



A JOURNEY IN SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

— LARRY C. SPEARS

W elcome to our 2018 edition of *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*. I would like to offer my special thanks to all of our contributing authors in this journal. The depth and breadth of articles and papers, poetry and research, film reviews and reflections demonstrate the vibrant nature of our ongoing journey in servant-leadership from around the world.

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

In the early 1990's I invited a handful of notables in the field of fundraising and philanthropy to share with me their thoughts on servant-leadership for possible inclusion within an article that I was writing. Their great insights never made it into the published article and have languished in my files for two decades. Here, for the first time, I am happy to share with you these observations on servant-leadership from a few of the 20th century giants in the field of philanthropy and fundraising. Servant-leadership has become an important touchstone for fund-raisers and donors alike.

“The idea of serving before leading is one of the roots of



the philanthropic enterprise. The practice of one giving before asking—that is, the practice of a person making his or her own financial commitment before asking another to give—is pure servant-leadership. When that happens, the person goes forward to ask another by example, rather than by advice.

In *The Philanthropic Quest* I suggested that the central tenet of servant-leadership is that one who leads thinks of him or herself as a servant first—serving those who follow. When we, as servant-leaders, invite someone to join in making a philanthropic investment, we ask ourselves, ‘Does it seem that this is a good and growthful thing for this person to do?’ This is clearly a different approach from thinking you’re taking something away from a person when you invite investment.

I see the servant-leadership concept as central to being able to distinguish the conventional ‘arm-twisting’ brand of fund raising from what I’ve begun to call ‘the philanthropic quest.’ At base, the quest asks us to respect the donor. So does servant-leadership. Both are obsessed with the notion that human beings (donors included!) are, at heart, good folks who want to do the right thing. It’s merely our job as professionals—as servant-leaders—to give them a way to bring what’s inside them outside.”

From James Gregory Lord, consultant and author of *The Raising of Money: 35 Essentials Every Trustee Should Know*

“The philosophy of servant-leadership is not just a noble,



nice thing for an institution to profess. Embracing the concept of servant-leadership is a business imperative and integral to the success of any business. The concept of leader as servant-first answers the soulful search for intrinsic gratification from work and a yearning for spirituality in the workplace. Foremost, servant-leadership creates an ambiance that almost certainly guarantees superior, holistic organizational decisions.

Servant-leadership resonates well within the structure of learning organizations. Total Quality Management initiatives and empowerment directives are only successful if individuals are involved and believe that their opinions and expertise will impact the decision-making process. The servant-leader model encourages empowerment in that decision-making occurs at the point where decisions need to be made. That is, decisions are based on expertise and knowledge and not solely on a hierarchical position imposed by an organizational structure.”

From John Lore, past-President & CEO of
ConnectMichigan Alliance, past-chairman of the National
Society for Fund Raising Executives

“Greenleaf’s thoughts have always intrigued me because they seem to verbalize in a very precise way what I believe are excellent values to be found in the professional who works in the field of philanthropy. For example, we like to be thought of as idealists—professionals who are committed to improving society. Greenleaf said, ‘There is a



place for the lone idealists, but their servant-leadership will have much greater influence if they become institution builders and take their stand for ethical quality within those institutions where it will have the effect of supporting the performance of large numbers who otherwise might falter. I have cast my lot with institution building.’ That inspires me to stay on track professionally with a good cause, and to continue to build it.

As professionals we have many opportunities to build our ego, although we are charged with the responsibility to make others—leaders particularly—to look good. This fact leads me to react positively to another statement Greenleaf made: ‘As good a definition as I know is that maturity is the capacity to withstand the ego-destroying experiences and not lose one’s perspective in the ego-building experiences.’

Greenleaf’s statement that ‘the most effective servants are those who can persuade others to go with them and who have learned to work in teams’ really turns me on! I could hope that we—as professionals—would read more of Greenleaf and make his philosophy of servant-leader an important part of our competence. We would all be the better for this, as would society.”

From the late-Milton Murray, founder of Philanthropic Service for Institutions and past recipient of NSFRE’s Outstanding Fund-Raising Executive of the Year award

“Servant-leadership, to me, has always been an expression of the spirit, a commitment to perform, to give



oneself beyond our more selfish needs. Servant-leadership is the volunteer who goes beyond the ken, serving because the work returns a spiritual satisfaction and not a monetary one. The servant-leader gives because of the very joy of giving and not in anticipation of applause, notoriety or any other form of public acclaim.

It has always been my feeling that fund raising is servant to philanthropy, and that those of us who work in Sy Seymour's vineyards do so because we believe it is a privilege to help a person to do what they really want to do; volunteer their spirit, their energy, their talents, and give of their resources because of the infinite joy of doing it quietly, selflessly in service to some public good.

It is thrilling to me to see younger people entertaining the profession of fund raising because they want to make a difference in life through service. It is equally thrilling to witness the dedication of an older person who gives up a better paying position because of an ideal, a reaching out, and an opportunity to become involved in something that will give meaning to their life. I have witnessed this often in the classroom, and it is an exciting experience to witness.”

From the late Henry Rosso, director emeritus, The Fund Raising School

“In his years as vice-president at AT&T, Robert Greenleaf was really a company talent scout for ‘comers’ among young middle managers. In that role he discovered empirically that his most promising in-house discoveries



were what he came to call ‘servant-leaders.’ After taking early retirement from AT&T in favor of fulltime consulting and teaching, he learned that government at all levels, the non-profit sector and academia are also searching for servant-leaders.

Even before Dr. Karl Menninger warned grant-makers that ‘grant-making can be harmful to your mental health’, Greenleaf was saying that the best philanthropists and non-profit executives are persons more concerned about the common good of society than about their own personal agenda.

Since Greenleaf’s death in 1990, a growing chorus of American writers (Robert Bellah, Peter Drucker, Amitai Etzioni, John W. Gardner, James A. Joseph, Brian O’Connell, Robert Payton and Paul Yivisaker) have been telling us that the good old American ‘habits of heart’ and our traditional commitment to community service are losing ground steadily to the more modern habits of hard-driving individualism and personal rewards.

Greenleaf’s basic thesis that a pluralistic democratic society depends for its survival on its ability to produce successive generations of servant-leaders, in every discipline and on every level, is steadily gaining acceptability in our culture.”

From the late Jim Shannon, editor of *The Corporate Contributions Handbook* and senior advisor to the Council on Foundations, and who served as executive director of the General Mills Foundation from 1980 to 1988



WRITINGS

Here is a list of some of the servant-leadership publications work that I have completed in 2017-2018:

- “The Common Good and Servant-Leadership: Rocks Upon Which Good Societies are Built,” (Dung Q. Tran and Larry Spears; 2018, unpublished).
- “Make Your Life Extraordinary: The Teacher as Servant-Leader,” (Michael J. Reilly and Larry Spears; 2018; *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, Volume 12, 2018, Number 1).
- *Servant-Leaders in Training: Foundation of the Philosophy of Servant-Leadership* (John Henry Horsman; 2018, Rowman & Littlefield). Foreword by Larry Spears.
- *Leveraging the Power of Servant-Leadership: Building High Performing Organizations* (James Laub; 2018, Rowman & Littlefield). Foreword by Larry Spears.
- *Servant Leadership in Action: How You Can Achieve Great Relationships and Results* (Ken Blanchard and Renee Broadwell, Editors; 2018, Berrett-Koehler). Chapter by Larry Spears.
- “The Accompanying Servant-Leader: Facilitating Change That Builds Engaged Partnerships,” (Josh Armstrong and Larry Spears; 2017, *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, Volume 11, 2015-2017, Number 1).



TRAVELS AND PRESENTATIONS

I am most grateful for the kind invitations to speak on servant-leadership that I have received in the past year. I thank everyone at the following institutions for their caring spirits and ongoing commitment to servant-leadership:

- “The Common Good and Servant-Leadership: Rocks Upon Which Good Societies are Built.” Presentation by Dung Q. Tran and Larry Spears, at Building Institutions for the Common Good: The Purpose and Practice of Business in an Inclusive Economy. Tenth International Conference on Catholic Social Thought and Business Education & Sixth Colloquium on Christian Humanism in Business and Society. University of St. Thomas. St. Paul, MN
- “Conversation on Servant-Leadership,” with Kathleen Patterson and Larry Spears, at the Servant-Leadership Research Roundtable. Regent University. Virginia Beach, VA.
- “From Badlands to the Promised Land: Bruce Springsteen as a Servant-Leader.” Presentation by Joseph Albert and Larry Spears, at the Bruce Springsteen International Symposium. Monmouth University. West Long Branch, NJ
- “Introduction to Servant-Leadership.” Presentation by Joseph A. Goss and Larry Spears, at the Servant-Leadership Certificate Program. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI



“Servant-Leadership: Past, Present, and Future,”
panel program with Pat Falotico, Don Frick, Kent
Keith, and Larry Spears. Greenleaf Center
Conference. Grapevine, TX

COURSES

It is a great honor and joy to teach for Gonzaga University. Since 2008, I have taught over seventy courses and more than 1,500 students. In the past year, I have taught the following classes:

Summer 2018: Servant-Leadership (ORGL 530)

Summer 2018: Listen, Discern, Decide (ORGL 535)

Spring B 2018: Servant-Leadership: Personal Development
and Organizational Practices (DPLS 775/ORGL 690)

Spring B 2018: Servant-Leadership (ORGL 530)

Spring A 2018: Listen, Discern, Decide (DPLS 775/ORGL
535)

Fall B 2017: Listen, Discern, Decide (ORGL 535)

Fall A 2017: Servant-Leadership (DPLS 774/ORGL 530)

HONOR

I was recently surprised and honored to be named the inaugural inductee in the Hall of Honor of Gonzaga University’s School of Leadership Studies. I am most grateful for my long relationship with so many wonderful people at Gonzaga University. Here is the presentation as read by John H. Horsman at the inauguration of the School of Leadership Studies, 21 April 2018:



The names Robert Greenleaf and Larry Spears have become synonymous with Servant-leadership. Greenleaf (1904-1990) published his first writings on servant-leading in the late 1970s at the cutting edge of history, when *leadership* began emerging as a distinct academic school of thought. In time since, the subject matter of Servant-leadership has intrigued and challenged academics and practitioners while continuing to gain a foothold as an emerging leadership philosophy. Larry's life work has been to disseminate Greenleaf's ideas in a persuasive Quaker sort of way.

Larry met Robert Greenleaf in 1990, when Larry was just beginning his new career in Indianapolis as CEO of the *Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership*. Over the next seventeen years at the Center, Larry promoted Greenleaf's ideas organizing numerous regional and international conferences, helped found Greenleaf Centers around the world (Australia, Britain, & elsewhere), and profusely promoted Greenleaf's ideas. Larry authored, co-authored, and edited many essays and books that have been translated into several languages. Larry is most fond of his edited anthologies on themes in Servant-leadership written by dozens of the foremost leadership authors of our time. Many of those writings have been and continue to be used by professors at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels. Larry Spears is known globally as an expert authority on the writings of Robert K. Greenleaf, and the topic of servant-leadership.



Since his time with the Greenleaf Center, Larry has continued to publish essays and anthologies while making a significant contribution to Gonzaga University. Larry has been a primary editor of the *International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, and an adjunct teaching at all levels within our School. With Gonzaga, Larry found a new calling: teaching Servant-leadership and mentoring aspiring writers. Notably, Larry's writings and edited works profoundly influenced the development of the Servant-leader Concentration, and his teaching provides expert credibility to our programs. Larry is best known for teaching the Ph.D. and Master's-level Organizational Leadership courses *Introduction to Servant-leadership* and *Listen Discern Decide*, a course he also helped to develop. Our graduate students often comment how much they appreciate taking courses with *the professor who wrote the book*. Larry has endeared himself as an excellent teacher, speaker, and mentor with students and faculty alike.

If Robert Greenleaf were here to sum up Larry's work, I suspect Greenleaf in his humble, wise, eye-twinkling way would very respectfully refer to Larry as an *influential persuader* and a *Servant-leader* in high regard. Greenleaf held persuasion to a high standard. For the Servant-leader persuasion is completely free of coercion and manipulation: Persuasion occurs when we freely arrive at a decision based on what we know and our own intuition. As for being a Servant-leader, Larry's way



has been *gentle persistent persuasion* since Greenleaf passed him the torch. Larry's writings and life work has influenced and persuaded many to pursue their own journey as *Servant-leaders in training*.

Larry continues to be a stalwart ambassador of Gonzaga University, helping to make our mission and programs synonymous with his many contributions to the advancement of servant-leadership.

On the occasion of beginning our journey as the *School of Leadership Studies*, it seems most appropriate to induct Larry Spears into the ***School of Leadership Studies Hall of Honor***. This first-ever award is but a small measure of our gratitude for his invaluable contributions to Servant-leadership and Gonzaga University's commitment to advance Leadership Studies.

ON APPRECIATION AND AWARENESS

In this, our 2018 edition of *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, I continue to feel a deep sense of appreciation and awareness surrounding the wonderful contributors to this publication, and to all those who have contributed to our previous editions since 2005. As always, I offer a special note of appreciation for the unflagging work and imagination of our stellar Editor, Shann Ferch, and to our Associate Editor, Jenny Song, for her beautiful work in helping to put this issue together. I am grateful to serve as Senior Advisory Editor of *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*; and, in my dozen years in this role, the friendship



and intellectual journey shared with so many servant-leaders at Gonzaga University continues to deepen my own understanding and appreciation of servant-leadership.

Larry C. Spears is president and CEO of the Spears Center for Servant-Leadership (www.spearscenter.org), Indianapolis, and he serves as Servant-Leadership Scholar at Gonzaga University, Spokane. He is the editor and contributing author for fifteen books on servant-leadership, including the critically acclaimed *Insights on Leadership* (1996), *Fortuitous Encounters* (2013, with Paul Davis); and, with Shann Ferch, *The Spirit of Servant-Leadership* (2011) and *Conversations on Servant-Leadership* (2015). Since 1994, Larry has also contributed chapters to an additional seventeen books edited by others. He also served as editor on all five of Robert K. Greenleaf's books. As adjunct faculty and Servant-Leadership Scholar, Larry teaches graduate courses for Gonzaga University (Servant-Leadership and, Listen/Discern/Decide). Larry serves as senior advisory editor of *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*. From 1990-2007, Larry served as president and CEO of The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership.