

# Lead

By Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges

In his instructions to his disciples on how they were to lead, Jesus sent a clear message to all who would follow him that leadership was to be first and foremost an act of service. No Plan B was implied or offered in his words. He placed no restrictions or limitations of time, place or situation that would allow us to exempt ourselves from his command. For a follower of Jesus, servant leadership isn't just an option; it's a mandate.

The truly exciting part of following Jesus is that he never sends you into any situation with a faulty plan or a plan to fail. When he speaks on leadership, he speaks to us of what's both right and effective.

As we explore what it means to lead like Jesus, we'll journey through two internal and two external domains. The motivations of our heart and the leadership point of view of our head can, at first, be something we can keep inside and even mask over, if it suits a private purpose. Our public leadership behavior and habits as experienced by others will determine how they will follow. When the heart, head, hands and habits are aligned, extraordinary levels of loyalty, trust and productivity will result. When they're not, frustration, mistrust and diminished long-term productivity are the result.

## **The Heart—Your Leadership Character**

As you consider the heart issues of leadership, a primary question you'll have to continually ask yourself is: "Am I a servant leader or self-serving leader?" It's a question that, when answered with brutal honesty, will go to the core of your intentions or motivations as a leader.

One of the quickest ways you can tell the difference between a servant leader and a self-serving leader is how they handle feedback, because one of the biggest fears self-serving leaders have is losing their position.

Self-serving leaders spend most of their time protecting their status. If you give them feedback, how do they usually respond? Negatively! They think your feedback means you don't want their leadership anymore.

Servant leaders, however, look at leadership as an act of service. They embrace and welcome feedback as a source of useful information on how they can provide better service.

The journey of servant leadership that starts in the heart with motivation and intent must travel through another domain, that of the head, which is the leader's belief system and perspective on the role of a leader.

# Like

# Jesus

Hear Ken Blanchard speak on “Lead Like Jesus,” the CMA Long Beach 2005 conference theme, at the Monday night session on April 25.

## Turning the One-Minute Manager® Into a Servant Leader

### The Head—Your Leadership Assumptions

All great leaders have a specific leadership point of view that defines how they see their role and their relationships to those they seek to influence. In particular, we want you to first understand the servant leadership point of view modeled and taught by Jesus, and then learn what changes in thinking are required to align your thinking about leadership with his.

When we talk about servant leadership, most people think that means the “inmates are running the prison,” or the leader is trying to please everyone. They don’t understand that there are two parts of leadership Jesus clearly exemplified: a visionary role—doing the right thing, and an implementation role—doing things right.

Servant leadership starts with a clear and compelling vision of the future that excites passion in the leader and commitment in those who follow. In practical terms, a good vision has three parts:

- *Your Purpose or Mission*—What business you’re in and how you’ll serve your customers.
- *Your Preferred Picture of the Future*—Where you’re going and what you’ll look like if everything is running as planned.
- *Your Values*—How you want people to behave when they’re working on your mission and picture of the future by defining what you stand for.

The journey to effective servant leadership turns outward when the heart and mind now guide the behavior of the leader in interaction with those who follow. This is where good intention and right thinking start to bear good fruit. It’s where real discipleship is truly tested.

### The Hands—Your Leadership Behavior

The decision-by-decision behaviors of leaders can make or break their long-range effectiveness and their ability to inspire trust. Right leadership motives and clear leadership thinking,

when coupled with inept or self-serving behavior, will bring frustration and inefficiency into any leadership effort. We need to provide basic instruction in two key growth areas:

- *Understanding the dynamics of effectively managing transformational change*
- *Applying the concepts of situational leadership modeled by Jesus for the growth and development of people, as well as accomplishing the goals of an organization*

A key role servant leaders often play is facilitating necessary changes. As a result, it’s imperative that these leaders recognize there are four levels of change that vary in degrees of difficulty and time: *knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and organizational change*. The last one is the most difficult, because now you’re attempting to influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of multiple people.

Another key element of being a servant leader is to consider people’s development just as important an end goal as their performance. As a servant leader, the way you serve the vision is by developing people so they can work on that vision even when you’re not around. The ultimate sign of an effective servant leader is what happens when you’re not there.

That was the power of Jesus’ leadership—the leaders he trained went on to change the world when he was no longer with them in bodily form. But as he promised them and us: “*and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*” (Matthew 28:20).

As Jesus trained and transformed his disciples from enthusiastic recruits to effective “fishers of men,” he employed different leadership styles to serve their needs for direction and support. There are three skills to being a situational leader: diagnosis, flexibility and partnering for performance.

■ **Skill #1—Diagnosis.** There’s no single best leadership style. Leader effectiveness depends on the development level of the person you’re attempting to influence. The first skill of

a leader is to be able to diagnose the development level. For any task or goal, people can be at different development levels based on two variables: their commitment (confidence and enthusiasm); and their competence (knowledge, skills and experience).

Four basic combinations of commitment and competence can determine a person's development level: enthusiastic beginner, disillusioned learner, capable but cautious performer, and peak performers/self-reliant achievers.

■ **Skill #2—Flexibility.** Once you know what people's development levels are, you need to give them the right leadership style. You have to be flexible and able to use a variety of leadership styles comfortably, to help the individuals achieve their goal or tasks. There are two types of leader behavior you can use in attempting to help people develop:

➤ *Directive Behavior*—telling people what to do, and when, where and how to do it.

➤ *Supportive Behavior*—listening to people, involving them in decision making, encouraging them, praising their progress and facilitating their interaction with others.

■ **Skill #3—Partnering for Performance.** Leaders must determine with their people how to work together in a way their people can accomplish their goals, and then they must follow through on any agreements. This involves leaders providing the right leadership for the right development level. This is exactly what Jesus did as he transformed the disciples from enthusiastic beginners to peak performers.

### **The Habits—Your Daily Recalibration**

On a daily basis, effective leaders recalibrate their commitment to their vision—purpose, picture of the future and values—through the use of five disciplines that were an integral part of what Jesus practiced during his earthly walk:

■ **A Call to Solitude.** Jesus modeled for us the spiritual discipline of solitude as an essential habit for spiritual renewal. We can be very sure that what he found useful for the conduct of his life in the Father will also be useful for us.

Solitude and silence give us some space to reform our innermost attitudes toward people and events. They take the world off our shoulders for a time and interrupt our habit of constantly managing things, of being in control or thinking we are.

■ **The Power and Privilege of Prayer.** It would be a rather low-voltage spiritual life in which prayer was chiefly undertaken as a discipline, rather than as a way of co-laboring with God to accomplish good things and advance his Kingdom purposes. Yet, prayer can be a discipline, and a highly effective one.

■ **Storing up God's Word.** A wise person once said, "Life is like a tube of toothpaste: you never know what's inside until you're squeezed." In times of personal crisis, you have to call on the resources of faith you've already stored up.

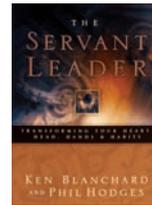
■ **Faith in God's Unconditional Love.** So much of what we're talking about in servant leadership has to do with the human ego and your capacity to accept the unconditional love that's there for you. The antidote for fear and pride is faith in God's unconditional love for us.

The true servant leader clearly understands that everyone needs to be heard, praised, encouraged, forgiven, accepted and guided back to the right path when they drift off course. As leaders, we need to practice these behaviors. Why? Because Jesus did!

■ **Involvement in Accountability Relationships.** Leadership is a lonely business. When we rely on our own perspective of how we're doing, we're bound to slip into convenient rationalizations and blind spots that can quickly invalidate the integrity of our witness to a watching world.

Having truth-tellers in your life is important. We're all vulnerable. We all fall short. Don't be afraid to share your vulnerability. It's one of the most powerful things you can do to build a team, to build a relationship with people you're leading. They know you're not perfect, so don't act like it.

Servant leadership starts with a vision and ends with a servant heart that helps people live according to that vision.



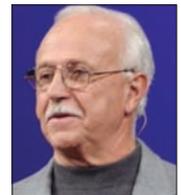
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