



THE SERVANT-LEADER AND THE TEAM: LOVE WITHOUT MEASURE!

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I don't necessarily have to like my players and partners. But, as a leader I must love them. Love is loyalty, love is teamwork, love respects dignity and individuality. This is the strength of any organization.

—Vince Lombardi

In a television interview, General Norman Schwarzkopf was faced with the following question (Kouzes & Posner, 1997, p. 329):

— How would you like to be remembered in the future?

The answer was simple:

— That I loved my troops. That my troops loved me.

One would hardly expect that kind of answer from a military leader, leaders whose relationship with subordinates is universally known as the hierarchical autocratic style of leadership. But Schwarzkopf's answer is evidence of the fact that true leadership is not the property of a certain professional, cultural, or academic category. And servant-leadership lies above any category.

The market is flooded with books on leadership techniques. Thousands of business training courses offer advice on how to maximize the team's power, how to motivate followers, how to increase the team's self-esteem, and how to achieve the maximum potential for productivity, sales, and profit. However, none of these techniques will ever replace or surpass a simple and essential secret: leadership is love! Kouzes and Posner (1997) explain this love in the following words: "It is difficult to imagine that



leaders are able to wake up everyday to accomplish extraordinary things without becoming involved with all their hearts. . . Leadership is a matter of the heart, not the head” (p. 329).

Sometimes the servant-leadership theme is much talked about and not much lived. Maybe the failure of leadership happens because we have dealt only with the level of the head, as a subject matter to be learned, and not as an experience to be lived wholeheartedly. Margaret Wheatley (1999) describes this phenomenon as a new discovery of the business world, which begins to free itself from the traditional mechanist standards of control and domination to develop a vision more guided to the potential of relationships as a growth and success factor. In her words, companies need to see this new undeniable reality:

We are refocusing on the deep longings we have for community, meaning, dignity, purpose, and love in our organizational lives. We are beginning to look at the strong emotions of being human, rather than segmenting ourselves by believing that love doesn’t belong at work, or that feelings are irrelevant in the organization. There are many attempts to leave behind the view that predominated in the twentieth century, when we believed that organizations could succeed by confining workers to narrow roles and asking only for very partial contributions. As we let go of the machine model of organizations, and workers as replaceable cogs in the machinery of production, we begin to see ourselves in much richer dimensions, to appreciate our wholeness, and, hopefully, to design organizations that honor and make use of the great gift of who we humans are. (p. 14)

Certainly, this is a revolutionary concept, especially in Western society, trained to separate the professional from the personal, emotion from reason, leisure from work, and friendship from business, as the old saying goes: “Business and pleasure don’t mix.” But isn’t it possible to be one kind of person at home and a different one at work? And might this really be the best way to work?

Greenleaf proposed a different answer many years ago. As he said,



how “can one love this abstraction called the corporation? One doesn’t! One loves *only the people* who are gathered to render the service for which the corporation is enfranchised. *The people are the institution!*” (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 149). And loving the people makes the whole difference within the corporation, as it provides an environment suited to personal and professional development and success.

One could reason that if love is the way to success, it is very easy to achieve success. Notwithstanding, that is exactly where many are at a loss, and that is exactly why few teams achieve the highest degree of success and accomplishment. The problem is that loving is not as easy as it seems. Witness, for example, the great number of divorces and failed marriages, or the great number of broken friendships, or the number of conflicts at the workplace. Loving is a rare art. The fact is, love is not a technique to be learned, but a way of living, be it in the family, with friends, or with the work team. All companies, for example, agree and work hard to prioritize and give reason to the client, or to demonstrate interest in her or his well-being; very few of them, however, are really prepared or are able to act with love and friendship, showing real interest in people’s well-being. Not settling for a romanticized view of love, I hope to explore the concept from a realistic and professional point of view.

Greenleaf (2002) describes love with a higher level of meaning. According to him, “*Love* is an undefinable term, and its manifestations are both subtle and infinite. But it begins, I believe, with one absolute condition: unlimited liability” (p. 52). This notion of love with unlimited liability is the whole background behind the servant-leadership model. In fact, there could be no genuine service without liable love. In other words, a servant-leader must feel liable and responsible for his team’s success and well-being, in such a way that the team’s success is her or his own success.

When talking about servant-leadership, teamwork is unanimously embraced. No one disagrees that the servant-leader must know how to work in a team. But working in a team is not a competency in knowing something or doing something, but a competency of being someone different, being a



liable servant, someone who lives in the team and is committed in love to the team, in the best possible sense. Since there are no leaders without followers, servant-leadership involves team relationships, whose quality will be determined by the level of real love and friendship that exists among team members.

After teaching Team Leadership and Cooperative Learning for a few years, I have observed that teams which achieve better performance in academic activities are those which are able to develop a closer and more open relationship among their members, even in the short time of one academic period, thus emphasizing the same concept revealed by many research works performed with teams from different companies.

With this vision of a team as a place of love, love is not limited to team motivation techniques and team performance, but explores and develops the dynamics of the relationship between the members of the team, in the team's positive and negative aspects, as the main factor of influence over both the motivation and performance as well as all activities and results of teamwork. A discussion of teams is warranted based on what different research works have found regarding how members of a team relate to and interact with each other in different contexts and situations.

GROUPS VERSUS TEAMS

An easy way to understand the level of relationship in a team is to make a didactic distinction between groups and teams. Different dictionaries have many definitions for the word *group*, such as “A number of persons or objects gathered, located or classified together” (*The American Heritage*) or “a number of individuals or things considered together because of similarities” (*Dictionary.com*) or “an assemblage of objects regarded as a unit” (*Merriam-Webster*). On the other hand, dictionaries define *team* as “a number of persons associated together in work or activity as a group on one side” (*Merriam-Webster*). If we look up the word *teamwork*, we will find definitions such as “work done by several associates with each doing a part but all subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole” or



“the work or activity of a number of persons acting in close association as members of a unit” (*Merriam-Webster*). The difference may seem subtle, but the implications are deep. The similarity lies in the fact that every team is a group but, surely, not every group is a team. The first great difference lies in the human element as being the essence of the team. So, a group may be composed of people or objects, whose essence lies only in similarity or proximity. A team, on the other hand, can only be composed of people, for there are no teams of objects. In other words, the essence of the team is the person, with all the wealth encompassed by the individual, for each one is a different world of ideas, feelings, wants, temperaments, stories, relationship capability, and accomplishment potential. The first difference, therefore, lies in the *essence*.

The second great difference lies in the *relationship*. A group is basically a set of people considered together, while a team is a set of people in close association. In other words, a team indicates that all parts are in tune in a relationship of absolute partnership. Again, there are no teams of objects, and only people are able to be absolute partners. Absolute partnership implies a common destiny, meaning one’s success is everyone’s and by the same token, one’s failure is everyone’s failure as well. In a group, some may be successful while others are not; in a team that never happens, for in such a situation it is not a team. In a partnership, ideas may be different because people are different, but the mission is common to all partners. That is where love comes in as an essential ingredient. No one fights for a legitimate common destiny if not out of love for a special mission and out of a feeling of love and dedication for the team. It is this sense of unity and commitment to the team’s mission that makes leaders and followers become a single team, one that “wears and loves the shirt,” to the point of sacrificing oneself for the team’s victory.

A third difference is that every team has a *shared dream*. In a group, every component may have a personal dream, not necessarily connected to anyone else’s. In the case of the team, all share the same dream and feel accountable for its achievement. As an example, in the 2002 World Soccer



Championship the Brazilian team was not considered favored for the victory, nor was it going through one of its best moments. The team's track record during the qualifying games alone was pure suffering, and Brazil only qualified in the last game, almost breaking the tradition of the country which has never failed to qualify for a single World Championship. In spite of the individual stars that the team possessed, such as Ronaldo, Rivaldo, and Roberto Carlos, technical evaluations did not point to the Brazilian team's superiority. But there was one factor few noticed. According to the players themselves and the coaching team, this team was considered one of Brazil's most united soccer teams, and united about a common dream: to become five times World Champions! The team's union was talked about by the media in such a way that the team became known as the "Scollari family"; such was the insistence of the coach, Luis Felipe Scollari, of maintaining the team as a family. The players themselves referred to this spirit of union publicly, as noted by the player Belletti in an interview on the Jovem Pan FM Radio website. When asked if there was real friendship and meshing in and out of the field, Belletti answered: "That is what we have the most in the team. Friendship, group thinking . . . sometimes people see players talking about that and think it is demagoguery. But it's not. The familiarity is great. Actually, more than any other factor, this fifth world title may be considered an achievement of team spirit in the quest for a common dream" (Jovem Pan FM).

To better understand the difference between groups and teams, we shall consider some practical examples below, and the reader may feel free to judge which are considered groups and which can actually be considered a team:

- *An army platoon* — Under normal conditions, a platoon is naturally seen as a group of soldiers whose members have the common interest of following orders and executing tasks. Generally, they are not committed to a dream common to everyone. In war, however, this same group may become a team united and committed to victory and survival, united by the same ideal.



- *A basketball team* — As the name itself says, a team is more than a group of people with private interests. All players are on one side, and everyone has the same goal, scoring against the opposing team, and all are running and working to achieve it while at the same time protecting themselves against the opposing team's offense. Naturally, the greater the team spirit and the union among the players, the greater the probability of success, which clearly serves as evidence of the power of teamwork. In a broader sense, the team of players forms a great team with its crowd of fans, who literally "push" towards victory. The phenomenon of the fans and its effect on the team is a demonstration of how the factors of union and relationship are just as important as the technical quality of the team. Teams that are theoretically stronger are many times beaten by weaker teams due to the fact that the game was a visiting game, played at the home of the adversary and suffering contrary psychological pressure from the great united team which is the crowd of fans.
- *A political party* — It is difficult to characterize a political party without being influenced by the stigma that many political segments carry in our society. Synthesizing, a political party may be seen in two different ways: as a group of politicians using the party in search of their own interests and personal promotion, or as a team of idealists united about a dream and committed to society's well-being as the absolute priority. Sociologically speaking, the party itself would be option number two, a team united about a social philosophy. In real life, however, in the face of frequent accusations of corruption and personal dispute, many parties bear the image of a group of people with individual interests. I believe that generalizing on either side would not do justice to the profession, since each case may be a different case. May the reader be the one to pass judgment.
- *A classroom* — A classroom may be the most typical example of a group of people with common tasks, but with personal interests. In



the traditional structure of the educational system, competition for the best grades is the rule. Never have I seen a classroom that was a team, where everyone toiled so that everyone might obtain the best grade. On the contrary, the test is a prime example of how individualistic traditional education is, in which any attempt of mutual help is considered illegal, forbidden and liable to punishment, for obvious and necessary reasons for the survival of the system. But, in the same way the principles of teamwork are revolutionizing the corporate world, the latest research in education shows the superiority of cooperative learning over competitive teaching. The exchange of experiences between students, cooperation in groups and in class as a whole, and the construction of knowledge in a collective and social way, in which students learn from each other's experiences and perspectives, has been shown to be an incredibly rich method, both in the form and in the quality of learning.

- *A family* — In its ideal structure, the family is the most complete example of a team led by and developed in excellence. In every sense, the family is the perfect model that contains all characteristics of a successful team, and when a family unbalances and falls apart, surely the principles of life in a team were not developed. In this model, the parents, as leaders, live to serve their followers, the children. In an ideal context, parents share leadership among themselves, providing security and comfort to the team. The healthiest families are those in which leadership is exercised in a peaceful, kind, and motivating manner, as opposed to the family style characterized by control, domination, sternness, and authoritarianism. The more love among the members of the family, the stronger the mutual bond and the greater the average success in terms of happiness, harmony, and union, which are the supreme family projects and dreams. In the opposite situation, when the family degenerates into fighting and clash of opinions, it ceases to be a team and becomes only a group of individuals defending personal interests. The implication is obvious: the stronger the relationship of love and



friendship among members, the greater the result in terms of the realization of the team's projects and dreams.

This brief comparison between groups and teams compels us toward a unique conclusion: what makes the difference between groups and teams is the quality of relationships and level of love, friendship, and commitment among team members. All motivation techniques and development strategies are very useful, both for groups and teams, and may generate good results, but the technical level does not produce a united and committed team in the best sense of the word. The difference factor between groups and teams is primarily relationship. Therefore, the best description of a good team may be the title of this article: love without measure!

As a result, a servant-leader cannot cause a positive impact while not having developed the competency of teamwork, which ultimately is nothing more than the competency of loving—loving your work, loving your dream, loving your mission, loving your team. Loving without measure and making everything well done is the greatest secret of successful servant-leadership.

Why is it, then, that this concept of love for the team is something relatively rare? In general, human behavior tends to move against this concept. Analyzing some theories of how groups of people are developed and how they behave and how the members of a team interact amongst each other can prove useful. The discussion sheds light on how the quality of the relationship makes the difference in the quality of the team.

STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Teamwork development is one of the subjects about which the least amount of research and theory is available, compared to other subjects related to the leadership area. However, in one of the available research works, psychologist Bruce Tuckman (1995, pp. 355-359) studied the dynamics of team development in depth, analyzing the various stages of development, both from the point of view of interpersonal relationship and from a functional point of view, connected to task performance. After



researching different teams and analyzing the literature on the subject, he proposed a team development model, distinguishing the team as a social and emotional entity from the team as a functional entity, related to task accomplishment. According to him, these two factors occur simultaneously as different aspects of the team's development. Tuckman based his studies on the behavior of both corporate teams and psychotherapy groups. This team development model proposes a sequence of stages that happen in different kinds of teams, according to what is discussed below.

1. Testing and dependency

At this initial stage, when groups are formed, the members of the group or team want to test and discover what interpersonal behaviors are acceptable in the group, based on the reaction of the leader and of the other group members as each new behavior is presented. Everyone watches the others expecting some kind of indication of how to proceed in different situations. There is a relationship of dependency to each other and an attempt to test different behaviors to discern which ones will be accepted by the group.

From the functional point of view, the members try to identify the tasks in terms of relevance to the group's experience, seeking to understand which tasks are really necessary. The group decides the relevant information in dealing with the tasks, in a true process of discovery of the "rules of the game." Both in the interpersonal and in the functional level, this phase is characterized by the behavior of seeking orientation from the leader and from the rest of the group members. It is similar to the first day of school in a classroom or at a new job, where everyone watches everyone, looking for the best way to establish her or his own space. For a certain amount of time, everyone tests each other and depends mutually on each other to obtain information.



2. Intra-group conflict

At this second stage, members become somewhat hostile toward the leader and colleagues in an attempt to express each one's own individuality and resist the potential for imposed rules and the formation of a collective structure that may limit individual behavior. From the relationship point of view, this phase is characterized by a lack of unity and the rise of some interpersonal conflicts that may cause discomfort to the team. The leader must deal with this unstable phase with serenity and assurance, aware that this is a natural part of the development process of a team. Conflict solving strategies may help, but generally, a friendly and respectful attitude on the leader's part tends to disarm the team and favor harmony.

From the functional aspect, the tendency is for an emotional response to occur as a way to resist the demands of a task. This emotional reaction is usually caused by the discrepancy between the natural preference and inclination of each person and the demands posed by the task.

In an amateur football team in the company, for example, this phase may be distinguished by the insistence of some players on fighting for a favorite position, such as quarterback, or by the complaints against some colleagues who prefer to keep ball control for too long and the consequent resistance on the part of these colleagues. If the team keeps playing for a longer period of time, the tendency is for these differences to be adjusted toward a balance point.

3. Development of group cohesion — acceptance

Here group members begin to accept each other and accept the group in general. They feel accepted and wish to maintain the group, generating new collective standards to ensure group preservation. Opposite to the second stage, when there is a reaction against the standards, now the group begins creating the standards. Personal relationship is characterized by mutual acceptance, and there is a tendency to avoid conflicts at this phase.

From the functional point of view, members interact in an exchange of



experiences about the demands of the task. There is an exchange of different interpretations and opinions about the projects and challenges facing the team. It is peculiar to this stage that members act openly with each other, sharing experiences. In a sales team, for example, the members discuss among themselves different approach methods to reach the client, or which strategies are working best in each one's experience, discussing different opinions naturally.

4. Functional role-relatedness

Considering that the relationship among members has already been established in the prior phase, the group now becomes a problem-solving instrument. Only when members learn to relate to each other as social entities can everyone perform their role wholly and completely, without obstacles or wear and tear in the field of relationships. In other words, once the interpersonal relationship is well established, it becomes a powerful tool itself for task performance. Everything goes well when relationships are mature and stable.

On the functional aspect, it is at this stage that solutions arise. The team is completely structured, bonds are established, relationships are not an issue any more, personal roles become flexible and practical, and now all effort and energy are directly focused on the task. The structure and the relationships become a solid basis supporting high task performance.

The greatest problem faced by many teams is to give priority only to the task, leaving relationships in the background. Research shows, however, that in every step of team development, there is an essential correspondence between the relationships field and the tasks field. The energy invested in structuring relationships produces direct results in task performance.

LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE MODEL

Developed by George Garen and associates (DuBrin, 1995, pp. 203-205), the leader-member exchange model helps to explain, at least in part,



how teams function in real life. After researching a vast number of teams in different companies, Garen proposed a team functioning model. Once again, the whole model is based on the quality of the relationship between the leader and her or his followers, reinforcing the theory that such quality determines the team's quality. The model explains how relationships occur in practice in most teams, thus exposing the factors that influence higher or lower team performance.

Relationship of the Leader with the Team

Countless factors influence the relationship between two or more people. Among them some may be mentioned, such as individual similarities and differences, temperament, the “chemistry” that occurs between two people, private interests, personal abilities and competencies, and so on. Since a team is composed of people, it is unavoidable that such factors influence the relationship of the leader with team members, causing the leader to have a better relationship with some members than with others. Whether it is desirable or not, Garen concluded that this is a fact in every team, and it is up to the leader to deal with it so that it does not become a serious obstacle for the team. In a very realistic perspective, the conclusions of the study are:

1. Every leader develops a unique personal relationship with every member of the team. The characteristics of the relationship differ from person to person and, therefore, it is certain that her or his relationship with the team will have a different format for each member.
2. Having a different relationship with distinct team members is something normal. However, research showed that the difference does not lie in format alone, but also in quality; the relationship of the leader with different team members has different levels of quality.
3. Research also revealed that such difference in relationship quality is quite significant in most teams. As a result, every leader has an



excellent relationship with some members and a poor or weak relationship with other members of the same team.

4. Beyond the relationship itself, leaders also use different leadership styles when dealing with different people. So, according to that model, they do not possess a single style of leadership, but take on different styles according to the situation and according to the degree of relationship established with that follower.
5. As a consequence of this difference in relationship, every team ends up, to a lesser or greater degree, dividing itself up in two internal subgroups, which the model calls “in-group” and “out-group.” The subgroups relate and behave in different ways and end up achieving different results. Making use of the above distinction between groups and teams, it may be said that the in-group forms a team with the leader, while the out-group forms only a more distant group, according to the characteristics of the groups described below.

Characteristics of the In-group

According to the study, the in-group possesses the following characteristics:

1. Its members develop greater intimacy with the leader, and as a consequence receive more time and attention on the leader’s behalf, setting them in a privileged position compared with other members of the team.
2. Due to being closer to the leader, they are invited to take part in important decisions, receive more responsibility, and have access to privileged and confidential information, as well as participating in the so-called intimate company “gossip.”
3. As a consequence of a greater relationship with the leader, in-group members achieve a higher level of performance, commitment, and satisfaction, and tend to stay with the company longer.



4. In real life, in-group members are extra-officially promoted to the role of right-hand men or women, consulted by the leader about more private interests.
5. As a result of this relationship, in-group members have a much higher chance of promotion and recommendation for management and leadership positions.

Characteristics of the Out-group

In contrast with the privileges of the in-group, the out-group ends up relegated to a secondary position within the team, due to a less intense and lower quality relationship with the leader. The main characteristics of that group are these:

1. Out-group members maintain a more formal relationship with the leader, being treated within the standards of a normal job contract.
2. Remaining at the formal level of relationship, they develop little intimacy with the leader, they are not invited to take part in important decisions, and they have no access to privileged information.
3. Due to this psychological distance from the leader, members of this group receive less warmth from the leader, less personal inspiration, and less professional or personal encouragement.
4. In real life, these members are seen more as general company employees rather than part of a team, integrated with the projects and dreams of the company and the leader's.
5. In view of the lack of relationship, they have much less probability to be a part of good teamwork, which results in a low professional performance level, leaving them at a disadvantage compared with the remaining members of the team (see Figure 1).

Influence of Personal Factors

Some results of this study reveal the strength of interpersonal relations influencing the professional area. The traditional separation between the

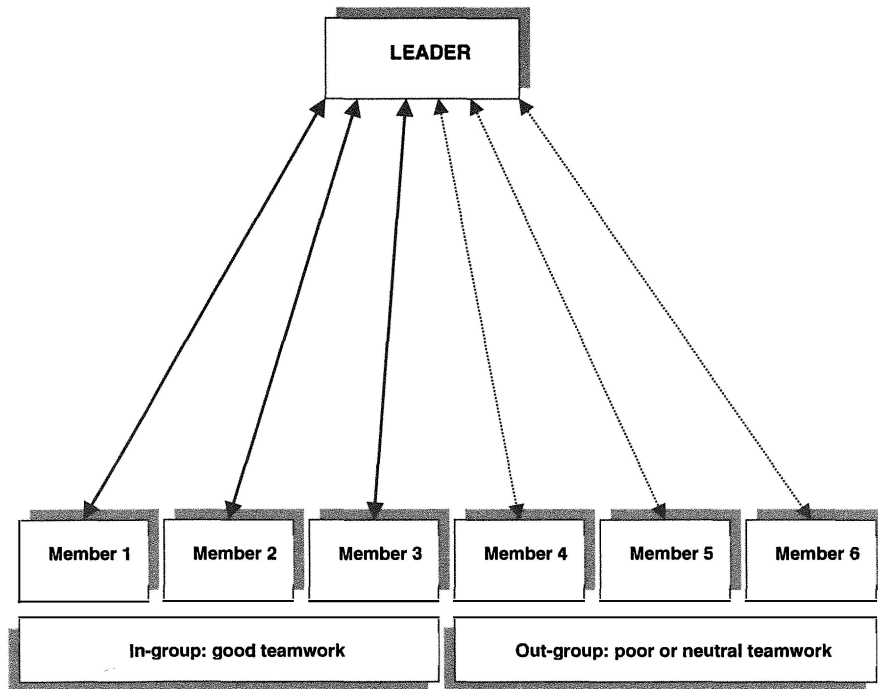


professional and the personal realms seems to be fruit of the need people have to maintain an exterior image, when actually people tend to behave according to feelings, preferences, and attitudes derived from their own personalities; at least that is what research works show. In the case of the leader-member exchange model, the reasons that lead to the separation between the in-group and the out-group seem to be more connected to the personal than to the professional realm. Here are some conclusions reached by the study:

1. The motives that determine who belongs to the in-group are not generally related to job performance. Far from being a result of professional factors, the team member's *status* as part of the in-group or the out-group is determined by personal factors much more than professional ones.
2. The choice is related to temperament and preferences, or to the "chemistry" between the leader and the team. In other words, individual personality, both the leader's and the followers', exercises strong influence in determining the structure and composition of the team.
3. One factor that was observed is that every leader has more relationship and affinity with those who take part in the same activities as he or she does. Those who play tennis with the leader or practice any other sport with him or her, or who share the same race or religion, tend to maintain greater relationship and, therefore, become part of the in-group. Even gender difference influences, for in some cases there is a tendency for men to favor professionally their male counterparts and women likewise.
4. Another discovery made by the study is that the choice of the in-group has much to do with the leader's first impressions about the team member. During the first contact between the leader and the team member negative or positive impressions are made which may determine the quality of relationship for both and the member's position in the team.



Figure 1: *Leader-member exchange model*



Adapted from DuBrin, Andrew J. *Leadership: research findings, practice, and skills*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995, p. 204.

5. With all that at stake, it is natural that there may be room for manipulation as well: to put it bluntly, members who are more skilled in using political tactics have a greater chance to be closer and become part of the in-group.
6. Finally, in real life, there is a give-and-take cycle: the leader does more favors to the in-group members who, in exchange, work harder to please the leader, who then feels justified in giving them more attention, more resources, better salaries, and more luxurious budgets.



Summarizing, the leader-member exchange model offers a portrait of how most teams behave, guided much more by personal and relationship factors than by professional performance. Based on this study, it is evident that from a servant-leadership perspective, the ideal would be for the whole team to behave as an in-group, without the existence of an out-group decreasing the team's potential. In other words, the team will be much more productive when its social structure develops and reaches a level where the differences between the in-group and the out-group are minimized, increasing the level of relationships among all its members.

Emotional Influence of the Leader

In the book *Primal Leadership* (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002) there is a statement which is disquieting to say the least: "This emotional task of the leader is primal – that is, the first – in two senses: it is both the original and the most important act of leadership" (p. 5). According to the authors, leaders have always performed a primal emotional role, earning their space because their leadership was emotionally contagious. In any group of people, the leader has the power to awaken everyone's emotions, and if such emotions are funneled into enthusiasm, performance will consequentially increase.

What does emotional intelligence have to do with love? Everything. In fact, there could be no emotional intelligence without love. As Batten (1998) explains, "Love is a powerful, healing, renewing, and fulfilling emotion. People who live passionately—at the cutting edge—know that love has infinite possibilities when harnessed, focused, and lived" (p. 50). In fact, the powerful emotion of love is what makes servant-leadership such a powerful and distinctive approach to leading. Or in the words of Socrates: "Human nature will not easily find a helper better than love" (Batten, p. 51). In other words, love is the best helper of human nature because it is a healing and fulfilling emotion that permeates all other emotions and gives sense to life. As such, a leadership concept based on the powerful emotion



of love inevitably makes a powerful impact on the lives of the followers and team members. Love is the secret of servant-leadership.

That is why servant-leaders are able to inspire passion and great ideals. Though many call it vision or strategy, studies indicate that great leadership works through emotions. Knowing how to guide followers' emotions in the right direction and knowing how to do the same with one's own emotions and relationships is what Daniel Goleman calls emotional intelligence—according to him, the essential competence of primal leadership (Goleman et al., 2002). The professional implication is clear: people who feel good perform better.

Studies show that the leader's emotional influence is exercised directly and indirectly, in distinct ways, and for many reasons. Below, an informal recapturing of themes around research on the leader's emotional influence lends discernment to the process:

1. Followers look up to the leader in search of empathy and emotional support. The understanding of this important role played by emotions in the work environment distinguishes the best leaders from everyone else, both in terms of performance and financial results as well as in less tangible aspects, such as high morale, motivation, and commitment.
2. The leader performs a fundamental role in determining the team's emotional situation and environment, for it is natural that people pay extra attention to the leader's feelings and behavior, since her or his point of view usually bears additional weight in the team's decisions and attitudes.
3. Negative emotions in the team, especially anger, anxiety, and insecurity, divert attention from the task to be accomplished, significantly jeopardizing the task.
4. Good human relations between leader and followers, as well as the team's emotional well-being, produce greater mental efficiency, help people to better understand information, to be more flexible



in their ways of thinking, to have better judgment, and to make better decisions.

5. Leaders who act with empathy enable the team to maintain effective relations among themselves and with the rest of the organization. Empathy means taking into account the feelings and needs of the team, of subordinates, and of clients, creating an environment of mutual interest within the organization and with respective clients.

Emotional Intelligence of Teams

Who is more intelligent: one person or a group of people? Though the obvious answer seems to be the group of people, studies show that the answer is conditioned to one factor: emotional intelligence. In other words, groups are only more intelligent than one person when their components display the qualities of emotional intelligence! Researchers at Cambridge University concluded that even groups composed of brilliant people make terrible decisions if the group degrades into fights, personal rivalry, and power struggles (Goleman et al., 2002).

Taking this principle as a starting point, it is possible to state that just like people, groups have needs, emotions, and willingness. Just watch how different teams behave. Some are easily classified as happy or stern, dynamic or dispirited, tranquil or tense, and so forth. Evidently, as mentioned earlier, the team's mood is directly related to the leader's influence. To put it differently, just like people, teams may have greater or less emotional intelligence. Some research conclusions about a team's emotional intelligence indicate the following:

1. Collective emotional intelligence is what separates high performing teams from mediocre ones. The team's professional performance is directly proportional to the leader's and the team's ability to deal with the emotional environment and the team's interpersonal relationships.



2. The way the leader and the team manage their emotions determines whether the group will be able to cultivate and develop an environment of trust, sense of identity, spirit of cooperation, and effective performance. Evidently, in a team where relationships are turbulent, the tendency will be for people not to trust each other, not to feel assurance of their identity in the team, and to be reluctant toward mutual cooperation, which will inevitably affect the team's effectiveness and performance
3. Emotions are contagious, and the team is influenced by the emotions of its leader and members, positively or negatively. Who hasn't had a boss whose mood was unpredictable and affected the whole team's environment? I myself worked at a company where every day the group was in expectation, waiting to see what the boss' mood was like. Every morning news spread fast down the halls, in comments such as "Today the boss is in high spirits," or "Chill out 'cause today things look mighty ugly over there with the boss." The result was that the group had to spend an additional amount of energy every day to adapt to the boss' mood, something that notably interfered with the team's normal pace of activity. A clear example of this interference was that on a bad mood boss day everyone avoided discussing more sensitive work issues with him, postponing them to a better occasion, thus many times delaying issues that needed to be dispatched urgently.
4. Recognizing and dealing with negative emotions avoids friction within the team, for the worse the emotional environment, the greater the tendency for stress, which, in turn, will worsen the emotional environment, generating a cycle that if not interrupted may completely destroy the team's productive potential. The opposite is also true: when the emotional environment is positive, everything works better, reducing the stress level and generating a cycle that tends to enrich the team's emotional environment more and more.



A good servant-leader must know how to deal with the emotions and feelings of people in order to help them develop themselves and their potential. Knowing how to deal with people's different emotions is the very heart of teamwork and servant-leadership. Since the essence of servant-leadership is the development of people, no leader can ignore the potential of emotions to promote people on a constructive path for success.

Table 1: *Emotional Intelligence Domains and Associated Competencies*

Personal Competence: These capabilities determine how we manage ourselves
<i>Self-awareness</i>
• <i>Emotional self-awareness</i> : Reading one's own emotions and recognizing their impact; using "gut sense" to guide decisions
• <i>Accurate self-assessment</i> : Knowing one's strengths and limits
• <i>Self-confidence</i> : A sound sense of one's self-worth and capabilities
<i>Self-management</i>
• <i>Emotional self-control</i> : Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control
• <i>Transparency</i> : Displaying honesty and integrity; trustworthiness
• <i>Adaptability</i> : Flexibility in adapting to changing situations or overcoming obstacles
• <i>Achievement</i> : the drive to improve performance to meet inner standards of excellence
• <i>Initiative</i> : Readiness to act and seize opportunities
• <i>Optimism</i> : Seeing the upsides in events
Social Competence: These capabilities determine how we manage relationships
<i>Social awareness</i>
• <i>Empathy</i> : Sensing others' emotions, understanding their perspective, and taking active interest in their concerns
• <i>Organizational awareness</i> : Reading the currents, decision networks, and politics at the organizational level
• <i>Service</i> : Recognizing and meeting follower, client, or customer needs
<i>Relationship management</i>
• <i>Inspirational leadership</i> : Guiding and motivating with a compelling vision
• <i>Influence</i> : Wielding a range of tactics for persuasion
• <i>Developing others</i> : Bolstering other's abilities through feedback and guidance
• <i>Change catalyst</i> : Initiating, managing, and leading in a new direction
• <i>Conflict management</i> : Resolving disagreements
• <i>Building Bonds</i> : Cultivating and maintaining a web of relationships
• <i>Teamwork and collaboration</i> : Cooperation and team building

Note: From Goleman, Daniel, Boyatzis, Richard, and McKee, Annie. (2002). *Primal leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, p. 39.



Being a servant-leader and knowing how to work with people's emotions requires some specific attributes and attitudes. Goleman (2002) refers to these attributes as the competencies of emotional intelligence. According to him, there is no fixed formula for great leadership, but good leaders should be strong in at least one competency of each one of the four fundamental areas of emotional intelligence. These four areas can fit into two large groups: personal competencies encompass self-conscience and self-management, related to the way the leader deals with him- or herself. Social competencies, on the other hand, include social conscience and relationships, related to the way the leader deals with other people. Table 1 shows Goleman's competences of emotional intelligence that include many of the servant-leadership principles, such as integrity, empathy, service, inspiration, developing others, teamwork and collaboration.

CONCLUSION

Love, service, and emotional awareness are the very basis of servant-leadership. But accepting this approach requires a lifestyle change, because servant-leadership is not a strategy to be learned, but an attitude to be lived: in order to become a leader it is not enough to change the way of acting, it is necessary to change the way of being. Or, in the words of Kouzes and Posner (2002):

Leadership is an art. And in the art of leading the artist's instrument is his own being. Mastering the art of leadership is mastering oneself. Ultimately, the development of leadership is a self-development process!
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In other words, mastering the art of leading teams demands personal growth and a change in attitude toward life. It is a change in interpersonal relationships and in feelings toward people. That is what servant-leadership really means. And this self-development process includes above all the development of love for team members and the people we work with. As Batten (1998) says, "Love is the toughest-minded emotion in the world and



the finest mental and spiritual nutrient you can possess for a total life of fulfillment and actualization. It is truly the nutrient that grows winners” (p. 50).

In fact, in its best meaning, servant-leadership is nothing more than loving the team and being a friend, a sister, a brother, in such a way that the leader imparts all her or his experience and professional guidance through a friendly relationship, one of mutual trust. That is why team leadership, from beginning to end, is nothing more than a relation of friendliness, a passion for the team’s growth and mutual professional development or, in other words, love without measure!

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