LEADERSHIP FROM THE INSIDE-OUT

THREE STEPS TO SUSTAINED SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

Servant
LEADERSHIP

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Leadership from the inside-out

Three steps to sustained servant-leadership

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Executive Summary

The Knowledge Age calls for a shift toward a new type of leadership, where the leader simultaneously acts as servant who consciously unleashes human potential. Such leaders are called *"servant-leaders"*, a term coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970.[2] Servant-leaders have the capability to connect with others and to create a culture of mutual trust where people feel empowered to take more responsibility and initiative. People like to apply their talents and want to be effective and serve others in the organization because they feel noticed, heard and understood. When people grow, the organization grows with them and becomes more successful. Organizations that apply servant-leadership score better: productivity increases, as well as client and employee satisfaction and sick-leave decreases. A culture emerges where talent likes to work and flourishes. In this way, a sustainable, serving and stable organization is built that is supported by its stakeholders. This is exactly what is needed from organizations today.

A servant-leader knows that use of hierarchical power is a sign of weakness and is capable of converting power into strength. In fact, leadership does not come with a position. Servants can choose to act as leading-servants. Therefore, this article is not exclusively aimed at people who hold positions with formal authority, but it is intended for anyone, irrespective of their position in their organization, who aspires to taking more responsibility and initiative in serving others.

This article builds on the work of Robert K. Greenleaf and some prominent authors on servant-leadership who followed in his footsteps, mainly Stephen R. Covey and Joseph Jaworski. It first analyzes why servant-leadership corresponds to the kind of leadership we need in today's Knowledge Age. A subsequent reality check reveals that the currently dominating management approaches are no longer working, while the required new type of leadership is not yet (fully) in place. It then describes in three steps how to achieve a sustained paradigm shift toward servant-leadership. First, the inner journey of becoming a servant-leader is described. Second, the article provides insight in how to inspire others to serve. Finally, it is explained how to build and nurture servant-leadership communities in our societies. Each step includes a theoretical part followed by more practical guidance.

The Knowledge Age is a reality. Are we prepared?

"The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be."
– Paul Valéry (1937)

Just as the Industrial revolution marked the onset of the Industrial Age, the Digital Revolution pushed the world into the Knowledge Age, where rapid global communications and networking shape the way we live. In particular since the Internet reached a critical mass in the 1990s, we have witnessed two decades of rapid development fundamentally impacting politics, economics and culture of modern society. Savage (1995) projected that in the Knowledge Age 2% of the working population will work on the land, 10% will work in Industry and the rest will be *"knowledge workers"*.[3]

Who are these so-called knowledge workers? The term knowledge worker was introduced by Drucker in 1959 as one who works primarily with information or one who develops and uses knowledge in the workplace.[4] Cooper (2006) put it as follows: "knowledge workers are employees who have a deep background in education and experience and are considered people who *think for a living*".[5] Typical examples include, but are not limited to software developer, scientist, medical doctor, architect, public policy adviser, financial manager and business consultant. As organizations increased their dependence on information technology and engaged in a networked economy, the number of fields

in which knowledge workers must operate has expanded dramatically. For example, today's advanced manufacturing industry depends on highly trained people on the work floor who, through both their knowledge and (manual) skills, are able to operate high-tech equipment and deliver their products and services as part of a networked supply chain.

What makes knowledge workers tick? Davenport (2005) observed that "In the industrial economy, one could do a job with one's body even when the brain and heart weren't committed to the job. But this isn't the case for knowledge work. It's unlikely that you'll get great performance out of a knowledge worker if he or she isn't mentally and emotionally committed to the job."[6] According to Drucker (1999), the knowledge worker's productivity is determined by six phenomenon factors:[7]

- The knowledge worker always asks: *"What is the task?"*
- They have to have *autonomy*.
- The knowledge worker wants *continuing innovation* to be part of the work and responsibilities.
- The knowledge worker requires *continuous learning* and *continuous teaching*.
- They focus on *quantity*, but the most important concern is *quality*.
- Knowledge workers want to be seen and treated as an *'asset'* rather than a *'cost'*.

One should bear in mind that many of the knowledge workers entering the workforce since the beginning of the 21st Century are from the so-called "*generation X*" demographic. They have, in effect, been knowledge workers since birth, adept with IT tools and comfortable in the 24/7 universe. These new knowledge workers value life-long learning over life-long employment.[8] They often engage in peer-to-peer knowledge sharing across organizational and company boundaries, forming networks of expertise, for example through online social networking. They seek employability over employment and value career over self-reliance.[9] Where baby boomers are proficient in specified knowledge regarding a specific firm, generation X knowledge workers acquire knowledge from many firms and take that knowledge with them from company to company. All this applies even more to "*generation Y*", the demographic cohort following Generation X. They are the digital natives who were teenagers around the millennium.

Drucker (1999) projected that "In a few hundred years, when the history of our time is written from a long-term perspective, it is likely that the most important event those historians will see is not technology, not the Internet, not e-commerce. It is an unprecedented change in the human condition. For the first time, literally, substantial and rapidly growing numbers of people have choices. For the first time, they will have to manage themselves. And society is totally unprepared for it."[10] A recent survey (2013) confirmed that "Knowledge workers like to have a high level of choice and control over what they do and learn; they are self-

directed, self-organized and self-managed. The less control they have, the more disengaged they are with their organization."[11] Thus, now more than ever, it is not about technology, it is all about people!

What does today's organizational reality look like?

"We live in a Knowledge Worker Age but operate our organizations in a controlling Industrial Age model that absolutely suppresses the release of human potential." – Stephen R. Covey (2004)

Covey (2004) observed that many of today's management practices are based on the belief that people need to be controlled and managed.[12] For example, the P&L statements list people as "expense", while equipment appears on the balance sheet as "investment". People are "motivated" by a carrot-and-stick approach i.e., reward and punishment. Budgets are allocated based on last year's projections but need to be spent because otherwise budgets will be cut next year. In order to increase efficiency and quality, more and more business processes are codified in strict rules and procedures. However, this makes organizations increasingly bureaucratic, less creative and thus less responsive to changing needs. Generation Y workers, after leaving university, are shocked when entering organizations that do not allow them to express, share and collaborate through blogs, social networking and collaborative tools they grew up with.

"The problem is, managers today are still applying the old Industrial Age control model to knowledge workers. Because many positions of authority do not see the true worth and potential of their people and do not possess a complete, accurate understanding of human nature, they manage people as they do things". Today's managers may often simply misconceive the need of their workers. At the same time, people may also witness other people being politically appointed to positions of authority, leading to kiss-up and kick-down behavior. Or worse, a culture of fear emerges when such people abuse their positional power to mask their own weaknesses and to maintain the status quo.

What happens if you treat people like replaceable work units or, simply, things and expose them to weak management? They do not feel appreciated for their capabilities and, more importantly, as human beings. Some may actually have joined a modern organization that advocated human capital to be their most important success factor, only to realize afterwards that in reality the organization does not practice what it preaches (broken promise). Consequently, people become angry, frustrated, stressed, bored, fatigued, empty, afraid, sad, depressed or even burned out. In the end, as Covey indicates, "People stop believing that leadership can become a choice. Most people think of leadership as a position and therefore don't see themselves as leaders".

As a result, some people disengage from their organization, first mentally, and then move on to the next, now even more aware

that they have to take care of themselves. Others keep hanging on because they do not have any job alternative or consider the price of leaving too high (golden cage). Most people then slip into a downward spiral of co-dependency. They may choose to sabotage, obstruct or, at most, comply with minimum effort, waiting to be told what to do. This only confirms the Industrial Age-minded manager in his belief that people must be told what to do and be controlled in their work, which again de-motivates the worker, etc. Over time, both parties confirm themselves in their roles, believing that the other one must change to make things better. As such, they have mutually disempowered themselves. Eventually, this behavior spreads and the organization finds itself trapped into a co-dependency culture.

What kind of leadership do we need in the Knowledge Age?

"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. Those who choose to follow this principle will not casually accept the authority of existing institutions. Rather, they will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted servants. To the extent that this principle prevails in the future, the only truly viable institutions will be those that are predominantly servant led."
– Robert K. Greenleaf (1977)

We need to shift from an Industrial Age management mindset toward a Knowledge Age leadership mindset. But what kind of leadership do we need? In 1977, Robert K. Greenleaf introduced a new paradigm, called *'servant-leadership'* into the boardrooms and corporate offices of America.[13] Greenleaf was among the first to analyze the qualities of leaders and followers, and the necessity for leaders to be attentive to the needs of others. Such a leader constantly inquires whether other people's needs are being served. This makes those who are being served become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely to become servants. The true leader is also a seeker, alert to new possibilities, open, listening and ready for whatever develops. True leadership, then, is an inner quality as much as an exercise of authority. Scholars generally agree on 10 characteristics that are central to the development of a servant-leader:

- Listening: a servant-leader puts the emphasis upon listening effectively to others.
- Empathy: a servant-leader needs to understand others' feelings and perspectives.
- Healing: a servant-leader helps foster each person's emotional and spiritual health and wholeness.
- Awareness: a servant-leader understands his or her own values and feelings, strengths and weaknesses.
- Persuasion: a servant-leader influences others through their persuasiveness.
- Conceptualization: a servant-leader needs to integrate present realities and future possibilities.

- Foresight: a servant-leader needs to have a well developed sense of intuition about how the past, present, and future are connected.
- Stewardship: a servant-leader is a steward who holds an organization's resources in trust for greater goods.
- Commitment to the growth of people: A servant-leader is responsible for serving the need of others.
- Building community: a servant-leader has to help create a sense of community among people.

These characteristics are by no means exhaustive.[14] They should not be interpreted as a certain manner to behave and they do not represent the best method to gain aims. Rather, every person shall reflect if these characteristics can be useful for his personal development.[15] Indeed, Greenleaf's acid test of servant-leadership brings it to the point: "How do you tell a servant-leader is at work? – Do the people around the person grow?" Thus, we need leaders who consciously unleash human potential, rather than putting people in a straight jacket. This requires, first and foremost, a profound understanding of human nature.

Following both Western and Eastern philosophy and religion, Covey (2004) provides us with a useful model, called the *'whole person paradigm'*.[16] This model conceives that human beings are four dimensional (body, mind, heart and spirit). It corresponds to the four basic human needs and motivations to live (survival-physical/economic need), to love (relationships – social/emotional

need), to learn (growth and development – mental need) and to leave a legacy (meaning and contribution – spiritual need). In line with these four dimensions, human potential can be expressed in four intelligences or capabilities:

- Physical intelligence (PQ): the ability to move well and to listen to and acknowledge deep seated physical signals.[17]
- Mental intelligence (IQ): a very general capability that, among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience.[18]
- Emotional intelligence (EQ): a range of five skills enabling you to identify, understand, express, manage and use your emotions and those of others.[19]
- Spiritual intelligence (SQ): the drive for meaning and connection with the infinite.[20]

What makes a servant-leader great? According to Covey (2004), all great achievers have in common that, through persistent efforts and inner struggle, they have greatly expanded their four native human intelligences.[21] The highest manifestations of these four intelligences are: for the mental, *vision*; for the physical, *discipline*; for the emotional, *passion*; and for the spiritual, *conscience*. Vision is seeing with the mind's eye what is possible in people, projects, causes and enterprises. Vision results when our mind joins need with possibility. Discipline is paying the price to bring that vision into reality. Discipline arises when vision joins with commitment. Passion is the fire, desire, strength of conviction and drive

that sustains the discipline to achieve the vision. Conscience is the inward moral sense of what is right and what is wrong, the drive toward meaning and contribution. It is the guiding force to vision, discipline and passion. It stands in stark contrast to the life dominated by the ego.

How do we know we make the right choices, tell right from wrong, preferably in a consistent way over time? Covey's answer is that, for this, we need to live by universal, timeless and self-evident principles, such as fairness, kindness, respect, honesty, integrity, service, contribution.[22] Moral authority is obtained by humble persons who use their freedom and power to choose in a principle-centered way. Values are social norms which, contrary to principles, are personal, subjective and arguable. Everybody has values, even criminals. Covey underlines that "consequences are governed by principles, and behavior is governed by values". Hence, values need to be principle-based. "Moral authority requires the sacrifice of short-term selfish interests and the exercise of courage in subordinating social values to principles. And our conscience is the repository of those principles." This implies that spiritual intelligence is the central and most fundamental of all intelligences because it guides the other three. It also helps us discern true principles that are part of our conscience.

Jaworski (2010) took the concept of servant-leadership one step further by putting even higher emphasis on spiritual intelligence as guiding force. He states that "At the time of writing

the first edition [1996], the most admired institutions were led by what Robert Greenleaf described as 'servant-leaders'. Scott Peck has referred to these as 'Stage III' leaders. But I believe that a more advanced generation of institutions must be lead by what I call 'Stage IV' leaders. Stage IV leaders embody the characteristics and values of servant-leaders but have matured to a more comprehensive and subtle level of development. They exhibit a capacity for extraordinary functioning and performance. At the heart of this kind of performance is the capacity for accessing tacit knowing that can be used for breakthrough thinking, strategy formation, and innovation, including envisioning and creating the kind of institution or society we desire. Stage IV leaders believe that there is an underlying intelligence with the universe that is capable of guiding us and preparing us for the futures we must create. They combine their cognitive understanding of the world around them with a strong personal sense of possibility – the possibility of actualizing hidden potentials lying dormant in the universe, a view that carries with it the power to change the world as we know it."[23]

He refers to this underlying intelligence within the universe as *'synchronicity'*, a term that was first coined by psychologist Jung in 1960 as "a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than the probability of chance is involved."[24] Jung was triggered by a session with a patient who told him she had dreamt about a scarabee. Just at that moment, a scarabee flew through the open window into the room. Although these two events do not show any causal relationship, yet their

coinciding occurrence was meaningful to them. Jaworski was also very much inspired by his conversations with physicist Bohm, who shared with him the underlying principles of synchronicity by taking the perspective of quantum physics.[25]

Jaworski concludes that "we should be open to fundamental shifts of mind. It's about a shift from seeing the world made up of things to seeing a world that's open and primarily made up of relationships. Once we understand a deeper reality exists, we begin to understand that we live in a world of possibilities. When this fundamental shift of mind occurs, our sense of identity shifts, too, and we begin to accept each other as legitimate human beings. When we start to accept this fundamental shift of mind, we begin to see ourselves as part of the unfolding. We also see that it's actually impossible for us not to have meaning. Operating in this different state of mind and being, we come to a very different sense of what it means to be committed. Our being is inherently in a state of commitment as part of the unfolding process. One surrenders into commitment: I actualize my commitment by listening, out of which my 'doing' arises. When this new type of commitment starts to operate, there is a flow around us. Things just seem to happen. When we are in a state of commitment and surrender, we begin to experience what is sometimes called synchronicity".

How can we create a flow and experience synchronicity in practice? Spiritual leader Chopra (2005) holds the view that synchronicity can be harnessed to create one's future or, what he calls,

'synchrodestiny'.[26)] In practical terms, the first step is to focus your intentions. You connect with your spirit through meditation and with full attention think about what you deeply desire as concretely as possible. These thoughts are mental energies emitted at a certain frequency. The next step is to not try to control, but to let go and trust the universe to do its work. The universe will synchronize itself with your thought frequency and out of its infinite field of pure potential starts weaving a web of meaningful coincidences, thereby unfolding the best possible outcome for you. Thus, it is not about making things happen, but letting things unfold. The universe is able to tune in better if such thoughts are emitted consistently over a significant period of time. Daily meditations will support this. When authentically open, you start noticing these coincidences while they are happening and begin to gain greater and greater access to the messages being sent to you about the path and direction of your life. At the next stage, you become fully aware of the interrelatedness of all things, how each affects the next, how they all are "in synch" with one another. By applying attention and intention to these coincidences and acting upon them, you can create specific outcomes in your live.

Chopra clarifies the working of synchronicity by stating that one's spirit has a personal part and a universal part. The personal spirit governs the conscience and provides a template for the kind of person each one of us will turn out to be. The actions we take can affect our personal spirit. Note that Covey emphasizes in particular this part of the spirit (see above). The universal part is not

touched by our actions, but is connected to a spirit that is pure and unchanging. Advanced servant-leaders are aware that they can always tap into the part that is universal, the infinite field of pure potential, and change the course of their destiny. Thus, synchro-destiny is about taking advantage of this connection between the personal spirit and universal spirit to shape your life. This vision is embedded in Chopak's (2010) view on the spirit as a guiding force for servant-leadership.[27)]

In conclusion, the Knowledge Age calls for a shift toward an advanced type of servant-leadership rooted in Greenleaf's notion of the servant-leader. Such leaders must have expanded physical, mental, emotional and spiritual intelligence, while being guided by their spiritual intelligence and not their ego. Conscience is the highest manifestation of the personal part of their spirit. By consciously connecting to the universal part of their spirit, they tap into the infinite field of pure potential, which allows them to shape their destiny.

The remainder of this article describes in three steps how to achieve a sustained paradigm shift toward servant-leadership. First, the inner journey of becoming a servant-leader is described. Second, the article provides insight in how to inspire others to serve. Finally, it is explained how to build and nurture servant-leadership communities in our societies. Each step includes a theoretical part followed by more practical guidance.

Letting the shift unfold - Step 1: Walk the inner path to wholeness

"I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul."
– William Ernest Henley, last two lines of his poem "Invictus" (1875)

Can everybody become a servant-leader? Leadership is about taking initiative and responsibility, independent of one's position in the organization. Therefore, leadership is a choice and everybody can become a leader. The key question in becoming a servant-leader is whether one puts the ego or the spirit in the driving seat. Greenleaf (1977) noted that "It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead…" On a deeper level, becoming a servant-leader is an inner journey in search of wholeness.

How do we walk that inner path? Walking the inner path to wholeness is a synergistic process, requiring one to respect, develop, integrate and balance the four dimensions to realize one's full potential and lasting fulfillment. This search is not linear and might sometimes be triggered by a series of events and/or even a deep crisis, a kind of (almost) lost-it-all moment in a life driven by one's ego.

The ego is a conditioned mental self-image from which we derive our identity through its attachments or possessions. The ego feels insecure because it constantly needs validation for its survival

and follows mental patterns to satisfy its selfish needs. One's ego can be so big that it even has three faces (me, myself and I). As the ego typically satisfies its needs by external factors, the ego works from the outside-in. A life driven by external factors leads to imbalance, fragmentation and, hence, mediocrity.

The journey starts by first realizing that you are not your ego and remembering who you really are, your true self, your spirit. Your spirit is whole by its very nature. Once the true self is rediscovered and starts to transcend again to the other three dimensions (body, mind and heart), wholeness has returned to your life. It feels like rebirth, like a caterpillar that has transformed itself into a butterfly. Thus, servant-leadership comes from the inside-out!

There is no one right way to do it, for everybody is unique. This makes the inner journey so personal. Nelson Mandela is known for having walked the inner journey during his 27-year imprisonment, taking comfort in Henley's poem (see above). He did not come out of prison as a bitter man, but instead asked himself the simple question: "How can I serve my country?" Defining a *'Personal Life Statement'* helps expressing one's unique voice.[28] Such a statement includes a person's mission, vision, values and dreams. The mission defines your overall purpose and answers the question "What can I contribute to the world and why?" The answer to the 'why' should reveal whether one follows the ego or spirit. The mission provides the framework or context within which you choose to live your life. It should serve a mid-term perspective, thus be valid for a number of years.

The vision defines what you would like to achieve in a particular role (e.g., spouse, parent, friend, professional, member of sports club, etc.). It answers the question "How can I contribute?". For example, "As event manager of my golf club, I will make our annual tournament in September a success". The vision should serve a short-term perspective and could be validated and updated, for example, on an annual basis. Ideally, SMART[29] goals are defined for each role, complemented by a sufficiently detailed planning and regular progress checks. Your efforts should be sustainable. Therefore, it is advisable to commit to goals for a limited number of roles only. Quality over quantity! Also, one should check whether all four intelligences at least are drawn upon in one of the selected roles. Otherwise you run the risk of not consciously working on improving a particular intelligence. One step further, you could consider roles that require more than one type of intelligence. For example, a basketball player not only needs to know how to move (PQ), but also to understand game tactics (IQ) and teamwork (EQ).

Values provide guidance in making decisions and need to be principle-based. They answer the question "How do I decide?". Make important decisions based on the direction of the conscience, as highest manifestation of one's personal spirit, subordinating IQ, EQ and PQ. All four intelligences, and life, will then fall into harmony. Finally, dreams are mid- to long-term objectives that, for the time being, are put on the reserve list in order not to be forgotten. Dreams answer the question "What have I always wanted

to do but have not made time for so far?". For example, "I have always wanted to give development aid to African children."When the time is ripe, a dream can be operationalized as part of an annual vision: "As development aid worker, this summer I will participate in a United Nations project to teach computer skills to children in Sudan".

Defining your Personal Life Statement is the starting point for creating a synchronistic flow. It focuses your intentions. Disciplined meditation on your goals will evoke the universe to unfold the best possible outcome for you out of its infinite field of pure potential. Be authentically open to any coincidences that have meaning to you and you will start experiencing how it feels to live a life from the inside-out.

Letting the shift unfold - Step 2: Inspire others to serve

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." – John Quincy Adams

Servant-leaders are persons who not only have found their own voice, but also inspire others to find their voice as part of a transformative inner journey at organizational level. According to Covey (2004), this journey is a sequential inside-out process that involves four leadership roles that are positive manifestations of the body, mind, heart and spirit.[30]

- Modeling (conscience) – set a good example
- Pathfinding (vision) – jointly determine the course
- Aligning (discipline) – set up and manage systems to stay on course
- Empowering (passion) – focus talent on results, not methods, then get out of people's way and give help as requested

Modeling is the start of the organization's inner journey and is focused on creating an organizational spirit i.e., its culture. A culture of trustworthiness and trust is the highest manifestation of an organization's spirit. Trust is the glue in relationships, thus also of organizations. Leaders serving as role model are worth other peoples' trust based on their character and competence. Character builds on integrity, maturity and an abundance mentality. Integrity comes from integrating principles in one's behavior, contrary to a quick-fix approach. Maturity is the capability to take tough decisions in a compassionate way. The abundance mentality means not seeing life as winner-takes-all game based on comparison, competition and contending, but rather as unlimited potentiality for people's growth and success. Competence relates to technical and conceptual knowledge, as well as the awareness that all of life is interdependent in terms of teams, organizations, customers, suppliers and stakeholders. For advanced servant-leaders, the abundance mentality and sense of interdependence are part of a higher level of awareness that allows them to actualize hidden potentials lying dormant in the universe.

When a servant-leader trusts his people, and those people live up to that trust and reciprocate, a bond will be created. A culture of trust will emerge. Hence, modeling inspires trust. Greenleaf (2002) observed on a deeper level that "There is something subtle communicated between the 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."[31] The next step of the journey is showing people how they can work and lead in a different way than the Industrial Age management style. The servant-leader will show others how a person who has found his voice will act in the three other leadership roles i.e., pathfinding, aligning and empowering.

Pathfinding is the process of uniting people with their different backgrounds, experiences, strengths and weaknesses behind one purpose. The servant-leader reasonably involves people in the process of co-creating a mission statement (purpose and destination) and a strategic plan (path that leads to the destination) for the organization. The strategic plan should include principle-centered values and a compelling scoreboard to monitor progress against strategic goals. The process typically is highly participative, interactive and creative, while building on and reinforcing the aforementioned culture of trust. This stimulates the group's capacity for accessing tacit knowing that can be used for breakthrough thinking, strategy formation, and innovation, including envisioning and creating the kind of organization they desire. Involvement not only lets people have a common understanding of the overall pur-

pose of the organization, it also enhances people's identification with the end result. This provides focus and drives all decisions that follow downstream. By making it a joint exercise, pathfinding creates order without demanding it. It ensures that everybody in the organization will have ownership in the path that leads to the destination. Once the organization's intention is focused, all the attention goes to executing the strategic plan. This execution requires the servant-leader to play the subsequent aligning and empowering roles.

Aligning is the process of (re)designing and executing structures, systems and processes for results (e.g., organizational structure, logistical infrastructure, information systems, appraisal systems, compensation systems, customer and worker feedback systems, workflows, etc.) This process could be divided in three main steps: 1) use both personal moral authority and formal authority to create structure, systems and processes that will formalize or institutionalize your strategy; 2) create cascading goals in the organization that support your mission and strategic plan; and 3) adjust and align yourself with regular feedback from customers and workers on how well your organization meets human needs. The scoreboard as defined in the pathfinding process is instrumental to this end. Organizational trustworthiness is institutionalized when *'structure follows strategy'*.

Empowering is the process of releasing peoples' passion and talent, clearing the way before them and then getting out of their

way. Empowerment is the fruit, not the root, of both personal and organizational trustworthiness, which enables people to identify and unleash their human potential. It promotes self-control, self-management and self-organizing, which taps into passion, energy and drive to deliver results. The leadership challenge is to strike the right balance between the knowledge worker's autonomy and accountability, which is achieved through directed autonomy. This means that training and coaching is provided to those who lack the competence to be fully entrusted with greater autonomy. Someone with a good performance track record earns greater trust. People become accountable for results and have freedom, within guidelines, to achieve the cascaded goals in a way that taps into their unique talents. Workers manage themselves. They become empowered. The leader's role then shifts from controller to enabler, thus serving human needs. The servant-leader supports the worker by asking how is it going, what are you learning and what are your goals? He also holds himself accountable by asking how can I help and how am I doing as a helper? Such dialogue not only reinforces a culture of trust, but also allows answering to Greenleaf's acid test: "Do the people around the person grow?" This dialogue may also include teaching the underlying principles of (advanced) servant-leadership as appropriate.

The servant-leadership approach is captured in the figure below. It should be underlined here that it concerns a sequential process of modeling, pathfinding, aligning and empowering that starts again whenever organizational change is required. It is para-

mount that all four stages are followed through and not performed partially. Too often, managers react on external or peer pressures to reform and then only involve staff in a pathfinding and aligning exercise. They skip the modeling part, because it makes them feel too vulnerable. Also, they do not follow up with empowering because they are afraid to share power and lose control. People will then easily grasp that, deep inside, the manager actually does not trust his or her people, nor is the manager interested in their growth and development. Such approach not only hampers sustained change, it undermines trust and motivation and ultimately organizational success.

Inside-out sequential process

Pathfinding
(Mind)

Modeling
(Spirit)

Empowering
(Heart)

Aligning
(Body)
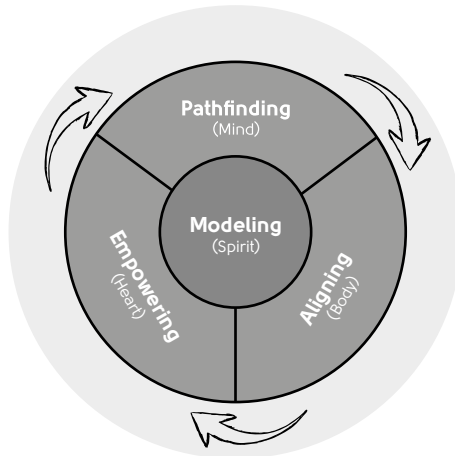
Unleashes human potential

Source: Stephen R. Covey

Advanced servant-leaders understand that their being is inherently in a state of commitment as part of this unfolding process. They consciously move themselves and their organization into a synchronistic flow. Or as Chopra put it: "Look up at the sky on any summer's day and wait for a flock of birds. … they all seem to be moving in formation, when they change direction, they all execute the same motions synchronistically. A single flock of birds can include hundreds of individuals, yet each bird moves in harmony with every other bird without an obvious leader. … They climb and turn and swoop so that they look like a single organism, as if some unspoken command was issued they all obey at once."[32]

Letting the shift unfold – Step 3: Build and nurture servant-leadership communities

"We need to be the change we wish to see in the world."
– Mahatma Gandhi

Greenleaf was the first to articulate the need for a new leadership paradigm, called servant-leadership. He put it rather dramatically when he stated that "the enemy is strong natural servants who have the potential to lead but do not lead, or who choose to follow a nonservant. They suffer. Society suffers. And so it may be in the future."[33]
The need for a paradigm shift became increasingly manifest during the 1990s when the Digital Revolution pushed society into the

Knowledge Age for good. Covey, Jaworski and others were inspired by Greenleaf when providing their view on how to let this shift unfold. While the body of literature grew, the notion of servant-leadership advanced to a more sophisticated level with the spirit as guiding force. More and more people got inspired to lead by example and teach others, thereby slowly spreading the new paradigm one by one. These good examples provide islands of hope. However, more momentum is needed to raise both the capacity to serve and the very performance as servant of existing organizations by new regenerative forces within them.

Greenleaf, Covey and Jaworski realized this and established organizations to leave a legacy.[34] Their institutes first emerged in the United States and later spread to parts of Western Europe and some other parts of the world. One could say that a servant-leadership movement is emerging. However, a more systemic approach is needed to realize a paradigm shift.

In line with step 1 and step 2 to let the shift unfold, also step 3 – build and nurture servant-leadership communities – is to be approached as a sequential inside-out process, with the servant-leadership spirit as guiding force. The servant-leadership spirit has a local part and a universal part. To increase impact, more locally embedded servant-leadership communities (local spirit) should be established that are part of a larger global servant-leadership community (universal spirit).

The above-mentioned institutes could play an important role in modeling the servant-leadership spirit at a global level. In a way, this should come naturally, for they all come from the same source (as the advanced servant-leaders among them are certainly aware). Through concerted efforts, they could co-create a mission statement and strategic plan to this end, while involving already existing local communities. Structures, systems and processes should be aligned to help establish, nurture and interconnect local communities throughout the world. This would follow an organic growth pattern. Local communities should be empowered through directed autonomy where the final measurement of success builds on Greenleaf's acid test: "Do the people in the local community grow?"

Such local communities should seek sustained change from within organizations in their region, rather than replacing them by new ones. This will only lead to new organizations with the same systemic problems. These communities should not include only those at the top of the hierarchy, as change can be created at any level. It must be recognized that the capacity for servant-leadership must be distributed throughout an organization. The number of servant-leaders needs to be increased everywhere. Local communities will not adhere to nonservants and not wait for people with formal authority to lead. Rather, they will underpin that leadership is a choice and passionately act upon a shared notion: "We are the leaders we are waiting for!" Leadership will then indeed become the capacity of a community to shape its future.[35)]

Conclusion

We are currently in a transition from the old Industrial Age to the Knowledge Age, driven by the search for meaning and contribution. Servant-leadership can guide people, organizations and communities during this transition, from the inside-out!

Notes

1. Ronald de Bruin is a servant-leader in international multi-stakeholder in-novation with nearly two decades of leadership experience in public policy, business and public-private partnerships. He holds a Ph.D. in Law & Computer Science, an M.Sc. in Technology Management and a B.Sc. in Electronic Engi-neering. In first instance, the author wrote this article as an essay to himself in an attempt to capture his own vision on leadership based on knowledge and experiences gained during both his professional and personal life. He decided to make his findings public to inspire others to become a servant-leader to the benefit of their personal lives, organizations and communities.

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