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"SERVANT-LEADERSHIP"

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The concept of servant-leadership has become a very powerful image in formulating the type of leadership needed in organizations today. It has been made popular through the writings of Robert K. Greenleaf, the former executive with AT&T and founder of the Greenleaf Foundation. He picked up the idea from Hermann Hesse's book "The Journey to the East" where the helpful, but ignored servant, Leo turns out to be the real leader of the group's journey to find fulfillment.

It is a style that is quite different than the popular image of the powerful, dynamic and charismatic chieftain of a successful enterprise that is projected today. It is also difficult to manifest when the top position of most organizations has perks and privileges that are a constant reminder of how much more you are "valued" than the others in the organization. It's hard to remember you are your people's servant when riding to work in a chauffeured car.

Of course the idea of servant-leader applies not just to those in authority or at the top of an organization. It is a generic concept that can apply to anyone. It is a "being" category, representing a life stance. Stephen Covey conveys much of this in his 7 Habits as he describes the power that comes from working on the "circle of influence" and making "deposits in the emotional bank account" of people. He relates a story of one man in an organization who, through his ability to listen and empathize with people became so influential that no important decision could be made without his blessing.

History has many examples of people who have embodied a servant-leadership life stance. Mahatma Gandhi is perhaps the most prominent example who lived a life of servant. He rode third-class, cleaned toilets and lived with the poor as his symbols of being a servant-leader. In religious traditions, both Jesus and Buddha preached the necessity of leadership by example of serving those who are the least in society. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples as his symbol of how we should understand what true leadership is about.

But these historical examples are not easy to translate into contemporary processes and operations.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs has always had servant-leadership as a central part of its operating values. Of course, as a non-profit organization it is easier to communicate the transcendent mission and story of the service to the world we intend to render than many commercial ventures. Nevertheless, we have in our core understanding that anyone who is part of that service is to be a servant-leader.

Over the years in ICA a number of operating principles evolved that symbolized this value.

• Anyone who is designated as a leader within the organization is responsible and accountable for the spiritual growth processes for their team members.

• "The power is in the center of the table" means that everyone gathered around a task or issue is equally responsible for the result. The leader is to discern the consensus as it emerges.

• When it came to team enablement tasks, everyone is equal. There are no "large" or "small" jobs, just a task that needs to be done. This was most dramatically symbolized in our large gatherings of summer research events when we would have 500-1,000 participants gather from across the world. In preparation for this there were many support functions necessary including publishing, meal preparation, logistics and housing. It was always a sign of servant-leadership to see some of our most valued leaders assigned to these support tasks. It was an address to see a senior member of the organization running the elevator in our eight story headquarters in Chicago.

I remember one summer being assigned to run our publication operations which had to work all night each day to prepare the work for the next day which meant missing the working sessions. It was a great experience knowing you were providing a valuable service on-behalf of the whole assembly.

• Those chosen to be leaders of various operations are those who have demonstrated and embodied the role of servant-leader.

• There is no higher pay or special perks for those in senior positions.

The experience of being a servant-leader gets acted out in our understanding of being a facilitator. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to not only enable the task to be accomplished by the participants without injecting oneself into the discussions and decisions, but also to observe and guard the "spirit" dimension of the event.

One experience I had dramatically affected my understanding of this role. I was still working as a research chemist at the time, but was part of the national faculty of the ICA in conducting its LENS seminars, a participatory planning program we conducted for businesses, government agencies and NGO's. I received a call that I was to conduct such a program that had been organized in a maximum security prison in Virginia. I was shocked and afraid at doing such an event. How could a group of convicts work together to examine the

future? What future could they possibly envision? After much soul-searching I agreed to be part of the team of four designated to conduct the program.

Among our participants, all of whom had voluntarily decided to be present were, convicted bank robbers, murders and extortionists. Guards were present in the back of the room. It was a tough assignment!

As the program proceeded we were shocked at how seriously the participants were and how much they enjoyed an opportunity to move into the future rather than dwell on the past. It also shocked some of the administrators who were observing. One told me he couldn't believe what he was hearing from the convicts. It was not an act. They were being treated as responsible people and were responding in kind.

In this program, one of the elements is to get the group to sing together. We had a song book with a number of songs printed including "The Impossible Dream". At the end of the program, we asked the group what they would like to sing as the concluding song and they chose that one. It was an incredible experience listening to them sing that song, not unlike those in the stage play and movie who were in a similar situation.

I truly felt that I would trust many of these people to be part of any team in the "outside" world. Several days later I received a letter from one of the participants who was serving a sentence of 30 years. He said that he had returned to his cell after the program and turned on his radio. It was playing "The Impossible Dream". He said he was wondering about how we had showed up in his life and why had we come there? The only answer he could think of was because we cared.

I still have that letter as it reminds me that the joy of being a servant-leader is beyond price and is what a life of service is all about. To paraphrase a current movie title, this is "as good as it gets"!

This Issue

One of the best books we have acquired in the last several years is a collection of articles edited by Larry Spears, Director of the Greenleaf Foundation. The book, Insights on Leadership, John Wiley, New York, 1998, is a collection of articles around the themes of Service, Stewardship, Spirit and Servant-Leadership. I would highly recommend this book to all the readers of the Image Journal. I could have taken almost any chapter from this book for this issue, but I have chosen two.

The first is from Larry's introduction to the book and is called **Servant-Leader Characteristics**. Larry outlines what he considers to be the 10 defining characteristics of servant-leaders. I could see these being incorporated in a performance evaluation review by those responsible for developing people-oriented leaders in an organization.

The second article is **The Virtual Organization**, by Thomas A. Bausch, and is part of his article called "Servant-Leaders, Making Human New Models of Work and Organization". He states in two sentences the essence of the servant-leader. "Fulfillment comes through service

to a cause, an idea, a mission, or others external to ourselves; best a purpose with a transcendent character. The role of leader is to create this purpose for the unskilled worker as well as for the highly skilled technical workers or the executives in the organization." The only thing I would add to this is that perhaps it is not the job of the servant-leader to create this purpose for people, but rather create the conditions where each and everyone of his/her people can find that inner calling for themselves: to provide a "purpose context" in which people earning their living in that context will find their own fulfillment. Thomas Bausch is a professor of management and former dean of the College of Business Administration at Marquette University.

One of the contributors to this book is Peter Block. Peter is an author and consultant for businesses, schools and governments around the world. He has relentlessly challenged the way organizations have been led and has called for many revolutionary changes in our management beliefs. One of his best books is called Stewardship, Berrett Koehler, San Francisco, 1993. We have included parts of this book in previous Image Journal issues. This article is entitled **Stewardship** and is his introduction to this form of servant-leadership. It is, along with the article preceding it by Charles Handy, a call for a new understanding of what citizenship is about.

Handy's article is about **Servant-Government**, and is taken from his latest book, The Hungry Spirit, Broadway Books, New York, 1998. Handy is one of Britain's foremost writers on management and has been a constant source of insightful articles for our Image Journal. This book is a commentary on our present contradiction of affluence and our sense of not being fulfilled.

David McCleskey is one of the founding members of the Institute of Cultural Affairs and has served the organization for over 40 years. He spent several years in India and directed the ICA's research efforts over the years. He is presently one of the directors of ICA CentrePointeS, living in Colquitt, Georgia. David wrote his article, **The Inner Life of the Servant-Leader**, after reading another article on "Healing Leadership" by Judith Sturnick from the Insights on Leadership book. He outlines the role of ritual in the life-cycle of an organization.

The last article is from the book, Rewiring the Corporate Brain, is by Danah Zohar, Berrett Koehler, San Francisco, 1997. Danah is the author of the book, The Quantum Self and has a background in physics and philosophy. Her chapter, **Servant Leaders**, draws on several examples of people who felt a deep vocational calling and thus became servant leaders.

Finally, we are sharing several ICA resources that are available and are very helpful for anyone wanting more practical skills and images of servant-leadership.

Jack Gilles
Editor

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS -

The term *servant-leadership* was first coined in a 1970 essay by Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990), entitled *The Servant as Leader*. Greenleaf, born in Terre Haute, Indiana, spent most of his organizational life in the field of management research, development, and education at AT&T. Following a 40-year career at AT&T, Greenleaf enjoyed a second career that lasted 25 years, during which time he served as an influential consultant to a number of major institutions, including Ohio University, MIT, Ford Foundation, R.K. Mellon Foundation, the Mead Corporation, the American Foundation for Management Research, and Lilly Endowment Inc. In 1964 Greenleaf also founded the Center for Applied Ethics, which was renamed the Robert K. Greenleaf Center in 1984 and is now headquartered in Indianapolis.

As a lifelong student of how things get done in organizations, Greenleaf distilled his observations in a series of essays and books on the theme of "The Servant as Leader" - the objective of which was to stimulate thought and action for building a better, more caring society.

THE SERVANT-AS -LEADER IDEA

The idea of the servant as leader came partly out of Greenleaf's half century of experience in working to shape large institutions. However, the event that crystallized Greenleaf's thinking came in the 1960s, when he read Hermann Hesse's short novel *Journey to the East* - an account of a mythical journey by a group of people on a spiritual quest.

After reading this story, Greenleaf concluded that the central meaning of it was that the great leader is first experienced as a servant to others, and that this simple fact is central to his or her greatness. True leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others.

In 1970, at the age of 66, Greenleaf published *The Servant as Leader*, the first of a dozen essays and books on servant-leadership. Since that time, more than 500,000 copies of his books and essays have been sold worldwide. Slowly but surely, Greenleaf's servant-leadership writings have made a deep, lasting impression on leaders, educators, and many others who are concerned with issues of leadership, management, service and personal growth.

WHAT IS SERVANT-LEADERSHIP?

In all of his works, Greenleaf discusses the need for a new kind of leadership model, a model that puts serving others - including employees, customers, and community - as the number one priority. Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and the sharing of power in decision making.

Who is a servant-leader? Greenleaf said that the servant-leader is one who is a servant first. In *The Servant as Leader* he wrote, "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 is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"

It is important to stress that servant-leadership is *not* a "quick-fix" approach. Nor is it something that can be quickly instilled within an institution. At its core, servant-leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work - in essence, a way of being - that has the potential for creating positive change throughout our society.

TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SERVANT-LEADER

Servant leadership deals with the reality of power in everyday life - its legitimacy, the ethical restraints upon it and the beneficial results that can be attained through the appropriate use of power.
—The New York Times

After some years of carefully considering Greenleaf's original writings, I have identified a set of 10 characteristics of the servant-leader that I view as being of critical importance. The following characteristics are central to the development of servant-leaders:

1. *Listening*: Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills. While these are also important skills for the servant-leader, they need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. The servant-leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps clarify that will. He or she seeks to listen receptively to what is being said (and not said!). Listening also encompasses getting in touch with one's own inner voice and seeking to understand what one's body, spirit, and mind are communicating. Listening, coupled with regular periods of reflection, is essential to the growth of the servant-leader.

2. *Empathy*: The servant-leader strives to understand and emphasize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits. One assumes the good intentions of coworkers and does not reject them as people, even while refusing to accept their behavior or performance. The most successful servant-leaders are those who have become skilled empathetic listeners. It is interesting to note that Robert Greenleaf developed a course in "receptive listening" in the 1950s for the Wainwright House in New York. This course continues to be offered to the present day.

3. *Healing*: Learning to heal is a powerful force for transformation and integration. One of the great strengths of servant-leadership is the potential for healing one's self and others. Many people have broken spirits and have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts. Although this is a part of being human, servant-leaders recognize that they have an opportunity to "help make

whole" those with whom they come in contact. In *The Servant As Leader* Greenleaf writes: "There is something subtle 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."

4. *Awareness*: General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader. Making a commitment to foster awareness can be scary - you never know what you may discover! Awareness also aids one in understanding issues involving ethics and values. It lends itself to being able to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position. As Greenleaf observed: "Awareness is not a giver of solace - it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity.

5. *Persuasion*: Another characteristic of servant-leaders is a reliance on persuasion, rather than using one's positional authority, in making decisions within an organization. The servant-leader seeks to convince others, rather than coerce compliance. This particular element offers one of the clearest distinctions between the traditional authoritarian model and that of servant-leadership. The servant-leader is effective at building consensus within groups. This emphasis on persuasion over coercion probably has its roots within the beliefs of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the denomination with which Robert Greenleaf himself was most closely allied.

6. *Conceptualization*: Servant-leaders seek to nurture their abilities to "dream great dreams." The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. For many managers this is a characteristic that requires discipline and practice. The traditional manager is consumed by the need to achieve short-term operational goals. The manager who wishes to also be a servant-leader must stretch his or her thinking to encompass broader-based conceptual thinking. Within organizations, conceptualization is, by its very nature, the proper role of boards of trustees or directors. Unfortunately, boards can sometimes become involved in the day-to-day operations (something that should always be discouraged!) and fail to provide the visionary concept for an institution. Trustees need to be mostly conceptual in their orientation, staffs need to be mostly operational in their perspective, and the most effective CEOs and managers probably need to develop both perspectives. Servant-leaders are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day focused approach.

7. *Foresight*: Closely related to conceptualization, the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation is hard to define, but easy to identify. One knows it when one sees it. Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future. It is also deeply rooted within the intuitive mind. As such, one can conjecture that foresight is the one servant-leader characteristic with which one may be born. All other characteristics can be consciously developed. There hasn't been a great deal written on foresight. It remains a largely unexplored area in leadership studies, but one most deserving of careful attention.

8. *Stewardship*: Peter Block (author of *Stewardship* and *The Empowered Manager*) has defined stewardship as "holding something in trust for another." Robert Greenleaf's view of all institutions was one in which CEOs, staffs, and trustees all played significant roles in holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society. Servant-leadership, like stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others. It also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion rather than control.

9. *Commitment to the growth of people*: Servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As such, the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within his or her institution. The servant-leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything within his or her power to nurture the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of employees. In practice, this can include (but is not limited to) concrete actions such as making available funds for personal and professional development, taking a personal interest in the ideas and suggestions from everyone, encouraging worker involvement in decision making, and actively assisting laid-off workers to find other employment.

10. *Building community* : The servant-leader senses that much has been lost in recent human history as a result of the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shaper of human lives. This awareness causes the servant-leader to seek to identify some means for building community among those who work within a given institution. Servant-leadership suggests that true community can be created among those who work in businesses and other institutions. Greenleaf said: "All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movement, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group."

These ten characteristics of servant-leadership are by no means exhaustive. However, I believe that the ones listed serve to communicate the power and promise that this concept offers to those who are open to its invitation and challenge.

THE VIRTUAL ORGANIZATION - Thomas A. Bausch

The primary purpose of work is the development of the full potential of the individual doing the work. Each of us as servant-leaders can only develop our fullness as a person as part of a community, both through serving others and working with others in communities as diverse as the family; a church; our local, state, national, and international communities; our voluntary affiliations; and possibly more important than anything but family, our community of work. There is no such thing as an effective community without leadership.

Changes in technology, information, understanding of the organization as well as of the human person and communications are all changing the way work is organized. One result is the rapid emergence of the *virtual organization*, where definitions of place, assets, ownership, and stakeholder are changing and calling for something other than the traditional hierarchical model of leadership. This essay argues that the most appropriate paradigm of leadership for the virtual organization is servant-leadership. This form of leadership must begin with a deep understanding of the human person as the basis, and the only source of sustainable competitive advantage as we enter the new millennium.

THE VIRTUAL ORGANIZATION: THE MODEL OF THE FUTURE

In the virtual learning organization of the future, and this will be the dominant form of organization, there will be no viable paradigm of leadership other than servant-leadership. For any organization, for-profit, not-for-profit, or governmental, the only source of sustainable competitive advantage will be the commitment to and trust in the mission and vision of the organization by highly competent employees. Technology, processes, location, or any other source of competitive advantage can be duplicated and surpassed with ever-shorter lead times. Although competence of individuals must be present, it also can be duplicated or surpassed. Therefore, the clear commitment by employees to organization mission and vision are necessary conditions for organization success. This commitment, in turn, depends on leadership that earns its legitimacy from within the organization, in part because of its commitment to the development of the full potential of each person. This will be present only if leadership has a deep understanding of the human person as a foundation for its commitment to the actualization of each person that makes the organization, as well as, in many ways, the other stakeholders.

Concepts and definitions of organizations are changing rapidly with ever more focus on the intangibles of mission and vision and the relationships among the persons striving for their implementation. We no longer identify organizations with physical assets. Many were aghast when Rockefeller Center was acquired by the Japanese, but this is symbolic of business firms no longer owning and managing real estate as they focus on core business.

I sit on the board of a major insurance company that is being driven by our core competencies, primarily based on the abilities of our executives and employees, into services we would not have conceived of, much less considered, 10 years ago. We have sold our headquarters building because, in the world of modern technology and the virtual organization, where we are driven by mission in a very competitive industry, location is determined in part by a strategic need for proximity to our customers. This calls for many local and regional offices focused on customer service. Our business also demands cost control in the processing of data, which can be done anywhere in the world, provided the communications technology is present. Our creative functions of product development and actuarial work can be located wherever we can attract the very best professionals.

As an insurance company, we manage a large portfolio. Our best-performing and most creative money management firm has no main office as this term has traditionally been used. It exists in space, the virtual organization, as its creative people live and work in a variety of locations to accommodate customer service and personal preferences. Money can be managed in Jackson Hole as well as New York.

I once left the headquarters of the Fidelity Mutual Funds in Boston in the middle of rush hour traffic. I asked a senior executive, "What demands that you be located in this mess?" The response was, "The front facade of this building is the logo on all of our printed material." So buy a Hollywood set and move your employees to Stowe! The real question the firm faces, as is true with any organization, although difficult to resolve in action, is very basic and straightforward. How does Fidelity in this new era of the virtual organization release the full potential of its employees? This is especially difficult to answer if community is necessary for the full development of people. Greenleaf tells us that developing this potential is the work of leadership. Is not this release and harnessing of potential what DePree, Drucker, Senge, and so many other write about?

As is so often the case, the poet, in this case Gerard Manley Hopkins, captures in a few words what it takes the rest of us volumes to say:

> As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
> As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
> Stone ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
> bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
> Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
> Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
> Selves - goes itself; myself it speaks and spells;
> Crying **What I do is me: for that I came.**

What does it mean in today's world of rapid change as leaders seek to create organizations where the fullness of the person comes alive with the power expressed by Hopkins and mission and vision are achieved by the organization? How do we apply the concepts of Greenleaf?

LEADERSHIP IN THE VIRTUAL ORGANIZATION

One of the most articulate social philosophers, a

writer, broadcaster, professor at the London Business School and a former executive, is Charles Handy, author of *The Age of Unreason*. He wrote the concluding essay "Unimagined Futures" in the most recent publication of the Drucker Foundation, *The Organization of the Future*. In this piece he pulls together many of the characteristics of the virtual organization. Implicitly it calls for the paradigm of servant-leadership. A few incisive quotes will make clear why servant-leadership is the model of today and the future.

Organizations aren't the visible, tangible, obvious places which they used to be. No longer, for instance, do you have to have everyone in the same place at the same time in order to get things done.

Observe how many office buildings in your town are being converted to condominiums, as professional workers are in the field, at home, and in their cars. The work of the leader is to coalesce and articulate mission and vision and develop commitment to them by people in these various diverse locations and circumstances. This is hard-nosed thinking in the existing world of productive business. In the insurance company I mentioned earlier, one of our major vendors is also a competitor, customer, and partner. The business context is no longer us versus them, it is one of creating a set of relationships around the accomplishment of our mission and vision that the employees must understand and be committed to achieve in a wide variety of relationships.

Handy continues as he compares the new organization to the new physics where particles are "bundles of potentiality." He sees this term as a good description of people in the new organization. For the leader this means:

Power, in the new organizations, comes from relationships, not from structures. Those who have established reputations acquire authority which was not handed down from above; those who are open to others create positive energy around themselves, energy which did not exist before. Love, or, to give it a more corporately respectable title, "unconditional positive regard," may not make the world go around, but it can certainly release unsuspected potential.

This resonates with Robert Greenleaf when he writes:

A new moral principle is emerging which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader.

Much of what is written in business ethics is of questionable analytical value for it is not grounded in first principles, to use a term so well developed by Covey. The very first and most basic principle for ethical behavior in any organization is that a clear mission and vision and set of core principles must exist. Integrity (wholeness) as an organization and consistent ethical behavior depends on and begins with the integrity of commitment to mission and vision. As Handy notes, as

he uses another metaphor from the new science, there must be trust in the "strange attractor":

Francis Fukuyama, in Trust: the Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity, argues that societies of high trust do better economically. I would extend his idea to organizations. Organizations which rely on trust as their principal means of control are more effective, more creative, more fun, and cheaper to operate.

Chaotic and energetic but uncontrolled organizations can exhibit movement without meaning unless they have found their strange attractor, which gives them point and purpose. Some have called this the "soul" of the organization, another soft but pregnant word which fits the new language of organizations. It is, I now believe, the principal task of leadership to find the strange attractor which will give meaning to movement, and around which a field of trust can be built which will allow the organization to devote most of its energies to its product instead of to its own entrails.

Again, does not this model of the future call for all the leadership qualities important to Greenleaf? Much of what Handy has to say is captured by the father of modern management, Peter Drucker, when he writes:

... increasingly, command and control is being replaced by or intermixed with all kinds of relationships: alliances, joint ventures, minority participation, partnerships, know-how, and marketing agreements - all relationships in which no one controls and no one commands. These relationships have to be based on a common understanding of objectives, policies, and strategies; on teamwork; and on persuasion - or they do not work at all.

The abilities of being able to persuade others, of developing understanding, of deeply caring about the growth of others, as developed by Greenleaf as he describes the work of John Woolman, Thomas Jefferson, and Nikolai Federik Severin Grundvig, define the persons who will lead the organizations of the future. It is fascinating that Greenleaf, the man drawn to the large bureaucratic organization of the mid-twentieth century, developed a paradigm of leadership that is so clearly the way to manage the virtual organizations of the future. But the explanation is simple. As Covey so clearly understands, the work of leadership is based in first principles, especially in an accurate and profound understanding of the human person and of the role of his or her work in the full realization or self-actualization of his or her personhood.

WORK - WHAT I DO IS ME: FOR THAT I CAME

I was recently in a meeting of professional social workers and businesspersons. When the speaker noted her agreement with Drucker's prediction that most persons in the next century will extend their work lives to the age of 75 there was a very audible and spontaneous gasp of disbelief, certainly not one of buy in to the idea out of the fulfillment of work. One does not need to be very perceptive to note that something is missing as one observes commuters and the activities in our modern

saloons in the late afternoon and early evening. There is no joy or sense of fulfillment of achievement for many on any particular day. Yet Drucker is correct. If we are serious about saving social security, Congress is dancing on the deck of the *Titanic* if our society does not deal with one consequence of living longer. It means working longer or going broke as a society. If people are to work longer in their lives, however, it is compelling to re-create work so it is meaningful.

One of my favorite stories is that of the three bricklayers who, when asked by a traveler to describe what they were doing, provided three different answers. The first said simply, "I am laying bricks." The second responded, "I am feeding my family by laying bricks." The third, with spirit, said, "Through my work of laying bricks I am constructing a cathedral, and thereby giving honor and praise to the Lord."

Fulfillment comes through service to a cause, an idea, a mission, or other external to ourselves; best a purpose with a transcendent character. Each of us has a right to the dignity that comes from a job with real purpose. The role of leader is to create this purpose for the unskilled worker as well as for the highly skilled technical workers or the executives in the organization. But this is not happening in our world of work today, and if my experience with many part-time MBA students is indicative of the wider world, there is less satisfaction than ever before. Often, if they do enjoy their work, it is for the wrong reason - money or power. The tragedy of Tom Wolfe's character Sherman in *Bonfire of the Vanities* appears to be their future. They are part of a dehumanizing, eroding, community-destroying, and eventually self-destructive concept of professional work. This is the tragedy of careerism. There is little thought to value added, much less service.

We must not underestimate the raw tragedy of unemployment and insecurity in our modern economies or the unethical nature of financial marketplaces that reward executives for firing people rather than making them productive and the companies profitable or the human costs of enforced mobility, even for those who may have highly marketable skills. This is not to suggest that the realities of a global economy do not exist - they do, and the naive populism of a Pat Buchanan or Ross Perot are just as senseless as the idolatry of the rigid "financial theory of the firm" academic and professional advocates who bow five times daily to Wall Street. Yes, needed are institutional and societal changes such as work expected until 75, disconnection of health insurance and pensions from jobs, and entirely new models of education that focus on the needs of persons rather than the vested rights of the providers.

ENSURING THE MEANINGFULNESS OF WORK: THE JOB OF THE MODERN SERVANT-LEADER

Two high school educator friends of mine recently were intensely engaged in a conversation as I approached them so the three of us could begin our meeting. One was complaining about the laziness, sloppiness, lack of

preparedness, and so on of his students. The second person, tiring of the tirade, finally responded, "Now that you have defined a high school student, what are you going to do about it?" The question sums up the task of the servant-leader in the modern organization. She must ask herself only three critical questions. What is the mission and vision of our organization? (For the high school it is to provide secondary education with the vision of helping each student achieve his or her fullest potential at that point in time.) What is the reality of the persons I must lead? (High school students do not fit any definition of mature; they are frustrating, challenging, and lovable; they often come from tough non-supportive backgrounds; and they have open and creative minds and wills if properly led.) What am I going to do about it? (The high school teacher should meet each student where he or she is, use the finite resources available, and take each person to heights undreamed by utilizing the potential present.) And of course the most important servants are the school boards, superintendents, and principals who will serve the teachers by asking the same three questions.

Derek Abel, a leading strategy theorist, defines a business by asking three similar questions. Who are our customers? (Mission and vision) What are their needs? (Reality) What are the competitive strengths and resources we have to serve the needs of these customers? (Resources) The leadership in any organization is not only asking these questions as it attempts to define the business, it is also asking them of each and every employee in the firm or organization. As the questions are answered, the executives should see the organization as a set of ever larger circles, rather than a bottom-to-top entity.

This image helps one to begin to understand the interdependence of the roles of the servant and the served. Those in the outer circle are the ones with the real feel for the customer and his or her needs, and the resources available, but each person in this circle is an expert in a small piece of the organization and does not see the big picture and the mission and vision in total. Developing, articulating, and conveying the mission and vision is the role of the servants in the center circle, the leadership of the organization. No matter how competent the people throughout the organization, Leo is needed to hold it together and give it purpose. No matter how good the Leos of the modern organization, they depend on the people in the outer rings of the organization for the information necessary to understand reality and to be the ones totally committed to serving the stakeholders of the organization.

The servant-leader is successful when each person in the organization is committed to serving the specific needs of the customer by stretching and growing as necessary. When I was a dean, one of the professors, after an out-of-town student called to convey the message that his computer had crashed, put his personal computer in his car and undertook the 120-mile round trip to deliver

SERVANT-GOVERNMENT - Charles Handy

It is not enough to promote responsibility and autonomy at work and at school. There is little point in developing the ideas of a full citizenship at work if they do not apply in the wider society. Government has many roles, from the defense of the country to the provision and care of the infrastructure of the land. Here we are only concerned with the part it can and should play in the promotion of individual responsibility, both for oneself and for others.

But first we need to consider the implications of the following fact: capitalism thrives on inequality. Markets separate out the successful from the less successful in a very thorough way. This competitive process creates wealth for the country as a whole, but it doesn't spread it around. Money is like muck, said Francis Bacon, centuries ago - of no use unless it be spread. The responsibility of government is to use some of the riches created by the market, not to make life easy for everyone, but at least to make life possible, not to give away the money but to invest that money, in order to build a decent society. You cannot leave it entirely to those who have the money to do the spreading, because many of them won't, and we have already noted that the money doesn't trickle down or spread itself fast or far enough.

We all want a decent society, and we know that it costs money to build it. Our affluent countries are disfigured by poverty at the edges, by ignorance, anger, and violence. We are creating a generation of thuggish young men who see no place for their muscles in a world of brains and fingertips, or for their macho selves in what will be mainly a service economy. It is hard to see where they can go other than into a world of criminality, or drugs or aimlessness. We can talk of personal responsibility, but without the education or the help to do anything for oneself such talk becomes meaningless for many.

We can each work out that it would pay us all in the long run to have better education for everyone, that help given early to struggling families saves us from spending money later on more police in our cities, more prisons, and more social workers. It is, in a sense, only properly selfish to want a more decent society and to be prepared to pay for it. So why don't we vote for higher taxes? The answer seems to be that we don't trust our governments to spend the money the way we want it spent.

A 1996 study from the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London produced an interesting graph. The richer countries became, the more they saw the state as the servant of the people, instead of the people being the servants of the state. China and Iraq, for example, are down at the bottom, with the state as the master, while the U.S.A., Canada, and Australia, hotly pursued by Germany, France, and the UK, see the state as the servant. The line of argument of this book would suggest that there is an intervening variable here. As we grow accustomed to a little more affluence, we want more control of our own lives and, as a result, want the state to facilitate our life, not to manage it. We want more responsibility. The British will soon formally declare themselves to be "subjects" no longer, but citizens instead.

The thesis of personal responsibility and proper selfishness will be an empty dream for many, unless we can equip them with the resources to achieve some sense of "enough" in material terms and then to go beyond that to reach their goal in life and find their white stone. It is one of the main obligations of government as servant of all its people to make this sort of responsibility a realistic possibility for everyone. This chapter is concerned with how governments might do that, in addition to their other obligations.

A servant government should provide the infrastructure of life, not its superstructure, but should tilt that infrastructure to make it more accessible to those who have fared less well in the market economy or who might do so in future. To build on the infrastructure remains our own personal responsibility. Exercising that responsibility is what gives life its meaning. Any attempt to do it for us is well-meant theft, even if it means that, left to ourselves, we live our lives badly.

The first task must, therefore, be to work out what is meant by the infrastructure of life in a modern society, what should be left to the individual, and how the infrastructure should be tilted. Governments which think it right to control and administer half of a country's annual income themselves have probably got the balance wrong. Restoring a proper balance is likely to be the most important social change in the West in the early years of the next century and will be one change where government has to lead rather than follow.

A servant government must also be under the control of its citizens if it is to be a proper servant. Information - the right to know what is going on - involvement - the right to participate in decisions rather than leave it all to "them" - and individuality - the right to certain freedoms and protections from that government - are the three essentials of proper citizenship. Governments which say "elect us and leave it to us to act, always, in your best interests" are turning democracy into elected paternalism or, less generously, into an elected dictatorship.

Responsibility which is exercised once every four or five years in a polling booth is so minimalist as to be meaningless. Since, under that system, we can't make much difference in any area, we might as well not get involved or, if we do, settle for what's best for us alone, not for the country. Apathy and cynicism are the real enemies of democracy. By insulating us from any real responsibility for what happens around us, a paternalistic democracy makes us, literally, careless of others beyond our immediate group. Our ambitions then become too narrowly focused, selfishness easily becomes improper.

Restoring The Balance

What counts as the infrastructure? How much should be left to us, and how much should governments spend on our behalf?

Take some numbers first. In the fifteen countries of the European Union today governments spend between

42 percent and 59 percent of their countries' gross domestic product (GDP). In America and Japan it is "only" 35 percent. In Singapore and Hong Kong, countries which are now richer than Britain and which have longer life expectancy, the take is under 20 percent. It is the same in the tiger economies of the rest of Asia. Who is right?

It gets more complicated still. The RIIA study, referred to above, also calculated that the average middle-aged worker in the OECD countries will draw something like $100,000 more in benefits from the state during his or her lifetime than they will have paid in. Their children, however, will have to pay $200,000 or $300,000 more in taxes than they will receive in benefits of one sort or another in the next century. In other words, if we were properly honest, if we weren't borrowing from the next generation, without their knowing it, our governments would be spending even more of our money and, if nothing is done, they will have to spend still more in the future. Should they?

It is not, in the final count, only or even mostly a matter of how much money is required to pay for all the things that are needed, be they our defense forces, our police and prisons, hospitals, schools, roads, sewers, and railways, and, most of all, our pensions, but of who pays it out and therefore has the responsibility for it. By taking that responsibility away from its citizens, governments are implicitly saying that we can't be trusted to look after our own lives. Some suspect that they might be right, that we would be improvident and wouldn't save enough to provide for our old age or for periods out of work, but the danger is that that assumption soon becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. We become improvident because we don't need to be provident, with the result that the state is left to do it all, while our irresponsibility is encouraged.

Western governments have now realized that they have walked to the edge of a cliff and that if they continue as they are they will fall into a bottomless pit because their promises far exceed their ability to pay. As a result of this economic impasse every government is being forced to return responsibilities to its citizens. The first step backwards from the edge has been to get rid of all the activities which they shouldn't have been doing anyway, running businesses which the private sector could run perfectly well, and usually better. It helped, of course, that the proceeds from this privatization went into the state coffers, reducing the money which they would otherwise have had to borrow or raise from taxes.

The next step is to take the state monopolies of things like water, gas, and electricity supply and sell them off as private monopolies, but regulated by the state. Note the conjuring trick - the customer still pays much the same but the money doesn't go through the government books. Until these private monopolies become true businesses, with competitors who can offer choice to the customer, this form of privatization does little to increase our sense of personal responsibility. The hope is that the lure of gain for the new managers and shareholders will increase the efficiency and the care of the customers - a good start, but not revolutionary enough.

The third step could be more promising, even though it does little to change the government accounts. Take things like health care and education and provide citizens with a mechanism to choose between the different providers, perhaps by giving them something like vouchers, the equivalent of checks signed by the state, for them to spend on the outlet of their choice. The underlying idea is to turn the providers, be they hospitals or schools or universities, into sorts of businesses, so improving their incentives and their efficiency.

I have argued earlier that the concept of businesses in these areas carries unintended consequences, because it allows the providers to choose the customers they want just as much as it allows customers to choose providers. If the providers are sensible business people they will not choose the old, the stupid, or the incurable. It would be better to forget the business angle, but force the providers to compete on standards of service across the board while allowing us all a choice within limits, limits which would need to be both geographical and financial. The sense of responsibility for major decisions in our lives will be fostered.

It is in these areas of health and education that the infrastructure needs tilting, to bring more of the benefits of wealth creation to those who were left out. If we gave bigger vouchers, or their equivalent, to those who need the most - children in inner cities, the chronically ill, the unskilled - these would become the preferred customers because they would carry with them the possibility of more resources.

There are all sorts of practical difficulties with vouchers, but because they encapsulate the idea of choice, they, or something like them, are a prerequisite of responsibility in these areas. There is, we must remember, no point in responsibility if there is no choice. To help the potentially excluded part of the population it is not enough to pour money over them, even by way of investment in schools, hospitals, and the surrounding environment unless the recipients also have an opportunity to exercise some choice and therefore take some responsibility for their own future. As a start, in education, we might offer vouchers for the extracurricular subjects which promote the forms of intelligence not developed in the classroom. We might even consider confining the formal curriculum to the mornings and allowing vouchers to dictate what was done for each young person in the afternoon.

The real revolution comes, however, with the privatization of the welfare and pension systems, which account for nearly half of all government outgoings and can only grow larger as the populations grow older. If nothing changes, for instance, and taxes are kept as they are, the public debt of the U.S.A. in 2030 will be 250 percent of the GDP, twice the level it reached at the end of the Second World War. That won't happen, because it would cost too much money, in interest, to borrow all that, even if anyone were willing to lend it. The situation is no different in Europe, or in Japan. Something has to change: our responsibility for our own future finances.

Go back to those figures for Singapore. The state expenditure figures are low because there is almost nothing in there for pensions or unemployment. That doesn't mean that no one has thought about those things. It is just handled differently. All who work in Singapore contribute to a superannuation fund, normally as much as 40 percent of income, paid jointly by employer and individual. It is the workers' money, invested for them, even if it is mostly invested in government stocks. Contrast Britain, where everyone pays so-called national insurance contributions. These sound the same as the superannuation payments in Singapore, but they aren't. They are effectively an additional income tax which goes straight into the government income stream. Pensions are then paid out of current income.

Most Britons don't realize this. They think that they are building up a nice little pension nest for their old age. They aren't. They will have to rely on the generosity of those who come later, because, as things are, with British pensions linked to the index of prices, not of earnings (earnings normally go up faster), the British state pension in 2030 will be equivalent of only 8 percent of average earnings. Not much to grow fat on. It will be worse for the Germans, and most other Europeans, who are used to looking forward to receiving up to 66 percent of their average lifetime salary, paid out of current government income. When the income isn't there any longer, the pension won't be either.

Government needs to provide the infrastructure for pensions, but not the superstructure. There needs to be a state-regulated and compulsory system whereby a proportion of our earnings, paid partly by ourselves and partly by our employers or our customers, goes straight into a personal pension plan, underwritten by the state. I say customers because the growing number of "portfolio workers" have no employer, only customers. For them, therefore, there has to be a system, like VAT, a value added tax, where a proportion of the sales invoice is automatically handed over to a pension plan, preferably by the customer, as happens in Italy, although there it goes straight into the state coffers. There should also be a compulsory insurance scheme to cover pay during any periods of unemployment. To this can be added the idea of a learning bank, with voluntary contributions matched by employer or government, to be spent on training and education at any stage of the individual's life.

For those who can't pay because they have no earnings for a time or earnings that are too low, there might be a loan scheme, as there will have to be for students in universities, financed by government and to be repaid through the tax system when earnings reach an adequate level. For an unfortunate few, this level may never be reached. They will end their days indebted to the government, a debt written off when they die or reach a certain age. That will be, in practice, no different from the present state of their affairs, but instead of seeing the money they receive as their entitlement they will see it as a loan - a reminder of their responsibility for their own life.

There are no easy solutions to this universal problem. Getting there from here is always going to be technically difficult, expensive - and it will take something like forty years before it is working properly. Which is all the more reason for starting something now. In Britain, all the political parties have begun to think about the problem, which is heartening. In the rest of Europe, and in most of North America, politicians are still hoping that the problem will somehow fail to materialize - at least during their lifetime. Chile, alone of South American countries, has made a start, but their system benefits only those who can afford to pay. Too many are excluded for it to be an adequate answer.

In a sense, all these schemes are merely massaging the statistics because the same amounts of money are involved. Why bother, one might ask. The cynic would say that it would make governments look leaner and fitter, more like Singapore, for example, which takes almost as much money out of its people's pockets but ingeniously routes it differently. Others would argue that it forces the different bodies concerned to be more visible and therefore most likely to be efficient and, possibly, more effective as well. I favor a move in this direction because it emphasizes our personal responsibility for our own lives. We get back where we put in, with interest, we hope. It remains the state's responsibility to create the infrastructure and to see that we use it, and to insure us against system failure, for example, the collapse of the world stock and bond markets in which our money is invested. The state remains the place of last resort when all else fails, but should never be the place of first resort if we are going to have any chance of earning our self-respect.

The danger, however, of such privatized systems is that we think only of ourselves and have no sense of commitment to the larger society. The tax bill is, of course, the outward symbol of that commitment and it is always encouraging to read surveys which record that a majority of people would be prepared to pay higher taxes, in Britain at least, if they could be sure that those taxes would go towards improved education and health care. It is because they can't be sure of where the extra money would end up that they are reluctant to put their votes where their mouth is and vote for a political party that promises to spend more, although this has not recently been put to the test because no political party anywhere is standing on a platform of higher spending. Maybe they should. If the pension money were taken out of the government expenditure figures there would be, by sleight of numbers, apparent room both to reduce taxes *and* to spend more. Our pension contributions, being our money saved for us, would not seem or count as a tax, leaving our taxes to be our contribution to the whole of society.

Re-Inventing Democracy

Thus far we have only suggested rearranging the tax structure so that fewer of our payments go through government hands, leaving us with more sense of responsi-

bility for our own lives, even though we are paying out the same money. I now want to suggest that we should take seriously the expressed willingness of most people to pay more tax if it made a more civilized society, and if they had more confidence in the results of their expenditure.

More taxes will be acceptable, I suggest, if they are locally voted and locally spent. If we can watch the local environment improving, can feel proud again of the schools and hospitals in our neighborhood, then and only then will we feel that our taxes have been spent as we wanted. And if things don't improve, we know who was responsible and can remove them from office. Democracy can still work, if it is local.

I am also a convert to the idea of hypothecated or earmarked taxes. No government likes such taxes because they bind their hands, requiring them to spend the tax on what it has been collected for, and to show how it has been spent. The reluctance is understandable but, once again, efficiency needs to be tempered by effectiveness. If we paid a separate health tax we would feel that it was more like an insurance than a tax and would understand better what health care costs. Similarly with education. There would inevitably be those who would want to opt out of the taxes, claiming that they wanted to make their own provision, or that they had no children to be educated, but their contributions could and should be presented as their stake in an inclusive society - the cost of citizenship in a decent world. It might happen, however, that we would turn out to be willing to spend more on health and education if we were sure that that was where the money was going to end up.

These earmarked taxes would need to be graduated as income tax is now, but by removing health, education, and pensions from the general budget, governments would be able to eliminate income tax for all but the richest citizens. Income tax, seen as a tax on labor, has always been resented and has always added to the cost of that labor. Removing most of it and relying for general income on expenditure taxes of varying sorts would encourage people to work more, even for modest wages, and to save more because only expenditure would be taxed.

Expenditure taxes are regressive. That is, they penalize the poor disproportionately. It would be important, therefore, either to introduce something like a basic income, given as a right to everyone, which would be complicated and expensive; or, more interestingly, to subsidize essential products rather than their consumers. At first this would seem to be in contradiction to the best free market practices, but there is no reason why a competitive market should not operate underneath the subsidy levels.

Were this principle to be applied to public housing, public transport, basic foodstuffs, and utilities, it would mean that people on low pay could still get by, and that any extra money would be a sort of riches, because it would not be needed for essentials. In other words, the level of material "enough" would come down, freeing

more people to define their lives the way they wanted to. Since these services would also be available at reduced cost to the more affluent whose taxes had paid for the subsidies, there would be an obvious and direct relationship with their taxes. Instead of supplementing the income of the lower paid, as most countries do now, we could cut the cost of essentials, thereby making existence possible without apparent subsidy and giving people back their dignity.

The subsidy may not be apparent, but some will argue it is already there in places, and can distort the market mechanism. Yet we don't call it subsidy when we offer health care or education apparently for free. When the British Museum announces that it will not impose entrance charges on anyone, no one talks of market distortion. Taxes spent on cost reduction for essentials can be precisely monitored, are visible to all, reduce the cost of living and therefore of wages, and reduce or even eliminate the poverty trap involved in subsidizing income.

The best way to encourage more initiatives in looking for work has to be to increase the immediate rewards of finding that work. The elimination of income tax combined with the reduction in the cost of essentials would go a long way towards doing just that. As importantly, individuals would retain the responsibility for their own lives rather than being so obviously dependent on the state.

the computer to the student. This is servant-leadership, for even if the student was poor and lazy, looking for a fail-safe excuse to extend the deadline for his paper, I am sure that this one action by the servant-professor resulted in immense growth of the student.

Tim Hoeksema, the CEO of Midwest Express Airlines, often rated as the airline with the best service in the United States, is a servant-leader. He tells the story of one of the station managers in a small airport who delivered one of his suits and shirts and a pair of his shoes to a customer of his size and build, after the airline misplaced the customer's luggage. The customer was thereby enabled to do a sales presentation to a very important client the next morning. The environment that Tim has created fosters this type of service by fostering the growth of employees and in that highly competitive industry has made Midwest the airline of choice in those markets it serves. Everything in the Midwest formula for success can be duplicated or surpassed, other than this intense commitment of the employees of Midwest to its mission and vision. The rest of the formula can change, as demonstrated by Southwest, today's most successful airline. But the same important ingredient for success is found in both companies - intense employee loyalty is present. Whenever I fly Southwest, my day is made by the take-charge, self-confident, and humorous attitude of all the employees. Southwest, under the servant-leadership of Herb Kelleher, develops the potential of its employees while serving customer and stockholder.

STEWARDSHIP - Peter Block

The evidence that our organizations are not working well is fully upon us. Something stark has happened to our institutions that we were not quite ready for. The changes seemed to come in waves and private industry took the first hit. Most businesses got the point in the 1970s and 1980s: if they did not find a way to serve their markets more quickly, with higher quality and lower costs, they would not endure. Granted, some have still not gotten the point. Hospitals and other health care providers were next in receiving their wake-up calls. We see the beginnings of the changes being undertaken in that hospitals now have marketing departments, hold meetings about market segmentation, call doctors "customers," and call patients "guests."

Schools are at the front of the most recent wave of reform. A radical version of the changes to come will have your eleven-year-old child be given four thousand dollars and a bus ticket and told to go shopping for the best education she can get. Private capitalists are racing into the business of elementary education, and in many systems each school building now has site-based management teams that are planning new beginnings with teachers, parents, and local business people. Making government work is next. Perhaps you will get your next driver's license from an ATM machine in the mall, your own customer service representative at the Internal Revenue Service. And, who knows, your local fire department might become a franchise operation with headquarters in Daytona Beach, Florida.

The changes we witness are an outgrowth of several fundamental crises facing our organizations. Crises always come packaged in economic terms first. And economically our schools, our health care systems, our government agencies, our private businesses and industries are under enormous pressure. They are all getting smaller as fast as they can. Eighty percent of new jobs in this country come from organizations with less than one hundred employees. The largest five hundred companies in the U.S. have not created one net new job since 1974. Our manufacturing capability is being exported to low-cost labor countries. And on it goes.

None of this is news. In fact we are weary of hearing about it. The problem with all the emphasis on economics is that economics is not the real problem. If we keep describing the problem as one of economics and the need for more money, it will lead us to the same actions that created the problem in the first place. Spending more money on health care, more money on education, more money to support higher prices and buy greater protection for business, more money for social problems, will only deepen our concern, given our lack of faith in the ability of these institutions to spend the money in a useful way. Money is a symptom, money is never the real issue. Money is a language. It is easily measured, so it is easy and convenient to talk about.

An economic crisis for any organization means it is failing in its marketplace. In some fundamental way it is unable to serve its customers. And if it is unable to serve its customers, it means it has failed to serve its own inter-nal people. The way organizations mobilize to serve customers and their own people has to do with the definition of purpose, the use of power, and ultimately the distribution of wealth. Purpose, power, and wealth are the chief concerns of the system and process traditionally called *management*. Better to use the term *governance*. *Management* is a cool, neutral term. It has a professional flavor to it and would treat power as a problem in social engineering. The political nature of institutions is finessed when we talk of management. The term *governance* gets more to the point. We are accustomed to equating power and purpose and wealth with the process of government. Using a term like *governance* recognizes the political nature of our lives and our workplace. Hope for genuine organizational reform resides in reshaping the politics of our work lives, namely how we each define purpose, hold power, and balance wealth.

Stewardship is the set of principles and practices which have the potential to make dramatic changes in our governance system. It is concerned with creating a way of governing ourselves that creates a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for outcomes at the bottom of the organization. It means giving control to customers and creating self-reliance on the part of all who are touched by the institution. The answer to economic problems is not more money; it is to focus on quality, service, and participation first. This is what will put us closer to our marketplace. It is the connection with our marketplace that is the answer to our concerns about economics.

We know there is a need for reform, we are less clear about how to achieve it. Most of our theories about making change are clustered around a belief in leadership. We think that leadership is the key to fitting organizations to their marketplace and fitting people to their organizations. If the organization fails, it is the leader's head that we want. It is this pervasive and almost religious belief in leaders that slows the process of genuine reform. Stewardship offers an approach to reform that puts leadership in the back-ground where it belongs.

Stewardship begins with the willingness to be accountable for some larger body than ourselves - an organization, a community. Stewardship springs from a set of beliefs about reforming organizations that affirms our choice for service over the pursuit of self-interest. When we choose service over self-interest we say we are willing to be deeply accountable without choosing to control the world around us. It requires a level of trust that we are not used to holding.

In its commitment to service, stewardship forces us then to yield on our desire to use good parenting as a basic form of governance. We already know how to be good parents at work. The alternative, partnership, is something we are just learning about. Our difficulty with creating partnerships is that parenting - and its stronger cousin, patriarchy - is so deeply ingrained in our muscle memory and armature that we don't even realize we are doing it.

In addition to engendering partnership, genuine service requires us to act on our own account. We cannot

be stewards of an institution and expect someone else to take care of us. Regardless of how parental our environment may be, we decide whether to support efforts to treat us like children, which expresses our wish for dependency, or whether to keep deciding that we serve the organization best by creating a place of our own choosing. The well-worn word for this is empowerment.

Stewardship is the choice for service. We serve best through partnership, rather than patriarchy. Dependency is the antithesis of stewardship and so empowerment becomes essential.

The way we govern our institutions grows out of the stance we take on each of these dimensions. How we define purpose, how we create structure, how we pay people, how we set goals and measure progress - all grow out of the beliefs we have about control, and about safety, and about self-interest. These are the essential questions about governance. And they are more profound than simply asking who is at the top of our organization and what management style enjoys popular support at the moment.

Choosing Partners

In deciding how to govern, one critical choice is between patriarchy and partnership. Patriarchy expresses the belief that it is those at the top who are responsible for the success of the organization and the well-being of its members. A measure of patriarchy is how frequently we use images of parenting to describe how bosses should manage subordinates in organizations. If our intent is to create workplaces that provide meaning, and are economically sound and strong in the marketplace, we need to face the implications for having chosen patriarchy for the governance system inside our organizations. The governance system we have inherited and continue to create is based on sovereignty and a form of intimate colonialism. These are strong terms, but they are essentially accurate. We govern our organizations by valuing, above all else, consistency, control, and predictability. These become the means of dominance by which colonialism and sovereignty are enacted. It is not that we directly seek dominance, but our beliefs about getting work done have that effect.

We pay a price for our top-driven, parenting, patriarchal governance system:

• Democracy cannot thrive if we only experience it for a moment of voting every two to four years. If day in and day out we go to a workplace that breeds helplessness and compliance, this becomes our generalized pattern of response to the larger questions of our society, and in fact most other aspects of our lives.

• In a high-control environment, what is personal and sacred to us is denied. Autocratic governance withers the spirit.

• In the marketplace we operate in now, centralized control cannot create product, guarantee quality, or serve customers. This is true for both a whole economy as in Eastern Europe or Russia, as well as for the single organization where we work.

Partnership carries the intention to balance power between ourselves and those around us. It brings into question the utility of maintaining consistency and control as cornerstones of management. It comes from the choice to place control close to where the work is done and not hold it as the prerogative of the middle and upper classes. It also flows from the choice to yield on consistency in how we manage, and thus to support local units in creating policies and practices that fit local situations.

Choosing Empowerment

Another choice is between dependency and empowerment. Dependency rests on the belief that there are people in power who know what is best for others, including ourselves. We think the task of these leaders is to create an environment where we can live a life of safety and predictability. Dependency also holds those above personally responsible for how we feel about ourselves (we want that positive feedback) and for how much freedom we have. I will never forget hearing a supervisor say to his boss, "I want my freedom, if it is all right with you." Dependency is the collusion required for patriarchy and parenting to endure.

We cannot be leaders with followers, and we cannot be good parents unless we have good children. This dependent mindset justifies and rationalizes patriarchy and keeps it breathing. If we were not looking so hard for leadership, others would be unable to claim sovereignty over us. Our search for great bosses is not that we like being watched and directed, it is that we believe that clear authority relationships are the antidote to crisis and ultimately the answer to chaos.

Empowerment embodies the belief that the answer to the latest crisis lies within each of us and therefore we all buckle up for adventure. Empowerment bets that people at our own level or below will know best how to organize to save a dollar, serve a customer, and get it right the first time. We know that a democracy is a political system designed not for efficiency, but as a hedge against the abuse of power. Empowerment is our willingness to bring this value into the workplace. To claim our autonomy and commit ourselves to making the organization work well, with or without the sponsorship of those above us. This requires a belief that my safety and my freedom are in my own hands. No easy task, therefore the adventure.

Choosing Service

Ultimately the choice we make is between service and self-interest. Both are attractive. The fire and intensity of self-interest seem to burn all around us. We search, so often in vain, to find leaders we can have faith in. Our doubts are not about our leaders' talents, but about their trustworthiness. We are unsure whether they are serving their institutions or themselves. When we look at our peers and our neighbors, we see so much energy dedicated to claiming entitlements. The nuclear family now includes one parent, one partner, children, a financial

consultant, and a lawyer. We ourselves are no different. We are so career-minded, even though there are so few places to go. Or we have surrendered to life-style and dream of the day we will have our own business. . .a small but profitable guesthouse-marina-landscape nursery-travel agency-human services conglomerate. We were born into the age of anxiety and become adults in the age of self-interest.

The antidote to self-interest is to commit and to find cause. To commit to something we care about so we can endure the sacrifice, risk, and adventure that commitment entails. This is the deeper meaning of service.

Let the commitment and the cause be the place where we work. It is not so much the product or service of our workplace that will draw us out of ourselves. It is the culture and texture and ways of creating community that attract our attention. Our task is to create organizations we believe in and to do it as an offering, not a demand. No one will do it for us. Others have brought us this far. The next step is ours. Our choice for service and community becomes the only practical answer to our concern about self-interest.

We Don't Act On What We Know

What is beguiling about our situation is that we already know a lot about service, about partnership, and about empowerment. The books have been written (I wrote one), the experiments have been conducted, and the results are in. We know, intellectually and empirically, that partnership and participation are the management strategies that create high-performance workplaces. Virtually every medium to large organization showcases the success it has had with self-management, quality improvement efforts, partnerships, autonomous operations, and giving superior service to customers.

Some short examples:

• General Motors took its plant in Fremont, California, which had a history of strife and poor performance, and reopened it in partnership with Toyota and the United Auto Workers union. Through this partnership, this plant became one of the most successful in the company, and with essentially the same workforce.

• Xerox moved itself from a history of quasi-militaristic management to formally create district partnerships in each of its field operations. They brought together the service, sales, and business functions to create a triumvirate, with no single function predominating. A district office, without a single chief. Who would have thought..?

In addition to most organizations' having their own pockets of innovation, there is a busload of executives, authors, and consultants traveling around this country to conferences and seminars, telling their stories of workplaces transformed, bureaucracies flattened, employees involved, customers honored, and quality rewarded. They are all true stories, with primarily happy endings.

So what's the problem?

The problem is that despite this load of knowledge and evidence, there has been disturbingly little fundamental change in the way business, government, health care, and education manage themselves. Even the organizations that are out telling their stories have enormous difficulty in capitalizing on their own experience. One or two plants may be accomplishing miracles, but within the same division, the other fifteen plants still operate business as usual...high command, high control, results acceptable, trying to make a living and doing the best they can.

You can go back to 1971 in Topeka, Kansas, where a Gaines Pet Food plant created deep participation, with teams doing their own purchasing and controlling their own work process. They even designed rooms with round corners to symbolize their intention to honor the circle of the team. The plant was successful in its quick start-up, and in the productivity and quality it achieved for many of its early years. It became a showcase, charged people for coming to hear the story, even launched several of its originators into consulting careers. What it did not do was have much influence over the way the multitude of other General Foods plants were managed around the world.

We are so actively engaged in change, yet certain fundamentals remain untouched. Like an old western movie set where a cowboy actor, elbows flapping, pistol smoking, sits on a stationary horse, painted scenery passing by on rollers. Every executive and manager in America has given at least one speech in the last year on the need for change. Every company in America has implemented at least one program intended to empower, one to improve quality, one to embrace customers, and one to "right-size" as a means to flatten its stomach and reduce body fat. These efforts are sincere and each taken alone is generally successful. Something larger though, like the cowboy's wooden horse in front of the camera, remains unmoved.

What remains untouched is the belief that power and purpose and privilege can reside at the top and the organization can still learn how to serve its stakeholders and therefore survive. When an innovative experiment challenges this fundamental belief about how to govern, one of two things usually occurs. Either the organization rejects the local experiment and it is power and privilege as usual, or an effort is made to drive the experiment across the bottom four layers of the whole institution, never really touching the real centers of control. The way we try to transform large groups of human beings bound together by common goals, with leadership as a big part of the solution, is our wooden horse. Our strategies and beliefs about how to change are not designed to serve, but are the very acts that can keep us frozen. We need to explore what is required to foster changes in our institutions that are truly fundamental and long lasting. If we are not careful, we too quickly lose faith even in the change efforts that we ourselves initiate.

The Leadership Question

The search for authentic reform, and the answer to the question why we have such difficulty implementing what we know, begins by questioning our current notions

about leadership. Though there is great appeal to the concept of leadership, it will not take us the distance we need to travel. It is not easy to question something that we have been searching for most of our lives, but it is the right starting point.

The strength in the concept of leadership is that it connotes initiative and responsibility. Good friends in hard times. It carries the baggage, however, of being inevitably associated with behaviors of control, direction, and knowing what is best for others. The act of leading cultural or organizational change by determining the desired future, defining the path to get there, and knowing what is best for others is incompatible with widely distributing ownership and responsibility in an organization. Placing ownership and felt responsibility close to the core work is the fundamental change we seek.

To state it bluntly, strong leadership does not have within itself the capability to create the fundamental changes our organizations require. It is not the fault of the people in these positions, it is the fault of the way we all have framed the role. Our search for strong leadership in others expresses a desire for others to assume the ownership and responsibility for our group, our organization, our society. The effect is to localize power, purpose, and privilege in the one we call leader.

Focusing power and purpose at one point in an organization, usually the top, has over time the impact of destroying the culture and very outcomes we sincerely intend to create. One of the clearest examples is our efforts to control nature and exercise dominion over the earth. We have split the atom, cleared our forest, and taken fossil fuels from beneath the ground and placed them in the engines of industrialization. But these triumphs over nature have left us vulnerable, and we do not yet know whether we have the will or the wealth to repair the environment we have wounded.

It is much the same with leadership as an organizing concept. The act of a few, in charge, defining the future, controlling the path, and knowing what is best for others, interferes with its own desire for cultural change as much as it fosters it.

We have the right language about change. We know it is a process and not a program. We know it takes time and training and is evolutionary. We know it requires commitment, not coercion. But then we begin to talk about leadership. It is at this point that we revert to our underlying beliefs about control and direction, and our intent for authentic and lasting change gets undermined. In the 1960s and early 1970s, we rarely used the term leadership. We talked about managers and managing. Leadership seemed too ill-defined, too much a personality trait and not enough a set of professional skills. You could train managers, how could you train leaders?

The 1980s saw the idea of leadership emerge. Every writer defined leadership, every company listed leadership as a training need, a nation looked for leadership and wondered where it had gone. The attraction of the idea of leadership is that it includes a vision of the future, some transforming quality that we yearn for. Managers get things done, but without heart and passion and spirit. Leaders bring spirit, even integrity, into play.

The wish for leadership is in part our wish to rediscover hope and, interestingly enough, to have someone else provide it for us. We hold on to the belief that hope resides in those with power. In response to this need, we create modern folk heroes. Executives who have turned companies around. Those who have saved Xerox, Harley Davidson Motorcycles, Johnsonville Sausage. Those who have built Federal Express, Apple Computer, Hewlett Packard. Our concern for education has created teachers and principals who stood tall and delivered.

These people write books, are documented on eight-hundred-dollar training videos, and become keynote speakers at conferences. All well and good, they have earned their recognition. That is not the point. The point is does this attention to leadership and leaders serve us? We pay a price for attributing to people in power the ability to transform whole institutions.

• The leaders we are looking for have more effect in the news than in our lives.

• Great leaders reinforce the idea that accomplishment in our society comes from great individual acts. We credit individuals for outcomes that required teams and communities to accomplish.

• Our attention becomes fixated on those at the top. We live the myth that if you do not have sponsorship from the top, you cannot realize your intentions.

• People in power who succeed begin to believe their own press. They begin to believe that their institution's success was in fact their own creation.

Is anyone capable of providing us the leadership we are looking for? And if not, is it the failing of the people in power, or is it the problem in the nature of our expectations?

The Underbelly of Leadership

There is something in the way leaders define themselves that inevitably becomes self-congratulatory and over-controlling. We expect leaders to choose service over self-interest, but it seems the choice is rarely made. Successful leaders begin to believe that a key task is to recreate themselves down through the organization. They begin to wonder, "How do I instill in others the same vision and behaviors that have worked for me?" At the moment, this question may seem to the leader like a sincere desire to be of service, but to an observer, it has the stamp of self-interest.

This becomes clear when you read about the way executives describe the basis for their success. One example is the president of a chemical company: we will call him John and the company Atlantic Chemical. His story is an example of how we can do the right thing, put in place the right pieces and programs, yet have the fundamental relationship of parenting leader and dependent organization remain unchanged.

John took over Atlantic Chemical and initiated its turnaround by creating an empowering, people-oriented environment. He decided that the competitive advantage

16

he had, in what was essentially a commodity business, was the attitude of his people. His strategy was to

- Flatten the organization by two to four levels, giving everyone more control over what they do.
- Create a participative culture, and force the issue with those who did not support a participative style.
- Fully inform people about the business and how it was doing in the industry.
- Implement pay systems geared to real outcomes.
- Eliminate the trappings of privilege.
- Be clear in defining quality in customer-response terms, both internally and externally.

And more. All of which made sense. And worked for the business. He led a struggling division of a large company into becoming a profitable independent business.

The steps that John took were intelligent and of service to the business, but somewhere in the midst of this John began to see himself as more and more central to the success of the business. Undoubtedly encouraged by others, an effort of a different nature began. John started to believe he not only knew what was best for the business, but also the best ways for people to behave; he began to believe that direction and soft coercion were needed from him to create the desired behaviors. He decided then to define the specific behaviors required to be successful at Atlantic. Consultants were brought in to create ways of measuring those behaviors and questionnaires were used to give feedback on those behaviors.

A workshop called "Managing the Atlantic Way" was used to reinforce John's vision and all employees were required to take this course. John continually talked about the need for him to repeat his vision and behaviors for the company over and over and over again, until people got it and believed it. Everyone was appraised each year, measured against whether they were managing the Atlantic Way.

The universal element in John's story is that people in charge begin to think that the way to achieve and institutionalize change is to

- Define the behaviors required.
- View themselves as essential to the change.
- Use education as indoctrination.
- Redo appraisals to insure compliance.

This is the way strategy turns into dogma. Our notion of leadership, which embraces these actions, too easily focuses ownership at one point. It encourages the replication of one belief system and tends to be very narrow in giving credit for success. Atlantic Chemical's success is now John's success. The governance at Atlantic Chemical remains one of parenting, even if the content of "Managing the Atlantic Way" has major segments on the importance of partnership.

The interest we have in people like John is the attraction each of us has to lead and be led. The concept of leadership does not leave much room for the concept of partnership. We need a way to hold on to the initiative and accountability and vision of the leadership idea, and to abandon the inevitable baggage of dominance and self-centeredness.

The Stewardship Answer

Stewardship asks us to be deeply accountable for the outcomes of an institution, without acting to define purpose for others, control others, or take care of others. Stewardship can be most simply defined as giving order to the dispersion of power. It requires us to systematically move choice and resources closer and closer to the bottom and edges of the organization. Leadership, in contrast, gives order to the centralization of power. It keeps choices and resources at the center and places power at the boundaries as an exception to be earned. When we train leaders, the topics of defining purpose, maintaining controls, and taking care of others are at the center of the curriculum. We were raised to believe that if we were to be accountable, we needed the authority to go with it. How many times have we heard the cry, "How can you hold me accountable, without giving me authority?"

Stewardship questions the belief that accountability and control go hand in hand. We can be accountable and give control to those closer to the work, operating from the belief that in this way the work is better served. Instead of deciding what kind of culture to create, and thus defining purpose, stewards can ask that each member of the organization decide what the place will become. Stewardship also asks us to forsake caretaking, an even harder habit to give up. We do not serve other adults when we take responsibility for their well-being. We continue to care, but when we caretake, we treat others, especially those in low power positions, as if they were not able to provide for themselves. In our personal relationships we have begun to understand the downside of caretaking, and the dominance that defining purpose for others can represent. What we have not yet done is to apply these concepts to the structure of how we govern. Many individual "leaders" understand the issues, and have the desire to serve, in the best sense, but the machinery of how we manage is filled with prescription and caretaking.

We are reluctant to let go of the belief that if I am to care for something I must control it. If I have stewardship for the earth, I must exercise dominion over the earth - this sort of thinking undermines our intentions. Like the logic that leads to the conviction that the way to protect animals is to put them in the zoo. This connection between accountability and control needs to be broken. There needs to be a way for me to be accountable for the earth without having to control it. To be accountable for outcomes of an organization without feeling I must control them.

The desire to see stewardship as simply a different form of leadership is to miss the political dimension of the distinction. When we hold on to the wish for leaders, we are voting status quo on the balance of power. Looking for leadership is some blend of wanting to get on top or stay on top, plus liking the idea that someone up there in my organization or society is responsible for my well-being.

THE INNER LIFE OF THE SERVANT-LEADER

Being a servant-leader in today's corporate environment is like driving on an icy street. Not long ago, I awoke in Dallas to a strange morning. The night before it had rained and the fast falling temperatures put a treacherous sheet of thin ice on the streets. Some had never driven in these conditions. As I watched their cars slide sideways on the highway ahead of me, I quickly recalled what I had learned about driving in such conditions: never slam on the brakes, never turn too suddenly, anticipate hills or turns well in advance. Always keep your cool and navigate from your center. Skating on thin ice in my old Dodge brought home a lesson.

How fragile human community is! We awake to changes that have occurred overnight while we were asleep in our beds - to the four lane nightmare of navigating on solid ice. How does the leader drive on under these conditions? What resources, past experiences and skills can be evoked?

We are coming to know what does not work, what sends us sliding sideways off the road. The old charismatic, top down, solitary hero is an image of leadership that maneuvers clumsily and poorly, if at all. Yet we need leadership. And those who are seeking to embody it are finding images in a new place.

Inner Terrain vs. Outer Techniques

This new place is an inner terrain of awareness rather than the outer terrain of methods and skills. Today we have great technology, methodology and techniques, all of which are useful. But we lack that calm center where it all starts and ends. We are just beginning to talk about the inner life of the leader.

It is in the inner life where I have found my answers and it is the inner life, in my opinion, where we must turn if servant-leadership is to be cultivated today. Robert K. Greenleaf's pioneering idea is that leadership is not status, but service. The servant-leader guards with great care the whole group or organization. The servant-leader recognizes thin ice, pulls forward and uses all his or her re-sources, past experiences and skills to enable the entire team or organization to navigate safely to their destination.

The servant-leader has a daily means of taking care of himself or herself that is not unlike the prayer life of a religious. Is it time, today, to bring this type of language into the workplace? Terms such as wounding, healing and spirit are now being used in the context of corporate life. We seem to be on the edge of a new frontier of sensitivity to the wholeness of life within our organizations. The whole human community is present in our workplace. To be whole ourselves we must address its spirit, beginning first with our own inner life.

Cultivating Silence

To do this, the servant-leader cultivates a life of Silence — not the stoic, brooding, or aloof silence of those who cannot express themselves, but the calm center from which all navigation occurs. The servant-leader guards his or her own silence on behalf of the group. He or she knows that if the scattered energies of task-orientation, worry and egoism take over, all is lost. He or she knows that from the calm center, a leader can navigate the icy roads with grace no matter what the other cars seem to be doing. He or she is a living demonstration of a style of leadership that carries the team and empowers the team, through example, to do the same. So how is this style manifest?

Listening, Reading, and Responding

The servant-leader listens. This is more than simply making sure that the words of another register an awareness and meaning. That's an expected process that takes some effort as opposed to not paying attention. But listening on inner levels is a developed skill — a reading of what is going on. How do I read what's happening with a group of people?

This is more than "taking the corporate pulse" of a group of people or constantly worrying about whether or not everything is okay. This is reading what's behind things — their feelings and emotions, their body language levels of interest and excitement. Are people meaningfully engaged, not only in their own work and tasks but also in their support and expressions of interest in the whole company? This kind of reading helps the servant leader form an appropriate response.

Some years ago, I was working for AT&T when teams were recouping business customers in a regional competition between Dallas and Houston. One Dallas supervisor stated, "Boy, do I like to kick butt!!" The constant use of the word "I" disclosed the source of both his inspiration and his motivation for doing what he was doing — mostly his own ego.

Reading his meaning, another group of supervisors formed an alternative response. They decided to create the situation of a playful game. They roused the office staff and motivated the rest of the sales force and contract workers into a campaign. Their inspiration and drive came not out of kicking the butts of their opposition but out of teamwork, small as well as big successes, the quality of the services they were offering and rubbing a lot of goodwill onto the various suppliers and cross-office visitors. The emphasis was more on joyful process and less on outcomes.

In the end this Dallas team won back more customers. Houston provided us all with a barbecue dinner to celebrate the victory. But the real victory was the deep listening done by the Dallas supervisors who rejected the kicking butt mentality and created care in the midst of doing the task.

Artful Consensus Building

As listening extends to reading a situation and creating a response to the situation, consensus-building

as a process emerges. In the old paradigm of top down leadership the top guy made the decision and announced it to the group. That may still work in some corporate cultures, but it is a dinosaur. Fewer and fewer people want someone else to tell them where to put their energies. Today the task is engaging everyone in the dialogue.

The servant-leader has mastered the art of building a consensus, getting broad support for actions that are being taken. His or her "reading practice" may take place in a group meeting or one-on-one interviewing. In either case, a complex set of skills including simply by listening, to observing body language, levels of interest, enthusiasm and commitment, is going on. From this reading, the servant-leader forms a response plan. This can happen around a table, but the truth is that more and more frequently a consensus has been built or not built long before we get around the table.

Therefore, getting every individual involved in thinking through the next steps has critical importance for effective decision making. Naturally this means getting servant-leadership to happen within the smallest work units of an organization.

I worked with another Texas company that applied a self-management system for each one of 4,300 employees. They wrote their own job descriptions, evaluated their own performance with feedback from their up line and down line, assessed their strongest and weakest skills, and finally recommended the training they needed to do a more effective, more fulfilling job. The company was diligent in providing the training either in house or externally in surrounding colleges or through private training consultants. This supported servant-leadership by honoring the individuals at all levels and involving them in deciding how to maximize their own performance in team situations and in individual work skills.

Honoring the Cycle of Death, Burial and Resurrection

Once the servant-leader has mobilized listening and reading into a response tool to build the community, the work isn't over. In fact, it's just begun. Servant-leaders act on a constantly changing stage, adjusting through deep internal transformations — many of them.

Judith Sturuck calls this "baptism of the self " in her article, "Healing Leadership", (*Insights on Servant Leadership*, Larry Spears, ed.) Her phrase struck a deep chord within me, reminding me of my own transformations. Each time major changes are required there is death, burial and resurrection. These dynamics are universal and symbolize transformation in many traditions across the globe.

The first dynamic in baptism is death. Symbolically and actually, everyone I know has had to die to outmoded behavior patterns, piously held beliefs and familiar, but outmoded ways of operating. Real deaths occur in the sense that all you had found life to be about up to that point in time goes, loses its power for you, dies.

I observed this a few years ago while working with a consulting team in India. We met with several key managers of a top company over a period of weeks to design our consultancy. The company was blue ribbon by anyone's standards. Worldwide they had excellent mission statements, public relations materials and dramatic success in marketing their product.

However, the design conference disclosed that the company had never defined its unique identity or mission for the Indian market. In fact, competitors were making inroads on their market niche! Many of the long term Indian managers and supervisors had to die a death — death to dependency on the global company's image and track record, death to their own loyalty to the company, and death to several ways of operating they had inherited. When that was done they were able to do a fine philosophy and values five-day workshop, followed by a strategic planning workshop. In other words they had to define their own unique identity as a company before they could strategically plan anything. They died to the old identity, a painful but necessary step.

The second dynamic in baptism is burial. After a death — a real physical death or an attitudinal death — it is necessary to bury the old ways — to have a complete letting go. That is what a burial ritual does. Perhaps this is the most missing step in our day. Symbol and ritual are hidden from our consciousness. Yet, we know it is necessary because we've seen what happens when it is absent, and the transformative power when it is present.

At the funeral of a close friend recently, some two hundred of her friends and family came to do the letting go. After her youngest son gave his eulogy, he passed by the golden urn where his mother's ashes were and simply reached out and touched the urn. He was letting go of the life of his mother ritualistically. I wonder if we could burn up all of our old ways of operating in our companies and "touch the urn" that houses their ashes?

When death has not been accepted by a burial ritual — a total, complete and final letting go of the dead one — then, the dead one goes on existing in our minds and hearts in a prolonged purgatorial state of being. The living dead can eat you up, cripple you, and block off all possibility of creativity or resurrection.

I know an organization who experienced a death without a burial ritual. "X" Corporation completely decentralized, leaving each person and each local unit on their own without support from each other. This was their answer to the paralyzing and unresponsive bureaucracy that caused decentralization to occur in the first place. It had been a tightly knit worldwide organization. The decentralization spelled its death. Yet, no burial ritual was performed. In fact one of X Corporation's leading managers said, "Well, we all know no one will ever leave X Corporation." As a result a living dead organization continues on, in some cases a purgatory closer to hell than heaven.

Here is a partial list of the living dead events or organizations that have never been truly put to rest: USA's failure to win the Vietnam War, pre-World War II liberalism, pure Adam Smith capitalism, fundamentalism

in Islam, Hinduism and Christianity, the ideal unit family (father works, ma runs the house and raises the kids, 2.5 children). And so we have uncelebrated war heroes, unpunished war criminals, dead bureaucratic welfare structures, America-first isolationism, terroristic Muslims, dictatorial Southern Baptists and absentee fatherhood — all residues of dead social forms that have never had a ritual burial with due praise and dignity.

The third dynamic is resurrection which can follow death and proper burial. Curiously, valor alone has sometimes brought companies back to life: Iacocca's Chrysler Corporation, the State of Texas without oil through telecommunications & other industries. Resurrection can happen as a natural course of events following death, but resurrection doesn't always follow every death. Some organizations die dead — never to return. And well they should, I suppose. On the other hand, new life does not have to be left to chance.

Resurrection happens. Sometimes when an organization is near the end of its rope, it hears or gets the notion that it is needed and accepted. It gets a new operating vision, the courage to follow it, and the willingness to do whatever is necessary to take a new path. I for one believe that the inner life of the servant-leader is key in catalyzing this possibility. For when only one or two in places of power can celebrate the death, bury the old, and call forth the new, transformation is possible.

I lived a year in a village in central India. The project had begun a year or two before. Due to some project staff mistakes, the project was floundering. The village was slipping back into the hands of a despotic upper caste, male leadership. My team was mostly a fresh new bunch. Two of the wives among the project staff came up with two new programs that were very successful: an after school evening program with youth and a Hindi literacy program, mostly with women, held in people's homes.

A village development association was created to run parallel to the village council (panchayat). It focused on social, small industries, and agricultural programs. By the end of the year servant-leaders from the development association were elected to council leadership (sarpanch) and several key positions on the panchayat.

In that election the village people died to their old ways, stood up to the traditional upper caste leaders, and opened themselves to become a transformed village. The election was a burial ritual. The ensuing health of the village was the resurrection.

Because of a rich inner life, servant-leaders among the project staff and the development association were tuned into the soul dynamics of the whole village. Knowing that death, burial and resurrection are the on-going life cycle, they were ready to wear traditional structures and customs like loose-fitting garments to be changed as the need arose.

Embracing Change

The servant-leader has made his or her peace with change. "We never step in the same river twice," said Heraclitus. Through a rich inner life of silence and listening, reading and responding, dying and living again, the servant-leader cultivates a unique style that is detached from predictable outcomes while allowing for amazing, transformational outcomes in the situation.

I am still pondering these things while driving on the thin ice of my own, ever changing life. Our task is to continue to clarify the spirit dimensions of servant-leadership. Perhaps there is a road manual coming forth from this inner work, one that will enable us all to travel boldly, yet safely, along the highway of change.

ICA SERVANT-LEADER RESOURCES

1. **WINNING THROUGH PARTICIPATION: Meeting the Challenge of Corporate Change with the Technology of Participation, by Laura J. Spencer, Kendall/Hunt, 1989**

2. **THE ART OF FOCUSED CONVERSATION: 100 Ways to Access Group Wisdom in the Workplace, R. Brian Stanfield, General Editor, published by ICA Canada, 1998**

3. **BEYOND PRINCE AND MERCHANT: Citizen Participation and the Rise of Civil Society, John Burbidge, Editor, published by ICA International, 1997**

4. **GOLDEN PATHWAYS CD: Through the Movement of the Spirit in the Twentieth Century, ICA CentrePointeS, 1996**

Price and ordering information can be obtained through any of the ICA: CentrePointeS offices listed on page 24

SERVANT LEADERS - Donna Zohar

Oh, this is the animal that never was.
They did not know it and, for all of that,
they loved his neck and posture, and his gait,
clean to the great eyes with their tranquil gaze.
Really it was not. Of their love they made it,
this pure creature. And they left a space
always, till in this clear uncluttered place
lightly he raised his head and scarcely needed
to be. They did not feed him any corn,
only the possibility he might
exist, which gave the beast such strength, he bore
a horn upon the forehead. Just one horn.
Unto a virgin he appeared, all white,
and was in the silver mirror and in her.

        - Rainer Maria Rilke
          Sonnets to Orpheus, "The Unicorn"

Rainer Maria Rilke is generally considered the most influential German poet of the twentieth century. His work has caught and reflected some of the century's major concerns. This poem about the unicorn is one of the central readings in the concept cafe that my colleague and I run for business leaders. I think that it adds important new dimensions to discussions of the servant leader concept. More than that, I think these are particularly quantum dimensions, and that the servant leader concept is vital to understanding quantum leadership.

As I understand the term, servant leadership involves practicing the essence of quantum thinking. Servant leaders lead from that level of deep, revolutionary vision that is accessed only by the third of our three kinds of thinking. They change the system, invent the new paradigm, clear a space where something new can be. They accomplish this not just from "doing," but more fundamentally, from "being." All this makes servant leadership the essence of what this book is about. Such leaders are essential to deep corporate transformation. For this reason, I have chosen servant leadership as the book's final and summary theme.

The unicorn has always been a special symbol in our culture. He is that most impossible creature of the human imagination, a beast conjured up by longing and the human capacity to dream. In Rilke's poem he is conjured up by love, and given a space to be by those who dare to believe in the possibility that he might exist. In quantum science, the whole of existence is a set of possibilities plucked out of the quantum vacuum's infinite sea of potentiality. Some of these possibilities are plucked out by observers, by human beings living our lives. An awareness of our role as cocreators of existence can increase our capacity to fulfill that role. Each of us is a servant of the vacuum, a servant of the manifold potentiality at the heart of existence.

Business leaders who become aware of servanthood in this sense know that they serve more than company or colleagues, more than markets or products, more even than vision and values as these are normally understood. They serve that longing that conjures up unicorns, and through this service they build or contribute to a successful - a profitable - business that adds some new dimension both to business and to human well-being.

One independent company founder with whom I spoke told me she could see three reasons why people might start up a business. The first reason is opportunity. The would-be entrepreneur looks at the market and sees that there is an opening for some service or product, and says, "Someone needs to provide this. I *will*." The second reason is talent or opportunity. The would-be entrepreneur looks inward at personal resources and skills or outward at the local environment and says, "I *can* provide this." The third reason is more spiritual. The future entrepreneur doesn't begin by thinking about business or a career, but about a feeling of inner necessity. "This *has* to exist. This *has* to happen. I *have* to do it." I think this is the beginning of the servant leader's business career.

There seems to me an interesting and useful interplay between these three motives for going into business, the three kinds of thinking our brains can do, and the three models of self and organization that we have looked at. The opportunity motive is very logical. I analyze the market, I see what is missing, I decide to provide it. This is the way my rule-bound, goal-oriented serial thinking operates. It's compatible with seeing myself as a Newtonian billiard ball in human form, as able to place myself in the scheme of things through manipulating and controlling the forces and bodies around me. It is management by objectives.

The skill motive is very associative. I am this sort of person with these sorts of resources, so I can see that I fit in here. This is the way the brain's parallel, networked thinking operates. Those things are most natural (those neural connections strongest) that conform to past experience, to habit, to the relationships around me. This is compatible with seeing myself in terms of my relationships to others, to what I can offer them. I find my place in some existing network, I go into the family craft or the family business. I deal locally, with familiar things and familiar people.

The inner necessity, "I *have* to" motive is quantum. The existing provisions, products, services, and so on are not adequate. Something new is needed here and I have to provide it. This is the way the brain's creative, rule-breaking, rule-making kind of thinking operates. Experience throws up things and events for which there are no previous neural connections, therefore no concepts or categories. So the brain creates new ones. It rewires itself. This is compatible with the quantum model of self where I see myself as a cocreator, as an active agent in this universe who makes things happen. If I want the world to change, I have to change it. If this product or service should exist, I have to provide it.

We've seen that in both the brain and in life's experiences, one reason why quantum thinking kicks in is that there is a crisis. We have little motive to change our neural wiring or our paradigm if the existing one is doing its job. Such crisis is common in the shift from normal or conservative science to revolutionary science. It often

plays a role in the making of servant leaders. In their case this is often a spiritual crisis, some threat to their usual self-esteem, to their usual framework of meaning and value, some longing for something more.

Real Servant Leaders At Work

I have had the good fortune to know several such leaders personally and to know a bit about their stories. I want to share brief episodes from each because they throw light on those deeper dimensions of servant leadership that I think are associated with the vision of the new science.

Juliette's Story

This is a true story, but the names have been changed at the request of its subject. The leader I will call Juliette Johnson owns a small but growing business, "Juliette's Fashion Studios." The founding studio is located in Southeast England. She is in her early forties, a French immigrant to the United Kingdom who is married to an Englishman. It was Juliette who outlined the three reasons why someone might start up a business.

In France, Juliette was an opera star. She is a large woman with the broad chest and wide neck that are usually associated with a successful singing career, and she was successful. She had her success, a husband, two teenaged children, and a wide circle of friends. She dabbled in spiritual quest, but not seriously. Then, within the space of a year, her husband left her, her children decided to join their father, and her friends became critical and distant. "I was devastated," she says. "I didn't know what had happened. I didn't know where to turn."

On the advice of associates in England, Juliette signed up for a six-month extensive study course at a spiritual community in Scotland. She studied the writings of an eleventh-century Sufi mystic, Ibn Al'arabi, and those of ancient Eastern and more modern Western mystics, all of whom used their work to celebrate the unity of existence. Life at the community was quiet, disciplined, and reflective. Juliette was thrown back on herself and on a quest to discover what really mattered to her. During the course she met her future husband, an Englishman, and they moved on to the south of England.

Living in a small flat above a shop and supported through state welfare funds, Juliette had no clear sense of career direction. Then a friend asked her to help with a handmade dress. She had done sewing ever since her early teens, and the dress she now made for her friend awakened something. She made a few others and felt that in her original designs she saw an expression of the passion she had felt during her study course in Scotland, a passion to celebrate the unity of existence and the true reality that lies behind the human form. She felt that she had to make more dresses, whether or not anyone wanted to buy them. But people did buy them. Her designs were fresh; they brought out some special, deeply feminine quality in any woman who wore them. She consciously designed in a way that made bodily shape and size unimportant. "All bodies are beautiful," she says. "Every woman should be able to feel good about her body. She should feel happy about herself."

In fact, Juliette's clothes flatter something beyond the body, something even beyond the feminine. She smiles and says, "Yes, of course. It's a celebration of that source from which all form arises." The passion and the vision it inspired led to more designs, to the opening of a large shop, to the growth of a promising business. "It *had* to be a business," she says. "I had to show that I could serve something sacred *and* that I could do this inside a business. I wanted my business to be an act of service." Nonetheless, she is loath to describe herself as a servant leader. It seems too grand, too lacking in humility. Quoting the mystic who inspired her, she says, "Just say what you know. Don't say how you got there."

Katsuhiko Yazaki's Story

Katsuhiko Yazaki is a Japanese businessman in his early fifties. He owns a global mail-order company named *Felissimo* with offices in Japan, Europe, and North America. His story is told in his 1994 book, *The Path to Liang Zhi.*

As a very young man, Yazaki had inherited a "storeless business" from his father. Goods were sold door to door, by word of mouth, through the network. Over the years, he built this up to a successful mail-order business that left him very wealthy. By his mid-forties, he had everything that he thought he wanted: success, wealth, esteem in the community, a family. But something was missing. Some friends showed him a book about Zen and told him of a Master Kido Inoue who taught it.

Yazaki went to Master Inoue's monastery for a week of meditation. He found it difficult, at times painful, but liberating. "One moment" he says, "I felt as if I had found peace, another moment I felt like a prisoner of my delusions. I was astonished at the realization of what I had been calling 'me.' This was the first time I realized how many delusions I had that were causing ups and downs in my daily life. Until this point, I had never confronted realities about myself so directly."

Yazaki emerged from his monastery cell after a week "to see the beauty of the world for the first time." He realized that he had been living his life in shadow and that the world itself was being damaged by human shadows. "Humans," he wrote, "by separating the world from the self, nature from humanity, and the self from others, trap themselves in delusions to protect the ego. They inevitably enter a frightening scenario of hypocrisy and self-righteousness."

After these insights, Yazaki rededicated his business life. He wanted to use his company to do something for the earth's environment and for future generations. He renamed the company *Felissimo*, which means "happiness" in Spanish and Italian, because his vision of the proper role of business became to increase the sum of human happiness. He formed his new concept of the "ultra store," a store that can "gather value over a wide area" by transcending the limits of geographical space

and present time. He felt that he could help his customers to realize images of their future selves and to imagine more fulfilling future lifestyles by marketing his goods globally, thus expanding service and awareness at a more universal level. He attended the Rio Earth Summit Conference and dedicated himself and much of his money to saving the earth's environment. He started a foundation to study the needs of future generations and to back needed educational projects. "I believe," he says, "that these international activities flowed from the development of our business as an ultra store and from my rethinking as a business owner." He readily quotes one of his heroes, Kazuo Inamori (founder of Kyocera Corporation), who said that what he had done as a business owner was "to continue to raise the level of my ideology every day."

The Concept of Servant Leadership

Western businesspeople who have been discussing the servant leader concept do mean by this a leader who has a sense of deeper values and a leadership style that involves conscious service to these values. But we don't always means the same thing when we speak about values. The usual Western corporate values, at their best, speak of things like excellence, fulfilling one's potential and allowing space for others to do so, achievement, quality of products and services, commitment to never-ending growth. In the East, traditionally, deep values have centered around things like compassion, humility, gratitude, service to one's family and community, service to the ancestors or to the ground of Being itself. Traditionally, the East has emphasized cooperation and trust; the West, competition and control. A "good man" in the East has a quality of *being*. In the West, a "good man" is usually measured by his quality of *doing*.

Robert Greenleaf, who wrote the original paper on servant leadership, had something more Eastern in mind. Indeed, he used the example of a Nepalese Buddhist monk. And in his recent book, *Synchronicity*, Joe Jaworski emphasizes the importance of *being* before *doing* in corporate leadership. He uses dialogue practice extensively as a way of helping leaders access the level of being within themselves. Jaworski's own life was turned around during an interview with David Bohm about the thinking in the new science. I deeply believe the conceptual structure of this new science can give us a more solid underpinning for understanding the true meaning of the servant leader. And a deeper understanding of what that leader serves.

As someone trained in physics at MIT, I know well from my own educational background the role that science and the wider spirit of Newtonian mechanism have played in widening the gulf between values associated with doing and those associated with being. Newtonian science is preoccupied with objects, obsessed with analysis and measurement. It draws a sharp divide between spirit and matter, between man and nature. And it give us a concern with the here and now, a view of truth as black or white, a preoccupation with achieve-

ment and progress as measured by doing and acquiring. These are not the values that have inspired the leaders whose stories I have cited.

We have seen that the new science of this century has a very different philosophical and conceptual basis. Quantum science tells us that the world is all of a piece, holistic. We human beings are in and of nature, we help to make reality happen, we are free agents with a responsibility for cocreation. More than that, quantum science shows us that we are, in our essential physical and spiritual makeup, *extensions*, "excitations," of the underlying ground state of Being. As I put it earlier, a quantum view of the self shows us that we are "thoughts in the mind of God."

To qualify as servant leaders in the deepest sense, I think that leaders must have four essential qualities. They must have a deep sense of the interconnectedness of life and all of its enterprises. They must have a sense of engagement and responsibility, a sense of "I *have* to." They must be aware that all human endeavor, including business, is a part of the larger and richer fabric of the whole universe. And perhaps most important of all, servant leaders must know what they ultimately serve. They must, with a sense of humility and gratitude, have a sense of the Source from which all values emerge.

Describing the unicorn, Rilke said, "Really is was not. Of their love they made it." The servant leader serves from a base of love. The three whose examples I quoted do so - not from some gooey, sentimental love of all humanity and wish to do good works, but out of a deep, abiding passion for and commitment to service. And that service itself is to something beyond the given. A wish to make women feel good about themselves inspired by the underlying nature of existence. A wish to make people happy inspired by the Jewish love of community. A wish to serve future generations inspired by a vision of the interconnectedness of existence.

To these servant leaders and others like them, the business of business no longer restricts itself to manipulating things and nature and people for profit. Rather, business becomes a spiritual vocation in the largest sense of that word. The brain's "spirit" (quantum thinking) integrates the abilities of the brain's "intellect" (serial thinking) and the brain's "heart" (parallel thinking). As such, it initiates and perpetuates the brain's necessary rewiring. I believe that it is only from such a basis of spiritual servant leadership that really deep transformation can come about in the corporate world. Without it, there can be no fundamental rewiring of the corporate brain.

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