



A JOURNEY IN SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

—LARRY C. SPEARS

Welcome to our 2020 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. Each edition of IJSL contains a wonderful array of articles and papers, poetry and research, film reviews and reflections from around the world that demonstrate many remarkable journeys in servant-leadership.

FOREWORD TO *SERVANT-LEADERS IN TRAINING*

In 2018, I wrote a Foreword to John Horsman’s groundbreaking book titled, *Servant-Leaders in Training: Foundations of the Philosophy of Servant-Leadership* (J. Horsman; 2018, Palgrave Macmillan), which I would like to share with you here—

I am honored to write the foreword to *Servant-Leaders in Training: Foundations of the Philosophy of Servant-Leadership*. Let me tell you why.

I was first introduced to the servant-as-leader idea in 1982. At that time, I was working with *Friends Journal*, a Quaker magazine based in Philadelphia. We received an article submission from Robert K. Greenleaf on the servant-as-leader idea, which we eventually published. All these years later, I still recall the “a-ha” moment that came over me as I read Greenleaf’s description of servant-leadership. I found that he had given a name to an undefined yearning that I felt within me. I knew that I wanted to do what I



could to help make the world a little better place in which to live. I was doing what I could to be of service in that goal, and I hoped that I might eventually have an opportunity to provide some leadership. In reading Greenleaf's definition and best test of a servant-as-leader, I began to understand servant-leadership as a personal philosophy that could be developed and practiced. All these years later, I continue in my personal and public efforts to practice servant-leadership. My reading and re-reading of John Horsman's *Servant-leaders in Training: Foundations of the Philosophy of Servant-Leadership* has proven to be so helpful in my continuing inquiry into servant-leadership, for which I am most grateful.

I first met John Horsman in 2005, when he participated in a program called the Leadership Institute for Higher Education (LIFE), sponsored by the Robert K. Greenleaf Center, and where I was privileged to serve as President & CEO from 1990 to 2007. In 1990, I had a chance to spend time with Robert Greenleaf; and, I eventually edited or co-edited all five of Robert Greenleaf's available books, as well as a series of popular servant-leadership anthologies. In 2008, I started a new phase of my work in servant-leadership when I was invited to serve as Servant-Leadership Scholar for Gonzaga University. That same year, I also launched the Spears Center for Servant-Leadership (www.spearscenter.org) and, thus I began to divide my time between these two institutions, which I continue to do.

While I have had a long history as a writer and editor of books on servant-leadership, in 2008 I was a complete novice when it came to teaching graduate courses in servant-leadership. Thankfully, I was blessed to have the wonderful guidance and support of several of my faculty colleagues at Gonzaga—including John Horsman—who helped to orient me to teaching servant-leadership within the construct of graduate courses.



Over the years, John and I have spent considerable time collaborating and teaching two graduate courses at Gonzaga University: *Servant-Leadership*; and, *Listen, Discern, Decide*. Both courses are deeply grounded in Robert K. Greenleaf's fundamental understanding of what it means to be a servant-leader. John is a consummate teacher, and I have learned much from him. Thanks to John and others, I have come to discover that my own calling in servant-leadership joyfully encompasses the role of teaching. John's many years of experience as a servant-leader teacher has contributed greatly to the powerful ideas contained within this book.

Robert Greenleaf was 73 years old when he published his first book, *Servant-Leadership*. Much like Robert Greenleaf before him, John has waited a long time until he was ready to publish this, his first book. Also, like Greenleaf, John has spent many years practicing and teaching servant-leadership, leading up to the distillation of his thoughts here. In truth, I believe that *Servant-Leaders in Training: Foundations of the Philosophy of Servant-Leadership* is one of the most important books to be published in this field since Robert Greenleaf first published *Servant-Leadership*.

Who *is* a servant-leader? Greenleaf said that the servant-leader is one who is a servant first. In *The Servant as Leader* he wrote, "It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?"



It is important to remember that servant-leadership begins within every one of us. As a lifelong student of how things get done in organizations, Greenleaf distilled his observations in a series of essays and books on the theme of “The Servant as Leader”—the objective of which was to stimulate thought and action for building a better, more caring society.

The servant-leader concept continues to grow in its influence and impact. In fact, we have witnessed a remarkable growth of awareness and practices of servant-leadership. In many ways, it may be said that the times are only now beginning to catch up with Robert Greenleaf’s visionary call to servant-leadership. The idea of servant-leadership, now in its fifth decade as a concept bearing that name, continues to create a quiet revolution around the world.

The words servant and leader are usually thought of as being opposites. In deliberately bringing those two words together in a meaningful way, Robert Greenleaf gave birth to the paradoxical term “servant-leader.” In the years since then, many of today’s most creative thinkers are writing and speaking about servant-leadership as an emerging paradigm for the twenty-first century. Robert Greenleaf’s writings on the subject of servant-leadership helped to get this movement started, and his views have had a profound and growing effect on many organizations and thought-leaders. Organizations like Starbucks, TDIndustries, The Toro Company, Southwest Airlines, The Men’s Wearhouse, Synovus Financial Corporation, The Container Store and many more are recognized today for nurturing servant-led cultures. These and many more organizational practitioners have been encouraged and supported by a long list of thought-leaders such as James Autry, Warren Bennis, Ken Blanchard, Peter Block, John Carver, Stephen Covey, Max DePree, Shann Ferch, Don Frick, Joseph Jaworski, James Kouzes, Lorraine Matusak, Parker Palmer, M. Scott



Peck, Peter Senge, Peter Vaill, Margaret Wheatley, and Danah Zohar, to name but a handful of today's cutting-edge authors and advocates of servant-leadership. With *Servant-Leaders in Training: Foundations of the Philosophy of Servant-Leadership*, we add John Horsman to this list of seminal thought-leaders who are helping to shape our ongoing understanding of servant-leadership.

In 1992, I conducted a study of Robert Greenleaf's writings. From that analysis, I was able to codify a set of ten characteristics that Greenleaf wrote about and which he considered as being central to the development of servant-leaders. These include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. These ten characteristics of servant-leadership are by no means exhaustive. However, they serve to communicate the power and promise that this concept offers to servant-leaders who are open to its invitation and challenge. In *Servant-Leaders in Training: Foundations of the Philosophy of Servant-Leadership*, John Horsman offers a more complete understanding of listening, foresight, and other characteristics associated with servant-leadership.

Becoming a servant-leader in training is a personal development process. As John writes, it is, "a process that enhances our awareness, our authenticity, and our integrity and in turn our relational capacity to respond to others. A servant-consciousness involves building on all that we have learned up to this point in time." Likewise, his emphasis on dispositions and capacities of servant-leaders significantly helps to move forward our understanding of what it means to be a servant-leader.

In *Servant-Leaders in Training: Foundations of the Philosophy of Servant-Leadership*, John guides us through the deep current of servant-leadership as a philosophy. His focus on human



development, personal relationships, creativity, human integration, moral authority, servant-consciousness, listening, and foresight provides an important breakthrough in our contemporary understanding of servant-leadership.

In our servant-leadership courses at Gonzaga University, we are fond of using the phrase, “servant-leader in training.” This serves as a reminder that all of us are, always, servant-leaders in training. And while there are no perfect servant-leaders, through our ongoing development and practice, we can become *authentic* servant-leaders.

I would like to add that one of the unexpected delights of this book is to be found in the charts and figures that John has included throughout this volume. These charts capture the essence of great theories of human development and help to make them understandable in their relevance to the servant-leadership philosophy.

I invite you to read what is contained within this book, and to consider becoming a servant-leader in training—one who serves first, and then looks for opportunities to lead. Here, John Horsman has managed to take servant-leadership and to expand upon it, making it more inclusive, more holistic, and more integrated than ever before. Through his examination of the servant-leadership philosophy, Horsman also reminds us that servant-leadership begins within every one of us.

Larry C. Spears

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President, The Spears Center for Servant-Leadership, Inc.

Editor, *Insights on Leadership*

Indianapolis, Indiana

2018



WRITINGS

Here is a list of some of the servant-leadership publications that I have published in 2019-2020:

- “Foreword: The World of Servant-Leadership,” *Servant-Leadership and Forgiveness: How Leaders Help Heal the Heart of the World*; (Jiyong Song, Dung Q. Tran, Shann Ray Ferch, and Larry C. Spears, editors; 2020, SUNY Press, Albany, NY).
- “Building Relational Bridges: The Inclusive Spirit of Servant-Leadership,” (Dung Q. Tran, Larry C. Spears, and Michael R. Carey; 2020; *New Horizons in Positive Leadership and Change: A Practical Guide for Workplace Transformation*; (Satinder Dhiman and Joan Marques, editors; 2020, Springer, Switzerland).
- “Reflections on Servant-Leadership and the United Kingdom: Interview with John Noble and Ralph Lewis, by Larry C. Spears; *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, Volume 14, 2020, Number 1).
- “Servant-Leadership and Community: Humanistic Perspectives from Pope John XXIII and Robert K. Greenleaf,” (Dung Q. Tran and Larry Spears) in *Humanistic Management Journal*, 2020.
- “Interview with Larry C. Spears,” by Ben Lichtenwalner; *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, Volume 13, 2019, Number 1).
- “The Common Good and Servant-Leadership: Rocks Upon Which Good Societies are Built,” (Dung Q. Tran and Larry Spears; 2019; *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, Volume 13, 2019, Number 1).



TRAVELS AND PRESENTATIONS

I am most grateful for the kind invitations to speak on servant-leadership that I have received in 2019-2020. I thank everyone at the following institutions for their caring spirits and ongoing commitment to servant-leadership:

- “Practicing Servant-Leadership: Succeeding Through Trust, Bravery, and Forgiveness.” Presentation at the Greenleaf Centre-United Kingdom’s Servant-Leadership Conference. London, England, October 30-31, 2019.
- “Introduction to Servant-Leadership.” Presentation by Joseph A. Goss and Larry Spears, at the Servant-Leadership Certificate Program. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Madison, WI, March 15, 2019
- “The Art & Practice of Servant-Leadership,” one-day intensive course taught at Gonzaga University, April 26, 2019.

COURSES

It is a great honor and joy to teach for Gonzaga University. Since 2008, I have taught some ninety courses and 1,800 graduate students. In the past year, I have taught the following classes:

- Fall B 2020: Listen-Discern-Decide (ORGL 535)
- Fall A 2020: Servant-Leadership (ORGL 530)
- Summer 2020: Listen-Discern-Decide (DPLS 781)
- Summer 2020: Servant-Leadership (ORGL 530)
- Summer 2020: Listen-Discern-Decide (ORGL 535)
- Spring B 2020: Servant-Leadership (ORGL 530)
- Spring B 2020: Listen-Discern-Decide (ORGL 535)
- Spring A 2020: Listen-Discern-Decide (ORGL 535)
- Fall B 2019: Servant-Leadership (ORGL 530)



- Fall B 20219: Listen-Discern-Decide (ORGL 535)
- Fall A 2019: Servant Leadership (ORGL 530)

ON APPRECIATION AND AWARENESS

In this, our 2020 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 we began in 2005. As ever, 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, for the friendship and intellectual journey shared with so many servant-leaders at Gonzaga University and around the world who continue 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 a writer-editor-teacher and contributing author to 34 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). He also served as an editor on all five books of writings by Robert K. Greenleaf. Larry serves as senior advisory editor of *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*. From 1990-2007, Larry served as president and CEO, and also as Senior Fellow and



President Emeritus, of The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership. Since 2008, he has served as Servant-Leadership Scholar for Gonzaga University’s School of Leadership, where he is an adjunct faculty member and teaches graduate courses; and, as President of The Larry C. Spears Center for Servant-Leadership (www.spearscenter.org).

Among other honors, Larry has received the “Outstanding Leadership Award” from Chapman University in California (2002); the “Dare to Lead” Award from the International Leadership Network (2004); the Community Leadership Award from DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana (2008); a special recognition from the Greenleaf Centre-United Kingdom (2015); and, as the inaugural inductee into Gonzaga University’s School of Leadership Studies’ Hall of Honor (2018).

In 2004, Larry was interviewed by NBC reporter Stone Phillips for a segment on servant-leadership that appeared on NBC’s DATELINE news program, which was seen by ten million viewers.