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What is a Servant Leader?

If you are a humble, honest, selfless, and generous servant leader, more people will be attracted to your team and those who join will stick, out of loyalty, if nothing else.

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Servant leadership has become a hot business topic. The funny part is that it sounds like an oxymoron. You know, like “original copy” or “alone in a crowd” or “exact estimate” and yet, it’s not. In this article we’ll examine this seemingly contractive form of leadership and describe the attributes of a servant leader.

Having been involved in the network marketing industry for 28 years, I’ve seen all types of leadership, but those who have enjoyed the greatest success over an extended period of time have all been servant leaders. So, what the heck is a servant leader, you ask? That’s a good question and I intend to answer it, but before we do that, let’s examine some descriptions of a leader.

First, a leader is someone who has followers. If you’re leading and no one is following, then you aren’t a leader. *Second*, to be a leader, you only have to be one step ahead of those that are following. *Third*, people follow enthusiastic leaders more than they do knowledgeable leaders. As the old saying goes, “if you’re on fire with enthusiasm, people will come from miles around to watch you burn.” *Fourth*, leadership isn’t just for business – we lead those in our family and often even our friends. *Fifth*, those who become effective leaders enjoy greater success in every aspect of life.

So, what separates a regular leader from a servant leader? In order to answer that question, let’s look at the primary attributes of a servant leader:

Humility – When we think of leaders, we often think of bossy, egotistic people who just want everything their way. When John and James approached Jesus to ask for leadership positions in his earthly kingdom, Jesus told them that they needed to be servants to all. A servant is among the humblest of positions – certainly not of high position. So, why did Jesus tell them that if they wanted to be great, they had to be servants?

> ***Because he recognized that people will follow humble leaders. I mean think about it… Who would you rather follow - a person who takes all the credit or someone who gives you the credit?***

A servant leader has a humble heart. In other words, it's not just a show, it's natural. A humble leader will rarely take credit for anything. I loved watching the post Super Bowl show when Indianapolis Colts coach, Tony Dungy gave credit to Jesus Christ, his coaches, and players. That's a servant leader and although Mr. Dungy may not have the most talented team in the NFL, he has a team that loves and will follow him, which is why they are now world champions.

Honest – It's unfortunate, but in our world we find that top leaders are not always honest. Take Enron for example – it took just about everyone by surprise, because the leaders weren't honest. As competition continues to heat up throughout the world, it sad to say that dishonesty has become a typical trait of leadership.

> ***The servant leader operates with a different code of morality –***

often based on the Bible. The Bible says that we are not to lie, not even those of the little white variety and the servant leader operates by this code, because he or she believes in complete honesty with their

followers. The great part about following a servant leader is that you know that what comes out of the mouth is always the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Selfless – In my experience, most leaders are looking out for themselves first and then those they lead. They're taking care of #1 above all else and that's not what a servant leader is all about. Jesus was the greatest of the selfless leaders, as he gave up the luxuries of heaven to come to earth, he got down on his hands and knees to wash the feet of his disciples, and then he gave up his life for his friends. That's a servant leader and today, millions of people throughout the world still follow him.

> ***The servant leader is always looking out for their follower's best interest.***

He/she recognizes that the more successful those people are, the more successful the servant leader will be. Because they are selfless, people want to follow them and will submit to their plans and actions.

Generous – In our extremely selfish, me-focused world, where most people are just looking out for #1, the servant leader stands head and shoulders above every other leader when it comes to giving. They give completely of their time, talents, and money to make sure that others succeed.

> ***The servant leader is always right there to help a person in need, even if it has nothing to do with business.***

They recognize that a follower with struggles is not a focused worker, so they will do whatever is necessary to help that person eliminate their struggles. Those who follow a servant leader know that they can share their struggles with him/her and won't be condemned. Rather, they will receive the help they need and this builds a strong sense of loyalty to the leader.

Okay, so how does this all fit into network marketing? Well, if you haven't already figured it out, network marketing success is all about leadership. People don't actually join companies because of the great products, management team, or compensation plan; they join because they like and trust you. If you are a humble, honest, selfless, and generous servant leader, more people will be attracted to your team and those who join will stick, out of loyalty, if nothing else. As a servant leader, your team will grow quickly and attrition will be low, thus helping you achieve a solid residual income that will continue to grow for years to come.

However, if you are really a servant leader, you're primary focus is not on what you're going to make, but rather on what your team is going to make, and that's what servant leadership is all about.

Rod Nichols has been involved in the network marketing industry since 1979, as a company founder/owner, distributor, consultant, trainer, coach, and author. His books, *Successful Network Marketing for the 21st Century* and *Would You Like to Dig In My Goldmine?* were industry best sellers for several years and his latest book, *The Ideal Business*, is quickly becoming a must read. Rod has built several large networks and still earns a full-time income from one of those. Rod and his wife, Karen live in beautiful Washington State, but travel extensively. They have five children and four grandchildren. To contact Rod, send an e-mail to Rod@RodNichols.com. To read more of Rod's articles or purchase any of his books, visit www.RodNichols.com.