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Creating a culture of Servant Leadership

by [Rita Balian Allen](#) March 26, 2019

Here are eight best practices.

Servant leadership is all about enriching the lives of others, building better organizations and ultimately creating a world that is more caring and equitable. Not only is it personally rewarding, but it makes a difference in others' lives.

Giving back and paying it forward is a way to add value and leverage one's talents and experiences while making a difference and having an impact. When you describe your corporate culture, is being of service to one another and the community a core value? Do your actions display service as a cornerstone to how you do business?

In fact, many studies have indicated that organizations that are servant-led actually perform better and yield higher returns. It is specifically good for business to practice servant leadership within your organization. Details of these studies can be found in the following books:

- ["Good Company"](#) by Laurie Bassi, Ed Frauenheim and Dan McMurrer, with Larry Costello
- ["Good to Great"](#) by Jim Collins
- ["Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership"](#) by James W. Sipe and Don M. Frick

Creating a culture of servant leadership requires certain behaviors and actions. It's more about what is enacted rather than what is said. Following are eight practices to create a culture of servant leadership in your organization.

Find your inner strength. Servant leadership begins with deep self-awareness — working from the inside out, having a healthy and accurate sense of self and of your values, strengths, development areas, motivations and aspirations. Being your authentic, best self is key.

Have compassion. Exhibiting compassion builds an environment of trust. Employees need to know their managers care and want to feel valued, appreciated and acknowledged for their contributions. Expressing interest and concern build credibility, and showing transparency and genuine vulnerability allows you to be relatable.

Practice active listening. Suspend judgement or assumptions, give employees your undivided attention, hold back your own thoughts and listen thoroughly — then reflect back what you have heard, confirming accuracy of comprehension.

Develop emotional intelligence. EQ is our ability to identify and manage emotional information in oneself and others. It reinforces empathy and helps build successful interpersonal relationships. It also affects our ability to assess, focus and control our emotional energy on required behaviors.

Collaborate. Establish, build and nurture long-lasting, mutually rewarding relationships. Connect with others to integrate solutions and achieve results that benefit all. Leverage diversity of thought, experience and expertise.

Be inquisitive. Fuel creativity and curiosity, and work on being resourceful and resilient to uncover answers, sources and solutions in a proactive and strategic manner. Be courageous, take risks and reach high to challenge yourself and others, reinforcing an atmosphere of trust and opportunity.

Mentor, coach and develop. Always look for opportunities to take interest and invest in others' growth and development. Become a mentor, seek out windows of coaching moments, initiate career conversations and create development opportunities on a consistent and continuous basis throughout all levels and areas of your organization.

Stay agile. Remain open-minded to new opportunities, new situations and new people, as well as to learning new things, new environments and unexpected directions or paths. Treat everyone with the same respect and dignity and embrace an open heart with a willingness to learn.

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