

# The Palgrave Handbook of Servant Leadership

*Editor-in-Chief:* Satinder Dhiman

*Associate Editors:* Gary Roberts and Larry Spears

*The best way to **find** yourself is to **lose** yourself in the **service** of others.*

~Mahatma Gandhi

From the time immemorial, humanity has been intrigued by its great leaders—state rulers, political leaders, royal kings, spiritual luminaries, and military leaders. Plato’s was perhaps the first thinker in the West to discuss the need and importance of proper leadership in his masterpiece, *The Republic*. Plato presents the inherent dichotomy of power vs. wisdom and concludes that humanity’s salvation depends upon the stewardship of its wise leaders. History has repeatedly borne out the truth of Plato’s wisdom.

In the modern times, leadership has emerged as a dynamic field of study and research. The search continues to discover how to use leadership power wisely for the common good. *Servant leadership represents an ideal form of leading by empowering and serving others.*

Envisioned as a primary reference work, the *Palgrave Handbook of Servant Leadership* is a multi-author *Major Reference Work* (MRW) comprising a wide-ranging cadre of leading world-class scholars, practitioners and contributing authors from diverse fields of inquiry and specializations.

Servant leadership is a happening field, fueled by the mounting research in the various positive forms of leadership over the last three decades. Servant leadership represents a *shift* from followers serving leaders to leaders serving followers. This approach is especially relevant during the current turbulent times, given that many leaders today seem to have lost their moral bearings; they tend to misuse their power and seem to have forgotten about the mission of serving. For the most admired organizations today, there is a good chance that there is a servant leader at the helm. Historically, our most cherished and exemplary leaders were servant leaders.

Regarded by many authors as “a valid, modern theory of leadership,”<sup>1</sup> servant leadership was first introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf’s powerful short essay written in 1970, titled “The Servant as Leader.” According to Greenleaf, “The 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 *leader first*.”<sup>2</sup>

Practicing servant leadership is deceptively simple: one is led by the deep desire to serve others. It is also about putting others’ interest first. History is a testimony to the fact that true leaders, above all, are servant leaders. There is no human ideal higher than the gift of selfless service. For in serving others humbly, we find our true joy and fulfillment

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<sup>1</sup> Robert F. Russell and A. Gregory Stone, “A Review of Servant Leadership Attributes,” *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*, 23 (3), (2002): 145–157.

<sup>2</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1977), 27. [Emphasis added].

## KEY SECTIONS/TOPICS/CONCEPTS

1. Servant Leadership and Religion: A section that explores the influence of the major religions on the principles and practices of servant leadership
2. Servant Leadership and Character: A section that explores the character and personality attributes of successful servant leaders.
3. Servant Leadership and Spiritual/Emotional Intelligence: Explores the relationship between spiritual and emotional intelligence and successful servant leadership
4. Critiques of Servant Leadership: Explores the conceptual, methodological and empirical critiques of servant leadership and their rebuttals
5. Barriers to Servant Leadership: Explores the factors that attenuate the effectiveness of servant leadership and how they can be overcome
6. Profiles of Servant Leadership: Provides case study examples of servant leaders across the organizational and sector (public, private, nonprofit) spectrums
7. Global Scope of Servant Leadership: Explores the common and unique attributes of servant leadership across cultures
8. Servant Leadership and Ethics/Morality: Explores the foundational ethical and moral attributes of servant leadership from a deontological, teleological, and character virtue perspective.
9. Servant-Leadership and Philosophical Influences: Explores non-religious philosophical influences on servant-leadership (Native Traditions, Jungian thought, Humanism, others).
10. Cross-fertilization through Servant-Leadership: Examines ways in which servant-leadership relates to other key ideas like Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Appreciative Inquiry, Scanlon Plan, Total Quality Management, and other concepts.
11. Servant-Leadership and Education: Explores the meaning and impact of servant-leadership for education and schools: Teaching servant-leadership, Service-Learning programs, Grade Schools, Middle Schools, High Schools, University.
12. Servant-Leadership and Social Change: Examines how servant-leadership (whether called that or not) has been present in major social movements (Civil Rights, Women's Rights, Peace/Anti-War, Disabilities, Worker's Rights, LGBTQ Rights, other).

*This list is at best suggestive and represents an initial listing of various topics and concepts pertaining to the servant leadership. It will be greatly enhanced based on the actual entries received from various contributing authors.*

**We invite you to be a part of this august venture. If interested, please send a brief proposal, with a chapter *title* and 4-5 short sentences by way of the *overview* of the chapter.**