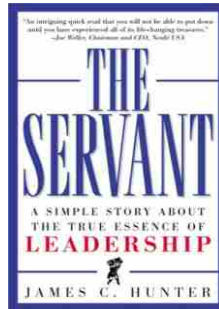


The Servant

A Simple Story About the True Essence of Leadership



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■ About the Author



James Hunter

James C. Hunter is head of J. D. Hunter Associates, LLC, a leadership training and development firm. His internationally bestselling book, *The Servant: A Simple Story About the True Essence of Leadership*, has been translated into nine languages and has sold more than 250,000 copies to date. Jim is a sought-after public speaker whose clients include some of the world's most admired organizations, including American Express, Nest, ServiceMaster, Procter & Gamble, Southern Company, and the U.S. Air Force. Jim resides in Michigan with his wife and daughter.

■ The Big Idea

"To lead, you must serve."

This age-old paradox is the solid premise of the book *"The Servant"* by James C. Hunter. It is discussed through the tale of John Daily, a business executive who starts to lose his grip as boss, husband, father, and coach. He was talked into going on a week-long retreat at a Benedictine Monastery to re-center and find his balance. During the retreat, a former Wall Street legend turned monk shows him a different perspective on leadership - *servant leadership*.

By citing words of wisdom from philosophers and writers, even borrowing from the teachings of Jesus Christ, Hunter explains that the principle behind effective leadership is based on the interplay of responsibility, respect, and care. Ultimately, leadership is about character and substance.

■ Power vs. Authority

In his book *"The Theory of Social and Economic Organization,"* Max Weber differentiated power from authority. Power is defined as the ability to force or coerce people into action, even if their hearts are against it, because of position or might. By doing so, you corner people into the psychological trap that can be called *"Do it or else!"*

Authority, on the other hand, is the skill of getting people to willingly

do what you ask them to because of your personal influence. *Willingly* being the operative word. They do it agreeably because they value their relationship with you.

The cornerstone of leadership is not power, but authority. Power changes hands, especially if it came with a coterminous position. Authority is part of your character - you need not be in a position of power to practice it. Servant leadership is getting things done through people. Servant leadership is built on relationship, love, service, and sacrifice.

■ The Power Glitch

Power crumbles relationships. Teenagers rebel because they feel they've been ordered around the house too long. The same goes for an organization. Remember that employee dissatisfaction is, in a way, masked rebellion.

Though in the past, power might have worked to make people do your will, people respond to it differently now. The 1960's saw the start of mobilization and open challenges to public institutions such as the government and schools. We also witnessed the Watergate issue, scandals involving church leaders, and military cover-ups (i.e., Agent Orange). As instances like these happen more frequently, society becomes more skeptical or wary of people in positions of power.

■ Healthy Relationships with C.E.O.S.

No, the acronym does not stand for Chief Executive Officers, but rather for *Customers, Employees, Owners/Stockholders, and Suppliers/Vendors*. Trust-based symbiotic relationships among these business components spell success.

If you aren't meeting the customers' legitimate needs, they will go to the competitor. It is the same with employees experiencing unrest. If the company doesn't heed their legitimate requests, they will defect to the other camp. These events, in turn, will make the owners or stockholders unhappy. As with the customers and employees, a give-and-take relationship with the suppliers is also essential to the long-term health of the organization.

■ Need vs. Want

There is a big difference between giving in to a need and giving in to a want. While slaves do what others want, servants give what others need. The mark of a servant leader is that he identifies and meets the needs of his people. He removes obstacles to efficiently and effectively serve the customer.

Now, the question is, how do you determine the needs of an individual?

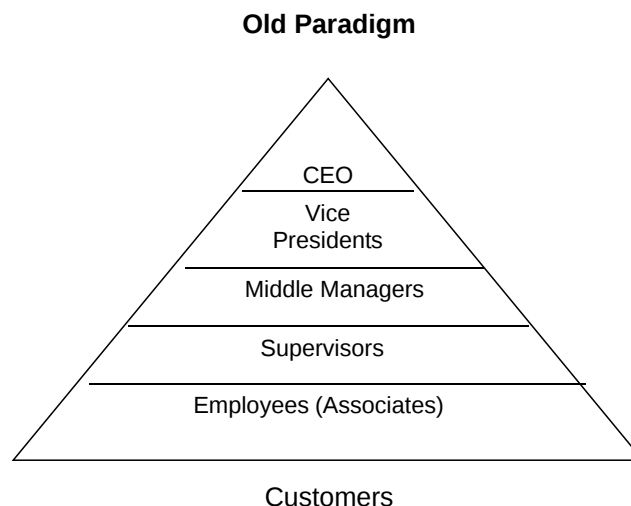
■ Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

In the 5-tiered theory of Maslow, the individual is challenged to meet lower-level needs first before he moves up the steps where he can utilize the higher level needs as motivators to self-actualization. Therefore, basic needs such as food, water, and shelter (first level) should be satisfied to gain a feeling of safety and security (second level). Once these needs have been met, belonging and love (third level) become motivators for self-esteem (fourth-level), which, in turn, become the ultimate motivator to be the best one can be (self-actualization, topmost level).

■ Shifting Paradigms

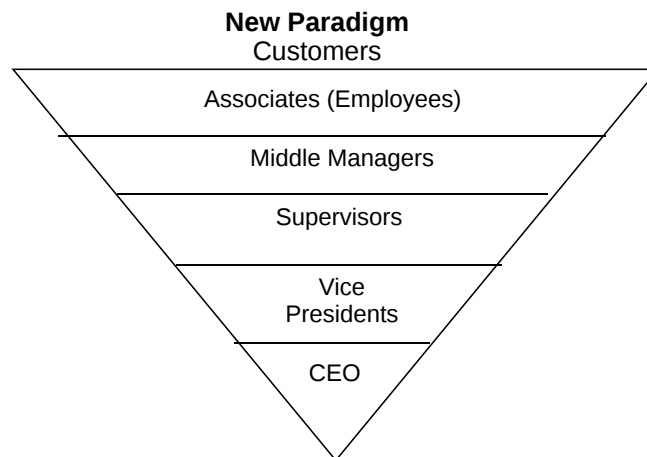
You live in a changing world. You see the world as you are. To cope with such changes, you must learn to tweak psychological patterns or models and tailor them accordingly. Challenge old paradigms. For all you know, the model you've been using all this time falls out of context in today's environment.

The Pyramid Style of Management, which was the business paradigm followed for decades, represents a five-step hierarchical arrangement. The CEO rests at the top of the pyramid followed by the Vice Presidents. The Middle Managers comes next, while the supervisors remain at the second to the last rung. Finally, the employees make up the bottom of the pyramid. The Customers lie outside the pyramid, beneath the Employees.



With this top-down paradigm or mentality, the message being sent to the organization is that everyone should look upwards, toward the CEO and away from where their attention should be - the customers.

Wouldn't it be so much better if the model was inverted? This way, the whole organization acknowledges the importance of the customer in their business. Also, everyone else in the pyramid is encouraged to adopt the new mind-set that the role of a leader is to serve.



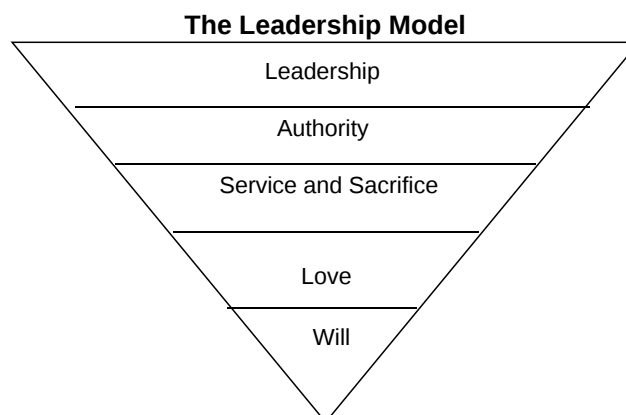
■ Leadership Defined

Leadership is defined as the skill of influencing people to work devotedly towards an identified common good. The key words here are skill and influence. *Skill* is a learned or acquired ability and *influence* is how you get people to voluntarily do what you task them to do.

How do you build that influence with people? How do you make them give freely their talent, ideas, commitment, and excellence?

■ Servant Leadership Defined

"Anyone wanting to be the leader must first be the servant. If you want to lead you must serve." This philosophy is found in Christ's teachings and was practiced by successful and very *influential* religious and political leaders including: Mother Teresa, Gandhi and Martin Luther King.



Authority is based on service and sacrifice. There can be no service and sacrifice if there is no love. It is important to take note that the word *love* is used as a verb (e.g. *love is as love does*) to describe how you behave towards others, and not how you feel about them. And what is love based on? Love firmly rests on the alignment between your intentions and your actions. Love rests on your will.

■ The Attributes of Love and Leadership

The book enumerated the following as the qualities of a servant leader. Incidentally, these are also the attributes of love, which was defined earlier as one's behavior towards others.

- **Patient** - showing self-control.
- **Kind** - giving attention, appreciation, and encouragement.
- **Humble** - being authentic without pretense or arrogance.
- **Respectful** - treating others as important people.
- **Selfless** - meeting the needs of others.
- **Forgiving** - giving up resentment when wronged.
- **Honest** - being free from deception.
- **Committed** - sticking to your choices.

All these behaviors entail you to serve and sacrifice for others. This would mean setting aside your own wants and needs to focus on the legitimate needs of others.

■ The Law of the Harvest

Remember: *you reap what you sow*. For authority or influence to flourish, the right environment must be provided and a nurturing behavior must be present. In a garden, the soil, the sun, the water, the fertilizer, and the care given by the gardener all make up the environment under which the plant will grow and mature. The one thing that you are not sure of, however, is *when* the flowers will actually bloom. Bear in mind that influence is not a magical beanstalk that will sprout overnight; rather, it is something that grows in time.

■ Legislating Workplace Behavior

Lead by example. By showing the people you lead that you care for them and value their contribution to the organization, you are fostering relationships. In addition to being a role model, motivate your people in such a way that you influence them to grow and change for the better. Remember, though, that there is a big difference between *influencing someone to change* and actually *trying to change someone*. The latter is impossible as change boils down to personal choice.

■ The Choices You Make

What sets man above animals is the ability to think and reason. With this ability comes the privilege of making choices. The theory of determinism, which postulates that a person's actions can be predicted by studying his past, has long been debunked. The burden of responsibility and accountability is now hoisted upon the individual. Your future is shaped through the decisions you make, not by the conditions you are under. It is up to you to choose to navigate through undesirable circumstances and emerge victorious.

Becoming a leader is a choice. Leadership starts with the will, and your will consists of the actions you choose to embody your intentions.

■ The Four Stages of Learning New Leadership Skills

- **Stage One: Unconscious and Unskilled**
This initial stage is where you have yet to identify which habit or skill it is you want to learn, thus obviously rendering you unconscious and unskilled.
- **Stage Two: Conscious and Unskilled**
This is the stage when you become aware of the behavior you want to learn. You might want to learn how to behave like a good leader but are unskilled for you have not taken the first steps to learn how to do so.
- **Stage Three: Conscious and Skilled**
This is the stage when you have begun to master good leadership skills. During this stage, however, you still think about how to act as it is not yet an ingrained habit.
- **Stage Four: Unconscious and Skilled**
This last stage is when you practice being a good leader as if it's the most natural thing in the world. By this time, you have made your behavior second nature, thus enabling you to easily function as a leader. You no longer have to try to be a good leader because you already are one. You have finally mastered the habits of patience, kindness, humility, respectfulness, selflessness, forgiveness, honesty, and commitment.

■ The Rewards of Leading with Authority

Leading with authority enables you to have a personal mission statement: to serve the people you lead, to listen to their needs, to give praise and recognition, to show kindness, and to be honest, among other things. When servant leadership becomes your ethos in life, people will line up to join your cause.

By serving others and loving your neighbors, you are keeping in line with the doctrines of the Church as well as other religions. You mature psychologically and spiritually, which is essentially the end goal of the individual's journey through life.

While the above payoffs are well and good, the most important reward of all is the joy you will experience when you put others first and free yourself from the chains of self-centeredness. As a certain Dr. Albert Schweitzer wisely puts it, *"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know. The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."*