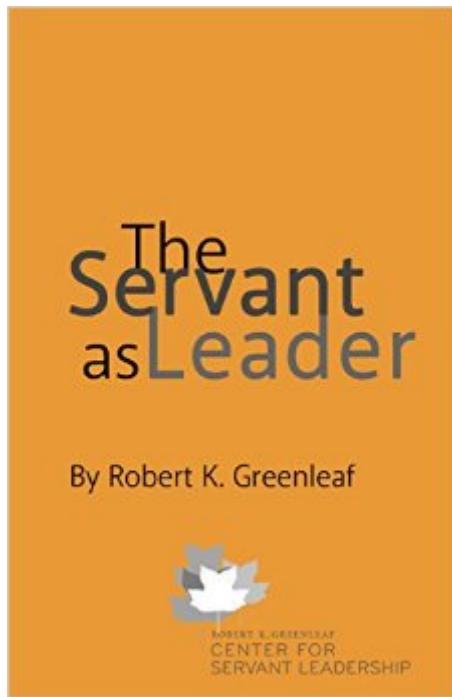


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# The Servant As Leader



## Synopsis

This is the essay that started it all. Powerful, poetic and practical. The Servant as Leader describes some of the characteristics and activities of servant-leaders, providing examples which show that individual efforts, inspired by vision and a servant ethic, can make a substantial difference in the quality of society. Greenleaf discusses the skills necessary to be a servant-leader; the importance of awareness, foresight and listening; and the contrasts between coercive, manipulative, and persuasive power. A must-read.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This very small book takes only and hour or two to read yet a lifetime to digest. Mr. Greenleaf's compelling insight into the essence of true leadership based on the servant perspective shows how true leaders lead from the front...and the back. The reader will quickly grasp the servant leader model at work in the true great leaders of the 20th century such as Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, and Gandhi. These people who made enormous differences in their own country and the world at large through leading by service. The book is not in any way a religious treatise but a thought provoking, energizing investigation into what may be the only leadership paradigm that the upcoming generation will respond to.

I was hoping for practical/pragmatic advice, not an esoteric piece of philosophical exhortation.

Greenleaf's essay is regarded as very influential, pivotal and foundational. So, for historical value, I can see it has a place. For leaders interested in operationalizing the concept, for those interested in what servant leadership looks like in practice... this isn't going to give you what you're looking for.

I am of the opinion that this book has many valid points regarding leadership. In the section entitled "Language and Imagination" the book says that "Many attempts to communicate are nullified by saying too much". I couldn't agree more. And this is my one criticism of this book. Although small, this book likely contains 40% useless filler. It is full of words and phrases that do nothing more than divert attention from the main point. I can easily point to a multitude of sentences in this book, comprised of three or more lines (Page 22), that could be condensed to a single sentence. Further, the broad vocabulary used in this book amplifies the distractions and steers one further from the main points. One could argue that the intended audience are scholars, business executives, and others who possess such a vocabulary. I argue that even they do not have time to read a book that contains so much useless writing. For the passive reader I feel this book will be viewed as challenging and cumbersome. Why three stars you ask? Once the fluff is filtered there are nuggets of wisdom to be found. This book could be easily reduced from approximately 50 pages to 25 or 30 pages. This book is the equivalent of using a fully automatic "word" machine gun and spraying the entire neighborhood with "word" bullets in hopes of hitting the center of a target with one "word" bullet. So once again I agree with the book; "Many attempts to communicate are nullified by saying too much".

Reading this book applies as much today as the day it was written. Greenleaf reminds us how to get back to the basics of leading well. It's simple; you have to care for those you lead. True leadership is touchy and feely--it's empathic. Through empathy, a leader learns she must serve her followers if she is going to lead them well. A must read!

If you're looking for clearly defined traits, you will be disappointed. Although it's a short read....I found it difficult to complete. This "book" is actually the first of four essays Greenleaf wrote on the subject of Servant Leadership in the 70's. So, it's really more of a theoretical & philosophical overview. Perhaps, one of his other books build on the framework of this book with a bit more practical information on the subject.

Teaches importance of leadership born out of heart, of desire to serve first as one cares for others more greatly than one desires leadership yet leadership is sought as one feels called to put that great love into action.

Clearly a foundational perspective for servant leadership reiterating the need for not throwing away our past and keeping only the new. Not only would we lose our history, we would lose our direction.

This is one of the best books I have ever read. It has become one of my favorites and one that we should have available and read over and over again. Robert Greenleaf teaches us lots of lessons that may be applied to our every day lives.

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