



General Assembly
January 13, 2005 – Hilton Austin

“Servant Leadership: Principles in Action”

Presented by Hamilton Beazley

Participant Questions

Q: By ordering people to undergo training in this belief system are you not actually promoting servile-leadership instead of Servant-Leadership?

A: Servant-Leadership training was mandated for supervisors, not for all employees of the college. The College has the right to mandate training and is pleased that the vast majority of supervisors anonymously evaluated the training as being very beneficial.

Q: Principle #6 says “Servant leaders lead by example, modeling & persuasion rather than by coercion.” Why is it that any Dept. Head that does not want to undergo Servant-Leadership “Training” will be asked to resign their position as Dept. Head? Is that not coercion?

A: Supervisors do not operate within a vacuum. It’s not unreasonable to expect them to operate as part of a team. If a department head does not see a connection to the management and leadership of the college, that actually indicates a need for training, whether it’s Servant-Leadership or some other program.

Q: Is the conformity implicit in the indoctrination of individuals compatible with the autonomy and freedom of each individual?

A: Employees retain their freedom of speech and other aspects of being an individual. Servant-Leadership, in fact, supports addressing people and their needs as individuals, rather than as a group. In recognizing differences in individuals, employees are able to better address the needs of the individual and provide needed services in a respectful manner.

Q: Servant-leadership is at its core a value system; a value system that emphasizes the free-will and autonomy of each person. Are not the principles of servant-learning essentially then a creed? Is it appropriate, given that ACC already has a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement, for the Administration to presume to impose its adopted creed on the people who work at ACC? Furthermore, is it not a violation of the principles of Servant-Leadership to autocratically order all employees to be indoctrinated in this value system? Thank you.

A: Servant-Leadership does set forth principles of value to the organization. These principles support the vision and mission statement of the College. The principles empower supervisors to influence employees to reach their potential. It is through satisfied, fulfilled employees that the organization will be able to achieve its mission; therefore, the principles are not autocratic but an organizational approach to establishing a climate of service to all employees and the public.

Q: It would seem that the fact the we are being paid to do what we do would inhibit the ability to consider ourselves as being equals – how can I become a leader to someone who is paid twice as much as I am? Why would I want to when that person’s authority/superiority is backed up by a significant difference in compensation? Through the wage system, people are intrinsically designated as not equal.

A: Servant-Leadership does not imply that individuals are equals in compensation or job responsibility. Employees are paid a market competitive salary for their position within ACC. Servant-Leadership does imply that individuals will be treated with respect and that their skills will be valued by others regardless of their title or position. Leaders are expected to facilitate the building of people first and support the growth and development of all employees.

Q: Do you not believe that, In view of #5 and #7, one cannot give an individual student a grade that is better than what they earned in order to “encourage them”? To do so would be unfair to other students and a disservice to the United States of America, which is falling further and further behind in education w.r.t. the rest of the world. Would it perhaps be better for our nation to outsource our education to India rather than deprive our children of a just and challenging education?

A: The example of the speaker was not intended to imply that grades are given on any basis other than what is earned.

Q: Adequate staffing at point of service; st. services; library; police; admins; clerks Shouldn't staffing be a key component & consideration of servant leadership?

A: ACC has made good progress in adding staffing over recent years and it's certainly important. Lack of adequate staffing, however, should not prevent a supervisor from adhering to the seven characteristics of Servant-Leadership, which are the following;

- Choose to be a servant first, and out of that desire to serve, choose to lead.
- Lead as first among equals, honoring the ideas, viewpoints and concerns of others.
- Be fully servant, fully leader—leading as an act of serving and following as an act of leading.
- While serving, be served by others, humbling accepting help when needed.
- Maintain the integrity of self, safeguarding your autonomy, integrity, and freedom while serving.
- Use power appropriately and beneficially, leading by modeling, example, and persuasion.
- Create a more caring and just society, helping others to fulfill their potential.

The same applies to support staff; even when staff levels are under the desired numbers, staff may follow the core concepts:

- It is a privilege to serve others.
- Helping others to grow provides employee satisfaction.
- Making the organization healthier and stronger is everyone's responsibility.

Q: Should a willingness to informally deal with conflict between supervisor & staff be part of S.L.? Does that include staff's representatives?

A: A section of ACC's policy indicates that conflict should be dealt with at the lowest possible levels in the organization; this includes all staff and staff representatives.

Q: What training could ACC provide for faculty to “Self-renew” themselves & to learn dialogue which they could use to be more effective servant-leaders in the classroom? (Such training would be especially beneficial for teachers who have been teaching for many years as well as to those who are new to the classroom.)

A: The Professional Development Office at ACC is designing and adding new Servant-Leadership training opportunities to its series of offerings; these will include workshops on Servant-Leadership in the classroom.

Q: Will or could ACC survey its employees to discover their skills, previous training, or other aspects (volunteerism, community involvement, and so on) that they could use in current or new endeavors at ACC?

A: Whenever there is a project or new initiative, we seek to find individuals within the organization that are familiar with the endeavor. This may need to be more formalized and also can be aided by ensuring that communication continues to be a high priority within ACC.

Q. What do they call servant-leadership at SW Airlines? (You mentioned that they use this philosophy.)

A: SW Airlines has adopted the Servant-Leadership philosophy and asserts that people come first. Southwest Airlines discusses their approach on their web site and has the following mission pledge to its employees:

We are committed to provide our Employees a stable work environment with equal opportunity for learning and personal growth. Creativity and innovation are encouraged for improving the effectiveness of Southwest Airlines. Above all, Employees will be provided the same concern, respect, and caring attitude within the organization that they are expected to share externally with every Southwest Customer.

(http://www.southwest.com/about_swa/mission.html).

You can learn more about the Southwest Airlines approach on the company's Bibliography page at http://www.southwest.com/about_swa/press/bibliography.html

Q: I, as many, have come from organizations with very strictly enforced chain-of-command communications. How does the concept of Servant-Leadership relate to the ACC communications channels?

A: The Core Concepts of S-L work well in ACC's communication channels, most especially the characteristics of active listening and observing. Supervisors at each level of the organization are expected to model the Servant-Leadership concepts.

Q: Good presentation! –So what do you do when those over or under or colleagues refuse to practice S-L? or even subscribe to the concept?

A: Supervisors are expected to ensure that the principles are practiced at ACC. If you feel they are not being honored, contact your immediate supervisor to discuss your concerns.