Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness
Greenleaf’s Landmark Book Newly-Published in 25th Anniversary Edition

Servant Leadership, by Robert K. Greenleaf, has just been published in an expanded edition. A joint production involving The Greenleaf Center and Paulist Press, this new edition celebrates the silver anniversary of what has been called one of the most influential books of its kind.

Twenty-five years ago Robert Greenleaf published his prophetic book on what he coined servant-leadership, a practical philosophy that replaces traditional autocratic leadership with a holistic, ethical approach. This highly influential book has been embraced by cutting-edge leadership everywhere. Yet in these days of Enron and massive institutional failure, Greenleaf’s seminal work must reach the mainstream now more than ever.

Over 100,000 copies of Servant Leadership have been sold worldwide. The 25th Anniversary Edition of Greenleaf’s classic work has been released as a low-cost hardback book. This new edition contains two very special and important additions to Greenleaf’s classic text in the form of a Foreword by Stephen R. Covey, and an Afterword by Peter M. Senge, in which each author addresses the significance of servant-leadership upon society past, present and future.

Servant Leadership —
• helps leaders find their true power and moral authority to lead.
• helps those served become healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous.
• encourages collaboration, trust, listening, empowerment, and the use of foresight.
• offers long-lasting change, not a temporary fix.
• extends beyond business for established and emerging leaders of all types of groups.

Robert K. Greenleaf is considered the originator of the modern trend to empower employees; he also coined the term “servant-leadership” in 1970. He

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On the Road and in the News with the Greenleaf Center

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Upcoming Events
The following is a brief listing of selected upcoming events. Contact the Greenleaf Center for more information on any of them.

The Greenleaf Center’s 8th Annual Leadership Institute for Educational Institutions will be held April 3-4, 2003 in Indianapolis. This two-day program for educators and educational administrators will be led by Dr. Jim Boyd and will feature a special presentation by James Kouzes (co-author of Credibility and The Leadership Challenge).

The Greenleaf Center’s 13th Annual International Conference on Servant-Leadership takes place in Indianapolis on June 5-7, 2003. Confirmed presenters include: Warren Bennis (On Becoming a Leader), Ken Blanchard (Managing by Values, The One Minute Manager), Diane Cory (poet and storyteller), pianist Michael Jones (Creating an Imaginative Life), Artis Hampshire-Cowan (Senior Vice President of Howard University), and Ken Melrose (Chairman & CEO, The Toro Company), plus two dozen concurrent sessions and more.

The Center for Servant-Leadership, Philippines will hold its first conference on November 4-5, 2003. James Autry will serve as the keynote speaker. Contact Eleanor Santiago at servleadphil@hotmail.com for more information.

The Servant Leader

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The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership

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Servant Leadership
New Edition
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was a top executive in management, research, development, and education at AT&T, as well as a lecturer at MIT’s Sloan School of Management and Harvard Business School. He also taught at Dartmouth College and the University of Virginia. Upon his retirement from AT&T in 1964, he founded the Center for Applied Ethics, which was renamed the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership in 1984, an international, non-profit organization located in Indianapolis and eight other countries around the world. Greenleaf is the author of five books: Servant Leadership (1977, 2002), The Power of Servant-Leadership (1998), Seeker and Servant (1996), On Becoming a Servant Leader (1996), and Teacher as Servant (1979, 1987). Greenleaf died in 1990 at the age of 86.

Larry C. Spears is the editor of this new edition of Servant Leadership. He has been the President & CEO of The Greenleaf Center since 1990. Spears has served as conceptualizer, editor, and the driving spirit behind a number of books on servant-leadership, including three posthumously published books of Robert Greenleaf’s writings—The Power of Servant-Leadership; Seeker and Servant; and On Becoming a Servant Leader; plus, the anthology series published by John Wiley & Sons on the contemporary practices of servant-leadership—Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the 21st Century (2002); Insights on Leadership: Service, Stewardship, Spirit and Servant-Leadership (1998); and Reflections on Leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf’s Theory of Servant-Leadership Influenced Today’s Top Management Thinkers (1995). See page 6 for information on ordering copies.

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 priorities 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 Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership exists to support those who, through the practice of servant-leadership, seek to create organizations in which individual stakeholders become healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous; and in so doing, build a better, more humane society which welcomes the full diversity of the human family.

The Greenleaf Center’s Goals

1. To make all institutions aware of servant-leadership and to deepen their understanding and practice of it.
2. To create a larger base of caring people from which servant-leadership can arise (i.e., CEO’s, trustees, aspiring leaders and followers, external consultants).
3. To achieve widespread recognition, understanding and acceptance of spirituality in the workplace.
4. To create a new understanding and practice of moral persuasion toward organizational transformation, and to follow the methodologies of exemplary servant-leaders.

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.

What Others Are Saying About Servant-Leadership

“There are very few books which can be truly called seminal works. Robert K. Greenleaf’s Servant Leadership is one of those rare books that will live far beyond the life of its creator. While its impact on leadership is already felt every day in organizations all over the world, I predict its influence will only become greater as more and more leaders and would-be leaders come to understand the power of its message and come to experience the results of its practice.”

— James A. Autry, author, The Servant Leader and Love & Profit

“Servant-leadership is now part of the vocabulary of enlightened leadership. This book incarnates those values.”

— Warren Bennis, author, On Becoming a Leader

“Servant Leadership belongs in every leader’s library. It is the indispensable companion on the journey!”

— Frances Hesselbein, Board Chair, The Drucker Foundation

“I congratulate the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership for its invaluable service to society, for carrying the torch of servant-leadership over the years, and for initiating this new edition. To the reader, I humbly and most sincerely commend this book and its absolute treasure of insights to you.”

— Stephen R. Covey, author, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

“Responsible board behavior is impossible in the absence of the servant-leadership Robert Greenleaf helped us all to understand. This silver anniversary edition of Servant Leader is both symbol and substance on the shelf of anyone blessed with the opportunity to lead.”

— John Carver, author, Boards That Make a Difference

“I expect the impact of Servant Leadership to be greater in the next twenty-five years than the past twenty-five years.”

— Peter M. Senge, author, The Fifth Discipline
Servant-Leader Books in Review

Servant Leadership:
A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness

Reviewed by Jeff McCollum

Jeff McCollum is a Greenleaf Center trustee and a frequent reviewer for this publication.

With the publication of “The Servant as Leader” essay in 1970, followed by the book Servant Leadership in 1977, a different paradigm of leadership entered into the hearts and minds of people, organizations, and society. Robert K. Greenleaf proposed that service ought to be the distinguishing characteristic of leadership. Not only would it create a better, stronger society, but people themselves “would find greater joy in their lives if they raised the servant aspect of their leadership and built more serving institutions.”

In this ground-breaking book, Greenleaf was among the first to analyze the qualities of leaders and followers, and the necessity for leaders to be attentive to the needs of others. Servant-leaders, said Greenleaf, constantly inquire whether “other people’s highest priority needs are being served. Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?”

The servant-leader is also a seeker—alert to new possibilities, open, listening and ready for whatever develops. Servant-leadership, then, is an inner quality as much as an exercise of “legitimate” authority.

This attractive new 25th anniversary edition contains all of Greenleaf’s classic text—including the central core of his ideas as described in the first three essays which he wrote on servant-leadership: “The Servant as Leader,” “The Institution as Servant,” and “Trustees as Servants.” Other chapters of the book deal with servant-leadership in education, in foundations, in churches, in business, and in the world. To this heady mix of Greenleaf’s classic book has been added the wonderful addition of a Foreword by Stephen Covey and an Afterword by Peter Senge, each of whom addresses the central question of why this book is so important.

“Through my work with many organizations over the years,” Covey writes, “I am a first-hand witness of [servant leadership’s] tremendous impact—and I’m convinced that its greatest influence is yet to come.” Covey’s observations coupled with the grim reality of the failure of institutional leadership around us brings focus to the creative tension between what is and what could be, what we experience and what we long for. That tension must be resolved. That tension calls servant leaders to action.

Covey’s Foreword is, in effect, a call for moral authority in institutions. “Moral authority is the gaining of influence through following principles,” i.e. leading from conscience and not ego. “Moral authority,” Covey argues, “comes through sacrifice in the four basic elements of our nature: physical and economic sacrifice is temperance and giving back; emotional/social sacrifice is surrendering self to the value and difference of another, to apologize and to forgive; mental sacrifice is placing learning above pleasure and realizing that true freedom comes from discipline; and spiritual sacrifice is living life humbly and courageously, living and serving wisely.”

“What if,” Covey concludes, “we could get model communities in this country, and model institutions, schools, businesses and government units that would become islands of excellence in seas of mediocrity? What if they could become models and then transport what they learn and become mentors to others so that this whole spirit of stewardship, of servant-leadership, of working at the empowerment process through structures and systems could take root and flourish? I honestly think we could heal our country.”

Peter Senge’s Afterword is equally compelling. He, too, cites the influence of the principles of servant-leadership on himself since his first exposure and predicts that Servant Leadership will become more important in the future because “it is one of the very few books that illuminate the depth of commitment required to build truly innovative organizations.”

Senge’s focus is on developing “organizational capacity” for servant leadership. This capacity building—learning—is driven first by aspiration as opposed to desperation. Desperation drives what Senge describes as the “number one leadership strategy in America: Create a crisis.” He argues the need for leaders who bring aspiration, and understanding of complexity, a genuine spirit of learning and true commitment (leading from uncertainty and inviting others to join the journey) to their institutions. These leaders, he further adds, are not “bosses.” The presence of bosses may reflect a requisite hierarchy, but being a boss does not equal being a leader despite the confusion of the two in the contemporary usage.

The servant-leader is willing to step ahead, vulnerable and uncertain, and lead from principle which can actually increase personal influence. This, to Senge, is the great paradox of leadership.

The Greenleaf Center’s President & CEO Larry C. Spears deserves special mention as editor and moving force behind this attractive new edition of Greenleaf’s classic work. This marks the seventh book to be published in the past eight years under his inspired editorial supervision. Through Spears’s caring efforts, the servant-leadership writings of Robert Greenleaf, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge and many other writers are having a growing impact around the world.

The essays contributed by Covey and Senge to this 25th anniversary edition of Servant Leadership both look back to the impact of Greenleaf’s writing over the last 25 years and point ahead to a future even more profoundly influenced by the principles of servant-leadership. It usually takes a generation for a radical idea to be adapted broadly. This republication of Servant Leadership comes at a key point in the evolution of institutions. The timeless ideas of Greenleaf, coupled with the reflections of two management thought leaders, can bring depth, nuance and strength to the servant leadership practitioner.
“One-to-One” is an occasional feature offering brief interviews with thought leaders on servant-leadership. This issue features a brief excerpt from a lengthy interview with Margaret Wheatley, noted author of several books including Leadership and the New Science.

Larry Spears: Do you recall when you first encountered Robert Greenleaf’s writings and any remembrances of your initial impressions?

Margaret Wheatley: I think it was through Max DePree. What I enjoy most about Greenleaf’s work is realizing that every time I go back, I read something that feels completely new and relevant. In that way his work stays very contemporary and exceedingly relevant. I think that’s the mark of a great thinker. It’s not just that he was a visionary and saw the need for the servant as leader. It’s truly great concepts and ideas that are timeless and fundamental.

LS: Is there any particular thought or idea about servant-leadership that has struck you as a source of wisdom or importance?

MW: I was recently struck by Greenleaf’s admonition to “do no harm,” which I had never even thought of before. Doing no harm is becoming exceedingly difficult. It’s not just about doing good, it’s actually avoiding harm. We don’t even know what we’re doing that’s causing harm. We don’t see the consequences of our actions. I know Greenleaf wrote that in a much simpler time, but I was really struck by that this time through.

LS: In light of the events of September 11, 2001 have you any thoughts as to what servant-leadership has to offer to the world today that might be useful?

MW: We have to ask ourselves, “What is the leadership the world needs now and what are we learning about leadership from actually being followers?” Now more than ever, we have to fundamentally shift our ideas of what makes an effective leader. We have to shift them away from this secretive, command and control, “we know what’s best.” I’m certainly learning that there are different needs at different times when you are a leader. But what I find in servant-leadership that I still find missing in the world is this fundamental respect for what it means to be human. And I think that right now the greatest need is to have faith in people. That is the single most courageous act of a leader. Give people resources, give them a sense of direction, give them a sense of their own power and just have tremendous faith that they’ll figure it out. We need to move from the leader as hero, to the leader as host. Can we be as welcoming, congenial, and invitational to the people who work with us as we would be if they were our guests at a party? Can we think of the leader as a convenor of people? I don’t know of any other model that can truly work in the world right now except servant-leadership.

LS: In Leadership and the New Science you wrote, “Love in organizations is the most potent source of power we have available.” What do you think that servant-leaders inside our many organizations can do to unleash love in the workplace?

MW: It’s simple: just be loving! Why has expressing love become such a problem when it’s a fundamental human characteristic? This is where I think we have over-analyzed and over-complexified something that is known to everyone alive. The fear of love in organizations is that it makes your life as a leader far more complex. But it also makes you much more effective.

LS: For many, serving others is inextricably tied to their own sense of spirituality. Are there practices you have found useful in terms of how we can better develop our own servant’s heart?

MW: Even if you start out with a naturally open heart and a generous spirit towards others, there are many, many structures and processes in modern work and modern life that actually close us down. So we do need a practice to maintain an open heart. I am a strong believer in meditation personally, but I think any process by which you withdraw from the world and focus on your own inner grounding is useful.

LS: What do you find most compelling about Buddhist practice?

MW: Buddhism has introduced me to the day-to-day practices that I feel have really opened my heart and made me far more understanding and gentle. And, what is more important to me, it has made me far less likely to condemn quickly and far more willing to be in the presence of suffering and not to run from it. And to bear witness, to just be with whatever’s going on and not to be afraid of it.

LS: Do you have any closing words of hope or advice for servant-leaders around the world?

MW: A few phrases come to mind from a wonderful gospel song, “We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.” This is the time for which we have been preparing, and so there is a deep sense of call. Servant-leadership is not just an interesting idea, but something fundamental and vital for the world, and now this is the world that truly needs it. The whole concept of servant-leadership must move from an interesting idea in the public imagination and toward the realization that this is the only way we can go forward. It moves from being a body of work to being a movement—literally a movement—how we are going to move this into the world. I think that will require more acts of courage, more clarity, more saying this has to change now. I am hoping that it will change now.

The complete interview is available as Booklet 7 in the Voices of Servant-Leadership Essay Series published by the Greenleaf Center. The Servant-Leader: From Hero to Host—An Interview with Margaret Wheatley may be ordered through the Greenleaf Center for $9 ($5 + $4 shipping-and-handling).
Order Servant Leadership Today!

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