Servant Leadership Style: What is it and What are the Benefits and Contrasts to Other Leadership Styles?

by

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ABSTRACT

There are many identified styles of leadership and servant leadership is one that is growing and being widely accepted by many Fortune 500 companies. In the 1970s, Robert Greenleaf created this leadership term to describe leaders who influence and motivate others by building relationships and developing the skills of their followers and individual team members (Gill, 2015). In addition to the common key leadership characteristics possessed by most successful leaders, 10 additional major characteristics of a servant leader will be discussed: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Servant leadership will be contrasted to five common leadership types (transformational, democratic, authoritarian or autocratic, laissez-faire, and transactional). Similarities and differences exist between the various leadership styles compared to servant leadership. The benefits of servant leadership for occupational health nurse leaders will be reviewed.

*Key words: servant, servant leadership, occupational health nurse leaders*
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Servant Leadership History

The modern concept of “servant leadership” was first introduced as a leadership philosophy by Robert K. Greenleaf in the management literature in the 1970s. Greenleaf’s works cover a variety of topics on servant leadership. Greenleaf retired in 1964 after four decades of working at AT&T as the Director of Management Development where he played a central role in launching the company’s groundbreaking vocational situational judgment testing program for the executives (Gill, 2015). When he retired, Greenleaf was considered one of the nation’s leading experts on corporate leadership development. After retirement he founded the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership and continued to serve as a consultant to AT&T and other corporations to promote his work.

The servant leadership philosophy and practices have been widely accepted by some well-known advocates such as Ken Blanchard, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, M. Scott Peck, Margaret Wheatley, Ann McGee-Cooper and Duane Trammell, Larry Spears, and Kent Keith. While most traditional theories of leadership are built upon a “power model,” servant leaders are those who evolve into leaders from a desire to serve (Charles, 2009).

Definitions

Servant

To effectively understand what servant leadership means, it is important to break down the meaning of both words and study their definitions. What is a servant? What does it mean for a person to be a servant? Merriam-Webster (2016a) defines servant as one who serves others,
especially one who performs duties for a master or employer, and a person subject to the direction or control of another. According to the King James Version Dictionary (2016), a servant is one who performs menial services for another and is subject to the master’s command. The word servant is not the same as a slave as the servant’s subjection to the master is voluntary as the submission of a slave is not. Slaves are servants but not all servants are slaves. The definition of a servant can also mean a person employed for a government department or agency, such as a public servant (Wikipedia, 2016a). Many countries call their chief political leader ‘First Minister’ or ‘Prime Minister’, which literally means first servant. In the context of servant leadership it is important to distinguish a servant as one who serves others. The status of a servant in the nineteenth century was not necessarily a demeaning one but depending on the position it was considered very high standing such as a chief butler to a member of royalty (Wikipedia, 2016a).

**Leadership**

According to Merriam Webster, leadership is defined as “a position as a leader of group, organization, etc., the time when a person holds the position of leader and the power or ability to lead other people (2016c, p. 1).” According to Investopedia (2016),

Leadership is the ability of a company’s management to make sound decisions and inspire others to perform well. Effective leaders are able to set and achieve challenging goals, to take swift and decisive action even in difficult situations, to outperform their competition, to take calculated risks and to persevere in the face of failure. Strong communication skills, self-confidence, the ability to manage others and a willingness to embrace change also characterize good leaders. (para 1)
Servant Leadership

Servant leadership can be defined as:

An approach to leadership, with strong altruistic and ethical overtones that asks and requires leaders to be attentive to the needs of their followers and empathize with them; they should take care of them by making sure they become healthier, wiser, freer and more autonomous, so that they too can become servant leaders. (Northhouse, 2004, pp. 308-309)

The phrase, servant leadership, may not be familiar terminology to many individuals but its philosophy and principles have been embraced by many successful organizations. According to Fortune Magazine’s annual list of the 100 Best Companies to Work For, 5 out of the top 10 companies are identified as companies practicing servant leadership (Lichtenwalner, 2011a). There are 17 organizations from Fortune’s 100 Best Companies to Work For that are considered companies practicing servant leadership (See Table 1.1).

The words servant and leader are usually thought of as being opposites and have been brought together to create the paradoxical idea of servant leadership (Spears, 2005). The origins of servant leadership date back thousands of years in both Eastern and Western philosophy. Traces of it can be found in the New International Version Bible in Mark 10:43-45 “…whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Bible Gateway, 2016, p. 1). Servant leadership is exemplified in biblical leadership and is best identified as exhibited by historical leaders like Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul, who exhibited sacrificial commitment to followers for the sake of the Gospel. The teachings of Jesus and the letters written by Paul are observed and applied today, centuries later, as a result of the successful implementation of their commitment to
### TABLE 1.1

ORGANIZATIONS FROM FORTUNE’S 100 BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR CONSIDERED PRACTICING SERVANT LEADERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SAS (#1 on the list of Best Companies to Work For)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Wegmans Food Market</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Zappos.com</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Nugget Market</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Recreational Equipment (REI)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Container Store</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Whole-Foods Market</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>QuikTrip</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Balfour Beatty Construction</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>TD Industries</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Aflac</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Marriott International</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nordstrom</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Men’s Wearhouse</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>CH2M Hill</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Darden Restaurant</td>
<td>97</td>
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<td>17</td>
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Source: Lichtenwalner (2011a)
servant first leadership (Winston, 2002). According to Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, “Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world” (2016, para 2). Greenleaf defined the servant-leader as:

The servant-leader is servant first… It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions… The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 13)

He continues by saying,

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and one that is difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 13)

Since the time of the industrial revolution, managers have tended to view their employees as objects and workers as cogs within a machine, but within the past few decades there have been major shifts towards this view. Many corporations are shifting their autocratic style of leadership to one based on teamwork and community, one that seeks to involve others in decision making, one strongly based in ethical and caring behavior, and one that is attempting to enhance the
personal growth of their workers (Spears, 2005). This emerging approach to leadership and service is called servant leadership.

**Purpose of Paper**

The purpose of this paper is to explain what servant leadership is and describe the benefits of the leadership style and contrast them to the other leadership styles. There are 10 major characteristics of a servant leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Northouse, 2013). Although there are many leadership styles, five common types (transformational, democratic, authoritarian or autocratic, laissez-faire, and transactional) will be discussed and contrasted their styles to servant leadership. Six major common leadership traits (vision, consistency, honesty, good communication, flexibility, and conviction) that all good leaders, regardless of their styles, possess will be addressed and expounded upon by each of the specific servant leadership style characteristics. The similarities and differences between the various leadership styles to the servant leadership will be examined.
CHAPTER II

COMPARISON OF LEADERSHIP STYLES TO SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Common Leadership Styles

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems; they are change-oriented and not creatures of the status quo (Johannsen, 2014). Transformational leaders inspire followers to accomplish more by concentrating on the follower’s values and helping the follower align these values with the values of the organization (Givens, 2008). Transformational leadership is a process whereby the leader engages with followers and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the followers. This includes mentoring and empowering the followers as a means of developing them to their full potential, therefore allowing them to contribute more capably to the organization (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). Transformational leadership has four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, sometimes referred to as the four Is (Givens, 2008). According to Ronald Riggio, Ph.D., Professor of Leadership and Organizational Psychology at Claremont McKenna College, he defines the four Is as the following:

**Idealized Influence (II)** – the leader serves as an ideal role model for followers; the leader “walks the talk,” and is admired for this.

**Inspirational Motivation (IM)** – Transformational leaders have the ability to inspire and motivate followers. Combined these first two Is are what constitute the transformational leader’s charisma.
**Intellectual Stimulation (IS)** – Transformational leaders demonstrate genuine concern for the needs and feelings of followers. This personal attention to followers is a key element in bringing out their very best efforts.

**Individualized Consideration (IC)** – the leader challenges followers to be innovative and creative. A common misunderstanding is that transformational leaders are “soft,” but the truth is that they constantly challenge followers to higher levels of performance (Riggio, 2009).

Transformational leadership involves the establishment of the leaders as role models by gaining the trust and confidence of followers, based on the ability to inspire followers and nurture followers’ ability to contribute to the foundational success of the organization (Bass, 1997). The leaders are considered visionaries and set goals for the organization and develop plans to achieve them (Northouse, 2006). According to Riggio (2009), transformational leaders have higher levels of performance and satisfaction than groups led by other types of leaders because they hold positive expectations for followers, believing that they can do their best.

As a result, they inspire, empower, and stimulate followers to exceed normal levels of performance. Transformational leaders also focus on and care about followers and their personal needs and development.

**Democratic Leadership**

Democratic leadership is defined as:

Team guided by a leader where all individuals are involved in the decision-making process to determine what needs to be done and how it should be done. The group’s leader has the authority to make the final decision of the group. (Business Dictionary, 2016b, para 1)
It’s also known as a participative leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process. Essentially, everyone is given the opportunity to participate, ideas are exchanged freely, and discussion is encouraged. The democratic leadership style is a very open and collegial style of running a team. The democratic leader facilitates the conversation, encourages people to share ideas, and then synthesizes all the available information into the best possible decision (Leadership Toolbox, 2015).

The democratic leadership style is based on mutual respect. It requires collaboration between the leaders and the people they lead. Since the employees or followers have an equal say in the decision-making process, they are more committed to the desired outcome and this results in more thorough solutions to problems (Money-Zine, 2015). Democratic leaders expect people who report to them to have in-depth experience and to exhibit self-confidence (Gill, 2016). Democratic leaders are focused on accomplishing goals. “Productivity is the key to adopting this leadership style. To be successful, democratic leaders must have productive teams that meet expectations” (Gill, 2016, para last).

The democratic leadership style depends on the leaders’ knowledge of their followers or employees. If the workforce is inexperienced, this leadership style is not effective. Another drawback of the democratic style is the time it takes for the collaborative effort. If the business need is urgent and a quick decision needs to be made, this leadership style is ineffective. “The democratic leadership style is most effective when there is a workplace that has experienced employees, and there is sufficient time to develop a thorough solution” (Money-Zine, 2015, para 12).
**Authoritarian or Autocratic Leadership**

According to Business Dictionary (2016a), authoritarian leadership style is when the “leader dictates policies and procedures, decides what goals are to be achieved, and directs and controls all activities without any meaningful participation by the subordinates” (p. 1). The leader dictates and controls all decisions in the group and task. Authoritarian leadership, also referred to as autocratic leadership, is “about control, organization and discipline and while it still has a place in a leader’s toolbox, it was regarded as the most prominent style almost one hundred years ago” (Educational Business Articles [EBA], 2016, para 1).

Autocratic leaders are very different from democratic leaders. Autocratic leaders rarely accept advice from followers, little feedback is sought or needed from team members, and they make choices based on their own ideas and judgments. Decisions on processes, tasks, and goals are all created by leaders with a sense that team members are rarely trusted with tasks and methods (EBA, 2016). This leadership style is focused on getting the task done and there is no collaboration or consideration for the employees or team members. This style of leadership can undermine people and stifle creativity. “Long term use of its use can also build to resentment and a feeling of festering, whereby those team members are never given a chance to grow, proceeding to the feeling of being undervalued and distrusted” (EAB, 2016, p. 2). However, if tasks have to be completed with great urgency with little time for thought and planning, and when conditions are dangerous, and rigid rules are needed to keep people out of harm’s way, authoritarian leadership can get the job done (EAB, 2016).

**Laissez-faire Leadership**

Laissez-faire leadership is defined as:
a non-authoritarian leadership style. Laissez-faire leaders try to give the least possible guidance to subordinates, and try to achieve control through less obvious means. They believe that people excel when they are left alone to respond to their responsibilities and obligations in their own ways. (Business Dictionary, 2016c, p. 1)

The laissez-faire leaders are hands-off and avoid active participation in the responsibility of setting goals, clarifying expectations, organizing priorities, or becoming involved when leadership direction is needed (van Eeden, Ciliers, & van Deventer, 2008). They allow group members to make the decisions. Laissez-faire leaders provide tools and resources but allow complete freedom for the followers to make decisions; followers are expected to solve their own problems yet the leaders still take responsibility for the group decisions and actions (About.com, 2016). Frequent absence and the lack of involvement of critical decision-making are utilized as a method of driving the followers to self-management (Eagly et al., 2003).

The laissez-faire leadership style can be effective in situations where group members are highly skilled, self-motivated, and capable of working on their own with very little guidance. This leadership style is especially effective in situations where group members are more knowledgeable than the leaders so the leaders allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and skill without directing them. This can lead to team members feeling more satisfied and accomplished with their responsibilities. The laissez-faire style can be used in situations where followers have a high-level of passion and intrinsic motivation for their work. Although the term laissez-faire may imply a completely hands-off approach, good leaders remain open and available to the group members for consultation and feedback.

The downside of laissez-faire leadership is providing too much autonomy to group members who lack the knowledge or experience and are incapable of making decisions and
completing the tasks without clear instructions and guidance. Without proper oversight and direction from the leader, projects and deadlines can be missed. If the team members are not self-motivated and driven and minimal guidance or direction is provided by leaders, the followers may perceive the leaders as uninvolved and projects may be taken less seriously.

**Transactional Leadership**

The transactional leadership, also known as managerial leadership, is driven by the ability of the leaders to appeal to their followers’ self-interest by the establishment of a relationship based on exchange (Avolio, 1999). The leaders focus on goal achievement founded by the establishment of incentives that appeal to the inherent needs, preferences and values of the followers (Huang, Cheng, & Chou, 2005). The transactional leadership takes a behavioral approach to leadership by rewarding the followers when they are successful, and reprimanding or punishing them when they fail. In this leadership style, rewards and punishments are contingent upon the performance of the followers (Huang et al., 2005). Leaders view the relationship between themselves and the followers as an exchange: If they perform well they receive recognition, but if they perform poorly they will be punished in some fashion. Transformational leaders inspire positive changes as they are generally energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate to help their members succeed (Cherry, 2016).

**Comparative Analysis**

**Leader-Centered vs. Follower-Centered Styles**

Leadership can be divided into two groups: leader-centered and follower-centered styles. “Leaders of both groups can have a vision, a mission, and goals that they strive to successfully achieve by providing direction, implementing plans and motivating followers” (Maslennikova, 2007, p. 1). However, how they accomplish their goals is very different. Leader-centered styles
have a top-down structure where the leaders rely on authority and specific directions for success. Examples of these styles are authoritarian and transactional. Authoritarian leaders are known as the experts in the organization and therefore take the responsibility of identifying the goals and strategic path to success (Maslennikova, 2007). Transactional leaders state clear standards and expectations for good performance and often their primary focus is completing a task properly without any need for creativity and innovation (Maslennikova, 2007).

“Follower-centered styles achieve organizational success through the realization, growth and development of the followers. These leadership styles are practiced in organizations that treat employees as the most valuable organizational assets, investing available resources in them” (Maslennikova, 2007, p. 3). The structure of the follower-centered style is not top-down but generally flat where the leaders and the followers are treated equally. In this leadership style, followers actively participate in the decision-making process to have greater organizational impact. Transformational, democratic, laissez-faire, and servant leadership styles are examples of follower-centered styles.

Transformational leaders inspire their followers to achieve a shared vision of the organization by investing time into their training, growth, and development (ChanginMinds.org, 2007). Democratic and laissez-faire leaders rely on the abilities, knowledge, and feedback of the entire team and they are not only driven by goal attainment, but also by their followers’ development (Maslennikova, 2007). Servant leaders care more about the success of their followers than their own success, and they look after the needs of the followers and provide an environment where the followers can reach their full potential and best performance (MindTools.com, 2007).
Task-Oriented vs. People-Oriented Styles

Another way to compare the leadership styles is to look at them as task-oriented vs. people-oriented. Task-oriented leaders create clear, easy-to-follow work schedules with specific requirements and deadlines (Friedman, 2013). The leaders focus on the task at hand and are less concerned with catering to employees, and more concerned with finding technical, step-by-step solutions for meeting specific goals (Anzalone & Media, 2016). “A task-oriented leader understands that a major task can involve numerous smaller tasks and can delegate work accordingly in order to ensure that everything gets done in a timely and productive manner” (Anzalone & Media, 2016, para 3). This leadership style maintains high standards with optimal efficiency to get tasks accomplished; however, this style comes with a price. The downside to this leadership style is that it can lead to a lack of employee autonomy and creativity, which can result in low morale in the office (Friedman, 2016). “When an employee has to work under strict deadlines and excessive task orientation, it can bring the company culture down. Employees who are self-motivated tend to rebel in this type of environment” (Friedman, 2013, p. 1). Examples of this leadership styles are autocratic and transactional.

People-oriented leaders focus more on employee relationships which tend to energize employees to make them feel appreciated for the work they do (Friedman, 2016). As a result employees work harder and have higher morale because they feel they are part of the company’s success (Friedman, 2016). The challenge to this style can occur when employees may feel their responsibilities are overwhelming and they may need clearer direction. “Ineffective decisions may result if the focus is consistently put on the manager and employee relationships, rather than the important business decisions that need to be made” (Friedman, 2016, para 6). Examples of these leadership styles are democratic and servant.
Contrast Leadership Styles to Servant Leadership

Transformational Leadership

There are many similarities and parallels between transformational and servant leadership. Both are known for their people-oriented and follower-centered leadership styles. There are numerous analogous characteristics between the two theories including influence, vision, trust, respect, credibility, risk-sharing/delegation, integrity, and modeling (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). However, one essential element differentiates the two theories.

While transformational leaders and servant leaders both show concern for their followers, the overriding focus of the servant leader is upon service to followers. The transformational leader has a greater concern for getting followers to engage in and support organizational objectives. (Stone et al., 2004, p. 354)

Thus, the focus of transformational leaders is directed toward the organization and building commitment to organizational objectives through empowering followers, while servant leaders focus on the service itself. Greenleaf (1977) makes this important distinction between accepting the person and not accepting the effort performance, thus indicating that quality performance is still important. When servant leaders build an environment of trust, they are better able to bring about change needed to enhance effort or boost performance (Kolp & Rea, 2006). Servant leaders are people-oriented and focus on the needs of those around them. They value human equality and seek to enhance the personal development and professional contributions of all organizational members (Russell, 2001). Organizations are only sustainable when they serve human needs (Covey, 2006).
**Democratic Leadership**

Servant leadership is considered to be a form of democratic leadership because team members participate in the decision-making process. Servant leaders prefer to give credit to their teams rather than themselves. Both servant and democratic leadership styles are considerate, consultative, consensual, employee-centered, concerned with people, and with the maintenance of good working relationships. Both styles have a fundamental belief that followers are internally motivated to do well and seek opportunity to prove their worth. Both styles encourage decision-making at lower levels and they treat subordinates’ mistakes as learning opportunities while celebrating their accomplishments. While there are major similarities between the servant and democratic leadership styles, servant leaders are more involved in the decision-making process but prefer to stay out of the limelight for their followers to receive the recognition for the hard work (Corey, 2013).

**Authoritarian Leadership**

Authoritarian leadership style is exactly opposite of what the servant leadership style represents. Authoritarian leaders are characterized by answering the ‘what’, ‘when’, and ‘how’ questions without any input from followers.

It is important to note that in while in servant leadership the major motivation is intrinsic; in authoritarian leadership it is extrinsic. With intrinsic motivation, individuals are motivated not by some external rewards, but because the behavior itself is rewarding. However, extrinsic motivation can be oriented toward money, recognition, competition or dictating to the people. (Vatandas, 2013, p. 2)

There may be a misconception that authoritarian leaders would abuse their powers by yelling or making threats but this type of leadership is not only ineffective but can expose them
and their organization to legal issues (Leadership Central, 2016). Although autocratic leadership is not viewed as a popular or favorable leadership style for everyday situations, an autocratic leadership style can be necessary under certain situations. For example, when a first responder arrives at the scene of an accident, the responder becomes the leader of the group and will use an authoritarian leadership style to take command of the situation and dictate instructions for others to follow.

**Laissez-faire Leadership**

Contrasted to servant leaders, laissez-faire leaders do not directly supervise their followers and fail to provide regular feedback to those under their direction. Laissez-faire leaders have a hands-off approach to leadership as they allow their followers to make their own decisions and do whatever they want to do (Brinn, 2014) while servant leadership emphasizes the needs of the servant over that of the leader. However, there are distinct similarities and differences between the two relationships.

A negative example of laissez-faire leadership such as the lack of managerial control is almost the exact opposite of servant leadership. On the other hand, a positive example of laissez-faire leadership in which a leader sacrifices some of his/her power for the good of the followers is the epitome of servant leadership. (Wilczewski, 2013, p. 1).

**Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leadership is similar to authoritarian in that both leaders tell their followers what to do and when to do it. However, unlike transformational leaders who tend to be forward-looking, transactional leaders are interested in merely maintaining the status quo and their leadership style is based on rewards for good work and punishment for mistakes. This style of leadership discourages creativity and the followers do not have any ownership of their work.
(Maslennikova, 2007). Unlike transactional leadership style which is based on behavioral feedbacks of rewards and punishment, servant leadership is primarily based on respect, motivation, and positive attitude and as a result the followers take ownership of the organization and perform their best.
CHAPTER III
QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD LEADERS

Common Characteristics of Good Leaders

Vision

Leaders have vision. It does not matter if leaders are in business, politics, religion, or any other profession; all good effective leaders must have a clear vision of their dream and direction that others want to share and follow. “The vision of leadership permeates the workplace and is manifested in the actions, beliefs, values, and goals of your organization’s leaders” (Heathfield, 2015, p. 1). Susan Heathfield, a Human Resources expert and a member of the Society for Human Resource Management, has listed the following fundamental principles necessary for a vision that excites and motivates people to follow the leader (Heathfield, 2015). These would apply to occupational health nurse leaders.

- Define a clear organizational direction and purpose,
- Show loyalty and caring to encourage employee involvement,
- Display and reflect the unique strengths, culture, values, beliefs, and direction of the organization,
- Inspire enthusiasm, belief, commitment, and excitement in company members,
- Help employees believe that they are part of something bigger than themselves and their daily work,
- Communicate and share on a regular basis, and
- Challenge people to outdo themselves, to stretch and reach.
Vision can be defined “as a picture in the leader’s imagination that motivates people to action when communicated compellingly, passionately and clearly” (Zmorenski, 2012, p. 1). This means that the leaders must have a clear vision of the future and motivate others to act with passion and purpose to work toward a common goal.

A visionary leader who clearly and passionately communicates his or her vision can motivate employees to act with passion and purpose, thereby ensuring that everyone is working toward a common goal. The end result is that everyone contributes to the organization’s forward momentum. (Zmorenski, 2012, p. 1).

In addition to good leaders possessing strong vision, there are other leadership characteristics the leaders must have such as consistency, honesty, communication, and flexibility.

**Consistency**

John Cameron, a popular speaker, consultant and trainer on leadership says, “one of the most important and overlooked characteristics a good leader must have is consistency or predictability” (2015, p. 1). Consistent leaders will gain respect and credibility which is essential to getting buy-in from the group (Leadership Toolbox, 2016). Great leaders stick to their plans and remain consistent to lead their team. Consistency allows for measurement, creates accountability, establishes the leaders’ reputation, and maintains the leaders’ messages (Holtzclaw, 2012). The late Jim Rohn, entrepreneur, author, and motivational speaker, said, “Success is neither magical nor mysterious. Success is the natural consequences of consistently applying basic fundamentals” (Van Hooser, 2016, para 6). If leaders develop a reputation for being inconsistent in their words or action, their followers will eventually lose confidence in their ability to lead effectively (Van Hooser, 2016).
Honesty

It is not surprising to see honesty as an important leadership trait because people want to follow moral and respectable leaders. Leadership experts Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner find honesty to be the most important trait of effective leaders as it brings a degree of transparency to a leaders’ interaction with others (Boundless, 2015a).

In leadership, honesty is an important virtue, as leaders serve as role models for their subordinates. Honesty refers to different aspects of moral character. It indicates positive and virtuous attributes such as integrity, truthfulness, and straightforwardness. These characteristics create trust, which is critical to leaders in all positions. Honesty also implies the absence of lying, cheating, or theft. (Boundless, 2015a, p. 1)

In general, people will trust those who actively display honesty, not just as an honest individual, but as someone who is worth following (Shead, 2010).

Communication

The ability to communicate appropriately is an essential component for effective leadership. The Ken Blanchard Companies conducted four separate studies from 2003 to 2006 with 2,004 leaders, managers, and executives sharing their views on the critical skills and common mistakes connected to leadership. According to the respondents, 43% identified communication skills as the most critical skill set, while 41% identified the inappropriate use of communication as the number one mistake leaders make (Blanchard, 2016). Good communicators not only have the ability to speak clearly, but their messages must be heard and understood. Leo Froschheiser, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Management Action Programs who works with premiere business leaders and companies nationwide says, “Clear communication is the most important key to a business leader’s success. So to grow as a
leader and manager, you must learn how to be an effective, compelling communicator… to reach new levels of leadership excellence” (ReliablePlant, 2015, p. 1).

**Flexibility**

Flexibility is being open to seeing different possibilities for the business especially when a major shift occurs in the economy (Small, 2016). Flexibility in leadership is “the ability to lead and manage others in a non-rigid way” (Owens, 2013, p. 1). Flexible leaders can utilize various leadership approaches depending on the situations. For example, leaders may need to be rigid, dogmatic, and directive when there may be safety, compliance, or legal issues while at other times different leadership styles should be employed.

In a world that is ever changing, it is no surprise that leaders must be flexible. Flexibility is a trait which is characterized by an open attitude – open to new ideas, new ways of doing things, openness to the possibility that how I’m doing something might not be the best way. The opposite of flexibility is stubbornness or rigidity. (Richard, 2012, p. 1)

Phil Owens, one of Australia’s leading performance and leadership specialists, provided four comments about leadership flexibility (Owens, 2013).

- Lead issue by issue, congruent with the leaders’ styles and values.
- Determine ‘what is at stake’: Is it a critical issue with no latitude that requires a dictatorial style?
- Determine the human implication: How does this impact the people involved – does it help develop their long term value for the organization?
- What would leaders miss by simply being dictatorial?
Conviction

A strong vision and the willingness to see it through is one of the most important characteristics of leadership. Leaders who believe in the mission and works toward it will be an inspiration and a resource to their followers. (Leadership Toolbox, 2016, para 2)

Leaders’ personal conviction of their ideas can drive them to make decisions, promote actions, accepts risks, overcome doubts, and draw others to complete the course of action (Woodruff, 2011). “Conviction does not guarantee success, but a lack of it almost guarantees failure. It leads you to take a course. It feeds into persistence, which drives you to stay the course. And that’s the shortest path to results” (Woodruff, 2011, p. 1). Leaders’ strong conviction will compel them to move forward no matter the cost. “Leaders with conviction create an environment of certainty for everyone” (Woodruff, 2011, p. 1).

Dr. Travis Bradberry, coauthor of Emotional Intelligence 2.0 and President at TalentSmart, says,

when a leader is absolutely convinced that he’s chosen the best course of action, everyone who follows him unconsciously absorbs this belief and the accompanying emotional state. Leaders with conviction show us that the future is certain and that we’re all headed in the right direction. Their certainty is neurologically shared by everyone. (Bradberry, 2015, p. 1)

Unique Characteristics of Servant Leaders

In addition to the common leadership qualities listed above, there are more specific characteristics of servant leaders defined by Greenleaf (1977) including: active listening,
empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of others, and building community.

**Active Listening**

Servant leaders actively listen to the needs of the staff and organization and help support them in their decision making. Many managers and leaders act as though they are listening to their teams when they may be focused on their own agenda. Good active listening is a skill; it does not come naturally but can be learned and mastered with practice. Active listening is very different than hearing. Hearing is passive as the ear receives and perceives audible sounds. In active hearing leaders try to understand what the sender is feeling and what the message means (Holden Leadership Center [HLC], 2009). “The best leaders are proactive, strategic, and intuitive listeners. The best leaders possess the uncanny ability to understand what is not said, witnessed, or heard” (Myatt, 2012, p. 1). Leadership is about doing what is right and not doing what’s popular (Diversity MBA, 2010).

Active listening is not only an important servant leader trait but a primary source of communication for nurses, especially for nurse leaders (Sherman, 2009). In active listening, nurse leaders should observe the other person’s body language, eye contact, and nonverbal behavior (Sherman, 2009). Active listening is a skill that nurse leaders can learn to lead effectively. “Active listening involves paying attention, withholding judgment, reflecting, clarifying, summarizing and sharing” (Center for Creative Leadership [CCL], 2015). Michael Hoppe from CCL authored a guidebook “Active Listening” and listed six skills that contribute to active listening:
1. **Pay attention:** paying attention to the other person means being focused on the moment and operating from a place of respect by giving them time to think and speak (CCL, 2015).

2. **Withhold judgment:** as a good listener the leaders must be open minded to new ideas, perspectives, and possibilities. This will require leaders to suspend judgment, hold their criticism, and avoid arguing to prove their point is right (CCL, 2015).

3. **Reflect:** reflection requires leaders to not assume that they have correctly heard what the other person was trying to say. It requires learning to mirror the other person’s information and emotions by paraphrasing key points to ensure both parties are on the same page (CCL, 2015).

4. **Clarify:** instead of assuming leaders understood the other person accurately, clarify by asking open-ended questions and encourage them to expand their ideas (CCL, 2015).

5. **Summarize:** to have mutual responsibilities and follow-up, leaders should summarize what was heard and ask the other person to do the same (CCL, 2015).

6. **Share:** active listening is first about understanding the other person, then about being understood (CCL, 2015).

According to research, active listening combined with empathy or trying to understand other’s perspectives and points of view is the most effective form of listening (Gearhart & Bodie, 2011). Overall, it is important for not only servant leaders but occupational health nurse leaders to recognize the multidimensionality of active listening and create an environment that encourages collaborative problem-solving. Nurse leaders can find many ways to demonstrate that the message was heard and understood such as repeating what was said.
Empathy

Empathy is an important leadership trait for all leaders; however, it is one of the main characteristics of servant leaders. The Merriam-Webster’s (2016b, p. 1) definition of empathy is “the feeling that you understand and share another person’s experiences and emotions: the ability to share someone else’s feelings”. Empathy is:

creating a legitimate rapport with your staff makes it less likely that personal issues and resentment can creep in and derail the group. When your team knows that you are empathetic to their concerns, they will be more likely to work with you and share in your vision, rather than foster negative feelings. (Leadership Toolbox, 2016, para 2)

Leaders do not have to share the feelings and emotions of their followers, but rather truly understand the feelings. It’s also important to note a difference between sympathy and empathy. Empathy is understanding and sharing another person’s feelings and emotions whereas sympathy involves caring and feeling sorry for someone.

Simon Sinek, a best-selling author and speaker for his books, Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don’t and Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action, capitalizes on the importance of empathy for great leadership.

According to Norton,

Empathy – the ability to recognize and share other people’s feelings – is the most important instrument in a leader’s toolbox. It can be expressed in the simple words, “Is everything OK?” Whereas many people think leadership is about rank, power and privilege, Marines believe that true leadership is the willingness to place others’ needs above your own, which is what empathy is. (2014, p. 1)
Healing

One of the great strengths of servant leadership is the concept of helping others ‘be whole’ by showing care and concern for their overall well-being. Servant leaders focus on the good of others and genuinely care about others and for their wellbeing.

Many people have broken spirits and have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts. Although this is part of being human, servant leaders recognize that they have an opportunity to help make whole those with whom they come in contact. (Spears, 2010, p. 26)

In Greenleaf’s essay, Servant Leadership, he 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” (1977, p. 50). Healing involves learning how to help others deal with their difficult situations and helping them to go through their personal and/or professional struggles through the words the leaders chooses.

Nursing is a profession that involves caring and helping people, both physically and psychosocially. Many nurses and nurse leaders practice holistic nursing which is the art and science of caring for the whole person. It is based on the belief that dynamic mind-body-spirit interactions are ongoing and impact a person’s ability to grow and heal. Similar to servant leaders, holistic nurses aim to promote health and wellness as they facilitate their client’s growth and healing. (American Holistic Nurses Association, 2016, p. 1)

Awareness

Having general awareness of one’s self is a unique leadership trait of servant leaders. “Awareness helps one in understanding issues involving ethics, power, and values. It lends itself
to being able to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position” (Spears, 2010, p. 27).

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. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 41)

Servant leaders have a strong awareness for what is going on, always looking for cues, and staying alert.

**Persuasion**

Another characteristic of servant leaders is reliance on persuasion, rather than positional authority in making decisions. “Servant-leaders seek 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” (Spears, 2010, p. 27). Although manipulation is a form of persuasion, there are clear differences and manipulation is never a characteristic trait of a servant leader.

Manipulation has self-interest in mind; it is changing the behaviors of others to serve one’s purpose and does not consider the interest of others. The magic pill of the art of persuasion, conversely, is to get others to take action for them, and in a direction that serves the needs of the persuader. In other words, a win-win proposition. Where manipulation is inwardly focused, persuasion is an outward, connecting approach to exerting influence. (Monarth, 2014, p. 1)

**Conceptualization**

Conceptualization is a characteristic trait of servant leadership. It is the leaders’ ability to create a future-oriented concept that provides vision and mission (Anderson, 2014).
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 leaders, this is a characteristic that requires discipline and practice. The traditional leader is consumed by the need to achieve short-term operational goals. The leader who wishes to also be a servant-leader must stretch his or her thinking to encompass broader based conceptual thinking. (Spears, 2010, p. 26)

**Foresight**

The word ‘foresight’ is not a common word or description to characterize a leader, but according to Greenleaf it is a central leadership trait. “Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision for the future. It is deeply rooted in the intuitive mind” (Spears, 2010, p. 28). Spears also says that while the ability to foresee an outcome of a situation may be hard to define, it is easier to identify. “The servant leader purposefully surrounds himself/herself with people who see things from different perspectives, and invites analysis of unintended consequences of decisions” (Anderson, 2014, p. 1).

**Stewardship**

Stewardship is a characteristic trait of servant leaders. Stewardship stems from medieval times when a steward would be assigned to hone the skills and development of the young prince to prepare him for his reign. A steward in an organization is responsible for preparing it for its destiny, usually for the betterment of society. When we describe a leader as having a strong sense of stewardship, we refer to a desire to prepare the organization to contribute to the greater good of society. (Spears, 2010, p. 29)
Servant leadership, like stewardship, assumes servant leaders will make a commitment to serving the needs of others.

**Commitment to Growth of Others**

Commitment to the growth of others is one of the fundamental characteristic traits of servant leaders. Servant leaders focus more on the people rather than production. In this leadership philosophy, by paying attention to the personal and developmental growth of the individuals, the corporation will eventually grow as well (Lovedfreeandpowerful, 2013). Servant leaders focus on the person by establishing an emotional connection with those they lead. They take interest and seek to nurture and support the people they lead in all areas of their life. They help people to understand through the way they interact with those they lead on a day to day basis (Lovedfreeandpowerful, 2013).

**Building Community**

The last characteristic trait of servant leadership is to build a sense of community within the organization. Servant leaders “build a sense of unity and cohesion among individuals so they can work together for common goals” (Boundless, 2015b, p. 1).

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 movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 53)

Building community can be exhibited through holding social events such as team lunches and barbecues, designing the workspace to encourage people to chat informally away from their desks, and dedicating the first few minutes of the meetings to non-work related conversations to establish connections.
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. (Spears, 2010, p. 26).

**Examples of Strong and Influential Servant Leaders as Role Models for OHN Leadership**

Servant leaders are driven by a particular set of principles, values, and beliefs. They are driven by the beliefs that they are in their roles for the benefit and support of those they lead (Brown, 2013). There are many great examples of servant leaders, such as Abraham Lincoln and Albert Schweitzer, but three servant leaders will be described for their exemplary servant leadership role model for occupational health nurses.

**Florence Nightingale**

Florence Nightingale, one of the first trained nurses, is the epitome of a servant leader role model for the nursing profession. She is remembered for her servant leadership not only for caring for the wounded soldiers during the Crimea war but also for teaching and modeling both the art and the science of skilled nursing to the cadre of other nurses who accompanied her (Selanders & Crane, 2012). Nightingdale led by example as she often persuaded other nurses to do grubby work, such as emptying bedpans which they refused to do but was necessary (Johanna, 2009). Nightingdale’s servant leadership is most recognized for her establishment of and contributions to setting up schools for nurses. She established the first training school for nurses at St. Thomas Hospital in London and authored a book entitled *Notes on Nursing* that laid out the basic principles of good physical and psychological nursing care for the ill person (Selanders &
Crane, 2012). “Miss Nightingale was the originator of the concept of the nursing process. She insisted that prepared and educated persons were necessary to function properly in the nurse’s role” (Dolan, Fitzpatrick, & Hermann, 1983, p. 165). She continued to work tirelessly to reform hospitals until her death at age ninety. “Florence Nightingale single-handedly elevated nursing to a profession, consisting of its own unique art and science” (Selanders & Crane, 2012).

**Mother Teresa**

According to servant leadership theory of leaders serving others, Mother Teresa almost perfectly fits that model. Mother Teresa grew up in Macedonia and at age 12 decided to devote her life to the service of others (Robbins, 2010). She became a nun and did charity worker in India. She founded Missionaries of Charity of Kolkata, India where she endlessly cared for the poor, sick, and orphaned. She was a selfless servant leader who dedicated her whole life to making others’ lives better. Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity had 610 missions in 123 countries which served people with HIV, leprosy and tuberculosis (Robbins, 2010).

She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 and received India’s highest civilian honor in 1980 for her humanitarian work. Her servant leadership has set examples for others to follow her footsteps to care for the needs of others (Vatican News, 2003). As of 2007, Mother Teresa’s followers in the Missionaries of Charity numbered more than 5,000, operating in more than 600 missions, schools, clinics, and shelters, all around the world (Vatican News, 2003). The Missionaries of Charity organization continues to grow and attract new followers. “In working to expand the ministry to reach more than 100 countries, Mother Teresa’s followers achieved personal growth as they saw their shared vision realized through their efforts on an individual level” (Robbins, 2010, p. 1).
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King, a civil rights leader, is among the greatest servant leaders this world has ever seen. His vision, leadership, and ultimate sacrifice left a legacy that will forever be remembered. “A servant leader is one who offers an inclusive vision; listens carefully to others; persuades through reason; and heals divisions while building community” (Perry, 2011, p. 1) and Martin Luther King, Jr. was an exemplary servant leader. Through his servant leadership he radically transformed a nation. While many elected officials are more interested in personal power, individual legacy, and financial gain, Dr. King left a legacy of courage and a philosophy of leadership that people can follow (Perry, 2011).

Dr. King asked that he be remembered not for the prizes and accolades he won in life, but rather than he be remembered as a Drum Major for Justice. He asked all Americans to join him in recognizing that to be great we need to do only one thing: serve (Perry, 2011, p. 1).

According to Wikipedia (2016b), King received the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence in 1964. In 1954 he helped to organize the Selma to Montgomery marches. In the final years of his life, King expanded his focus to include poverty and spoke against Vietnam War, alienating many of his liberal allies with a 1967 speech titled “Beyond Vietnam.” King was all about serving other people and not himself. He always had the people that followed him in mind with anything he did. King did not care about the outcome for himself but rather he stood up for the people. (Perry, 2011).

All three of these servant leaders embodied many of the characteristics of servant leadership to the highest possible ability. Each of them through their servant leadership changed the course of history and made significant impact to the world in a positive way. Through their
vision and conviction to serve others they will forever be remembered for their sacrificial contributions to society as exemplary servant leaders.
CHAPTER IV
APPLICATION OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

Is There a Perfect Leadership Style or Is It Situational?

Various situations call for leaders to adapt their leadership style (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Nelson, 1993). Successful leaders adapt through recognition that no best leadership style exists for use in all situations. “There is no perfect leadership style, which means there is more than one way to lead effectively” (Eikenberry, 2013, p. 1). Leadership styles are not mutually exclusive (Murray, 2010); it will depend on the needs of the situation at hand and/or the followers they lead (Harness, 2016). The ideal is not to adopt one style while ignoring others, rather good leaders need to understand the various styles and use the style that meets the needs of the moment (Murray, 2010). “The good leader, in other words, must understand what motivates those he or she wishes to lead” (Murray, 2010, p. 1).

The leadership styles are drawn from leaders’ personalities, beliefs, experiences, values, and intrinsic qualities (Murray, 2010). Regardless of the leadership styles, a “successful leader garners commitment from each member of the team by establishing common values that are important to all” (Harness, 2016, p. 1).

Situational Leadership Model

According to Wikipedia (2015c), the situational leadership theory or model was developed by Paul Hersey, professor and author of the book, *The Situational Leader*, and Ken Blanchard, leadership trainer and author of *The One Minute Manager*, while working on the first edition of *Management of Organizational Behavior*. In the late 1970s/early 1980s, the authors
both developed their own models using the situational theory; Hersey – Situational Leadership Model and Blanchard – Situational Leadership II Model.

The fundamental underpinning of the situational leadership theory is that there is no single best style of leadership. Effective leadership is task-relevant, and the most successful leaders are those who adapt their leadership style to the maturity of the individual or group they are attempting to lead or influence. Effective leadership varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it also depends on the task, job or function that needs to be accomplished. (Wikipedia, 2016c, para 3)

**Situational Leadership II Model**

According to the Situational Leadership II model, there is no one best leadership style. “Effective leaders are the ones who are able to adapt their leadership style according to the situation – match the appropriate leadership style to the individual’s or group’s development level” (Tang, 2011, p. 1). The situational leadership II model is widely utilized by many organizations to teach leaders to diagnose the needs of the organization and then use the appropriate leadership style to respond to the needs of the group and the situation (Blanchard, 2010). The situational leadership model II consists of two components: the leadership style and development level. The leadership styles consist of directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. The development level gauges the employee’s competence and commitment to perform a particular task with little to no supervision (Blanchard, 2010). See Figure 4.1.

Situational leaders have an instinctive ability to discern when it is best to lead by consensus and when it is necessary to make decisions independently based on the current situation, time, and people involved (How situational leadership fits, 1996). Leaders must identify the amount of guidance needed, the depth of relationship support wanted, and the degree
FIGURE 4.1

THE SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP II MODEL

Source: Blanchard (2010)
of preparedness of followers (Lowell, 2003). Situational leaders should consider the following when deciding on a leadership style: degree of difficulty of the task and the employee’s competence and commitment to perform a particular task with little to no supervision (Blanchard, 2010).

**Leadership Style**

Leadership style is explained in two different behaviors: directive behavior and supportive behavior (Blanchard, 2010). Directive behavior is task-oriented and focuses on goals to be achieved and actions to be taken. For example, leaders tell and show people what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and provide frequent feedback on results. Supportive behavior is people-oriented, involves two-way communications, and focuses mainly on emotional and social support. This is done by listening, facilitating self-reliant problem solving, encouraging, praising, and involving others in decision making.

There are four leadership styles consisting of four different combinations of directive and supportive behaviors (Blanchard, 2010). The leadership styles are described in Figure 4.2.

1. **Directing**: high directive behavior and low supportive behavior. The leader provides specific direction about goals, shows and tells how, and closely tracks the individual’s performance in order to provide frequent feedback on results.

2. **Coaching**: high directive behavior and high supportive behavior. The leader explains why, solicits suggestions, praises behaviors that are approximately right, and continues to direct goal or task accomplishment.
### FIGURE 4.2

LEADERSHIP STYLE DESCRIPTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style 1 Directing</th>
<th>Style 2 Coaching</th>
<th>Style 3 Supporting</th>
<th>Style 4 Delegating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning/prioritizing</td>
<td>Explaining/clarifying</td>
<td>Asking/listening</td>
<td>Allowing/trusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orienting</td>
<td>Redirecting</td>
<td>Reassuring</td>
<td>Confirming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching/showing and telling how</td>
<td>Sharing feedback</td>
<td>Facilitating self-reliant problem solving</td>
<td>Empowering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking/monitoring</td>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>Collaborating</td>
<td>Affirming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving feedback</td>
<td>Praising</td>
<td>Encouraging feedback</td>
<td>Acknowledging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defining</td>
<td>Appreciating</td>
<td>Challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring/asking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Blanchard (2010)
3. **Supporting**: low directive behavior and high supportive behavior. The leader and the individual make decisions together. The role of the leader is to facilitate, listen, draw out, encourage, and support.

4. **Delegating (empowering)**: low directive behavior and low supportive behavior. The leader empowers the individual to act independently with appropriate resources to get the job done.

**Development Level**

Development level refers to the follower’s degree of competence and commitment (Blanchard, 2010). See Figure 4.3. Competence refers to the individual’s demonstrated task-specific and transferable knowledge and skills on a goal or task. Commitment is the individual’s motivation and confidence on a goal or task. Development level is also goal or task specific. It is not an overall rating of an individual’s skills or attitude. There are four development levels which describe several combinations of competence and commitment (Blanchard, 2010).

- **D1** – Low competence, high commitment (individuals don’t know what they don’t know). Leaders should start with Directing Style (high directive, low supportive).

- **D2** – Some competence, shaky commitment (individuals are overwhelmed by what they don’t know). Leaders should use Coaching Style (high directive, high supportive).

- **D3** – Moderate competence, moderate commitment (individuals are knowledgeable but not too motivated). Leaders should use Supporting Style (low directive, high supportive).

- **D4** – High competence, high commitment (individuals are knowledgeable and motivated). Leaders should use Delegating Style (low directive, low supportive).
FIGURE 4.3

DEVELOPMENT LEVEL BY KEN BLANCHARD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D1 Enthusiastic Beginner</th>
<th>D2 Disillusioned Learner</th>
<th>D3 Capable, but Cautious Performer</th>
<th>D4 Self-Reliant Achiever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New to the goal or task; inexperienced</td>
<td>Has some knowledge and skills; not competent yet</td>
<td>Is generally self-directed but needs opportunities to test ideas with others</td>
<td>Recognized by others as an expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eager to learn; willing to take direction</td>
<td>Frustrated; may be ready to quit</td>
<td>Sometimes hesitant, unsure, tentative</td>
<td>Consistently competent; justifiably confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic, excited, optimistic</td>
<td>Discouraged, overwhelmed, confused</td>
<td>Not always confident; self-critical; may need help in looking at skills objectively</td>
<td>Trusts own ability to work independently; self-assured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know what they don’t know, so they may do the wrong thing</td>
<td>Developing and learning; needs reassurance that mistakes are part of the learning process</td>
<td>May be bored with goal or task</td>
<td>Inspired; inspires others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence based on hopes and transferable skills, not reality</td>
<td>Unreliable, inconsistent</td>
<td>Makes productive contributions</td>
<td>Proactive; may be asked to do too much</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Blanchard (2010)
The goal of the situational leadership model is to match the appropriate leadership style to the development level.

**When and How Servant Leadership Style Utilized within Situational Leadership II Model**

The Situational Model by Hersey and Blanchard and the Servant Leadership theory by Greenleaf were published at similar times in the 1970s. Leaders using the situational model will decide on a style of leadership closely related to the present situation (Blanchard et al., 1993). The servant leadership model places the needs of the followers first (Northouse, 2004).

Employees who are low on the motivational or experience level will need a more directive approach and the highly skilled and motivated employee will only need to be gently guided. Servant leaders can utilize the situational leadership model to appropriately serve and lead their followers; the two models are not mutually exclusive. Leaders must understand their given situation to effectively approach their situational roles of directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating within various situations and circumstances. Servant leaders understand that any given situation may require a different type of leadership with a different approach, practice, action, or message; however, leadership principles should be consistent across the organization and time (Lichtenwalner, 2011b).
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Education about Various Leadership Styles and Servant Leadership

Leadership is essential in all organizations as well as leadership development. However, how does one become a good leader? Are leaders naturally born or are they made? Some think leaders are born with natural charisma and social intelligence to motivate others while others believe that leaders are made by building their skills with practice, experience, and mentoring (Forbes BrandVoice, 2015). One research study from The Leadership Quarterly on heritability (innate skills) and human development (learned skills) estimates that leadership is 24% genetic and 76% learned (Bretton, 2013).

Therefore, leadership skills should be taught in colleges and universities as part of their program curriculum. “Leadership needs to be a part of the classroom experience. Universities serious about leadership education should include more distinct leadership education both as a separate curriculum and as a part of every discipline” (Doochin, 2009, p. 1). David K. Ferguson, Director at Undergraduate Leadership Program at the Andrews University says,

Truly, leadership is a lifelong process. And it is ignorant to suppose we can graduate students who are complete as leaders. In fact, it is likely more important the balance of what gets started in their leadership development than what gets finished. However, I believe that any student who embarks on leadership development at the undergraduate level has an exponential advantage against the person they otherwise would have been when it comes to impact, influence and making a difference in the world around us. (Ferguson, 2016, p. 1)
Andrews University rejects the notion that leadership is only for the few and the university defines leadership as individualized intentional influence, believing that a well-trained leader will be better able to affect meaningful change regardless of their personality or career path (Ferguson, 2015). Leadership programs can provide vital skills for students to maximize their leadership potential. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program in Gonzaga University focuses on the values of servant leadership to promote health, to care for patients with acute and chronic illnesses, and to support patients and their families till the end of life. The BSN program builds on the curricular themes of servant leadership and they have doctorate degrees in leadership studies and nursing (Gonzaga University, 2016).

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health offers an online Master’s in Public Health (MPH) track for occupational health nurses (sph.umc.edu, 2016). This program provides graduate students with the knowledge and skills for leadership and management positions within their work settings. Viterbo University, on the other hand, offers a Masters of Arts in Servant Leadership but is not specific to occupational health nursing. Viterbo’s program aspires students to leadership positions in their community, church, and businesses (Viterbo.edu, 2016).

Nurse managers can obtain the Certified Nurse Manager and Leader (CNML) credential, which is a collaborative effort between the American Organization of Nurse Executives Credentialing Center and the American Association of Critical Care Nurse Certification Corporation (American Association of Critical-Care Nurses [AACN], 2016). “CNML certification gives nurse managers a way to validate their knowledge as they strive to excel in their demanding roles, carrying out complex leadership responsibilities that directly affect the quality of care to patients and families” (AACN, 2016, p. 1). The American Board for
Occupational Health Nurses (ABOHN) is an independent nursing specialty certification board that sets professional standards and conduct occupational health nursing specialty certification. The ABOHN provides three credentials: Certified Occupational Health Nurse (COHN), Certified Occupational Health Nurse-Specialist (COHN-S), and Case Management (CM) (American Board for Occupational Health Nurses [ABOHN], 2015). The COHN-S certification focuses on administration in the workplace and 28% of the examination’s questions focus on management and leadership (ABOHN, 2015).

In addition to nurses learning the fundamental leadership skills during undergraduate and graduate studies, there are significant benefits of attending leadership conferences to increase leadership abilities and sharpen and gain new skills. Occupational health nurses can benefit from attending leadership conferences to learn something new or be reminded about important leadership principles. Leadership conferences can bring nourishment into the nurse leaders’ life because they can encourage, motivate, and inspire them (Black, 2013). Leadership conferences also provide a great opportunity to network with other leaders (Lichtenwalner, 2010). The Servant Leadership Institute is just one of the many organizations that host servant leadership conferences to provide unique opportunity for leaders to learn about the growing global movement and to inspire others to follow their lead. Attending servant leadership conferences can inspire occupational health nurse leaders by equipping them with the tools and knowledge to serve their followers and clients. Professional associations, such as the American Association for Occupational Health Nurses (AAOHN), hosts annual conferences and the 2016 AAOHN conference held in Florida focused on leadership.
Mentorship Programs on Servant Leadership to Develop and Promote OHN Leaders

Mentoring plays an important role in the personal and professional development process. “For individuals seeking personal and professional development or for organizations seeking to facilitate knowledge and skills transfer, mentoring has emerged as an important means to achieve these ends” (Poon, 2006, p. 1). Institutions of higher education should be involved in the development of leaders who believe that power and authority are for helping others grow (Polleys, 2002). Universities such as Columbus State University (CSU) offer Servant Leadership Programs to address this need. At CSU students commit to leadership development through academic study, extensive community service, and mentoring (Polleys, 2002).

Many companies listed in the Fortune 500 are abandoning hierarchical models (authoritarian, democratic, transactional, etc.) and replacing them with the servant leader approach. “The model emphasizes the power of persuasion and seeking consensus, over “top-down” leadership. At the heart of this concept is the importance of leaders nurturing both the institution and those individuals affected by the institution” (Kumar, 2010, p. 47).

Customers (patients, families) and our colleagues need nurses who are servant leaders; employees need leaders who listen to and empower them, rather than dominate or tell them what to do. If leaders pay attention to the qualities mentioned, an important framework is built to ensure long-term effects or related management and leadership approaches. (Kumar, 2010, p. 48)

Mentoring programs on servant leadership are needed to develop occupational health nurses as great servant leaders. Occupational health nurse leaders can benefit from other great nurse leaders practicing servant leadership. Leadership training and mentoring should be offered
more at local, state, and national AAOHN chapter meetings by inviting speakers who are experts on leadership development and particularly on servant leadership.

**Additional Research and Study Publications Needed on Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership may not be widely known by many corporations for their leadership style to positively contribute to the company’s success due to its primary focus on followers need and development; however, there are studies that report evidence in support of the positive impacts of servant leadership on various soft and hard measures of corporate performance (Spears, 2005). “In addition to the conceptual differences in its focus and scope relative to other leadership approaches, these evidences unequivocally suggest that servant leadership is better predictor than transformational leadership in relation to a few key outcome variables” (Sendjaya, 2015, p. 25). A few studies have been conducted to “corroborate the evidence for positive effects of servant leadership on key organizational outcomes such as creativity and innovation, trust, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and employee engagement” (Sendjaya, 2015, p. 25).

There are limited research studies on the topic of servant leadership for occupational health nurse leaders. To promote servant leadership style for occupational health nurses, more research studies are needed to support and encourage all nurses to know and apply its principles.

There is a need for strong, effective and nurturing research leadership to mitigate the negative aspects of organizational cultural life, and develop positive environments that foster research capacity. Servant leadership is a model for nurse leadership that, through community processes, encourages connectedness between people, deepens the capacity for supportive collegiality and encourages positive values such as collaboration and cooperation. (Jackson, 2008, p. 32)
There are research articles on the principles of servant leadership in community health nursing (Sturm, 2009) and other nursing profession (Sherman, 2012), but there are no specific articles or examples of servant leadership in the field of occupational health nursing. This identifies a gap and a need for occupational health nurses to write and publish articles on servant leadership.

**Promotion of Servant Leadership as a Good Leadership Style for OHNs**

Nursing is often considered the “caring” profession as the nurses serves their patients, employees, customers, as well as their employers in some capacity. One of the best ways to improve the delivery of nursing practice and health care is for occupational health nurse leaders to demonstrate the servant leadership model of nursing to their staff. Through serving their followers, OHN leaders can effectively model how other nurses should serve their clients. Dr. Rose Sherman in her nursing leadership development blog, Emerging RN Leader, discusses the background and value of servant leadership in the nursing profession. She believes the philosophy is effective and valuable because it exemplifies caring leadership for those under a leader manager’s authority and builds trust among a nursing staff. According to Sherman (2012), nurse leaders who successfully demonstrate and apply the 10 characteristics of servant leadership in their organization facilitate higher engagement and a healthier work environment.

There is growing evidence in nursing literature regarding the positive impact of healthy work environments on staff satisfaction, retention, improved patient outcomes, and organizational performance; therefore, need for strong nurse leaderships (Sherman & Pross, 2015). The Nursing Organizations Alliance, a coalition of major nursing organizations throughout the United States, identified the following as some of the key elements that support the development of healthy work environment: the presence of expert, competent, credible, visible leadership; shared decision making at all levels, the encouragement of professional
practice & continued growth/development; recognition of the value of nursing’s contribution; and a culture of accountability (Sherman & Pross, 2015). To build healthy work environments, occupational health nurses must develop and practice strong leadership to support the development of healthy work places. Many of the characteristics of servant leadership, such as listening, empathy, awareness, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community can be applied to building a strong healthy work environment.

**Summary**

The purpose of this paper was to explain what servant leadership is and describe the benefits of the leadership style for occupational health nurses while contrasting them to the other leadership styles. Although there is no perfect leadership style for every situation, it is vital for occupational health nurse leaders to understand the various styles and develop good leadership skills to effectively lead their team members to achieve healthy growing working environments. Occupational health nurse leaders should understand the situational theory model and apply its principles to support and develop their team members. Servant leadership style should be closely examined and adopted to build and strengthen their employees and community.

Servant-leadership advocates a group-oriented approach to analysis and decision making as a means of strengthening institutions and improving society. It also emphasizes the power of persuasion and seeking consensus, over the old top-down form of leadership. Some people have likened this to turning the hierarchical pyramid upside down. Servant-leadership holds that the primary purpose of a business should be to create a positive impact on its employees and community, rather than using profit as the sole motive. (Spears, 2005, p. 5)

The development of leadership for occupational health nurses is a journey. Occupational health nurses make differences for the lives of their employees and their families, and the
occupational health nurse leaders make differences in the satisfaction of their staff. Servant leadership features leader behaviors that are altruistic or seek to serve others. Servant leadership is effective when implementing a team approach (Bormann & Garrett-Wright, 2015). The caring aspect of servant leadership resonates well with the caring nursing profession. Servant leadership is recommended for occupational health nurse leaders on the belief that nurse leaders are motivated to serve their staffs who in turn serves others. The relationships that nurse leaders develop with their staff can influence satisfaction and retention.
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