



Lead Differently

Mark Miller

Why Lead Differently?

Leaders and leadership are often thought of in a poor light. Leadership is often viewed as a necessary evil. There is even a growing voice to the idea of leaderless organizations. I'm not sure where that is headed, but I do know I don't want to be a part of a leaderless organization.

My experience is that people want to be well led. We all seem to thrive when we are under great leadership. We know it when we see it because our talents are being leveraged, our purpose is clear, our contributions are appreciated, our ideas are welcomed and we're making progress organizationally and personally.

Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Most of us have had an experience or two—or more, in which we were NOT well led. We were doing time and watching the clock. We weren't giving extra effort because that was not what we were told to do and doing what we were told to do is ALL we were supposed to do!

Which of these scenarios matches your experience with leadership—necessary evil or liberating force?

People and organizations are much more likely to thrive if the leader subscribes to what Robert Greenleaf called Servant Leadership. It is not a new idea—Greenleaf didn't invent it nor did I. However, it is an idea whose time has come. It is time to Lead Differently!

View Leadership Differently

What's your picture of leadership? Have you ever asked that question of others? You might be surprised by the answers you'd get. My picture of servant leadership is an iceberg.

Just like an iceberg, most of leadership is below the surface. Yes, about 90% of an iceberg is below the waterline. This can be thought of as the Character of a leader. The character of the leader is a HUGE part of their success—or lack of it.

The 10% above the waterline represents the Skills of a leader. Can the leader actually lead? Can he/she cast vision, engage followers, align resources, build teams, get results, etc.? These are critical and can generally be learned.



When Peter Drucker was asked about the importance of character in a leader, his response was: “The quality of character does not make the leader, but the absence flaws the entire process.” Great servant leaders must possess both Character and Skills!

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Practice Leadership Differently

Servant leadership has many definitions—some abstract, some academic and some full of emotion. Almost a decade ago, Ken Blanchard and I took a different approach in a book entitled *The Secret: What Great Leaders Know and Do*. Our definition of servant leadership is extremely pragmatic. It is based on what great leaders DO. Yes, they DO serve, but they serve in 5 intrinsically strategic ways.

See the Future. Leaders are the visionaries who see the future first—they see it BEFORE it actually exists. Leadership is fundamentally about taking people to that preferred future. Leaders answer questions like: Where are we going? Why does it matter? What are we trying to accomplish?

And, what's in it for me? Leaders don't know every detail regarding what the future holds. However, they are in the business of inventing the future. Leadership always begins with a picture of the future.

Engage & Develop Others. Once the picture begins to take shape in the heart and mind of the leader, he or she must enlist others for the journey. The leader has the opportunity and responsibility to build a team capable of making the vision a reality. This starts with selection. The leader must field a team that is passionate, skilled and committed to the vision. Then the leader must create an engaging environment to bring out the best in those enlisted.

Reinvent Continuously. Leaders embrace the principle that progress is always preceded by change. This change will manifest itself in countless ways. It should be readily apparent in at least three arenas: Self, Systems and Structure. Leader must be constantly reinventing themselves. Leaders must be learners. The work processes must also be under constant evaluation. If different outcomes are desired, most often, the system must be changed. Finally, leaders know that structure should enable, not inhibit, the accomplishment of the work—when it doesn't enable, structure must change.

Value Results and Relationships. The best leaders have a broader definition of success. Traditional results will always be of utmost importance—whether you're in the marketplace,

non-profit sector, academia, or the armed services. Leaders know they must deliver results. However, a growing number of leaders are also interested in the relationships that are created and nurtured along the way. Results and relationships—together, they model what Jim Collins would call “the genius of the AND.” Although challenging, this broader definition of success actually creates more traditional results in the process.

Embody the Values. The people we lead want leaders they can trust. Granted there are many ways to build trust, but one of the fastest is to walk the talk. That’s what Embody the Values means. You and I as leaders have an opportunity to bolster our leadership or destroy it through our daily actions. People always watch the leader. They are looking to see if we are trustworthy. Do we attempt to live in alignment with the things we say are important? If not, we’ll ultimately forfeit the right to lead.

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When a leader delivers on these practices and is motivated by a genuine desire to serve those we lead, the effect is profound!

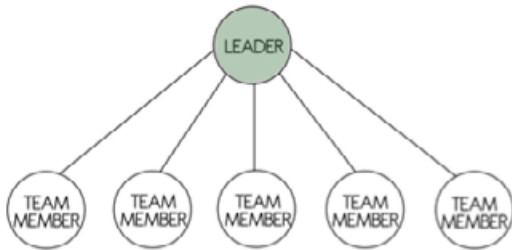
After all our work on servant leadership, Ken and I had to look in the mirror and ask ourselves a soul-searching question: Am I a serving leader or a self-serving leader?

Our conclusion, we're both still a work in progress!

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Lead Teams Differently

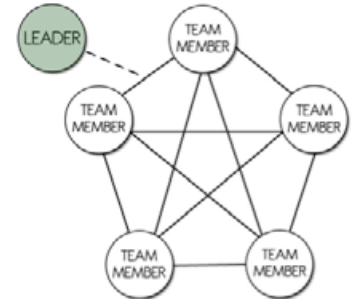
Servant leaders, like all leaders, have a fundamental decision to make regarding how they'll structure their organization. There are infinite ways to structure an organization. However, there are three archetypes that show up over and over again. See if you can identify your current approach.



Command and Control



Quarterback



High—Performance

As you can imagine, each of the previous structures have advantages and disadvantages. However, in the complex world in which we live, more and more leaders are finding the High-Performance approach makes the most sense. Fundamentally, it is the structure that creates the most capacity for the leader and fosters the most growth among the team members. If you can grow capacity and people simultaneously, most leaders are interested!

So how would a leader go about creating a High-Performance Team?

The answer is simple in concept and very challenging to execute.

It can be summarized with this diagram:



Here's a quick summary of the four elements of a High-Performance Team:

Results. The best teams have a focus on results. The team is working together to accomplish something! They don't meet for fun. They don't meet to share information. They measure their progress and constantly look for opportunities to improve performance. They work together to achieve results.

Talent. The best teams also place a priority on getting the right people on the team. They don't settle when adding new members to the team. They are always looking to raise the bar on talent. Jack Welch said, "The team with the most talented players usually wins." High-Performance teams know this to be true.

Skills. Skills are the essential element that enables a team to achieve any level of success. Without skills no team can win. Skills are needed in two arenas: Individual Skills and Team Skills. Each member of the team must possess the necessary skills to execute their individual role with excellence. Also, the team must learn Team Skills to enable the members to work together at a high level. Team Skills include things such as problem solving, conflict resolution, meeting management and decision-making.

Community. Community is the secret sauce for high-performance teams. It is what separates the good teams from the great ones. Community is identifiable by the level of genuine care

and concern the team members have for each other. While once believed to be totally random in its occurrence, we now know that if pursued purposefully, community can be created in a team setting. When it is present, assuming the requisite talent and skills are in place, community will turbo charge the performance of the team.

How does all this happen? Can a High-Performance Team just appear? Perhaps the answer should be thought of as the fifth piece in the puzzle. To create a high-performance team will require leadership—a different kind of leadership. A leader who is fully engaged but engaged differently. Here's a partial list of important responsibilities and how they might be assigned.

The Role of the Leader

- Establishes the Vision
- Establishes the Core Values
- Creates Boundaries for the team
- Provides resources for the team
- Encourages the team and individual members
- Teaches the team how to succeed

The Role of the Team

- Communicates the Vision
- Enforces the Core Values
- Manages the day-to-day operations
- Provides accountability
- Solves problems
- Improves performance

How do you and I prepare for this new type of leadership and our new role?
We must be willing to GROW differently.

GROW Differently

Living things grow. Growth for a leader is like oxygen for a deep-sea diver. Without it—you die. Ken Blanchard and I have just released on a book on this topic entitled *Great Leaders GROW*.

To most of you reading this, the idea of growth for a leader makes perfect sense. However, many leaders still see personal growth as extracurricular at best; it is something to do if you find extra time, energy and resources.

So why do so many leaders miss the point that growth is not optional? What are the impediments a leader must navigate to GROW?

1. **Too Busy.** Most high-impact leaders I know are busy. However, the best leaders know they can never allow themselves to become too busy to learn. Leaders must be sure we've allocated time to reinvest in ourselves. Stephen Covey talked about this when he documented the habits of “highly-effective” people. His research revealed the practice of “Sharpening

the Saw.” Yes, it takes time, but our effectiveness increases more than enough to offset the time investment. If we’re too busy to learn, we’re too busy to lead.

2. **Lack of Priority.** Clearly, this is related to item #1. Leaders act on their priorities. That’s what leaders do. So, where is personal growth on your priority list? Is it near the top or at the bottom of your list? Or is it even on your list? Granted, there will be seasons when personal growth may take a back seat. But the best leaders know this is not a sustainable situation. If a leader places priority on personal growth, he or she will make it happen.
3. **Misplaced Responsibility.** Who’s responsible for your growth as a leader? Is it your supervisor’s job? Is the organization accountable? If you and I wait for our supervisor or the organization to fuel our growth, we may be waiting a very long time. Let’s face it—our growth is not the highest priority on someone else’s agenda. Our growth is our job. We must own it and act on it!

So, in light of these very real obstacles, what’s the antidote?

It starts with a realization that leads to a decision. The realization:

Leaders must embrace the truth that our capacity to grow determines our capacity to lead.

The decision:

I will assume full responsibility for my growth as a leader.

This realization and decision will position you for growing influence, impact and opportunity. You'll be ready to begin the journey. What's your next step? Get started!

Here are four strategies that if executed well, will enable you to become a leader for life!

Gain Knowledge. This is perhaps the most obvious of the four strategies. As leaders, we've always got to be getting smarter. We must be learning. This will take many forms—in part, this will be based on our own learning styles and preferences. There is no universal formula for learning. We get to create our own! While there's no step-by-step recipe, leaders need to continually gain knowledge in at least four arenas.

- Their People
- Their Business
- Their Industry
- Leadership

Reach Out to Others. Reaching out to others is both a practice and a mindset. It is born of the belief that sharing what I am learning will not only help others grow, it will help me grow. This “sharing mindset” can manifest itself in many ways. For some, it will be a formal mentoring relationship. For another, it will be a teaching assignment. Some will find social media a valuable tool for sharing what they are learning. Many others will informally influence the lives of those around them by looking for and seizing “teachable moments.” Regardless of the forum, Reaching Out to Others will help leaders GROW.

Open Your World. For many leaders, this will be the most fun of the GROW strategies. To Open Your World requires a never-ending pursuit of new ideas, relationships, experiences and adventures that will inform your leadership for the rest of your life. Think of it like an artist putting paint on a palette—only then can the paint be applied to the canvas. As you expand your world, you are adding to the reservoir you can use to lead in the future. Don’t limit your thinking on this. You can, and should, think about how to Open Your World at work and outside of the workplace.

Walk Toward Wisdom. Like the previous strategies for growing as a leader, Walk Toward Wisdom is a never-ending pursuit. Wisdom is often thought of as something out of the reach of mere mortals and relegated to the few and aged in our world. While we do see it often among those who have more experience than others, we’ve also seen the “old fools” around us. Age is not a guarantee of wisdom. Wisdom must be pursued. So how does a leader Walk Toward

Wisdom? A life-long journey marked by rigorous self-evaluation, feedback and counsel will be required.

Great leaders GROW! They are on a never-ending journey to Gain Knowledge, Reach Out to Others, Open their World and Walk Toward Wisdom. How about you?

Are You Ready?

The world needs a different paradigm for leadership. What would happen if leaders led well? What would happen if leaders put the needs and interests of their people and their organizations ahead of their own? The resulting performance improvements would be staggering!

This is not a fairy tale.

Think about the leaders that have had the greatest, positive impact on your life—maybe it was a parent, a teacher, a coach, even a boss. Were they self-serving? I'm guessing they weren't. Think about the greatest leaders the world has ever known. How many of them were self-serving? They weren't. If they were, they wouldn't be on your list.

What I'm describing in this booklet is possible—you've seen it. You've experienced it. It is not common, but it is possible. You can become the type leader I've described in these few short pages. You may be willing; you may have a faint glimmer of hope stirring in your heart right now. But you may also feel the weight of a nagging question... yes, but how?

The good news is that the first step is actually the easiest. It begins like all great conquests—with a decision. Once the decision is made, you can invest the rest of your life “managing the decision.” But you only have to decide once.

Before you decide, let me encourage you to think carefully about the consequences of your decision. It will require courage, discipline and faith. It will require time and energy and maybe a few personal resources.

But, I also want to remind you of the upside of your decision. The world needs servant leaders. Your family needs you to be a servant leader. Your company needs servant leaders. Your employees need you to be a servant leader. You can be that leader.

My final encouragement for you is to begin today and...

Lead Differently! 

Info



BUY THE BOOKS | Get more details or buy a copy of [The Secret](#), [The Secret of Teams](#), and [Great Leaders Grow](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Mark Miller began his Chick-fil-A career working as an hourly team member and is currently VP of Training and Development. A decade ago, he teamed up with Ken Blanchard to write *The Secret: What Great Leaders Know and Do*. Today, almost 400,000 copies of *The Secret* are in print, and it has been translated into more than 20 languages. Recently, he released *The Secret of Teams*, which outlines some of the key lessons learned from a 20-year study on what makes some teams out-perform the rest. His newest book, *Great Leaders Grow: Becoming a Leader for Life*, was released in February 2012. You can read Mark's blog at [GreatLeadersServe.org](#). Mark's twitter is [@LeadersServe](#).

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