

## THE NEW PARADIGM: SERVANT LEADERSHIP

### On Angela

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*Many researchers offered their thoughts on what they called a servant leadership, as a new emerged paradigm for a better understanding of leadership process. The servant leader's motive is not to direct the activities of followers. It is a characteristically unique method for stimulating and influencing the behavior of others. Servant leaders rely upon service to establish the purposes for meaningful work and to provide needed resources.*

*Service theory is a fairly young field in positive psychology and provides fruitful scope for understanding the potential success of servant leadership theory in a wide spectrum of organizational environments.*

*Keywords: leadership, service, agapao love, humility, servant leadership.*

*Cod JEL:*

We learned that leadership is an acquired skill and is synonymous with influence; we learned that character is the moral maturity in action: doing the right thing regardless of the cost. Though a new approach on leadership had emerged, focused on kindness, sensitivity, love and humility, constructs that more and more are seen as essential for leader-follower relationship. I consider this a wonderful approach, being the response to many changes in human perceptions and understandings of labor environment. I also believe it can offer a more credible solution to **James Hunter** (2004) is one of the authors that offers important lessons, which he has learned from successful organizations, including selecting workers very carefully, finding ways to make work more challenging, compensating people fairly, demanding excellence and accountability, training people well, and building community.

Hunter call a servant leader *a person of character who is skilled in influencing and inspiring others to enthusiastically contribute their hearts, minds and other resources toward goals identified as being for the common good*<sup>273</sup>. Referring to his religious faith, he consider that leadership is spiritual underpin.

According to Hunter, leadership means, exactly as love does, *patience, kindness, humility, respect, generosity, indulgence, honesty and commitment*. Surprisingly, the author discovered identities between the abilities list that most of the people consider fundamental for a leader and the list of those specific attributes of a love relationship.

A love relationship is described almost on every wedding ceremony and it hardly means romance, passion, flowers and candies. It rather means a lot of work and engagement, reinforcement of the feelings of the partners (married couple), a life time effort to develop a relationship and reach the maturity. When difficulties occur, the real value of feelings and the strength of the bond shows up.

Those eight virtues of love relationship are not just a splendid definition for love, but also the essence of leadership (Hunter).

**Patterson**<sup>274</sup> (2003) also shaped a model that suggests servant leaders are guided by seven virtuous constructs which define their attitudes, characteristics, and behavior. She define servant leaders as *those leaders who lead an organization by focusing on their followers, such that the*

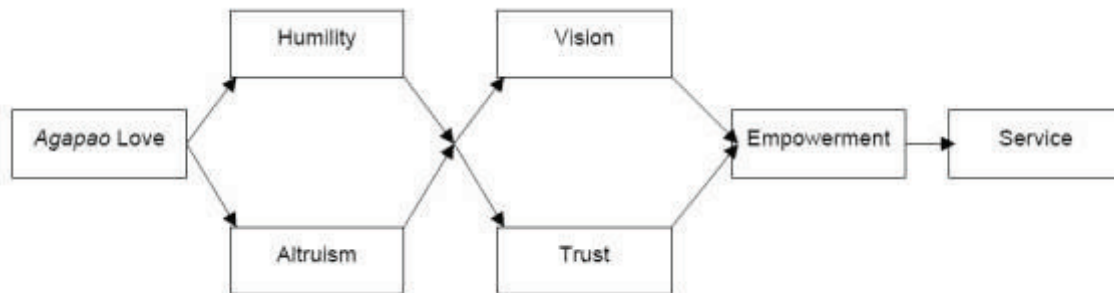
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273 Hunter C.J., Las claves de la paradoja (original version The World's Most Powerful Leadership Principle), Ediciones Urano, Barcelona 2005, p.79.

274 Patterson, K. A., Servant leadership: A theoretical model, Doctoral dissertation 2003, Regent University, cited in Waddell.

followers are the primary concern and the organizational concerns are peripheral. Her theory of servant leadership was presented as an extension of transformational leadership theory, defining and developing the component constructs underlying the practice of servant leadership. She suggests the servant leader : (1) demonstrates agapao love, (2) acts with humility, (3) is altruistic, (4) is visionary for the followers, (5) is trusting, (6) empowers followers, and (7) is serving. The cornerstone of Patterson’s construct is agapao love.

**Figure 1: Patterson’s Model**



### Agapao love

The Greek word agapao means a moral love, doing the right thing at the right time for the right reason<sup>275</sup> (Winston 2002). This kind of love is a social one, meaning the judgment and deliberate assent of the will are taken as a matter of principle, duty and propriety. The basis for agapao love is to consider each employee or follower as a total person with needs, wants and desires. According to Patterson, in demonstrating agapao love, the leader focuses on the employee first, the talents of the employee second and the benefit of the organization third.

Considering humility, altruism, trust and service as direct consequences of agapao love, some of the descriptions are as follows.

#### Humility

It has been defined as putting the needs of others above one’s own. The servant leader’s motive is not to direct the activities of followers. Instead, the servant leader's behavior motivates, influences, inspires, and empowers followers to focus on ways to serve others better.

Hunter (2004) explains the paradox of humility in leadership by saying humble leaders realize they came into the world with nothing and will leave with nothing. People mistakenly associate being humble with being overly modest or passive. To the contrary, humble leaders can be very bold when it comes to their sense of values, morality, and doing the right thing. They view their leadership as a great responsibility to take care of the people entrusted to them. Humble leaders are very willing, even eager, to listen to the opinions of others, including those with contrary opinions.

#### Altruism

Wikipedia defines altruism as the practice of placing others before oneself. Altruism can be distinguished from a feeling of loyalty and duty because altruism focuses on a moral obligation toward all humanity while duty focuses on a moral obligation toward a specific individual or organization, or an abstract concept.

According to Kaplan (2000), altruism is helping others selflessly, just for the sake of helping, which involves personal sacrifice, although there is no personal gain to the person performing the act of service. Monroe (1994) defines altruism as behavior intended to benefit another, even when doing so may risk or entail some sacrifice to the welfare of the actor. Monroe adds there are

275 Winston B.E., Be a leader for God’s sake. (Workbook), Virginia Beach, VA: Regent University, School of Leadership Studies.

four critical components of altruism. Altruism must entail action, must further the welfare of another, does not diminish if well-intentioned efforts result in negative consequences for the recipient of the action, and must carry some possibility of diminution to the welfare of the person committing the sacrificial act.

#### Trust

Nyhan (2000) describes trust as the level of confidence one individual has in another person's competence and his or her willingness to act in a fair, ethical, and predictable manner. The servant-leader model is not an easy model to embrace, but it permits the greatest number of people to experience the greatest good as the leader provides optimal conditions for the growth, development, and self-improvement of all. The climate of trust in the organization facilitates cooperation and also results in better serving of others, from leader-to-follower and follower-to-leader. Bennis and Nanus (1997) also believe that the capacity to generate and sustain trust is the central ingredient of leadership.

#### Service

The core of the functional attributes of a servant leader is service. It is important that leaders understand one of their primary functions as a leader is to serve the needs of others. The servant-power is a category of influence outside the traditional kinds of power. Real servanthood is a leadership style that relies upon the influence of self-giving without self-glory.

Many researches based on Patterson's model have been conducted since, including more constructs (like *hope*), or widening the perspectives by inserting leader's agapao and follower's agapao. Still, more than one approaches to general leadership theory was based on agapao love.

**Jane Waddell**<sup>276</sup> (2006) introduces the idea that there is a relationship between a servant leader's preference for introversion relative to his or her demonstration of the virtues of agapao love, humility and trust.

The propensity of individuals for extraversion is demonstrated by their preference for the outer world of people, places and things; They are typically more prone to talking and engaging than listening and reflecting. Waddell suggests that four of the Patterson's model constructs of servant leadership appear to be in opposition to the source of energy for extraverts; humility, altruism, service, and trust.

Extraversion and Introversion are two categories of the personality, which assesses an individual's preference for how he/she interact with the world. Waddell believe that authentic change happen only when it begin in the inner solitude of single individuals; she also believe this inner solitude of individuals is a critical component of servant leadership.

**James Kouzes and Barry Posner**<sup>277</sup> also present some lessons of the past (*legacies*), which can guide new generations of leaders. Those legacies are:

- leadership belongs to all
- leadership is a relationship
- leadership starts with the action
- the leader is his own creator

The most harmful belief about leadership is the myth of the *chosen one*, or *the great man* or the idea that leadership is just for few, because of its negative impact on personal and organizational development. Investigations constantly demonstrated leadership is not about location, is a process, observable action, so leadership belongs to everybody.

A leader's success in business and in life depends on his /her capacity to work and cooperate with others. Every relationship is based on trust; the most effective leader spend o lot of efforts to create and develop relationships based upon respect and mutual consideration.

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276 Waddell J., Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University, August 2006;

[www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl\\_proceedings/2006](http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2006)

277 Kouzes M.J., Posner Z.B., El futuro del liderazgo,(original version, The Future of Leadership), Ediciones Deusto, 2002, Bilbao, p. 94;

A leader is the one who begins with an action, has the urgency feeling about something, cannot wait for a formal approval or authorization. Small actions normally conduct to small victories which finally result in gaining prestige and trust.

Being a leader means being yourself and knowing very well your potential and limits. The better you know yourself the more appropriate can be your answer to outer world challenges. Judging and constantly evaluating your life and work are critical for leadership.

**Steve Farber** is another author who pleaded for love in leadership relationships. He pointed out four essential typical actions of the *extreme (radical) leader*<sup>278</sup>:

- cultivate love
- generate energy
- inspire audacity
- provide proof

*Love* is the fundamental motivation of the *radical leader*, and it means loving someone or something, loving a cause, a principle, your work coloborators, your clients, your organization, loving the future image of yourself and others in this organization etc. Without an emotional engagement there's no valid motivation of the extreme leader for changing or improving the world.

*Energy* is not abstract or metaphysical; it's real, tangible, palpable. Energy is the inner power to act or to produce an effect and is generated by love, big ideas, noble principles, stimulating goals, interesting work, exciting challenges etc. The extreme leader's job is to define and redefine, day after day, what that higher purpose of organization is (or principles, or goals), in order to create an energetic work environment.

*Audacity* means deliberate disregard for normal constraints. Normal constraints are coming from limited believes about what a person can or cannot do. Love-inspired audacity is courageous then the extreme leader is courageously audacious in his or her actions and approach.

When the leader is convinced that he/she can change the organization, the family or the community for the better, he/she has to *prove* it through the radical courage of his/her own action.

According to **Chatterjee Debashis**, *leadership is not a science or an art, it is a state of consciousness* and the changing paradigms of *conscious leadership* is about self-mastery<sup>279</sup>. Explaining what *conscious leadership* is, he uses wanderful metapfors and dedicates a great deal of attention to love and its importance for leadership. The Debashis changing paradigms are:

From	To
Capacity	Leadership capacity
Work enrichment	Self enrichment
Quality circle	Quality consciousness
Balanced personality	Integrated personality
Intelectual culture	Emotional consciousness
Strategie	Purpose
Leadership	Follower
Virtual reality	Virtuous reality

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278 Farber S., Los cuatro fundamentos del liderazgo verdadero (original version: The Leadership Leap – A Personal Lesson in Extreme Leadership), Ediciones Urano, Barcelona 2005, p. 89; also available on <http://stevefarber.com/extremeleadership/>

279 Chatterjee D., Leading Consciously. A Pilgrimage Toward Self-Mastery, Ediciones Granica, Barcelona, 1998, p.186.

**Tom Peters** also consider love as central ingredient for effective leadership. *Love is passion, taste for life, engagement; great causes and the decision to make a difference; shared adventures; audacious fails; growth and a permanent need for change*<sup>280</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

Servant leadership is actually a robust, revolutionary idea that can have significant impact on organization's performance. To lead is not to be the boss. Servant leadership turns bosses and managers into coaches and mentors. Many studies have built upon this model to explain the interactions between leaders and followers in *servant leadership relationships*.

I would propose that the leader who produces results by encouraging and teaching (by serving), has longer lasting results because he builds future leaders who learn to believe in themselves and their abilities and strengths.

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<sup>280</sup> Peters T., La esencia. Liderazgo (original version Essentials. Leadership), Pearson Educación, Madrid, 2005, p.153.