THE SERVANT-LEADER IN THE LIBRARY
A Case Study and a Journey Towards Self-Transcendence
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What follows is a personal case study in servant-leadership. For the sake of confidentiality and clarity, I will employ pseudonyms both for my subject (the library dean at a small but growing Catholic institution of liberal arts) and for the school itself. I first met the subject of this study, whom I will refer to as Evelyn Bentley, late in November of the year 2000, not long after she had assumed the role of Interim Dean of Library Services at the institution I will call St. Aloysius University. In April of the same year, I had given up my job managing a mid-sized branch of a public library system and embarked with my wife on a four-month road trip, free-spiritedly crisscrossing the country and culminating in our arrival in a new city where my wife had enrolled in a graduate program. When we arrived, we were cheerfully cash-poor from our four months of living as vagabonds; my wife had that fresh-faced and determined look of a hopeful new grad student; and I had no job in sight. For a couple of months, it appeared as though my career as a librarian might have to detour into bartending or used car sales (both fine enough occupations, and not all that different from librarianship when you think about

it), but then I happened upon an ad in the local newspaper for a temporary adjunct faculty librarian position at St. Aloysius. Evelyn Bentley hired me for the job and, six months later, signed off on my promotion to a tenure-track faculty librarian position as well—around the same time that Evelyn herself was promoted to *Dean* of Library Services, minus the "Interim."

During my time at St. Aloysius, I found Evelyn to be an inspiring and encouraging leader. Despite her struggles, around that same time, with cancer and the horrible exigencies of its treatment, as far as I could see she maintained a warm, hopeful attitude and exemplified—in my encounters with her, at least— what I would now call a real spirit of servant-leadership. I had, a few years previously, paid regular visits to Mount Angel Abbey in western Oregon and had steeped myself in some of the literature of Benedictine monasticism (thinking I might even become a monk myself, until my now wife derailed me, happily, from that path). I recognized in Evelyn something of the same quality of calm, twinkle-eyed *joie de vivre* I had noted in some of the monks I had met—what Patrick Leigh Fermor (1988) referred to as "an indefinable air of benevolence and happiness" (p. 73). Although my contacts with Evelyn were intermittent, as is typical of faculty contacts with deans, they were always enlivening and illuminating. In my work as a librarian, I at times assisted or provided research instruction to graduate students and faculty in St. Aloyisius' Leadership Studies program, and I learned that Evelyn herself was a graduate of the program. Curious, I obtained a copy of her dissertation and perused it with interest: an ethnographic study

that explores the pressures experienced by working mothers. Evelyn's dissertation may not have been framed explicitly in terms of servant-leadership, but it was certainly relevant to the topic. It could be argued, after all, that mothers are the original servant-leaders; and, as James Autry (2015) has pointed out, "the impact of motherhood and women's need to balance this" can often "make a profound difference in how their work styles will be manifested" and can be a key influencing factor that pushes an organization in the direction of a servant-leadership model (p. 22). For me at the time, reading Evelyn's dissertation reinforced my sense of her—although I had only just encountered the term and possessed only an intuitive sense of its meaning—as a servant-leader, one who, as Greenleaf (2008) insists, "is servant first . . . then conscious choice brings [her] to aspire to lead" (p. 15). Had I encountered this statement by Greenleaf at the time, I believe I would have—while also recognizing her humanness and therefore the likelihood of a shadow side that I would later glimpse more fully—confidently applied it to Evelyn.

During my first year at St. Aloysius, I served on a mission statement committee with Evelyn and others and developed a strong, positive connection with her that carried over to the remainder of my time there. More so than with anyone I had ever worked for, I felt tremendously supported and appreciated by her. Reflecting back on that time, I see in Evelyn's basic posture towards me personally all the ingredients bell hooks (2000) lists for a genuine will to love: "care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust,

as well as honest and open communication" (p. 5). In her first reappointment recommendation following my transition to the tenure-track position, Evelyn wrote: "His commitment to the profession shines through everything he does. He is thoughtful and deliberate in his comments, and his wonderful sense of humor has lightened many moments. He is a dedicated and delightful colleague . . ." (personal communication, January 24, 2002). How could anyone not feel bolstered and loved in the face of that kind of glowing praise? The "best test" of the servant-leader, according to Greenleaf (1970/2008), takes the form of two questions. First: "do those served grow as persons; do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (p. 15). The answer to that question, for me personally, is certainly a resounding yes. Although our interactions were limited and relatively infrequent, Evelyn was prescient in checking in at just the right time and she seemed to have a knack for offering just the right word of encouragement or posing just the right question to steer me away from a potential pitfall. She also conveyed an openness and trust that I felt as empowering. I truly believe I did become wiser, freer, etc. under Evelyn's mentorship and servant-leadership. The fact that I am now, fifteen years later, pursuing the question of servant-leadership in this context is further testimony to Evelyn's impact on me.

But there is a second part to Greenleaf's test, and it may point to a weakness or shadow in Evelyn's posture of servant-leadership, and, further, it may well point to an area that is

difficult for any leader. The second part of Greenleaf's original test is the question: "*And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived?" This is a large question, touching on large societal issues, and more difficult to pin down than the first part of Greenleaf's test. If we turn the question a few degrees, however, and ask what is the effect on the least privileged *within the organization*, some subtler and more pernicious dynamics can be highlighted. That is to say, yes, my individual experience of Evelyn certainly fit into a sphere of servant-leadership, but what about others? Are there some who were excluded from that sphere?

It is still a difficult question, because servant-leaders are above all human and humans are limited beings and there will naturally be differences in how the leader approaches individuals; inevitably some will receive more attention than others. Fairness and inclusion are always at risk anytime a leader makes a choice to promote or highlight one follower but not another—and yet such choices cannot be avoided. They can be ameliorated, perhaps—and the servant-leader must try to— but it may be humanly impossible to entirely avoid difficulty in this area. The literature of social influence and in-groups may be helpful in sorting out the question. In their study of leadership and group process, Platow, Haslam, Reicher, & Steffens (2015) concluded that "leadership is a psychological group process in which it is followers who effectively make someone a leader" (p. 32). A key problem, however, is that some subgroups may inevitably possess more social influence

than other subgroups, resulting in exclusion and alienation. Similarly, Platow & van Knippenberg (2001) in their study of leader prototypicality and fairness noted that "ingroup-favoring leaders received the strongest endorsements from high identifiers, whereas fair leaders received the strongest endorsement from low identifiers" (p. 1515). In my relationship with Evelyn, I could be seen as a high identifier ready to strongly endorse her leadership. But were there others who, for whatever reason might be viewed as "low identifiers" suffering unfair exclusion?

At the time, I was aware of this dynamic of exclusion and my conscience was indeed bothered by a line of questioning very similar to what is outlined above. When I was initially hired as an adjunct, it was to fill not only a faculty librarian role but also to cover the duties of a paraprofessional staff member who had to go on extended leave for a medical procedure. As sometimes happens in the library world, this paraprofessional staff member possessed professional librarian credentials—that is, a master's degree in library and information science—and had accepted a non-professional position at St. Aloysius as a career stop-gap. When the staff member returned from medical leave, I had not only learned the ins and outs of her staff job, but I had also been thrust into the awkward position, even though I was still only an adjunct, of being her functional supervisor. Not long after that, I was promoted, right over the staff member's head, into the tenure track position she might rightfully have expected to get fair a shot at. I was honest with Evelyn about my qualms. She

reassured me that I had fairly earned the spot; and I found that my qualms were not severe enough to turn down the job and return to my dream of bartending. But my conscience did indeed remain troubled. Mayer (2010) has pointed out that, although servant-leadership theory shares many features with charismatic leadership, ethical leadership, spiritual leadership, fair leadership, and authentic leadership, the "unequivocal focus on follower needs and follower personal and professional development separates servant leadership from these related forms of leadership" (p. 148). Mayer may well be right in this assertion, but the question is how does the servant-leader balance the needs of *all* of his or her followers equally and fairly? In passing over the staff member for a promotion in favor of me, who could be seen as a sort of interloper, was Evelyn setting aside her servant-leader mantle and applying a different set of values? In my willingness to embrace the promotion, was I actually setting aside my qualms of conscience in a low-key Nietzschean power grab, so that my taking the job "fell easily and unsought from the tree, as an involuntary deed, almost as a gift" (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 510)?

For the next three years, I stayed in the position. My respect and admiration for Evelyn only increased during that time, but I questioned whether she might not have done more for "the least of these"—i.e. employees like the staff member I had aced out of the job and others (there were several) who were working in positions below their qualifications or who were otherwise disempowered. Society is plagued by

institutional inequality and disenfranchisement, but rooting out the more subtle exclusions and snubs that leadership informed by a fallen human nature is prone to is a trickier proposition. Applying servant-leader thinking to her analysis of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Lea Williams (1996) proposed a balanced but radical view: "While modeling the highest standards of excellence for a diverse constituency, the servant-leader never rejects people because of their inherent shortcomings" (p. 144). Perhaps Evelyn could have been more vigilant in balancing this equation.

When my wife and I were expecting our first child, a tenure-track librarian position opened up at a nearby state university. Although I felt devoted to St. Aloysius, the position attracted me with a higher salary and the added enticement of summers off—a huge bonus for a new father. With a baby on the way, pursuing the opportunity seemed like the right move. I cannot say that my three-year-old conscience qualm did not also factor into my decision. When I successfully landed the new job and left St. Aloysius, I urged Evelyn to consider promoting the staff member who had previously been passed over. To her credit, in my view and from the standpoint of a servant-leadership framework, Evelyn did in fact later promote the staff member in question. Evelyn and I had several conversations about my leaving, and I honestly expressed my ambivalence and regret, but I also felt relieved. For her part, she told me she was sorry I was leaving because, she said, she had envisioned me as following in her footsteps as Dean of Library Services someday. The power of suggestion: Evelyn's

statement planted the seed for an ongoing daydream about the possibility that I might indeed move in the direction of a servant-leadership role and even that I might someday return to St. Aloysius as Dean. When the cancer finally won and Evelyn left us in the fall of 2014, it brought that daydream into the foreground of my mind.

I am now going to tell you something, dear reader, that may strike you as a little loony—or at the very least something that would be better kept to myself. You can take it for what you will. Shortly after Evelyn died, I was taking a midday break and walking along the riverside trail that runs between our two campuses. (I now work at the state university's urban campus, right across the river from St. Aloysius.) I was thinking about what Evelyn had said and gazing over at St. Aloysius when I entertained a sort of Walter Mitty fantasy. I envisioned myself as Strider in *The Lord of the Rings*, returning triumphantly, as Aragorn, to St. Aloysius. "The return of the king," I said to myself, "Library dean." A moment later I shrugged that off as a silly and narcissistic daydream, pathetically Nietzschean in its underlying hubris. But I began to pray. My prayer went something like: "Lord, I need some guidance here. Is this something I should pursue? Not my will but thy will be done." That was about it. I crossed the street back to my office and resumed the daily grind. Five minutes later, a friend and colleague of mine sent me a message out of the blue—no context other than that we had talked a bit at some point about my thoughts of moving in the direction of more of a leadership role in librarianship and she was encouraging me in that

direction. The message contained a split image. On the top was Strider with the caption, "Put aside the ranger"; and on the bottom was Aragorn with his crown on, with the caption, "And become who you were born to be." As you might guess, I have been thinking hard about the coincidence of my daydream and prayer with that message ever since.

Take it with whatever grain of salt you see fit to. If I know anything, I know the cosmic realm is tricky, so I do not by any means believe that what I experienced (if we assume for a moment that it came from God, which I do not necessarily hang my hat on either) has a clear or simple interpretation. But it has made me a lot more sensitized to the whole situation and my possible place in it. And it helped rekindle something I had first considered fifteen years ago upon learning that Evelyn was a graduate of a leadership studies program: namely, the notion of enrolling in such a program myself. In the summer of 2015, I followed through on the idea and enrolled—hence this essay.

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP SURVEY: ST. ALOYSIUS LIBRARY STAFF AND FACULTY

In the foregoing, I have attempted to tell the story of how I came to know Evelyn Bentley as a servant-leader, how her servant-leadership influenced me, and how I questioned at least one element of her leadership that benefited me personally but may have unfairly excluded others. Glancing in the rearview mirror at the narrative I have just related and getting ready for the right-hand turn I am about to make, the

words of Flannery O'Connor (1957/1969) come to mind: "The storyteller is concerned with what is; but if what is is what can be determined by survey, then the disciples of Dr. Kinsey and Dr. Gallup are sufficient for the day thereof" (p. 31). Although I appreciate O'Connor's derisiveness on this score, I also believe there can be complementary value in combining the storyteller's art with the science of the survey—or at least that the additional dialogic light that even an unscientific survey might shed on one's untested solitary thoughts and recollections may be of value for discerning "what is." Towards that end, I undertook to employ a survey of staff and faculty who worked within Evelyn's sphere of leadership during her tenure as Dean over the past fifteen years.

The primary survey instrument I chose for my task was the servant leadership scale developed in 2008 by Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson. I was attracted to this scale because of its simplicity, elegance, and strong foundation in a thoroughgoing scientific process of development. The scale consists of 28 items across 7 dimensions of servant leadership "validated by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using an organizational sample" (p. 165). Additionally, development of the scale incorporated a sophisticated method of modeling and controlled for two other related constructs, namely transformational leadership and leader-member exchange (LMX). Furthermore, and of particular relevance to my consideration of the problem of exclusion, the development of the scale included analysis of both group-level and individual-

level dynamics, exploring "the possibility that across all of their followers, leaders differ in the extent to which they engage in servant leadership behaviors" (p. 164). In Northouse (2013), this scale appears under the name Servant Leader Questionnaire (SLQ); and a method of scoring is provided, designating the subject of the survey as *High range*, *Moderate range*, *Low range*, or *Extremely low range* in each of the 7 dimensions of servant leadership identified in the original study: *emotional healing*, *creating value for the community*, *conceptual skills*, *empowering*, *helping subordinates grow and succeed*, *putting subordinates first*, and *behaving ethically* (pp. 245-247). In addition to the 28-item survey with its 7-point numeric scale, I gave respondents the opportunity to answer three open-ended questions about Evelyn: first, respondents were invited to share any general thoughts about Evelyn prior to embarking on the SLQ portion of the survey; next, following the 28 items of the SLQ, respondents were invited to elaborate on any of their responses; lastly, in order to provide another conceptualization of servant-leadership, respondents were provided with a brief synopsis of Spears' (2010) ten characteristics of a servant-leader and asked to reflect on which characteristics were predominant in how Evelyn conducted herself as a leader and which characteristics represented areas of weakness. The survey was created online using the Typeform platform. A link to the survey was sent by email to 34 current and 5 former employees of the St. Aloysius Library, for a total of 39. Of those, 14 responded to

the SLQ portion of the survey and, of the 14 total respondents, 10 also responded to one or more of the open-ended questions.

The results of the SLQ supported my general hypothesis or contention that as dean of library services Evelyn did indeed exhibit many of the qualities of a servant-leader. According to the rubric supplied by Northouse, Evelyn scored in the high range in four of the seven dimensions and in the upper moderate range for the remaining three dimensions. Evelyn's areas of strength identified by the survey, from highest to lowest, were: *conceptual skills*, *creating value for the community*, *emotional healing*, and *helping subordinates*. Weaker areas, although still moderately strong, were identified as: *behaving ethically*, *empowering*, and *putting subordinates first*. The survey statement that garnered the highest average score was, "Evelyn had a thorough understanding of the organization and its goals." The statement which respondents on average disagreed with the most was, "If others needed to make important decisions at work, they did not need to consult Evelyn." The high and low scores on these two items are indicative of Evelyn's competence in navigating organizational dynamics but perhaps a reluctance to let go of the reins and empower others to make decisions independently. These scores are not indicative of a major deficiency, but they do reveal an area where Evelyn's leadership behavior perhaps tended to move against the grain of a servant-leadership orientation.

Among the answers to the open-ended question inviting respondents to elaborate on any of the 28 statements of the SLQ, most drew a picture of a complex, strong, insightful,

supportive, and admired leader. Among the remarks that stand out are phrases such as "her ability to listen," "she allowed people to be included in the process," "could see potential in people even when they did not," "supported learning and growth," "a general willingness to promote the well-being of all the staff," "a great leader," "she had an omniscient view of the library employees and their strengths." Several responses, however, included remarks suggestive of my concern regarding exclusion: "Many of the above questions applied to a select circle of persons," said one respondent. Another said, "There is a hierarchy, with different levels of benefits and opportunities." Yet another said, "My answers reflect my sense of the general experience of most The St. Aloysius employees. My own experience was somewhat less positive overall." This undercurrent of resentment or disillusionment points to an issue Liden & Maslyn (1998) explored in an earlier study of the leader-member exchange (LMX) framework, with an analysis of "in-groups" characterized by strong affective ties to the leader contrasted with "out-groups" characterized by low involvement with and support by the leader (p. 43). In the same vein, an inherent area of tension for the servant-leader may involve the problem of balance in fostering close, affective relationships with subordinates. In that context of closeness, as Lind & Tyler (1988) have pointed out, "feelings of unfair treatment are likely to have even more devastating consequences . . . than in the more formal, institutional contexts" that characterize traditional command and control oriented leadership models (p. 213).

The final open-ended question of the survey garnered a number of lengthy, detailed, complex, and thoughtful responses. Respondents were provided with a list of Spears' (2010) ten characteristics of servant-leadership, based on the writings of Robert Greenleaf—*listening*, *empathy*, *healing*, *awareness*, *persuasion* (as opposed to coercion), *conceptualization* (in terms of seeing the big picture), *foresight*, *stewardship*, *commitment to the growth of people*, and *community building* (pp. 27-29)—and asked to identify areas of strength and weakness. Overall, the portrait collectively painted by these responses was one of a complex, strong-willed, insightful, transformative, personally compassionate and empathetic individual whose tremendous strengths as a servant-leader were at times marred by her shadow side. The darker shades of Evelyn—or areas of weakness as a servant-leader—that emerged from these responses included the following: "She had her 'pet projects' and perhaps did not fully see other areas for growth," "she used coercion," she did not listen "with a truly open mind," she was not committed to "the growth of *all* people in her care," "if for some reason you got on her bad side there was no support or even respect," "she was also prone to favoritism and arbitrariness," "she could hold a grudge . . . it took a while to get back in the good graces if you upset her . . . for those that went against her, the mind had a way of shutting down." Finally, the comment that most succinctly summed up the in-group/out-group issue and the problem of exclusion was, "She was a fierce protector of her circle and consequently they probably have a very different perspective."

I believe this last comment is true to a degree, although what is interesting is that the divisions in perspective among the comments were not clear cut. Even the minority of respondents who might be characterized as detractors had positive things to say, and those who were clearly in Evelyn's camp seemed very cognizant of her shadow side and blind spots. The writer of the "fierce protector of her circle" comment, whom I would place somewhat in the detractor camp, obviously felt excluded but also recognized some value in what was perceived as Evelyn's practice of exclusion: "She excelled in awareness, foresight, and community building. Her chosen ones kept her aware of certain details, she had the foresight to choose them selectively, and she built the community to sustain them." There seems to be recognition here, understandably mixed with some bitterness, that there is value in developing a cohesive core team, an inner circle. To quote John Maxwell (n.d.), "Wise leaders staff around their weaknesses, and welcome talent in areas where they lack strength" (Driving Away Talent section, par 1). The question is whether it is possible to do so in a manner consistent with a servant orientation, without alienating those outside the circle—a superhuman task, perhaps. Perhaps it is in part the result of "competitive either/or thinking, the belief that the self is formed in opposition to another," such as bell hooks (1984) reacted to when asked "whether being black is more important than being a woman" (p. 29).

Although Evelyn's shadow side certainly makes an appearance in this collective portrait, the warm glow of her

goodness seems, in the overall picture, much more powerful and prominent. One response, in particular, is worth quoting at length:

> I questioned her leadership when she first started as the interim dean, worried that she hadn't had the experience at that level to carry the library forward. My questioning was replaced by awe in a very short time. What had been a hierarchical, "mad men" type of leadership quickly turned into a magical quilt of all staff, faculty and students becoming part of the answer and the answer was always to get to yes and how can we all help get there. Evelyn's forward thinking and her background in technology helped bring the library into a finely tuned, flexible work environment. Collaboration [and] persuasion come to mind. If an idea came to her in any form, she would say okay, how do "we" make that happen? Always open to new ideas & she had more ideas than most. . . . Evelyn took the time to realize people's gifts and she encouraged them to use them. . . . Her faith, her resilience, her determination and her compassion—a true servant leader to me.

The reference to the leadership that preceded Evelyn is noteworthy here—"mad men" style! The fact that Evelyn, early on in her tenure as dean, stepped into an environment that had been characterized (it would seem from this comment) by a patriarchal form of dominance and control, where perhaps the prior dean "in dominance motivation prioritized [his] power over the group's performance and potential" (Maner & Mead,

2010, p. 488)—provides an interesting background to what Evelyn herself subsequently accomplished as dean in terms of a radical reorientation towards a culture of servant-leadership.

Other responses included the following: "strong in most if not all of these characteristics," "she operated from a strong 'power center'," "a good sense of the 'big picture'," "good at seeing the big picture . . . very good at building community," "she trusted and supported her team," "she shined in the conceptualization arena," "conceptualization, foresight, stewardship were her areas of strength," "a very good listener," "always a good listener and willing to help in any way she could . . . always making sure the staff were happy . . . she never really had to be a helicopter boss," "a very easy person to work with . . . she helped define a 'servant attitude' for the library as a whole," "very interested in helping all staff and faculty develop their skills," "listening, empathy and awareness were real areas of strength . . . unconditional support during times of personal crisis . . . always available for listening and relating," "on a personal level she was so supportive of everyone who worked here and her heart was with the educational enterprise at its core," and finally, "her vision and guidance are still painfully missed."

EXCLUSION, FORGIVENESS, AND SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

This exploration of Evelyn Bentley's deanship and the question of her servant-leadership have powerfully impacted my personal vision of leadership, my sense of myself as a

potential servant-leader, and my understanding of a key thread from my past that has reemerged to tug at my sleeve in the present (if I may mix a couple of threadbare metaphors). In embarking on this process of sustained reflection and dialogue, I gained a renewed appreciation for Evelyn's tremendous loveliness as a person and leader—a bittersweet process in light of her untimely passing from this world. (I so wish I could chat with her about this project.) The insights I gained into Evelyn's weaknesses—her Shadow, to put it in Jungian terms—have in a way endeared me to her all the more. In the process, I have circled round my own shadow, my own deficiencies and guilt, and perhaps gained some ground towards a place of good conscience—that place which Victor Frankl (1988) rightly points out cannot be pursued but can only be allowed to ensue as a mysterious side effect of pursuing something else (pp. 40-41).

Part of that sidelong pursuit led me back to my colleague, the staff member who was passed over when Evelyn promoted me to a tenure track position fifteen years ago or so. During my ensuing three years at The St. Aloysius Library, this staff member and I worked together on good terms and even, dare I say, became trusted colleagues and friends. At the time of the promotion, I recall apologizing for my part in the injustice she suffered; but in reflecting back on that time as part of this project, I was confronted with a glimpse of my own shadowy culpability that I believe I never fully acknowledged. So I sought her out. It was not difficult, since she and I have remained on friendly terms over the years and

she is still in the position I left. I asked her to read the first section of this essay and to fill me in on how she experienced what happened back then. She told me she had been stunned, hurt, and angry when the announcement of my promotion was made, because it came out of the blue—she was not even given a chance at the position. She went for a long drive that day and screamed out her pain and frustration. She said she appreciated my compassion and support at the time and that she did not really blame Evelyn so much as other library faculty who coordinated the process. My reply was that, yes, I may have been apologetic and sympathetic after the fact, but that I had clearly seen the injustice of it as it was unfolding and that I could have done more to make it a fair process.

"I want to come clean and ask for your forgiveness," I said.

"I certainly do forgive you!" came her reply. "It was a rough patch, but now it's just a speck on the horizon in the review mirror."

And so there it is. Turning back to Victor Frankl (2000), I see that what I have experienced in the process of conducting this study is something akin to his definition of logotherapy: an "education in responsibility" (p. 120). Further, as Shann Ferch (2012) makes abundantly clear in his marvelous study of servant-leadership against the backdrop of atrocity, "forgiveness is not cheap; it requires a form of personal integrity that is hard-won" (p. 72). I feel that I am only a beginner in that sort of integrity but that I have started down a new path that promises to lead me deeper in and farther on than I ever imagined. Drawing close to Evelyn through this

study, and encountering her shadow and mine in the process, has given me at least an initial glimpse of both the power and the challenge of servant-leadership as a conscious and willed choice. The dynamic of exclusion and other negative elements that may have undercut Evelyn's overall spirit of fostering a servant-leader culture is a challenge I see in my own past, even affecting my closest and dearest relationships—as a husband and father, as a son, brother, and friend. In the mirror of these relationships, there are moments when my deficiencies become clear to me—and they strike at the core of a servant-leader orientation. I all too often succumb to anxiety or self-involvement and fail to be present in the moment, I fail to listen, fail to engage even when I see quite clearly what is called for. But reflecting on Evelyn Bentley as a role model—and, yes, honestly examining her shadow side (and mine) as well, I begin to see how I might venture down the path of servant-leadership she pointed me toward a decade and a half ago.

I want to more fully embrace that twinkle-eyed quality of presence and self-transcendence I saw in Evelyn back in the very beginning. It is that fundamental human quality, identified by Frankl (1948/2000) again as the process whereby one becomes more human, more oneself, not by dwelling on oneself, but by serving (whether officially in a leadership capacity or not)—by giving oneself "to a cause or another person" (p. 84), by becoming "immersed and absorbed" (p. 85) in love and genuineness to something or someone beyond oneself.

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