Not by leaving it behind, but rather by adding to it.

Level Two: Organizational Leadership

The second level of leadership is that of organizational leadership. This level of leadership is similar to and an extension of the preceding level because leaders exist within social networks. However, at this level leadership is not merely a matter of influence, but rather a process for guiding interaction to accomplish organizational objectives regardless of whether the organization is a business, school, church, family, or any other social group. The following definition is representative of this type of leadership. "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2004, p. 3). Leaders who fail to accomplish goals, therefore, "simply are not good leaders" (Zenger & Folkman, 2002, p. 14).

The primary focus of leaders at this level is on identifying and developing the skills necessary to produce results. Such leaders acquire followers through shared goals, charisma, and a history of success. As a result, their influence is derived primarily from expertise and past accomplishments. This emphasis is reflected in the majority of leadership books, articles, and development programs (Northouse, 2004, p. 51).

While this emphasis is neither surprising nor detrimental, in fact it is essential, the focus on skills and outcomes as a means of evaluating leadership can lead to a situation where leaders become "clearly manipulative, even deceptive, encouraging people to use techniques to get other people to like them" (Covey, 1989, p. 19) and to follow them solely as a means of accomplishing results. When this occurs, leaders often begin to see others merely as objects to be manipulated to achieve desired results rather than as "[children] of God, valued and treasured for what" (Palmer, 1998, p. 205) they are. In so doing, they "become too busy caring for things to care about people"(Noddings, 2003, p. 21) thereby closing themselves off to the humanity of others. They then begin to relate to other human beings as if they were mere objects or obstacles (Arbinger Institute, 2000, 2006; Warner, 2001).

This relationship drives leaders into a cycle of justification and further dehumanization of others, and self, that leads to alienation and suffering, not only for those who follow, but also for those who lead (Arbinger Institute, 2000, 2006; Thompson, 2000). This cycle of decline ultimately leads to individual and organizational decline. As Greenleaf (1977) stated, "Some institutions achieve distinction for a short time by the intelligent use of people, but it is not a happy achievement, and eminence, so derived, does not last long" (p. 53).

This negative cycle of decline is most likely to occur when leaders lack a sustainable commitment to the value of others or encounter high levels of stress. Such stress is not uncommon due to the inherent challenges and conflicting demands of leadership (Clark & Cooper, 2000; Fassel, 1998; Goleman, et al., 2002; Maddi & Khoshaba, 2005) which are merely augmented by the abundance of social, economic, and technological changes occurring in the world (McNair, 2001; Work, 1996). The reason stress limits the effective use of skills is because it negatively impacts one's capacity to manage challenges by taxing physical, mental, and emotional resources and altering effective behavioral patterns (Khoshaba & Maddi, 2005; Maddi & Kobasa, 1984). As a result, it is increasingly imperative that leaders find a means of transcending this basic skills approach if they desire to be effective in the world of tomorrow. As Quinn (2004) explained, becoming a leader is not a matter of becoming adept at a certain set of behaviors or learning a particular set of leadership principles or tools. Behaviors, principles, and tools all have their place, but they will not make transformational leaders of us with out a process of deep inner change. This is where the third level of leadership emerges.

Level Three: Transcendent Servant Leadership

The third level within the panorama of leadership does not reject the validity or importance of either of the previously delineated levels. Instead, it transcends them by focusing not merely on what the leader does, but rather on who the leader is (Zohar, 2002, p. 112). Thompson (2000) declared "leadership at its best is not the sum of certain skills or competencies, or charisma, or facile style, but rather the sum of who the person is" (p. 8). At this level, leadership is about identity and self-transcendence. The reason it is referred to as transcendent servant leadership as opposed to simply servant leadership is twofold. First, this level of leadership requires that one transcends one's own self interest in order to serve others. Second, transcendent servant leadership is not a stand alone concept. Instead, it is seen as the outer circle of the three concentric levels of leadership. It embraces each of the previous circles in that leaders still occupy a position of influence within the social stratum and effectively achieve organizational objectives while at the same time transcending these levels to become identity based servant leaders.

Quinn (2004) argued that such identity based leadership is a result of one's entering a state-of-being wherein one is "purpose centered, internally driven, other-focused, and externally open" (p. 21). This state of being fundamentally alters the relationship between leaders and followers. Indeed, it fosters a relationship in which leaders and followers engage one another on a more equal level. In such a relationship "leadership is co-created as individuals relate as partners and develop a shared vision, set a direction, solve problems, and make

meaning of their work" (Moxley, 2002, p. 47). Because leaders acquire followers as a result of integrity and wholeness as well as their commitment to serving others, this type of leadership is fundamentally different than that which occurs at the other levels. The type of leadership that most fully embraces this concept of identity based leadership is servant leadership.

The term servant leadership was coined by Robert Greenleaf in his essay, *The Servant-Leader* (1977). Greenleaf suggested that leadership has less to do with oversight, position, and direction and more to do with commitment to service. He wrote, "The great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness" (p. 21). This servanthood is grounded in "a natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first." (p. 27) and flows outward from one's motivational core through one's actions resulting in a "conscious choice . . . to aspire to lead. (p. 27). This leadership is similar to other forms of leadership in that the leader steps forward and leads the way for others; however, "there is a special quality to this—the quality of service. [Servant-leaders] take others with them because of their manner. . . . It is in serving that they gain the respect of others who know that the servant carries their interests in mind" (Young, 2002, pp. 250-251). Thus, influence and leadership are derived not so much from position or effectiveness, though servant-leaders must also be effective, but rather from the core identity of the individual and the emotional resonance of the person's leadership.

From this core identity, servant leaders engage in behaviors consistent with their desire to serve people and institutions through the use of the knowledge and skills required to lead others. It is through this integration of intent and action that they derive their uniqueness as leaders. This is reflected in the characteristics of servant leaders described by Spears (1998b). These characteristics include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

Because of the different motivation and the integrated actions of servant leaders, the outcomes or purposes of leadership are also significantly different. As Greenleaf (1977) explained, the difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that the other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test and most difficult to administer is finding answers to such questions as: (a) Do those served grow as persons? (b) Do the followers, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? (c) What is the effect on the least privileged of society? And, (d) Will the followers benefit or at least not be further deprived?

Against this standard, not the standards of productivity, profitability, nor return on investment, is the servant leader measured. In fact, Greenleaf (1977) argued that rather than being the ends of leadership, these traditional standards should be

considered the means whereby a company is able to serve its employees and society.

While these notions are indeed idealistic, they are intensely practical as well. In fact, these concepts are so practical that "several of the top twenty companies ranked in the 2001 issue of *Fortune* magazine's 100 Best [Companies to Work For] were servant-led organizations" (Ruschman, 2002, p. 123). Among the companies on this prestigious list are Southwest Airlines, TDIndustries, and Synovus Corporations, all of which are industry leaders in more traditional measures of leadership such as profitability and productivity. In a study conducted by Sipe and Frick (2009) over a 10-year period, organizations that are recognized as practicing servant leadership out performed Collins' (2001) good to great companies by a significant margin. Thus, the challenge does not lie in the translation of the concepts of servant leadership into the real world, but rather in the development of servant leaders who can engage in its practice. Consequently, the following model is proposed as a guideline for transforming, nurturing, and developing transcendent servant leaders.

A Model for Developing Transcendent Servant Leaders

Servant leadership scholars have argued that one of the fundamental pursuits of the leader is fostering wholeness of self through the process of healing (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1998a; Sturnick, 1998). Greenleaf (1977) stated "there is something subtly communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share" (p. 50). According to Sturnick (1998), healing our leaders involves "restoring our leaders by bringing them back to emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical health" (p. 187). The model proposed in this paper draws upon these four fundamental aspects of the self and adds an additional element, the extra-personal. These elements of the self are arranged as outlined in Figure 1 with the spiritual self at the core of the sphere, enveloped by the mental, physical, and emotional aspects of the self, all of which are surrounded by the extra-personal.

Figure 1
The Whole Self
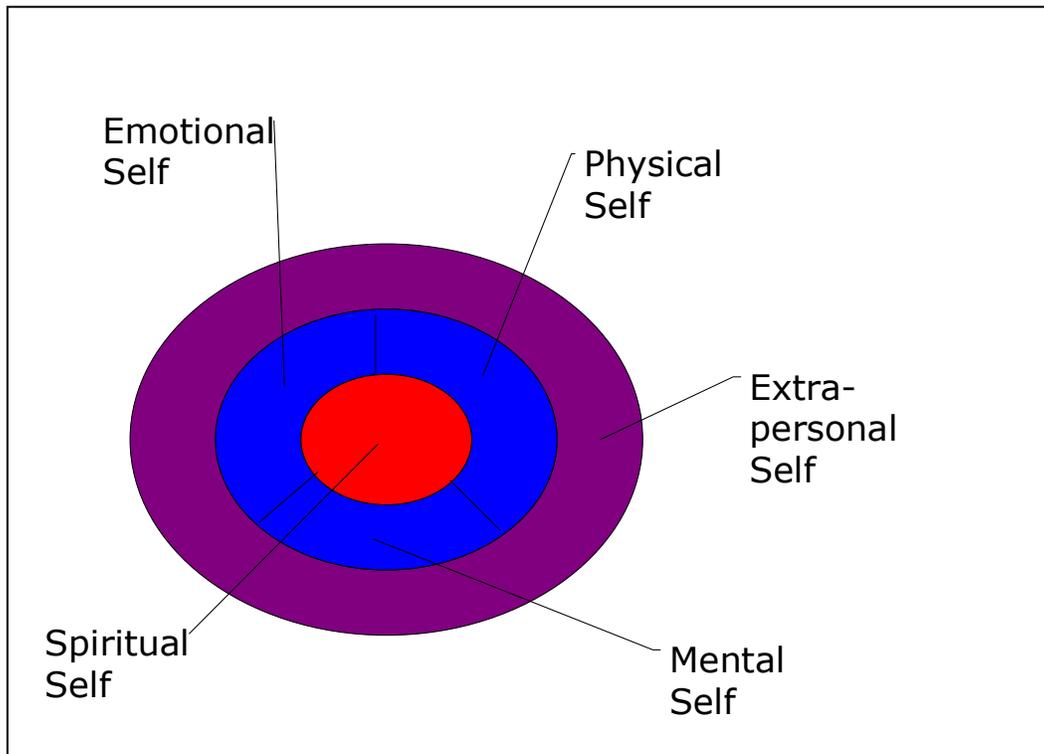
The Spiritual Self

The spiritual self, as is evident from its location, represents the core of identity. It is the place from which leaders derive their sense of meaning, connectedness to others, and motivation to serve. In sum, it represents the purposeful nature of the leader. Wheatley (cited in Spears & Noble, 2005) stated, "people have deep yearnings, a quest for meaning, and an ability to wonder. This is a non-religious view of what spirituality might mean" (p. 51). Frankel (1984) stresses that this essential "striving for meaning in one's life" represents the "primary motivational force in man" (p. 104) and drives people to ponder the deep questions of existence, such as what is the meaning of life? These questions of identity and purpose underlie the significant stories that are at the heart of leadership (Gardner & Laskin, 1995).

While the specific answers to such questions must be searched out and answered by each individual soul, the broader, more general answer to these questions can be found in the religious and philosophical works of many of histories great thinkers and social activists. Plato referred to it as pursuit of "the good" (Plato, 2000), the Christian ethic identifies it as sacrificial love (1 John 4: 9-10; Gospel

of John 15: 12-14), and in Buddhism purpose is found in the principles of interconnectedness and compassion (Dalai Lama & Chan, 2004; Hanh, 1999), while a modern philosopher and consultant, Robert Morris (1977), identified it as creative love. In spite of the different ways in which these great minds conceptualized this idea, the underlying notion is the same and it is identical to that identified by Greenleaf (1977) in his statement that, "except as we venture to create, we cannot project ourselves beyond ourselves to serve and lead" (p. 61).

The answer to the question of universal purpose is, therefore, found in one's ability "to serve and be served by" (Greenleaf, 2003, p. 81). Dostoevsky's (1994) character Ivan expressed it in this way. "The secret of human existence lies not only in living, but in knowing what to live for." (p. 319). This is because "being human always points, and is directed, to something, or someone, other than one's self—be it a meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter. The more one forgets himself—by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love—the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself" (Frankl, 1984, p. 115).

Consequently, the fundamental task of developing servant leaders is to assist them to find their motivation to serve, their personal sense of purpose. In the following statement, Frankl (1984) delineated three means of discovering one's purpose as a result of experience. He declared, "We can discover this meaning in life in three different ways: (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; (3) by the attitude we take towards unavoidable suffering" (p. 115). As individuals experience life, they can, if they are intentional and reflective come to identify their purpose.

This can be accomplished, at least in part, by engaging leaders in reflection upon the inspirational, self-transcendent moments they have experienced, as well as the ways in which they dream to serve. As this is done, themes emerge that help individuals identify who or what they wish to serve, in what ways, and for what reasons. Once some such answers are found, servant-leaders begin to come alive with a feeling of empowerment and passion to serve the causes or individuals they have identified. This sense of passion and purpose, or love, is what allows a leader to remain true to self and maintain respect for the humanity of others, "even under circumstances in which powerful forces may seem to operate to deny it" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 115). As Mandela (1995) explained, "The human body has an enormous capacity for adjusting to trying circumstances. I have found that one can bear the unbearable if one can keep one's spirits strong even when one's body is being tested. Strong convictions are the secret of surviving deprivation; your spirit can be full even when your stomach is empty" (p. 416). For this reason, it comes as no surprise that "love, desire, motivation, inspiration, and passion are in the final analysis the greatest differences between good leaders and great leaders" (Zenger & Folkman, 2002, p. 136).

As would-be leaders come to identify elements of their purpose, they must serve. If they have truly found their sense of purpose, their service and reflection on that service will confirm or expand their source of meaning. In such cases confirmation may come as a result of what Maslow (cited in Thompson, 2000) described as a simultaneously "seeking and fulfilling of the self and also an achieving of the selflessness which is the ultimate expression of the real self. It resolves the dichotomy between selfish and unselfish" (p. 37). Noddings (2003) described this same phenomenon in these terms, "This is the fundamental aspect of caring from the inside. When I look at and think about how I am when I care, I realize that there is invariably this displacement of interest from my own reality to the reality of the other" (p. 14). Such transcendent moments signal the discovery of one's purpose.

In some cases, however, engagement will simply lead individuals to new and deeper insights. Ultimately, however, as individuals pursue this journey, they come to experience a fundamental change of heart as they develop the heart of a servant. As this occurs, they can then move to the next level of the self and engage in the intentional development of the physical, mental, and emotional skills and abilities necessary to pursue their purpose through leadership.

The Physical Self

The physical self is the body of the leader which is developed through healthy living. This includes proper nutrition, exercise, relaxation, and appropriate use of vitamin supplements and medication (Khoshaba & Maddi, 2005). The purpose of this aspect of the self is to facilitate action in accordance with one's purpose, manage the stress of pursuing one's purpose, and insure one's ongoing capacity to serve.

A significant amount of research has demonstrated that a healthy, relaxed body is more energetic and alert and less debilitated by fatigue, moodiness, attention difficulties, mental, physical, learning, and psychological disabilities and illnesses (Khoshaba & Maddi, 2003). Such research is supported by the anecdotal statements of effective leaders such as Nelson Mandela. In his autobiography Mandela (1995) suggested, "I found that I worked better and thought more clearly when I was in good physical condition and so training became one of the inflexible disciplines of my life" (p. 490). As this testimony proclaims, physical health facilitates action in accordance with one's purpose.

A second way whereby physical health contributes to effective servant leadership is as a result of the impact of healthful living on one's ability to manage the inherently stressful nature of leadership. Through effective nutrition, exercise, and

relaxation leaders increase hardiness and are more able to manage stress (Khoshaba & Maddi, 2005). Mandela (1995) wrote, "I have always believed that exercise is not only a key to physical health but to peace of mind. . . . Exercise dissipates tension, and tension is the enemy of security" (p. 490).

Whereas Mandela (1995) proclaims the virtues of exercise, other leaders vouch for the benefits of relaxation techniques such as meditation and the need for good nutrition (Covey, 1989; Dalai Lama & Chan, 2004; Murrell, 2003). Thus, as Batten (1998) explained, "servant-leaders recognize that developing optimum physical fitness is an important requisite of mental and physical health" (p. 48).

A final impact of healthful living on leadership is that it insures one's ongoing capacity to serve. Murrell (2003) offered the following explanation, "All of us have likely experienced the loss of a friend or colleague who has not been taking appropriate care of him or herself. In the past we have lost many in the O.D. profession too early because their personal health was secondary to what could be described as a nearly compulsive or obsessive need to do [their] work" (pp. 107-8).

For a servant leader, few greater tragedies exist than to fail to achieve one's purpose because poor health prohibits one from doing so. Therefore, it is imperative that any training programs developed to nurture servant leadership include training in healthy living (Sturnick, 1998).

The Mental Self

The mental self represents the cognitive and intellectual aspects of the person that function primarily towards understanding and seeking solutions to problems. This of necessity involves intelligence.

Intelligence, like leadership, is a complex, much debated concept that is central to the art and practice of leadership (Dickman & Stanford-Blair, 2002). Gardner (1999) explained, "What it means to be intelligent is a profound philosophical question, one that requires grounding in biological, physical, and mathematical knowledge" (p. 22). The need for such a breadth of knowledge is derived from the reality that much of what is considered intelligence is rooted in the functionality of the human brain (Zull, 2002). As a result of extensive research, which initially led to the development of the concept of multiple intelligences, and 20 years of rethinking his research in this area, Gardner (1999) defined intelligence "as a bio-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (p. 34). In relation to servant leadership such processes represent the natural skills and knowledge in a variety of domains that an individual possesses to accomplish

organizational objectives in order to nurture the growth of others, influence followers, and accomplish organizational objectives.

In accordance with Gardner's (1999) definition, knowledge and skills must be able to produce results valued by the culture. In addition, however, they must also be aligned with the spiritual purpose of the individual. Zenger and Folkman (2002) spoke of this notion as a convergence of one's passion and competencies with the needs of the organization. Such a convergence results in what they termed a "leadership sweet spot" (p. 117).

This place of convergence is obviously different for every individual; nonetheless, there are certain knowledge and skills that effective servant-leaders must possess. While numerous frameworks have been developed for cataloguing a leader's knowledge and skills, the most commonly used seems to be that of organizing them into the following three categories: technical skills, conceptual skills, and relationship skills (Northouse, 2004).

According to Northouse (2004), "technical skill is having knowledge about and being proficient in a specific type of work or activity" (p. 36). This includes the actual knowledge and skills required to perform the tasks that are unique to the work of the individual. Such skills are necessary not only for leaders to perform their jobs, but also for them to establish credibility with followers. This is because "there is an element of modeling (example) that comes first, otherwise there is no credibility" (Covey, 2002, p. 30).

The second category of knowledge and skills is that of the conceptual domain. Conceptual skills are typically those "used to work with ideas and concepts" (Northouse, 2004, p. 38) in order to develop plans, visions, and to manage the abstract conceptual work of leadership. The final category, relationship skills, embraces the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively with people.

In relation to servant leadership, the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in effective leadership, in addition to any technical skills related to one's field of work, are those required to outwardly express the characteristics delineated by Spears (1998b). In Table 1, these characteristics are listed along with the knowledge and skills required to engage them, these lists are not meant to be exhaustive.

Table 1
Characteristics and corresponding knowledge and skills

Characteristic	Knowledge and Skills
Listening	Understanding of cultural differences, particularly in relation to body language and effective expression of interest. Active listening skills.
Empathy	Theoretical understanding of empathy and how to express it appropriately.
Healing	Understanding of what it means to be whole. Knowledge of maturation/development theory. Counseling and coaching skills.
Awareness	Self-awareness and skills related to awareness, such as meditation.
Persuasion	Knowledge of human motivation. Communication skills.
Conceptualization	Broad understanding of systems and systems thinking. Knowledge of issues related to diversity. The ability to suspend judgment, analyze broadly, develop visions, and "dream great dreams" (Spears, 1998b, p. 5).
Foresight	Intuition
Stewardship	Understanding of one's role and the technical skills to perform it.
Commitment to the growth of people	An understanding of what it means to be human and how human beings grow, develop, and learn. Teaching, learning, mentoring, coaching, counseling, and advising skills.
Building community	Understanding of community. Skills in facilitation of dialogue, interaction, etc.

As is evident the knowledge and skills listed embrace all three categories. Consequently, any program that is designed to develop servant leaders must, at the minimum, provide individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop the characteristics listed above.

Beazley and Beggs (2002) argue that the pedagogical mode that is prescribed by Greenleaf and necessary to develop servant leaders "is conceptually an apprenticeship" (p. 55), which, as is evident, implies "both instruction in theory and supervision in practice" (p. 55).

As part of this process of iterative action and reflection, leaders should be challenged to ponder the following questions as they seek to identify what other knowledge and skills they might need to accomplish their purpose: What would you say or what would others say are your talents? What are you passionate to

learn? What do you already know a lot about? What do you do well that you enjoy doing? What do you need to know or be able to do to accomplish your purpose?

As would-be leaders deeply embrace and seek to understand the response to these questions, they will become aware of what they must know and what abilities they must develop in order to serve. In addition, they should recognize and accept that true leadership requires the servant leader to constantly engage in this ongoing iterative process of seeking, engaging in, and evaluating means to accomplish the ends of the "best test" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 28).

The Emotional Self

Part of the knowledge and skill that must be acquired by leaders is the capacity to manage one's unseen world of feelings and emotions. It is through this aspect of the self that individuals harness their own motivation and connect to others, both of which are fundamentally important to nurturing leadership in general and servant leadership in particular (Winston & Hartsfield, 2004; Zenger & Folkman, 2002). This ability to manage the emotional self is referred to as emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Goleman, et al., 2002). The essential capacities of this kind of intelligence include the ability to understand and regulate one's own emotions, which provides leverage for understanding and influencing others (Feldman & Mulle, 2007; Goleman, et al., 2002). This is, perhaps, the most challenging element of servant leadership to teach, however, because it is rooted in the deeply engrained emotional response patterns that an individual has developed. These deep seeded patterns are often based, at least partially, on deeply held paradigms and beliefs. In order to change these patterns of behavior and cognitive processes would-be leaders may have to engage with counselors or coaches on an ongoing basis to identify and understand the driving forces behind their emotional responses and to change these. Consequently, a theoretical understanding of emotional intelligence and related concepts such as conflict management would likely prove helpful as would practice and training in meditation, mediation, conflict resolution, and emotional response therapy.

The Extra-personal Self

The final aspect of the self addressed by the model is that of the extra-personal self. This element of the self consists of all the things that contribute to one's identity that are not physically part of the individual. These include possessions, reputation, relationships, titles, and credentials. Many of the skills previously listed contribute to development in this area; however, two additional concepts may prove beneficial in relation to training servant-leaders. The first is the issue of perception management. The second is that of legacy leaving.

Perception management involves striving to manage the perceptions of those one leads so that the leader is perceived as he wishes to be seen. Russell (2001) wrote, "What sets great leaders apart is their ability to manage perceptions. What people observe or assess as your ability to be a leader and your effectiveness becomes their perception, which in turn becomes reality. Perceptions that are not managed become rumors, then gossip, then backbiting, which leads to destruction. Unmanaged perceptions become a reality that was not intended" (p. 2).

Admittedly, this concept is problematic because many leaders start and end their leadership by simply attempting to manipulate what others think of them. However, when used by servant leaders who have developed and integrated their spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional self, and are merely seeking the means to demonstrate that alignment to better serve others, the concept of image management becomes a powerful tool for positive influence. Thus, training leaders how to manage the perception of others is significantly important; however, training in this area should likely be postponed until the individual has begun to achieve personal alignment.

The second important concept for developing servant-leaders to consider in relation to the extra-personal self, and one that should be pondered early in the process, is that of leaving a legacy (Covey, 1989). While it is true that "dignity, significance, character are wholly attributes of individual people. . . . [and] have nothing to do with anything external to the person" (Greenleaf, 2003, p. 117), it is also the case that these external aspects of the self are the personal advertisements for the individual that determine how much influence he or she has in life and what kind of legacy will be left when she or he is gone. This becomes particularly significant when one remembers that the only way to lead is "through the power of your relationships" (Wheatley in Spears & Noble, 2005, p. 49). In fact, Greenleaf (1977) argued that "many otherwise able people are disqualified to lead because they cannot work with and through the half-people who are all there are. The secret of institution building is to be able to weld a team of such people by lifting them up to grow taller than they would otherwise be" (p. 35). Consequently, it is imperative that leaders contemplate the question of what legacy they wish to leave and that they strive to manage the perceptions of others accordingly, based on an authentic conveyance of self.

The Importance of Integrity

In developing leaders and teaching them to understand this model of the self it is absolutely imperative that emphasis be placed on the integration of all aspects of the self in alignment with one's sense of purpose and servanthood, thereby "creating a seamless link between [the leader's] espoused values, actions, and

behaviors" (Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 242). If this is neglected, the model and training are useless because only those "people who genuinely care and who have this personal integrity merit the confidence of others" (Covey, 2002, p.28); because without confidence, one cannot serve and one cannot lead. Furthermore, Zenger and Folkman (2002) pointed out that any "efforts to change employee behavior" (p.36), as well as attempts to change their nature to that of a servant, "[have] to start by making sure that managers' behaviors [are] in alignment" (p. 36). Nothing is more important to leadership, not only because of the desire to influence others, but also because the ability to be present, in the moment, with those one is serving is essential to the capacity to truly serve (Greenleaf, 1977; Griffin, 2002; Noddings, 2003; Stacey et al., 2000). Doing so requires alignment of the self. As Jones (2002) beautifully proclaimed, leadership is about (a) listening for the restorative power of language and story, (b) keeping faith with the living word, (c) making a home for others through the appreciation of beauty and place, and (d) developing the sense of seeing gifts in others through first being committed to calling up and living out the gifts that are in themselves by learning to "live in the question" (p. 45) and lead without a script through being open and responsive to the emergent as it is revealed through what the world is already trying to be. Leaders can learn to let life live them rather than feeling they must always be trying to make things happen.

Through such abandonment true servant leadership is embraced and people grow. Thus, servant hood and integrity expressed in the creative now are the real foundation of truly transcendent servant leadership. Only in this way can servant leaders curb the excesses of organizational leadership and the shallowness of everyday leadership. Would-be servant leaders must learn this.

Conclusion

Thompson (2000) wrote, "Perhaps leadership in business and elsewhere is, as Warren Bennis put it, the natural expression of a fully integrated human being, and can thus be seen only through the wide-angle lens of the leader's total growth and development" (p. 11). In addition to offering a simplistic understanding of the panorama of leadership, this essay has attempted to offer a model for developing leaders in today's complex society that is true to this statement. It is hoped that this model is one that invites leaders to transcend a myopic focus on accomplishing results through the self-serving misuse of people. In so doing, it focuses on what it takes to develop leaders who are servants first, and who, from that desire to serve combined with establishing a sense of purpose, actively choose to lead. These leaders strive to integrate their physical, mental, emotional, and extra-personal selves in order to achieve integrity and alignment with their spiritual core.

The pathway to such leadership is not easy because to truly lead with power and integrity, one must first journey to the deepest center of one's being – to the core that envelops the deep meaning of one's existence. Then the servant leader must travel across space and time battling the demons of the self to create integrity and alignment at all levels. This journey is not short, simple, easy, or painless, thus it is not to be taken lightly; indeed, to take it lightly means not taking it at all. Nonetheless, if one wishes to become a true leader, it is the only journey worth taking.

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Biography

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