



MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

A Tool for Servant-Leadership

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In this essay I hope to interest the servant-leadership (SL) community in the well-developed communication style known as motivational interviewing (MI) (Miller, 1983; Miller & Rollnick, 2013), which bears similarities to a SL style of guiding and leading namely: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth, and building community. Furthermore, there is extensive scientific literature bearing on the nature and efficacy of MI in facilitating human growth and change, which could describe SL in practical terms that can be taught, measured, and studied.

I have been exploring MI as a tool that servant-leaders could use to enhance their own leadership skills in motivating workers. I surveyed leaders from Veterans Administration hospitals in the US who had undergone SL training that included MI to identify changes they had experienced in their interactions with workers. I begin with a discussion of SL itself, then consider how the practice and teaching of this leadership style might benefit from what is known about MI.

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

Though it is an ancient concept, SL remains relevant today, linked to timeless notions of ethics, virtues, values, and morality (Parris & Peachey, 2013; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).



There is increased interest in SL practice, with many organizations viewing it as an ideal style that leaders and organizations can aspire to emulate (Spears, 2010). Greenleaf (2002) defined SL as being a “servant first,” contrasting this with leadership that seeks to control and overshadow the people being led (p. 28). His understanding of SL was inspired by reading Hermann Hesse’s (2003) *Journey to the East*, wherein the key character Leo was a servant to the group of people he led, sustaining them with his spirit and song. Greenleaf (2002) concluded that “*the great leader is seen as servant first*, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness” (p. 21).

How is SL defined and measured? Studies performed by Parris and Peachey (2013) in an organizational context found that SL is a viable leadership theory that can help organizations improve workers’ well-being. These studies have also shown that: (a) there was no consensus on the definition of SL, (b) SL theory was being investigated across a variety of contexts, cultures, and themes, and (c) researchers used multiple measures to assess SL.

According to Greenleaf (2002) a “servant-leader *is* servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. . . . That person is sharply different from one who is a *leader first*” (p. 27). Two models of SL described by Spears (1995) and Laub (1999) are most frequently cited (Green et al., 2015).

SL measurement instruments include the Organizational Leadership Assessment (Laub, 1999), the SL Questionnaire (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), the SL Behavior Scale (Sendjaya et al., 2008), the SL Survey (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), and SL Scales by Ehrhart (2004) and Liden et al. (2008).

SL and Motivational Interviewing have similar concepts. Yet, MI is in a unique position, for it could be a tool for SL to develop the needed leadership skills. There is extensive research by van



Dierendonck, Liden, and Sendjaya amongst others, supporting SL's effectiveness in the workplace (Mustamil & Najam, 2020).

EFFICACY OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

A review of 285 articles on SL found consistent positive relationships with teamwork, individual citizenship behavior, task performance, creativity, and customer satisfaction (Eva et al., 2019). SL has been found to enhance employee satisfaction (Li et al., 2018). Also, one way in which SL may benefit organizations is by facilitating employees' engagement in their work and commitment to the organization (Hanayasha, 2016). Servant-leaders support and enable workers to be the best at work and achieve their goals in a collaborative environment (Abdullah & Ramay, 2012; Khuong & Le Vu, 2014; Linuesa- Langreo et al., 2017; Vanaki & Vagharseyyedin, 2009). Moreover, studying 185 hotels in Spain, Palomino et al. (2017) found that SL enhanced customer service performance. Senge (1990) affirmed that in contrast to hierarchies, SL facilitates organizations to become dynamic learning communities.

As a result, organizations that utilize their employees' strengths tend to have workers who are more engaged, exert extra effort and persistence in job performance, are more satisfied in their work, and remain committed to their organization (Christian et al., 2011; Kanfer, 1990; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Yalabik et al., 2013). Research demonstrates that a SL approach is able to tap into the intrinsic motivation of employees in several dimensions described in the following sections.

Trust

Trust is "confidence in [someone's] integrity and abilities. Distrust is suspicion [of someone's] integrity, their agenda, their capabilities, or their track record" (Covey & Merrill, 2006, p. 5).



Trust in the leader is key to positive interpersonal relationships and harmony within an organization for “high trust materially improves communication, collaboration, execution, innovation, strategy, engagement, partnering, and relationships with stakeholders” (Covey & Merrill, 2006, p. 19). Similarly, SL can facilitate interpersonal and organizational trust, fostering group identity (Russell, 2001). For instance, Joseph and Winston (2005) found a strong connection of SL style with the leader and organizational trust, as measured by employee perceptions on the Organizational Leadership Assessment (Laub, 1999) and the Organizational Trust Inventory (Nyhan & Marlowe, 1997).

Team Building, Skills Development, and Engagement

SL can influence follower well-being and performance (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), thus positively impact employee relationships, engagement and performance. At the same time, SL adds to employees’ healing, commitment, and feeling of self-worth (Greenleaf 2002). Carter and Baghurst (2014) carried out a study of 11 participants from a SL-led restaurant. The focus of the study was on employees’ perspective on SL. The results showed that SL enhanced employee engagement and contributed to their commitment to the workplace. Likewise, a study by Kanfer et al. (2017) found that motivation affected the workers’ skill development, choice of jobs and careers, level of engagement, and goal achievement. Moreover, motivation enhanced development of a conducive work environment, and the appropriate human resource policies for a better organization (Kanfer et al., 2017). Conversely, when employees were not engaged, they became less innovative, less productive, and their performance reduced (Great Britain Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2009). Furthermore, a study on the role SL in effective team building for Organization



Citizen Behaviors (OCB), by Hu and Liden (2011), with a sample of 304 employees, was used to determine the moderating strength of SL on the relationship between goal, process clarity and team potency, team performance, and team OCB. The results revealed that SL moderated the relationships between both goal and process clarity and team potency (Hu & Liden, 2011).

Employee Performance and Job Satisfaction

SL can also positively affect employee performance and job satisfaction. A study by Li et al. (2018) on the relationship between SL and life satisfaction, showed that SL enhanced employee satisfaction. In Taiwan, a cross sectional study among hospital nurses was conducted by Tsai (2011). The results demonstrated that leadership behavior was significantly positively linked with job satisfaction, and organizational culture significantly linked with leadership behavior and job satisfaction (Tsai, 2011).

Meanwhile, another study by Mayer et al. (2008) on the link between SL and satisfaction of follower needs, demonstrated that SL played an important role in satisfying follower needs and improving job satisfaction. SL was able to influence job satisfaction by meeting the psychological needs of the employees. Additionally, Mayer et al. (2008) linked SL to follower job satisfaction. The mediator was organizational justice based on the models of justice, Self-Determination Theory, needs based theories of job satisfaction, and the SL literature.

Organizational Commitment Job Retention

SL can enhance affective organizational commitment, thus reducing employee turnover. For instance, in the United States, Jang and Kandampully (2018) conducted a study amongst frontline restaurant employees to examine the impact of SL on turnover



intention. The sample study was 213 frontline employees from restaurants, and organizational commitment was the mediator. The researchers used structural equation modeling to support their hypothesized model and indicated that affective organizational commitment fully mediated the relationship between the employee perception of SL and turnover (Jang & Kandampully, 2018).

Additionally, Katz and Kahn (1966) asserted that decreased absenteeism and labor turnover is an indication of employee sense of belonging and thus job satisfaction. They acknowledged that sense of belonging precedes employee retention, for it was in itself a motivation factor. For instance, when employees are not happy with the culture of the organization, the safety within the workplace, support from the management, or compensation and benefits, they manifest job dissatisfaction through absenteeism and high labor turnover (Henne & Locke, 1985). This revealed that job satisfaction interconnected with employee retention.

Finally, Chughtai (2016) in Pakistan, surveyed 174 full time employees in a large company. They demonstrated that organizational identification and psychological safety partially mediated the effects of SL.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (MI)

Motivational Interviewing was originally developed outside of organizational leadership as a communication method for facilitating behavior change by Miller (1983) during a sabbatical leave in Norway. As a way of being in relationship, MI is defined as a “collaborative conversation style for strengthening a person’s own motivation and commitment to change” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 12).

Initially, the concept was used in counseling and psychotherapy (Arkowitz et al., 2008; Miller & Rollnick, 1991). The applications of MI have since spread into “health care, rehabilitation, public health,



social work, dentistry, corrections, coaching, and education, directly impacting the lives of many people” (Miller & Moyers, 2017, p. 757). MI has a strong evidence base for promoting positive behavior change, with more than 1,500 controlled trials from dozens of nations, and 100 meta-analyses published across a wide variety of professions, fields, and cultures (Arkowitz et al., 2015). MI practice is well operationalized, with extensive research on learning, training, measurement, and quality assurance (Miller & Rollnick, 2013).

Additionally, training in MI emphasizes its underlying “spirit,” the important attitude that guides its practice, comprised of partnership, acceptance, compassion, and evocation (Miller & Rollnick, 2013; Rollnick & Miller, 1995). The spirit is an important element of MI (Copeland et al., 2015). The evocation skill of “recognizing, eliciting and responding to change talk” (Arkowitz et al., 2015, p. 8) involves an empowering trust in the person’s wisdom, ideas, and motivations that are evoked in the process of MI. Change talk is anything the interviewee says that shows movement towards change (Arkowitz et al., 2015). Besides, MI’s effectiveness in facilitating change is partially mediated by calling forth a person’s change talk, thus stating their own motivations for change (Fischer & Moyers, 2014; Moyers et al., 2007, 2009).

Moreover, documentation and quality assurance of MI practice has been well-developed, with reliable observer measures of both global ratings of constructs such as empathy, and specific behavioral components (Madson & Campbell, 2006; Moyers et al., 2003, 2005). In the same way, fidelity in MI’s practice predicts its efficacy (Miller & Rollnick, 2014; Moyers et al., 2009). Training methods to increase MI competence in practice are also well developed (Miller et al., 2004), with a large international Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (www.motivationalinterviewing.org).



MI emanated from clinical science and the person-centered approach (Moyers & Martin, 2003). The spirit of MI underlines individuals' strengths and motivations, and this begins with engaging relationship (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). While training in SL has focused on inspiration, MI includes a set of well-defined, measurable, and learnable skills. Moreover, a variety of observational coding tools provide reliable measures of MI skill acquisition and practice that in turn predict the probability of subsequent change (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). The most commonly used instrument to evaluate the validity and reliability of MI is the Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity coding system (MITI) (Moyers, et al., 2005).

Furthermore, the extensive research on learning, training, and quality assurance of MI could help to operationalize, teach, and measure SL's closely related central characteristics, which could further enhance opportunities for empirical research on SL. For instance, a meta-analysis of 25 years of empirical studies of MI was conducted by Lundahl et al. (2010), along with a systematic review and meta-analysis of 48 randomized controlled trials by Lundahl et al. (2013) on use of MI in health care systems.

Moreover, MI might provide a framework for servant-leaders to continue developing their skills and qualities to empower workers. The MI skills include identifying the desired goal, evoking change talk, finding a target behavior, providing direction, measuring the level of motivation, information giving, facilitating the client to plan for action while tactfully using open-ended questions and reflecting, affirming and summarizing. Besides, MI has specific guidance for how to practice it with the aim to develop qualities to empower workers.

Finally, beyond initial training, skillfulness in MI is developed



through personal feedback and coaching based on observed practice. Consistent with McGregor's (2006) Theory Y approach to management, MI seeks to evoke people's intrinsic motivation, honoring autonomy and personal choice. There is a clear direction for growth and change, without an expert-directive role.

A STUDY OF MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING IN SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

An opportunity for studying the practical application of MI in SL arose in a leadership-training program offered within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals. The VA's National Center for Organization Development (NCOD) promotes organizational health in the VA workforce to improve veterans and families' services. For instance, a national SL training program for VA leaders, launched by NCOD in 2016, included specific MI training. A total of 74 VA leaders completed the training, of whom seven volunteered to be interviewed for this study to learn about the initial impact of MI in their ongoing leadership practices (Organ, 2020).

I selected Narrative Inquiry as my research design because it would enable me to work directly with the participants and listen to their lived experiences (Labov, 1972; Patterson, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative Inquiry (NI) is the "study of the ways humans experience the world" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). In NI the stories are data (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). Therefore, NI allowed me to get a deeper understanding of my participants' lived experiences through interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

I was able to build a picture of their lived experiences using the approach based on Labov (1972), Patterson (2002), and Polkinghorne (1995). I transcribed, coded, and analyzed transcripts from the interviews using NI, carried out a cross analysis of



narratives, and came up with themes. Interested in how MI skills may have influenced these VA leaders in practicing SL, I specifically asked:

How has MI spirit influenced your leadership?

How have you used MI skills to motivate employees at work?

What technical skills in MI have you found beneficial in leadership?

How do you think MI influences power dynamics between a leader and worker?

Major Themes From Leader Interviews

Four major themes emerged from participant-leaders' comments about MI in their daily work as servant-leaders. I have included some direct anonymized quotes to illustrate each theme.

1. MI provides practical, specific methods to manifest SL

One common theme was that while SL is often presented in broad, abstract, and inspirational terms, it is often shorter on specific guidance for how to practice it. MI has well-developed, measurable, and learnable skills and a strong evidence base for enhancing positive outcomes. Below are some quotes from the participants.

When I asked Rosie, "What impact if any has using MI in SL had on your employees?" She said, "It provides you with very concrete strategies for how to work out SL." She further explained that,

SL is a kind of conceptual theory and the concepts feel kind of abstract with people, they kind of don't know what it looks like in real life. And I think that MI helps to operationalize SL. It helps to concretize it.

On the same question, Gideon's response was "SL is such a



broad thing, but the MI portion is just being specific.” When I asked Rosie about the results so far from the SL MI trainings SL she said, “The workshop has been primarily positive. They really like being able to walk out of one-day workshop with tangible, simple things that they can do differently the very next day.”

When I asked Gideon if he could remember what he learned from MI, he said,

I think that using those tools helps the employees to feel that they are involved and they are not just an object to complete tasks, and that the training made such a big difference. I interact differently with my staff and see positive outcomes.

When I asked Ruth to tell me “How your experience has been since you received that SL MI training,” she said, “You get a lot done and a lot faster. I ask the questions. I understand the issues and they come up with solutions. That seems to work much better.” However, MI works well in small groups rather than large groups as noted by Gideon, Rosie and Ruth.

2. MI fosters a stronger relationship between servant-leaders and their workers

MI mainly focuses on interpersonal communication skills and is meant to improve outcomes and foster a collaborative working relationship. Below are some quotes from the participants.

When I asked Susan what intrigued her about MI she said, “I find that employees further engage, and they come up with better ways which we can expand on.” When I asked Leonel how MI has impacted his leadership he said, “It has improved my handing of many situations. It’s improved how I interact with my team.”

When I asked Ruth in her opinion if MI was a good tool for leaders, she said, “It is certainly. It has improved and impacted my



relationship with my core workers,” and “It was amazing, a turnaround of what I encountered. It seems to be a much better approach.” She continued to say

I think it gets you a lot of engagement and a lot of buy-ins. It decreases opportunities for dissatisfaction, conflict when you have a more open way of discussing what your organization is about and why you are doing what you are doing.

3. MI improves communication and teamwork

Beyond strengthening of relationships, the specific methods of MI also improve communication and foster better teamwork. Below are some quotes from participants. When I asked Susan how MI impacted her leadership she said, “For me it has helped me to be an effective listener and that the employees know that they are part of the team and that they are valuable.” When I asked Leonel what impact if any has MI in SL had on his employees, he said, “I think it has promoted teamwork. It has fostered self-worth amongst the team with individuals, and it has caused the team to work together far better than before.”

When I asked Gideon if he had a chance to talk to a leader about MI, what would be the important aspects he experienced using MI as leader that he would share with this other leader? He said,

I would say if you feel you need to improve collaboration in your team, I think MI would be the way to do it. To the young leaders, MI skills might be helpful specifically when it leans towards communicating and collaborating.

On the same question Rosie said,

I would talk about the impact on the improvement of relationships with employees. I think it helps teams become



more cohesive. I think it allows you to know the organization is moving toward more reliability. I think it helps move toward high reliability, because these are strategies that help to support the culture. I think MI supports the larger goals of the organization right now.

Gideon continued to say that, “It is an opportunity for improved communication and collaboration with the employees and I wish I had heard of it earlier in my career.”

When I asked Rosie what aspects of MI she found intriguing and what aspects of MI she found challenging, she said,

I was intrigued by having almost like a recipe on how to have difficult conversations. I loved how it laid it, just so simply, and provided what I find to be a pretty easy road map, to help me be more successful, so I liked that a lot. I liked that all the concepts around having and developing a sure plan unfold. I like the emphasis on that. The challenge was in giving affirmations, not praising someone, but to be very specific, behaviorally specific about what it is that I liked.

When I asked Gideon how MI has impacted his leadership, he said,

I really think that it has improved my ability to communicate with employees and staff. That it has refined my techniques of leading and it is refining them into interesting additions from the normal obligation as a leader. Communicating with these [MI] techniques is what I ought to have been doing in the first place.

4. MI empowers workers and enables leaders

MI honors workers’ autonomy and their ability to find practical



and creative ways to work. When I asked Leonel what aspects of MI he was using, he said, “The open-ended questions allow them the opportunity to come up with ideas and operations to attain our goals and to best serve the clients.” When I asked Susan what intrigued her about MI, she said, “Yes they have more control, so they also have an opportunity to give me opinions of how we can improve on this aspect of this job.” When I asked Kennedy the aspects of MI he was using, he said, “I think it goes back to that enabling of decision making. I think about more why they are making it rather than like an expert. Don’t approach it with just your expertise but think more ramifications.”

When I asked Leonel what aspects of MI he uses, he said, “I try and make daily affirmations. We hold morning meetings as part of the start of our workday, so that everybody in the group is on the same page.” When I asked Kennedy, “How do you motivate your workers?,” he said, “We just don’t have a lot of incentives that you can give. So, the incentives are freedom to work, the freedom to make the choices to do the work, and to feel empowered.”

I asked Gideon what MI skills he had been using after the SL/MI training. His response was,

You are able to help people to open up. It has helped people build confidence and they are able to have confidence in the conversation and discuss either sensitive things or insignificant things. MI becomes such a great tool for allowing employees to be collaborative and that active listening shows care.

MI also enabled servant-leaders to become self-aware and helped them to increase their effectiveness. When I asked Kennedy, “How has MI impacted your leadership?” he said,

I think it has made me more self-aware. I think it has given me



cognizant points that I need to watch for., It made me more aware of how I was doing as far as listening, was I really listening, or was I just trying to jump ahead and reach a conclusion versa gathering information. I think that a whole kind of thought pattern went into it. Just a lot more awareness; was I actually paying attention or just kind of stepping through it?

When I asked Victor how he would say MI has impacted his leadership, he said, “It has made me more effective.”

Limitations of MI

As much as MI made a huge contribution to the servant-leaders at VA, the leaders also experienced some limitations of the MI method. When I asked Leonel the limits he had encountered in MI leadership, he said,

Sometimes when you ask open ended questions, you still have limitations with the policies and procedure you have to follow in the organization. So, at that point, no matter how good the ideas may be, they may not work and you just have to figure a way to communicate that. You may have to say, “I like that change, unfortunately it doesn't go with the guidelines we have to follow. So we have to go with the guidelines and procedures.”

When Gideon was asked the same question, he said, “I don't think it is for every single opportunity or every single environment, but you can use aspects of it. I think it is meant for like smaller teams of ten people, twenty people.” Rosie's response was, “I think it may be harder to use the full MI strategies when you are in a crisis.” Ruth also agreed that it was hard to use MI during a crisis. She gave an illustration,



Our office was going through crisis and those top leaders had to make decisions but there was no time to really get all the input from the employees, though this would have been ideal if they really understood the problem.

She continued to say,

If you used MI for your team before, they will already have respect for you and they will know that you have to make those decisions and they will trust you, but that's hard if you have not already developed that trust.

Virtual Training of MI

The impact and quality of the MI experience by servant-leaders and followers may be compromised in virtual training, but no studies have been done to ascertain this. However, the zoom breakout rooms are helping in making the virtual training more collaborative and effective. In the recent past before COVID-19 the MI literature was based on in-person face to face training/teaching of the MI skills, with the use of video clips for demonstration. The virtual teaching/learning of MI skills is relatively new. Here are some participants' comments on delivering MI virtually.

When I asked Gideon, have you tried to use it virtually? He said,

I have, and to tell you the truth I don't think it has been quite as successful. My body language speaks a lot and my body language is typically welcoming. So, I feel like I am not able to communicate that welcoming part of me virtually. If I am just talking like right now, I don't feel like you and I are having a relational experience because I am not able to use my empathetic or genuine skills that are part of body language.



There are numerous demonstration videos on how to use MI skills, which are normally used as part of in-person training.

DISCUSSION

After interviewing the VA leaders trained in SL that included MI, I recognized similarities between SL's core values and MI's attitudinal spirit. Both approaches honor and seek to evoke people's intrinsic motivations and abilities. Participants recognized these parallels, observing how MI could support SL practice by strengthening relationships, improving communication and teamwork, and empowering workers.

The combined training focused broadly on SL, offering only an introduction to MI. Beyond its underlying spirit, MI encompasses technical skills for engaging, focusing, evoking, and planning. In fact, developing competence in MI, training optimally includes individual feedback and follow-up coaching based on observed practice (Miller et al., 2004). In particular, leaders commented on how specific MI skills, such as open-ended questions and empathic listening, could contribute to effective SL.

The well-defined MI method could facilitate the training of servant-leaders, offering practical and evidence-based skills that are consistent with the core conditions of SL. Interviewees indicated that something they valued about MI is that it could equip them with tangible SL skills. The fact that these skills are learnable, observable, and reliably measurable could provide an assessment of learning in SL training and quality assurance measures of ongoing SL practice. Therefore, these measures could further be linked in research to the SL outcome.

The development of interpersonal skillfulness in MI is not a quick and easy process, but it does provide tools that can be used throughout one's leadership career. Like physicians, social workers,



and others who practice MI, leaders are busy people. Therefore, MI can be used effectively in relatively brief interactions with individuals as well as in groups.

Finally, the application of MI in SL is in the early days. The first two volumes on MI in leadership are recent (Marshall & Nielsen, 2020; Wilcox, et al., 2017). To my knowledge, this is the first study integrating MI specifically as a tool for SL. If I have interested you in learning a bit more about MI and how it might support servant-leaders' work, I am content.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The purpose of this study was to explore MI as a tool that servant-leaders could use to enhance their own leadership skills in motivating workers. I was able to align SL characteristics with those of MI methods to show the similarities between SL and MI, and how MI could be used to concretize SL. I described how I collected and analyzed data using the narrative inquiry approach and discussed my findings. The findings were suggestive, but not conclusive. Nonetheless, they revealed that MI is able to concretize SL. Moreover, the participants were self-confessed servant-leaders who were using the MI skill in their leadership.

Therefore, my recommendations are that there is need for further studies on MI in leadership, for there are only two studies: "Motivational Interviewing and Transformational Leadership: The Impact of Training on Self-Perceptions of Leadership" (Sumpter, 2019) and "Motivational Interviewing as a Tool for Servant-Leadership" (Organ, 2020). In order to get the best-rounded data from the participants, a mixed methods study is needed. The mixed method study might include interviews and observation, and MI coding could be very useful and hence verify that the participants were using MI.



There is also need for SL instruments to measure and prove that the participants were using the SL approach. Likewise, there are MI instruments to measure if the participants were using the MI method. I suggest using the Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity (MITI) scale or the Motivational Interviewing Skills Code (MISC).

Additionally, there are needs for follow-up training, coaching, or a community of practice to ensure that the participants get feedback on the proper use of the MI skills as they continue to develop the SL character. To get the perceptions of the workers about the leaders, there should also be data collected from the workers to verify that the leaders followed SL and MI practices and to get their perspectives on the effectiveness of SL/MI. This could be done through a qualitative study. Above all, there needs to be specific research on each aspect of MI technical skills that are aligned to SL, as well as the relational skills and the MI spirit.

Finally, there is need to explore MI as a tool for SL in other organizations with a different purpose and a different structure of leadership from the VA, for MI in leadership is a new area of study. Applications of MI in leadership are more recent (Marshall & Nielsen, 2020; Rollnick, et al., 2020; Wilcox et al., 2017), and have much in common with SL (see Table 1).



Table 1 Some Parallels of Servant-Leadership Characteristics with Motivational Interviewing

Servant-Leadership Characteristics (Spears, 2010)	Motivational Interviewing Spirit and Skills (Miller & Rollnick, 2013)
Listening	Active, reflective listening is a central and foundational skill
Empathy	The learnable skill of accurate empathy
Healing	Compassion and acceptance in MI spirit
Awareness	Fosters consciousness of one's influence on others
Persuasion	Helps people persuade themselves through "change talk"
Conceptualization	Evocation of people's own hopes, goals, and motivations
Foresight	Direction, focusing, planning; specific cues that predict outcome
Stewardship	Serving others, efficient use of communication time
Commitment to Growth	Specific skills in empowering, honoring autonomy, affirming, and evoking personal strengths and efforts
Building Community	Partnership rather than an expert/authoritarian role



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