# ALTRUISM AND ALTRUISTIC LOVE

*Intrinsic Motivation for Servant-Leadership*
— PETER MULINGE

In a world where self-interest and selfishness are often a way of life, it is a mystery to see altruistic people commit their lives to the benefit of others, while self-centered people are becoming more isolated and focused on themselves, rather than others. Seltzer (2016) explained that the self-centeredness of narcissists perpetuates their grandiosity, sense of entitlement, lack of empathy, and exploitative relationships. Self-centered narcissists perceive themselves as different from others; they lack understanding of self and value for others at a fundamental level. Understanding of self is very critical in life, "it includes knowing one's agendas and the self adequately so that one can choose as freely as possible, in order to strengthen and give life to others" (Underwood, 2002, p. 73).

Leadership theories, such as Servant-Leadership, Authentic Leadership, and Transformational Leadership share the common view that leadership is about selflessness for the sake of others. Spears (2011) said, "Servant leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and the sharing a power in

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decision making" (p. 10). Northouse (2016) noted that authentic leadership "emphasizes the development of qualities that help leaders to be perceived as trustworthy and believable by their followers" (p. 206). Authentic leaders see their role as one of responsibility for bringing out the best in others and doing what is best for the organization within the context of serving their community (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Leaders who exhibit transformational leadership often have a "strong set of internal values and ideals, and they are effective at motivating followers to act in ways that support the greater good rather than their own self-interest" (Northouse, 2016, p. 177). Bass (1998) suggests that transformational leadership enhances the follower's altruism and motivates them to go beyond their self-interest for the good of others. These theories suggest that leadership is a prosocial behavior based on altruism, which Batson (2014) referred to as a "motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare" (p. 87).

Intrinsic traits are key motivators that can inspire leaders to demonstrate altruism and altruistic love. Dugan (2017) argued that the leadership that can touch the heart of others is "motivated by intrinsic traits" (p. 203). According to Patterson (2004), the desire to serve is grounded in altruistic love. On this premise, the purpose of this paper is to discuss altruism and altruistic love as intrinsic traits that motivate leaders to serve selflessly and explain how those traits manifest within servant-leadership theory. Servant-leadership is a theory with strong altruistic and moral overtones that require leaders to be

attentive to the needs of others and empathize with them (Northouse, 2016). The theory also prompts leaders to take care of their followers by helping to ensure they become healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous in the pursuit of becoming servant-leaders themselves (Greenleaf, 1970).

ON ALTRUISM

Social science scholars Post, Underwood, Schloss, and Hurlbut (2002) noted the concept of altruism, or disinterested concern for another's welfare, has been discussed by everyone from theologians to psychologists to biologists. This discussion may have been occasioned by Skinner's (1979) contention that "by giving too much help we postpone the acquisition of effective behavior and perpetuate the need for help" (p. 43). Thus, a prominent debate in the fields of sociobiological and psychological studies has been to discern what altruism is and whether pure altruism exists. The studies of altruism have produced a variety of definitions. Cardwell, Clark, and Meldrum (2002) defined altruism as a "form of prosocial behavior in which a person will voluntarily help another at some cost to themselves" (p. 64). Lippa (1994) proposed that altruism involves "helping another person for no reward, and even at some cost to oneself" (p. 480). Some studies, such as Wilson (1975), took an extreme view in defining altruism as: ". . . self-destructive behavior performed for the benefit of others" (p. 578). Carlson, Martin, and Buskist (2004), and Nagel (1978) provided a practical definition of altruism: "by altruism, I mean not abject self-sacrifice, but merely a

willingness to act in the consideration of the interests of other persons, without the need of ulterior motives" (p. 79).

Studies in social disciplines have contextualized the meaning of altruism. For example, Evolutionary biologists such as Dawkins (1976) concluded that an altruistic behavior of one individual "enhances others chances of survival at the expenses of the individual" (p. 4). While biologists view altruism as a behavior, psychologists such as Sober (2002) viewed altruism as a "property of motives or desires, or preferences that apply only to individuals who have minds" (p. 18). Krebs (1982), a social psychologist, also affirms altruism as "a willingness to sacrifice one's welfare for the sake of another" (p. 37). Additional definitions of altruism by Bowie (1991), Kanungo and Mendonca (1996), and Worsel, Cooper, and Goethals (1988) included critical components of behavior and dispositional intentions; one's behavior and intentions must have some cost for the performer. In other words, there must be a sense of surrender and commitment on the performer's behalf.

Northouse (2016) suggested that altruism is an "approach that suggests actions are moral if their primary purpose is to promote the best interests of others" (p. 335), while Nagel (1978) espoused that altruism entails a "willingness to act in the interests of other persons without the need for ulterior motives" (p. 79). In a practical example, altruism could be demonstrated through counseling a rape victim by volunteering one's time in a rehabilitation center without payment and doing so prompted solely by an internal motivation to help others.

However, if a student volunteers the same services for the purpose of meeting a course requirement, then there may be ulterior motives. Genuine altruism can be described as a prosocial behavior done purely in the interest of the other person, with little regard to one's own interests.

MANIFESTATION OF ALTRUISM

According to Kanungo and Mendonca (1996), there is a substantial agreement that altruism is seen "as a principle of moral behavior" (p. 35). This claim suggests that altruism is a motivation to act morally in an organization, community, or at an individual level. Altruism is the epitome of sound moral principles, manifesting itself in behavior to benefit others. Studies by Murray (1938), Jackson (1967), and Wilson (1975) showed that altruistic behavior reflects concern for others without regard for self-interest, even when such a concern involves considerable personal sacrifice or inconvenience.

Altruistic behavior is essential in servant-leadership, as it promotes a focus on others. This behavior prompts the leader to engage in exemplary acts perhaps innovative and unconventional, which often involve great personal risks and sacrifices (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Thus, the altruistic behavior of servant-leaders manifests itself at the operative level in terms of affiliate interest, self-discipline, and social achievement needs (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996). Servant-leadership effectiveness is often ensured by altruistic acts that reflect the leader's concern to benefit others, despite the personal risk(s) involved in such an act. As Higgs (1995)

noted, Nelson Mandela is a great exemplar of altruistic behavior; he chose to sacrifice his freedom so that others could be free (p. 361).

On the topic of what motivates altruism, studies by Baron (1992), Oliner (2002), and Mastain (2007) affirmed that altruism has contextual, social-cognitive, affective, and relational roots motivated by cultural and religious ideologies. Oliner and Oliner (1988) asserted that ideologies, values, and norms that place a premium on caring for others may inform a sense of personal responsibility for the fate of those who are in need, which may become such defining aspects of the self that they prompt action in ways consistent with one's values.

Critics of altruism, such as Bass (2006), have argued that altruism treats "others as more important than oneself and therefore is degrading and demeaning to the self and hinders the individuals' pursuit of self-development, excellence, and creativity" (p. 332). Campbell (1996) supported Ayn Rand's argument that most problems in the world come from the doctrine of altruism; asserting that there is no rational ground for claiming that sacrificing oneself to serve others is morally superior to pursuing one's own interest. For example, a social system based on altruist morality, such as socialist regimes, treat some people as a sacrificial animal to be sacrificed for the benefit of others. According to Reginster (2000), Nietzsche purported that no matter what degree altruistic action is performed, it is harmful to its practitioner and therefore, should not be performed.

## ALTRUISTIC LOVE

According to Akdermirc (2010), altruism and altruistic love are inseparable, as a person cannot love unconditionally without being altruistic, nor can a person be altruistic without loving unconditionally. Fundamentally, Post (2002) explained altruistic love as "uniquely human, an intentional affirmation; as such, it is the epitome of human altruism" (p. 51). Furthermore, Pope (2002) explained that the power of altruistic love "strikes much deeper, more ancient, and more powerful affective cord than does the term altruism" (p. 168). Thus, altruistic love is to be identified with altruism to enhance the well-being of others. Conversely, people who are known to be altruistic are also known to be loving people. For example, Langford (2003) considered Mother Teresa of Calcutta "the light of love" for serving the poor through the small things she did with great love. Though sometimes she was hard on the nuns, nevertheless, she supervised them with love and care.

According to Post (2002), altruistic love is closely linked to care, which prompts one to respond to others in need. Altruistic love is demonstrated by compassion for the suffering, sympathy for those suffering unfairly, acting for the well-being of others, being present at the moment of needs, and addressing social injustice (p. 51). Emotionally and physiologically, human beings need altruistic love, because it adds the feature of deep affirmative effect to altruism. Altruistic love expects nothing in return and is given freely and generously with the other's good in mind (Koenig, 2007, pp. 422-441).

Post (2002) compared altruistic love with "*Agape*, a Greek word for love" (p. 337). The term *agape* has a Christian motif that transcends mere notions of love and stands unique as a concept of love. It also fulfills love's greatest potential as a moral agent in the praxis of servant-leadership. Scholars such as Nygren (1953) and Hallet (1989) concluded that altruistic love and *agape* have at least one common feature: a self-sacrificial activity on behalf of others without thought for the good that might be returned to oneself. However, Post (2002) maintained that altruistic love does not eclipse care of self, for without this, the agent would eventually become unable to perform altruistic acts. Here, Post wanted to show that self-love is the enabler to loving others. As an African adage says, "If you do not love yourself, you will be unable to love else."

Viewed from a Divine perspective in the Christian tradition, *agape* is similar to altruistic love in self-giving and forgiving, which God decisively expressed in the world by the redemptive act of Jesus. William (1968) noted that *agape* love is "not another love which is added to the others, rather it is the love which underlies all others, leads them towards the discovery of their limits, and releases a new possibility in the self which is created for communion" (p. 359). Examining *agape* from a religious perspective, Nygren (1953) pointed out that "it was initiated by God, that is, it flows from God and then through the faithful and from there outward to others" (p. 338). Since altruistic love is divinely orchestrated, Ruse's (1994) argument is acceptable: "altruistic *agape* love is superior to and restraining of, if not ideally abolishing, other

forms of love" (p. 172). In essence, altruistic love affectively affirms and gratefully delights in the well-being of others.

## EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF ALTRUISM AND ALTRUISTIC LOVE

Mattis et al. (2009) conducted an empirical qualitative study on the altruistic motivation for caring action in a low-income urban community in New York City. The study found that people are motivated to behave altruistically when they become aware either of the needs of individuals or the needs of a group. The participants expressed that the factors that motivate people to act altruistically include, ideological and relational norms, expression of love, and character traits. Scholars such as Ozinga (1999), and Warneken and Tomasello (2009) have shown that altruism is an innate part of human nature, with its source in heredity, natural law, or in the instinct for social behavior. Templeton's (2000) study on the benefits of a life lived with love from a religious perspective concluded that, while world religions all encourage benevolence, charity, and compassion, the contemporary scientific notion of altruism cannot account for these values in their religious contexts. Crook's (1980) study on altruism suggested that altruism may be linked to consciousness, which enables people to empathize with others, along with the ability to appreciate and perhaps even simulate others' cognitive and emotional lives from their standpoint. Batson (2014) viewed consciousness as the ability that promotes altruistic and social behavior. Studies on modeling altruistic behavior by Rushton,

Neal, Fulker, Blizard, and Eysenck (1983) suggested that parental models and other forms of social support are essential factors in the development of altruistic behavior.

## THE MANIFESTATION OF AGAPE AND ALTRUISTIC LOVE

Altruistic love is manifested in the quality of love rather than the kinds of objects to which it is directed. Everyone is to be loved. As Pope (2002) stated, "*Agape*/altruistic love embraces everyone far as well as near, unattractive as well as attractive, lost as well as found, an outsider as well as insiders" (p. 175). According to Post (2002), altruistic love may "presuppose self-sacrificing and risk-taking" (p. 54). For example, rescuers of Jews during the Nazi persecution demonstrated altruism, *agape*, and altruistic love. According to Fogelman (1994), the rescuers were moral people who risked their lives for the sake of endangered human life. Thus, the rescuers felt a sense of responsibility towards others, feeling an obligation to help even when there was no potential for tangible gain (Oliner & Oliner, 2003). What makes altruistic love unique is the spirit of thought and deed, as displayed by the actor.

## ALTRUISM AS A SERVANT-LEADERSHIP VALUE

Scholarly studies have noted that servant-leadership theory can be measured with moral behaviors. Graham (1991), Ehrhart (2004), Hale and Fields (2007), Walumbwa, Hartnell, and Oke (2010), and Spears (2010) all agreed that servant-leadership is based on behaviors that help others. Similarly,

Northouse (2016) noted, "servant leadership is an approach that focuses on leaders' behaviors" (p. 225). Patterson (2004) considered *agape* and altruistic love as the key "cornerstone of servant leadership theory" (p. 5). Christensen, Mackey, and Whetten (2014) observed that servant-leadership offers a multidimensional leadership theory that encompasses all aspects of leadership such as ethical, relational, and outcome-based dimensions.

Servant-leadership is different from other leadership theories in that it specifically embraces the practice of putting the interest of others above oneself. It emphasizes that leaders be attentive to the concerns of others, empathize with them, and nurture them (Northouse, 2016, p. 225). The term servant-leadership has been assigned a variety of definitions, and Greenleaf (1970) who first coined the term, stated:

> The servant-leader is a 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. . . . The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? (p. 6)

Servant-leadership's roots and principles can be found in many faith traditions, including Christianity. Jesus said:

> You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,

and whoever wants to be first must be a slave to all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:42-45, New International Version)

The Christian scriptures emphasize the motivational aspects of being a leader as those based on intrinsic moral traits of altruism, *agape*, and altruistic love. These scriptural presuppositions are revitalized by Northouse's (2016) assertion that, "servant leadership works best when leaders are altruistic and have a strong motivation and deep-seated interest in helping others" (p. 239).

The altruistic behavior demonstrated by leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., Maya Angelou, and Desmond Tutu distinguished them from other leaders of their time. Their strong motivation and deep-seated interest in helping others brought them into conflict with oppressive regimes as they counted their lives unworthy compared with the need for the well-being of their people. Scholars have credited these leaders as altruists, such as Northouse (2016), who described Mandela as a "leader with high moral standards" (p. 168). Ferch (2012) characterized Martin Luther King Jr., and Desmond Tutu as leaders of courage "who walked through a desert of despair to the revitalizing of love" (p. 104). Thus, their altruistic behavior compelled them to sacrifice their own well-being for the well-being of others. Heifetz (1994) explained how Gandhi chose to live as a "poor man by spinning cotton each day, weaving traditional loincloth and homespun shawl" (p. 226). Corey,

Corey, and Muratori (2016) described Angelou as an extraordinarily talented woman who advocated against injustice and prejudice. Her success is measured by her ability to love and care for others. Their deep natural inclination to serve is what ultimately inspired these leaders to act sacrificially.

## STRENGTH, CRITICISM, AND APPLICATION OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

Leadership studies have found that the key element distinguishing servant-leadership from other leadership theories is its moral component. Northouse (2016) applauded it as the only "leadership approach that frames the leadership process around the principle of caring for others" (p. 240). Notably, altruism is also sometimes more successful than its counterparts within the context of business. Research conducted by scholars from Arizona State University (Keith, 2014) on the effectiveness of servant-leadership examined 126 CEOs of technology firms in Silicon Valley and found that the returns on investment were higher for firms whose CEOs were servant-leaders. Even though servant-leadership has positive features of altruism, its' critics argue that the paradoxical nature of this model creates conflicts of individual's autonomy and other principles of leadership such as directing, concern for production, goal setting, and creating a vision (Gergen, 2006). For example, Northouse (2016) noted that "being a servant leader implies following, and following is viewed as the opposite of leading" (p. 241). Additionally, Northouse argues

that "although Servant leadership incorporates influence, the mechanism of how influence functions as a part of servant leadership is not fully explicated in the approach" (p. 241). Many other critics have argued that many practitioners of servant-leadership are not necessarily researchers who want to conduct studies to test the validity of servant-leadership. Thus, with its positive features, servant-leadership criticism relates to its soft approach unsuited to a competitive environment.

Servant-leadership is praised for its value-based approach to holistic leading, which places the worth of others before self (Greenleaf, 1998). Inherent values determine the outward actions of a servant-leader's behaviors. Russel (2001) argued that these actions grow out of inner values of an individual, and those intrinsic traits are independent variables that motivate the servant-leader's behavior. Thus, servant-leadership expands upon these traits by promoting self-transcendence in the service of caring and supporting the growth and development of others (Greenleaf, 2002). Traits manifested by servant-leaders include integrity, authenticity, courage, objectivity, humility, empathy, and forgiveness (van Dierendonck, Nuijten, & Heeren, 2009).

**Empathy.** According to Ferch (2012), empathy is "the compassionate gift of seeing life through the eyes of another, and in seeing clearly, to extend tenderness" (p. 140). Another way to describe empathy is "proverbially standing in the shoes of another person and attempting to see the world from that person's perspective" (Northouse, 2016, p. 227). In essence, empathy entails the ability of a leader to experience and relate to the thoughts, emotions, or experiences of others and be able

to understand them. Considering empathy from a situational context, it refers to situations in which the subject has a similar emotional state to an object as a result of the perception of the object's situation or predicament (Preston & Waal, 2001). Thus, a servant-leader is not only motivated by an intrinsic impulse to act, but also extrinsic motivators such as terminal illness, natural calamities, deprivation, or homelessness. Empathy is that intrinsic trait manifested by a servant-leader to fill or step into the space of need within another's life.

An empirical research by Batson (1987) to test the possibility that empathy-induced altruism can be used to improve attitudes toward stigmatized out-groups, concluded that "inducing empathy can improve attitude towards racial minorities, people with aids, the homeless, and even murderers" (p. 93). A research on the benefits of empathy-induced altruism suggested that empathy-induced-altruistic motivation can benefit groups in need (Batson, 2010). According to studies done by the Center for Creative Leadership to understand if empathy has influence on the manager's job performance, after analyzing data from 6,731 managers from 38 countries, found out that "empathy improves emotional well-being, deepens relationships and gives a leader a deeper understanding, empathy is positively deep related to job performance" (Gentry, Weber, & Sadri, 2007, p. 4). Empathy is also a key part of emotional intelligence that several researchers believe is critical to being an effective leader (Bar-On & Parker, 2000; George, 2000; Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Therefore, empathy is a construct

that is fundamental to servant-leadership.

**Compassionate love.** Compassionate love, which is sometimes called altruistic love, refers to love that centers on the good of the other (Underwood, 2002) and is marked by openness and receptivity. Sprescher and Fehr (2005) defined it as an:

> . . . attitude towards others, either closer others or strangers and all humanity; containing feelings, cognitions and behaviors that are focused on caring, concerns, tenderness, and an orientation towards supporting, helping and understanding the others particularly when the others are perceived to be suffering or in need. (p. 630)

Compassionate love is about doing good with a clear motivation of concern for others. In servant-leadership, compassionate love is the underlying motivation, given that servant-leadership emphasizes concern for the welfare of others (Mayer, 2010). Compassionate love is the cornerstone of a servant leader-follower relationship and gives a deeper understanding of others' motives and behaviors.

According to Underwood (2002), compassionate love is other-centered love and includes actions, attitudes, and expressions. Its characteristics of openness and receptivity help the leader show others, empathic love. Factors encouraging the development of compassionate love may include suffering, older age, poverty, or deprivation. Being loved by others and by the Divine can also foster and empower one's capacity to express love for others (Underwood, 2002, p. 75). George (2003)

defined being compassionate as being sensitive to the plight of others, opening one's self to others, and being willing to help them (p. 38). Compassionate love, driven by positive motivation and appropriate discernment, can have positive effects on the development of the person, contributing to moral and spiritual growth and additional insight and wisdom (Underwood, 2002). Compassionate love transcends ethnicity, religion, race, and social class. Once expressed, it can break down animosity and racial barriers. This is the kind of love that was experienced by the perpetrators of apartheid in South Africa when Nelson Mandela implemented the Commission for True Forgiveness and Reconciliation of Restorative Justice. The result of truth-telling was that the perpetrators would receive amnesty (Ferch, 2012, p. 38). The doing of compassionate things in and of itself can encourage one to do more.

**Awareness.** Greenleaf (1970) viewed awareness as a quality of servant-leaders that makes them accurately attuned and receptive to their physical, social, and political environments. It includes understanding oneself and the impact one has on others. With awareness, a servant-leader is able to see themselves and their perspectives amid the greater context of the situation. Awareness is the inner eye and ear of a servant-leader that helps him or her to see and listen to himself or herself and then come to terms with human conflicts, underlying or hidden suffering, and self-denial. Regarding awareness, Ferch (2012) explained that a "servant leader encounters the imagination and determination necessary to turn human suffering into meaning and meaning into

transcendence" (p. 142). It lends people the ability to view situations from a more integrated, holistic position. As Greenleaf (1970) observed:

> Awareness is not a giver of solace—it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity. (p. 15)

Servant-leaders manifest this trait by giving light, life, and healing, as well as helping others actualize potential to reach their desired destinations. Awareness is a trait that gives a servant-leader a deep sense of himself or herself and the environment around him or her.

**Surrender.** Surrender is a rare term to find mentioned in servant-leadership, and it is often labeled as a sign of weakness, but it can be among the greatest of leadership strengths. The definition of the term surrender is appropriated from different worldviews, but the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2005) defines it as: "to give up completely or agree to forgo especially in favor of another" (p. 1258). While this definition describes a giving up, it reinforces the meaning of surrender in terms of giving up in favor of another. According to Branscomb (1993), surrender is about giving over of something with the willingness of heart. This is a profound salutation of the heart to give up for the sake of others. Kaplan (1984) used the term "altruistic surrender" to describe the willingness to live for others. Altruistic surrender is another way of understanding empathy. Whereas empathy

seeks to temporarily identify with others for the sake of understanding and sensitivity, altruistic surrender goes further to a level where the distinction between self and other is lost (Moze, 2007). Altruistic surrender is not only the opposite of narcissism, but it is an extreme overcorrection from narcissistic tendencies. Altruistic surrender, self-sacrifices one's development for another's advancement.

Surrender provides servant-leaders a willing path toward greater understanding. The action of surrendering allows for flexibility and movement in relation to a polarized other, and it is a sacrificial choice not to resist. Such a choice, LaMothe (2005) proposed, is as much a part of ego development as choosing to resist. As one example, the Bible states, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matt. 6:33). According to Moze (2007), many spiritual traditions point to the role of surrender as pivotal in the personal development and the move toward optimal function known as enlightenment.

**Commitment to the growth of others.** Commitment to the growth of others is seamless in a heart devoted to the welfare of others. The heartbeat of the altruistic servant-leader is to improve a collective well-being largely through collaborative relationships. According to Northouse (2016), "servant leadership places a higher premium on treating each person as a unique person with intrinsic value that goes beyond his or her tangible contributions" (p. 234). Servant-leaders manifest their intrinsic values by helping others develop their inherent gifts, giving them opportunities to serve, leading, and ultimately

become better people both professionally and personally. Nelson Mandela demonstrated one of the inviolable altruistic traits of a natural servant when, close to the end of his first term, he prepared to retire and hand over leadership to his deputy. In 1999, he stepped down as the president of South Africa at the end of only one term of office (South Africa history online, 2011).

A servant-leader has to develop trust with followers to promote fast growth. When followers know they have their leaders' trust, they give themselves to the leaders' nurturing. Commitment to the growth of others can take many forms, including mentorship, coaching, and counseling, helping others develop new work skill, taking a personal interest in their ideas, and involving followers in a decision (Greenleaf, 2002). Servant-leaders encourage their people to have goals and demonstrate that their actions will have consequences. Sometime servant-leaders and their followers discover a mutual purpose when they recognize that they have compatible goals, allowing them to collaborate on common strategies. The aim of discovering mutual purpose is to help both parties focus on higher and longer-term goals that will continue even when the servant-leader is not on the scene. This helps people grow, as they become successful and become self-actualized, reaching their fullest human potential.

## PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW ON ALTRUISM

Philosophers discuss altruism as a behavior undertaken to help others. It is intrinsically motivated by a desire to benefit

someone other than oneself. As such, the term is an antidote for selfishness or self-absorption. Human beings naturally respond to suffering and other woes, and research by Blum (1980), Nodding (1986), and Slote (1992) concluded that humans are emotionally motivated to act altruistically toward the needy. They further asserted that altruistic love is the power that makes people love God's creation. On this, Lewis (1960) described God as a "person who loves his creation, human being above all, when we love others for themselves, we imitate God and express our love for him" (p.11). Altruistic behavior is admired only in a circumstance in which it is appropriated to act for the sake of others.

Though the purpose of this paper is to affirm altruism, it is important to name the counter-arguments as well. Nietzsche (1966) argued that altruism steps out of ascetic practice by involving control of basic bodily functions. He argued that placing value on self-sacrifice may lead one to say no to life and to oneself. Further, he claimed that the practice of the ascetic is destructive to man since it involves suffering and denial of one's happiness and that all this ideal can do is to see goodness for others but not oneself. Nietzsche (1966) stated that altruism lacks specification in that when one subscribes to altruism, he or she becomes willing to make himself or herself a useful member and instrument of others. He suggested that this altruistic action is harmful to the agent in any degree and thus, should not be performed. According to Reginster (2000), Nietzsche believed that altruism is not the only means by which one can be generous. Further, Nietzsche (1966)

suggested that abundant giving is a characteristic of the ideally selfish person.

According to Nietzsche (1966), altruism has the potential to harm a person's capacity to be generous. That is, to the extent that one engages in altruistic acts, one will either undermine his or her ability to be generous or simply become incapable of being genuinely kind, as though doing so causes one to neglect one's values and desires. When one's values are neglected, the person loses his or her identity and self-esteem. Nietzsche believed that genuine altruism could not come from a person who neglected himself or herself for the sake of others. He saw altruism as a bad behavior that suppresses one's ego to sacrificially restrain interest in wealth for the sake of others.

There have been many who have countered Nietzsche argument. For example, Frankl (2000), stated that altruistic actions and selfless nature are manifested in self-transcendence and logotherapy. Frankl suggested that altruism is a general sense of calling, regardless of one's occupation, and it is the call to devote one's life to serving others and to improving oneself as a means of fulfilling one's potential. Thus, altruism comes from commitments that transcend personal interests, or as Fabry (1994) stated, it comes from "reaching beyond the self toward causes to serve or people to love" (p. xix). Maslow and Maslow (1971) suggested that self-transcendence refers to the "very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos" (p. 269). Thus, it is a

moral trait that is intrinsically relational. In self-transcendence, other people matter in their own right because of their intrinsic value. People engage in deeds of compassion and kindness because they are simply expressing altruistic love. Research by Coward and Reed (1996) and Nygren, Jonsén, Gustafson, Norberg, and Lundman (2005) on self-transcendence have demonstrated that it is related to the well-being of others.

> On altruism and logotherapy, Frankl (1986) noted:
>
>> Human existence always points, and is directed, toward something other than oneself; or rather, toward something or someone other than oneself, namely toward meanings to fulfill, or toward other human beings to encounter lovingly. And only to the extent to which a human being lives out his self-transcendence is he really becoming human and actualizing himself. (p. 294)

Altruism is at the heart of logotherapy, as it deflects one's attention away from the self so that one can become whole by thinking about others rather than themselves.

According to bell hooks (2001), altruistic individuals possess an internal moral impulse that compels them to aspire toward ideas such as justice, equality, and compassion. She stated that the sense of altruistic love finds expression when individuals and communities devote themselves to realizing good on behalf of others. However, before expressing love to others, hooks suggested that one should seek self-love that is not equated with selfishness and self-centeredness. When one gives oneself love, she or he provides the inner being with the opportunity to have the unconditional love or *agape*/altruistic

love that one may have longed to receive from someone else (pp. 66-67). People who have experienced this love are radically unwilling to withhold their noblest initiatives and ideas, from building up humanity everywhere and anywhere. A precise expression of self-love is the foundation of human loving practice.

hooks (2001) envisioned a concept of love that is other-centered. She embraced Martin Luther King Jr.'s philosophy of serving others as he preached other-centered love until his death. He once declared, "When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am speaking of that force which is all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life" (as cited in hook, 2001, p. 75). hooks' understanding of love is altruistic in nature, as she wrote of a love that is a force that penetrates and breaks the walling of bigotry and hatred, a love that unites people together, and a love that gives hope and promises wellness of life.

Chau, Johnson, Bowers, Darvill, and Danko (1990) provided a study on other-centered love, which showed that this construct is positively correlated with altruism, and the expression of altruism enhances others' quality of life and builds community. Other-centered love is manifested through individuals who believe that giving to others is an extension of their concern for and support of their own families (hooks, 2001, p. 76). It is also expressed by altruistic individuals who bring new resources to help the needy in the society. Missionaries provide a good example when they go to foreign countries to help build schools,

provide health care, and start projects that will improve people's well-being, and such individuals often are motivated by altruistic love. This is described by hooks as a "love for other that seeks a just society and emphasizes more on social responsibility and empathy" (p. 56).

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I presented altruism as a behavior that holds that individuals have a moral obligation to help, serve, or benefit others, at the sacrifice of self-interest if necessary. I demonstrated that altruism is the epitome of sound moral principles that manifest in the altruistic behavior of a servant-leader. Altruistic love is argued here as a key accompaniment of altruism. This kind of love encompasses intrinsic traits that motivate an individual to act sacrificially. Intrinsic traits that manifest in servant-leaders' behaviors include empathy, awareness, compassionate love, and commitment to the growth of the other. The actions of these intrinsic values form a distinctive marker in servant-leadership, thereby differentiating it from other theories of leadership.

From a philosophical perspective, Frankl saw value in helping people access their nobler sides in each life situation, even when the ability to know what to do was often unclear but still compelling. Thus, Frankl elevated commitment to the spiritual act of serving a higher purpose for the greater good. For Nietzsche, altruism is an outgrowth of the ascetic ideal. It is a moral principle that demands self-sacrifice for the sake of others. I noted that Nietzsche does not advocate a wholesale

rejection of altruism, but that he does advocate for a qualified form of egoism. Ultimately, I posit that altruistic love is other-centered and comes from the motivation to serve others in freedom, thus, altruism and altruistic love are discussed in this paper, as key intrinsic traits that motivate leaders to serve selflessly and how they manifest in servant-leadership theory.

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