1996 International Conference “Invigorating, Affirming”

by Don Frick

“What servant-leadership represents will increase in relevance. There is a growing awareness and consciousness of it.”

So said Stephen Covey, one of five keynote speakers at the Greenleaf Center’s recent annual conference. The 1996 International Conference on Servant-Leadership, held June 13-15 in Indianapolis, offered over 400 participants a chance for maximum saturation in rich ideas and stimulating people. Those who wonder whether Robert Greenleaf’s ideas about servant-leadership are a passing fad or a hope for the future will be heartened by the position of every major speaker who linked servant-leadership to the deepest emerging principles in business, public life, and personal growth.

In the opening session, executive director Larry Spears provided an overview of the history and practice of servant-leadership, and The Greenleaf Center. This was followed by a panel of members who addressed the question of how servant-leadership can help one balance service, leadership, life and work. Responses ranged from observations on America’s love of the Hero Myth, to a call for redefining work which is great, to some personal moments of sharing from panel members. The entire conference was like that, a blend of ideas, case studies, and personal sharing—offerings from both “out there” and “in here.”

In his presentation, “To Live, To Love, To Learn, To Leave a Legacy,” best-selling author Stephen Covey told participants that Robert Greenleaf had articulated a principle of nature. “The servant-leadership concept,” he said, “is a natural principle, a natural law. Natural laws are simply there, like true north. To get social systems aligned around natural laws is the challenge in our lives.”

Covey insists the rumblings of the global economy, with its demand for every-higher quality at lower cost, will move people and systems independently toward servant-leadership principles. “The only way you can compete in the world economy is through empowerment, and the only way you can get empowerment is through high-trust cultures, and an empowerment philosophy that turns bosses into servants and coaches.” Covey went on to call participants to align their social and organizational systems with changeless principles.

Diane Fassel, co-author of The Addictive Organization and author of Working Ourselves To Death, said that Greenleaf’s books and essays “articulated what I always felt inside.” She noted that with an exponentially increasing pace of change, excess work has become “the new religion,” with some serious social and personal consequences. According to Ms. Fassel, most business organizations have already become a “nexus with nodes.” Given the life-track of an organization, represented by a sigmoid curve, she argued that we must continue to discover new meanings in our work relationships.

Ms. Fassel’s presentation ended with a moving description of her own

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Greenleaf Center Launches New Leadership Institute for Higher Education

“The best leadership program I have ever experienced, and I’ve experienced a lot!” was how one participant described their participation in the unveiling of The Greenleaf Center’s first-ever Leadership Institute for Higher Education.

The presidents and their board partners from seven institutions met on June 26-28, 1996 for the Greenleaf Center’s first annual Leadership Institute. Meeting in beautiful Brown County, Indiana, participants engaged in three days of learning, reflection, and planning around both the personal and institutional meanings of servant-leadership.

Last year, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded The Greenleaf Center a four-year grant to create and launch this new program. The purpose of this grant-and-program is to establish a process for effectively supporting servant-leadership at 25 educational institutions across North America. While focussing primarily upon colleges and universities, other kinds of educational institutions, such as seminaries, law schools, and public school systems are also eligible to participate.

In a retreat setting, and operating out of a learning model which emphasizes reflection and dialogue, participants engaged in a casual, restorative and inspirational process which culminated in each institutional pair’s creation of some “next steps” in deepening the servant-leadership roots of their own institutions.

The Institute program was designed by a team of Greenleaf Center staff members, working in conjunction with

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struggles with cancer, and her increased awareness of living her life at its depth, of taking ultimate responsibility for one’s life and health, of seeking “healing” as a servant rather than simply “cures” for our ailments. “I would any day rather die healed, than die cured,” she said.

Peter Hutchinson, acting superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools, spoke of how Greenleaf’s wisdom has confirmed what he’s learned in maturity. “As I grew up, I thought leaders told us things. I’ve since learned that the real trick of leadership is listening.” In relating his experiences in government, education, and non-profit enterprises, Mr. Hutchinson gave practical applications of servant-leadership ideas. “If you treat people as if they are worthy, your systems will work better.” In serving followers, leaders must get over narrow needs. “For example,” he said, “one of the services a leader should provide is succession. Leaders are often too egotistical to do that.” Hutchinson is clearly a person trying to apply servant-leadership principles—sometimes in messy and highly political situations, always in complex systems—and doing so with equal doses of confidence, humility, energy, and good cheer.

Janet Hagberg, author of Real Power, talked of the journey of maturity: a journey winding from outward seeking of symbols and signs of power to an inner quest for the core of soul and spirit. Dr. Lorraine Matusak, Leadership Scholar for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and author of the forthcoming book, Finding Your Voice [due out October 1, 1996, Jossey-Bass Publishers], spoke on the increasing leadership roles which “regular people” are making throughout society. She shared stories of everyday people—from all walks of life—who saw a need, decided to make a difference, and chose to act.

Between the presentations, conference participants were able to make choices from over a dozen different learning sessions, and from a broad range of servant-leadership applications and practitioners. This year, about 200 people also participated in one of three pre-conference workshops which were offered on the opening day of the conference.

One participant called the Center’s office immediately after the conference and said, “the experience was invigorating. I also found it affirming because what I heard and saw gave validation to some of the deepest ideas I believe are critical for my own organization.” The network of learning, a goal of every Greenleaf Center conference, was expanded for each participant.

Audio cassettes of all conference keynote speakers (with the exception of Stephen Covey) and concurrent sessions are available through Sound Images. Contact the Greenleaf Center for an order form.

What Others Say

“I have found Greenleaf and his writings among the most original, useful, accessible and moral on the topic of leadership.”
—Warren Bennis, author, Why Leaders Can’t Lead

“Bob Greenleaf was a prophet before his time. Reading his wonderful essays will uplift your heart and increase your effectiveness.”
—Ken Blanchard, co-author, The One Minute Manager

“Greenleaf is important reading. He wrote from the heart and envisioned a world we are each required to seek.”
—Peter Block, author, Stewardship
Plan Ahead for the
1997 Servant-Leadership Conference!

The Greenleaf Center’s next annual International Conference on Servant-Leadership will be held June 12-14, 1997, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Confirmed speakers include: John Lore (President and CEO, SSJ Health System), Jim Shannon (Senior Consultant, Council on Foundations; editor of The Corporate Contributions Handbook), and Peter Vaill (author, Learning as a Way of Being and Managing as a Performing Art). Plus exciting concurrent sessions, pre-conference offerings, and much more. An early registration form will be available in September. We hope to see you in Ann Arbor!

Innovative Reading-and-Dialogue Program Is Now Available For Local Groups

In recent years The Greenleaf Center has received inquiries from a number of people who were interested in organizing a local group for the exploration and practice of servant-leadership. In response to this expressed desire the Center’s staff is pleased to announce the creation of our Reading-and-Dialogue Program and Kits.

This program has been designed as a means for our members to come together in a shared vision of learning, reflection, and community-building around servant-leadership. The program itself is intended to begin a process for growing-and-nurturing local groups of servant-leaders across North America and around the world. The Center will eventually be publishing a listing of local Reading-and-Dialogue Groups.

The Reading-and-Dialogue Kit itself consists of Robert Greenleaf’s essays—The Servant as Leader, The Institution as Servant, and Trustees as Servants; plus, a Reading-and-Dial-

Who is the Servant-Leader?

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. ... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant — first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. 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?

— from The Servant as Leader
by Robert K. Greenleaf

The Greenleaf Center’s Mission

“The Center’s mission is to fundamentally improve the caring and quality of all institutions through a new approach to leadership, structure, and decisionmaking. Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decisionmaking.”

The Greenleaf Center’s Goals

1. To help deepen an understanding of the original ideas of Robert K. Greenleaf and the principles of servant-leadership, via the preservation and promotion of his writings.
2. To nurture colleagues and institutions by providing a focal point, and opportunities to share thoughts and ideas on servant-leadership.
3. To produce and publish new resources by others on servant-leadership.
4. To connect servant-leaders in a network of learning.

Originally founded in 1964 as the Center for Applied Ethics, Inc., the Center was renamed the Robert K. Greenleaf Center in 1985. The Center is an international, not-for-profit institution headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana.
Seeker and Servant: Reflections on Religious Leadership

Reviewed by Jeff McCollum

(From time-to-time reviews of books relating to servant-leadership are included in The Servant Leader. This review is written by Jeff McCollum, a member of the Greenleaf Center’s board of trustees. Jeff is director of Organization Development for Warner-Wellcome, a consumer health products manufacturer.)

The enduring vision in all of Robert Greenleaf’s writings is one of servant institutions which, through their example, produce a caring society and servant-leaders who will perpetuate and improve it. This volume, published as a companion to On Becoming a Servant Leader, shows that vision undiminished in Greenleaf’s last writings into the late 1980’s. Although the title emphasizes religious leadership, the thinking covers all institutions which have the potential to re-bend (re-ligio in Latin and the root for religion) people who suffer from the two “pervasive social problems of modern life”—alienation and low-serving institutions.

What emerges from this volume is Greenleaf’s belief that seeking, prophecy and leading are interdependent qualities of a larger “whole”—servant-leadership. The leader must be a seeker first. And she must “seek to seek” rather than “seek to find.” Trusting her intuition, she may discover “lost knowledge” (things known to earlier societies but obscured to modern society) and, in articulating it, may attract other seekers. When this has happened, the leader appears prophtic to the other seekers. Operating from an awareness of the good that is possible in people, she can “go ahead and show the way” toward that which is possible—Greenleaf’s definition of leadership. This type of leadership transforms individuals and institutions with its healing qualities.

In Greenleaf’s vision, religious institutions, and seminaries in particular, are central to the creation of a caring society. The “trimtab” is a popular metaphor in today’s management literature. Think of a large, ocean-going vessel. What turns the ship? The rudder. What turns the rudder? A small, strategically located device called the trimtab. Find the trimtab, the metaphor goes and you can find the place to begin changing the course of a large system. For Greenleaf, the seminaries represent the trimtab. They should be the seed (seminalis in Latin) for developing servants who can lead churches which, as mediating structures in modern life, can change society.

In the essay “Spirituality as Leadership”, Greenleaf writes, “Any institution that carries these two roles [reducing alienation by nurturing spirituality and improving the serving quality of other institutions by being an example] effectively, is a church.” Leaders who are able and willing to step into these roles can be developed through a process of “reflecting on, and communicating about, the conditions under which the human spirit flowers in contemporary settings”. This reflection, in community with others, would create a “theology of institutions”. Even in his later writings, in which Greenleaf saw more evidence of spirit-nurturing work in business than other institutions, the hope for seminaries to become the seedbed for improving the entire society persisted.

Seeking and spirituality are the dominant themes in this volume. The essay, “The Search and the Seeker”, written in 1966, was, for me, an astonishing piece. Its lessons are clear. Change comes from the “inside out”. The most able leaders value self-awareness over everything else.

Why is it so important not to name the goal, not to seek to find? Because, one can only name a goal that one can conceptualize with the limited vision one now has. One does not name his or her potentialities, in what direction spontaneity might take him or her, or what she or he might become. But in our narrow, rational world one is supposed to know what one is doing and where one is going. Is there not a problem of survival here? Indeed there is. Most of us meet it by living in two worlds: the outer world of conformity, in which the requirements of polite society and vocational competence are met, and the inner world of freedom, spontaneity, and limitless possibilities. Some such compromise is necessary if one is to make a living or raise a family and take on social concerns. It is not too difficult a compromise provided one knows who one’s real self, one’s private, free self, is. (Seeker and Servant, pp. 286-7)

During the Greenleaf Center’s 1995 Conference, The Soul of Leadership, poet and keynote speaker David Whyte talked about two dimensions in which we operate as human beings. The “strategic” dimension is that which is concerned with meeting the mortgage and succeeding. He described the “soul” dimension in terms very similar to Greenleaf’s discussion of the “inner world”. The poetic tradition seems important to servant-leadership—particularly to seeking self-awareness.

Seeker and Servant includes several references to William Blake, Robert Frost and W.B. Yeats and lauds poetry as a nurturer of the spirit.

Greenleaf, who was known to “teach” through questions and silence and avoiding prescriptions, does offer a prescriptive description of the qualities of those who can develop other servant-leaders:

- They are strong, able, well-prepared people.
- They know who they are and where they stand.
- They have a clear vision, a sense of direction.
- They have great sustaining spirit with which to confront adversity.
- They have unqualified dedication to the mission to which they are committed.

These are all qualities produced by “seeking to seek.”

This volume belongs in the library of thinking leaders and leading thinkers everywhere.
Team Spirit: Creating New Spirit in the Workplace

by Barry Heermann, Ph.D.

In the late 70's I served in a public college in Ohio where I provided leadership for an exceptional team which produced extraordinary results, challenged all the existing assumptions, and altered the way in which education took place in this college. It was a team that had an affinity for working together. It was a team with passion, transcending individual differences that occurred among team members. It was a high performing team.

This experience influenced my thinking about teams, my work with teams, and led to the formulation of TEAM SPIRIT—an approach to team development that works at a deep level to stimulate and reveal the team's unique passion for service and contribution, nurturing high performance and exceptional results.

Participants in TEAM SPIRIT workshops, with a little prompting, recall formerly dormant and inaccessible experiences of extraordinary teams—teams full of spirit—that they participated in. They take great delight in doing this, creating greater consciousness about the possibility of spirited teams. Participants grapple with questions such as, "What does it mean to be a spirited, high performing team?" and "How do we foster spirit in teams?"

For the last 13 years my passion has been working with teams and team leaders to provide answers to these questions. I have concluded that the transforming power in high performing teams is spirit.

These participants come to understand that spirit is not separate from worldly affairs, nor is spirit some ephemeral, elusive, or ambiguous state. It is at the core of our humanity, should we choose to notice and cultivate it. We can become more conscious of spirit in work and employ concrete processes to bring spiritedness to our work.

Spirit contains its own source of meaning and purpose. It inspires us, catapulting us beyond self. In going beyond self, spirit and team come together. Selflessness, as Robert Greenleaf so brilliantly describes it, is powerful and deeply spiritual. Out of selflessness, we may give ourselves freely to some important work or mission, to the service of others, or to colleagues with whom we join in work. Spirited, high performing teams routinely report selflessness and a sense of spirit.

In moving beyond narrow self-interest, beyond the individualism that so permeates our culture, the possibility of extraordinary team emerges. Spirit is at the depth of this possibility, and spirited team is the desired end state.

While at some level spirit defies cognitive understanding, we can name qualities of spirit operating in team. Identifying these qualities provides a common vocabulary for teams to reflect on their work together. In our work with organizations like AT&T, NCR, and Lexis/Nexis we identify, and work with, six qualities that we characterize as "phases" of a spiral:

- **The Core Integrating Phase of Service**
  Quality of spirit: the experience of contribution and service to others.

- **Letting Go Phase**
  Quality of spirit: a sense of freedom and completion that arises from being forthright and sharing with full integrity.

- **Celebrating Phase**
  Quality of spirit: the presence of awe, wonder, and an appreciation for the contribution of the team and team members.

- **Claiming Phase**
  Quality of spirit: the experience of team solidarity, single minded purpose, and assurance about what needs to be accomplished.

- **Visioning Phase**
  Quality of spirit: an extraordinary sense of possibility for what can be created—that is alive and present for the team.

- **Initiating Phase**
  Quality of spirit: a profound sense of relationship, wherein team members feel belonging and trust in their work together.

All teams, whether consciously or unconsciously, move through and operate in all phases, linked by the critical sixth integrating component of service. The seminal work of Robert Greenleaf informs the TEAM SPIRIT Spiral, particularly with regard to the core of the spiral, service. Each phase has its own unique contribution to make in realizing a spirited team. These phases spiral simultaneously and interdependently together. Our experience shows that ordinary work groups can become spirited, high performing teams by consciously attending to each of these phases.

Significant forces work against spirit in team. Years of conditioning elevate and enshrine individualism. Organizations exalt form and structure, relegating the unseen, the spirit of the team, to unconsciousness. Organizations ignore, or respond ineptly to, the needs of the spirit. Intolerant of problems and ambiguity, organizations rely on aggressive individuals or on form and structure to find their healing and reality. It isn't there.

We believe that embracing the spirit in team, in all of its various manifestations—both its light and shadow sides—is critical to significant team and organization renewal.

Team Spirit Certification

I invite the friends of The Greenleaf Center to journey along a new path of heart and of spirit that can nurture extraordinary teams. You are invited to develop competence as a facilitator of

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spirit in teams and organization. You are invited to the TEAM SPIRIT Certification, sponsored by The Greenleaf Center.

TEAM SPIRIT Certification supports you in your efforts to restore the spirit that is missing in today's organizations. Our commitment is to help you work with teams at a deeper level to achieve inspired results.

The TEAM SPIRIT Certification combines the two-day TEAM SPIRIT Workshop with a two-day train-the-facilitator process. Upon completion, you are able to conduct TEAM SPIRIT Workshops in your organization and/or for your clients.

The TEAM SPIRIT Workshop develops teams who are able to harness their unique passion to serve customers, and to sustain high performance. Teams practice and apply the TEAM SPIRIT spiral that provides a detailed map and tools for the journey to spirited teams and organizations.

The TEAM SPIRIT train-the-facilitator component builds upon your experience of the Workshop. In the final two days we increase your comfort with, and "ownership" of TEAM SPIRIT so you can effectively deliver the Workshop and Diagnostic Feedback Sessions.

TEAM SPIRIT Certifications are scheduled September 24-27 and November 19-22 at The Greenleaf Center, in Indianapolis. The cost of the certification is $1,500. For more information, or to confirm your participation, please call Richard Smith or Michele Lawrence at The Greenleaf Center.

Barry is the executive director of the Expanded Learning Institute that he established in 1983. He is a talented organization development consultant who has worked with over 200 organizations nationally. Barry has served as a faculty member, department head, dean, and vice president in public and private institutions. He is the author of two books and is currently writing Building Team Spirit, to be published in 1997 by McGraw-Hill.

Leadership Institute for Higher Education (Continued from page 1)

consultant-educator Judy Brown. The program was facilitated by Program Director Richard W. Smith and Judy Brown. A "fireside chat" was provided by Peter Vaill, author of Learning as a Way of Being and Managing as a Performing Art.

An important part of this program centers around the establishment of long-term relationships between The Greenleaf Center and participating institutions. Follow-up activities can include a wide array of workshops, consultative support, affinity groups, written and electronic communication, and more.

Participating institutions and their representatives in this first Leadership Institute included: Crowder College, Neosho, Missouri (Dr. Kent Farnsworth, President, and Andrew Wood, Trustee); Dominican College, Orangeburg, New York (Sr. Kathleen Sullivan, President, and James Hennessy, Board Chair); The Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, Indianapolis, Indiana (Larry Spears, Executive Director, and Andy Morikawa, Trustee); Highland Community College, Freeport, Illinois (Dr. Ruth Mercedes Smith, President, and Franklin Walker, Board Chair); Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California (Dr. B. Lyn Behrens, President and Dr. Calvin Rock, Board Chair); Santa Fe Community College, Santa Fe, New Mexico (Dr. Leonardo de la Garza, President, and Violanda Nunez, Trustee); and San Juan College, Farmington, New Mexico (Dr. James C. Henderson, President, and Steven S. Dunn, Trustee).

The ultimate intention of this program is to assist in the evolution of several dozen servant-led institutions in higher education which may serve as inspirational models for other institutions. Also, the Greenleaf Center will be utilizing the Institute model with other kinds of organizations in the next few years. A Leadership Institute for Healthcare is being planned for the Fall of 1997.

The next Leadership Institute for Higher Education will be held on April 16-18, 1997, in Culver, Indiana. For more information on this program, or to register, contact our program director, Michele Lawrence.