

Importance of Servant Leadership

Why is servant leadership vital to a community? Excellent leadership supports the needs of the people, and also leads communities to their full potential. The phrase “servant leadership” was created by Robert K. Greenleaf. In his first essay, *The Servant as Leader*, he states, “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.” If mayors, senators, city councilman, or anyone with a leadership role do not have the characteristics of a servant leader, they will not succeed. A successful leader demonstrates characteristics such as good listening, commitment to the growth of the people, and building a thriving community.

Elected officials must listen to citizens’ thoughts and opinions. As humans, we sometimes refuse to accept someone else might have a better idea. However, servant leaders are willing to listen and learn from others. If a leader does not display excellent listening skills, they are not going to benefit the community.

Every leader must be committed to the growth of the people. Servant leaders want to see communities reach their potential, and even exceed further. Elected officials should always make sure the community has a variety of jobs for its citizens such as grocery stores, gas stations, restaurants, factories, hospitals, and more. If leaders put others’ needs first, businesses will flourish and the community will reach its full potential.

Martin Luther King Jr. is an example of an outstanding servant leader. He had no intention of becoming the leader of the Civil Rights Movement. However, he saw a greater

purpose. Martin Luther King Jr. wanted African Americans to have equal rights. He had outstanding leadership characteristics such as listening, persuasion, awareness, foresight, and stewardship.

Another example of a servant leader is a football coach. They resolve conflicts, collaborate with players, and they are result-oriented. Coaches see the team as a whole rather than each individual. If they can not fulfill their role then the whole team will fall apart. Baltimore Ravens' head coach, John Harbaugh states, "As a leader you need to figure out who you need to help and how to do it." Football coaches have to collaborate with their players in order to win games. They should also discuss conflicts with the team and resolve them as well. Coaches also focus on the result rather than the process. They make short-term goals in order to achieve the long-term goal.

In conclusion, each characteristic of a servant leader is vital to a community. Leaders should listen, commit to the growth of the people, and build a strong community. They have a huge impact on the growth of the economy. If elected officials demonstrate these characteristics their communities will reach new heights, citizens will be prosperous, and businesses will grow.