



SERVANT-LEADERSHIP AS A CORNERSTONE FOR RESTORATION OF HUMAN DIGNITY

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Human beings are experiencing a loss of dignity that diminishes us as a community of people. Many times the consequences of losing our dignity are not severe, allowing us to recover in a short time; other times, they can be so dramatic that they end up scarring us for a lifetime. Those who lose their dignity ultimately have the choice to find resiliency and recover from their loss. Likewise, those who violate the dignity of others bear the responsibility to choose to live with morality and justice toward others. As Greenleaf (1977) explained, “Because we have a natural authority resulting from our power and freedom to choose, we need to use it in a principled way” (p. 5). An important characteristic of an individual is the innate ability to choose. As humans, we are equipped with the unique capacity to do what no other being can do, endowed with the power to utilize freedom to make our decisions and to choose between alternatives. Viktor Frankl’s (1997) idea of a person’s freedom to choose gives some perspective to the relationship between human choice and human freedom; he describes it as having an “awareness of freedom and responsibility” (p. 33).

The purpose of this paper is to consider the idea that humility and seeking forgiveness are key elements of servant-leadership and that these are the elements of servant-leadership that are required for the restoration of human dignity.

An individual’s dignity can be stripped as the result of a variety of actions or situations (e.g., berating a child, yelling at a store clerk, beating a homeless person, being unable to afford health care), and on a small scale, for example an isolated instance of verbal abuse of a child, to a large scale,



for example the repeated sexual abuse of a child (Fraser, 1987). Ferch (2003) noted, “People have inherent worth, a dignity not only to be strived for, but beneath this striving, a dignity irrevocably connected to the reality of being human” (p. 2). Viktor Frankl (1963) referred to external powers as barriers to people’s enjoyment of freedom. He pointed out that “a creative life and a life of enjoyment are banned [resulting in] . . . an existence restricted by external forces” (p. 106). For most of us, suffering is an ineradicable part of life; generally people have the inner capacity to fight for the preservation of their dignity in difficult times. However, depending on a person’s inner strength and circumstances, there are phases when an individual’s suffering is perpetrated by external forces that limit him or her to a hopeless life of despair. Frankl also talked about people making decisions in challenging and stressful times:

Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision, a decision which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom . . . [and which resulted in your] renouncing freedom and dignity. (p. 104)

Through self-responsibility we are able to grow and have a better understanding of freedom and choice. In choosing to live responsibly, we develop characteristics of servant-leadership within us. Servant-leadership can be a great tool for people of all walks of life to use in meeting the challenge of losing our dignity. Servant-leadership offers an opportunity for each of us, not just those in positions of “power,” to respond to the loss of dignity in the world.

An understanding of servant-leadership requires humility and maturity of an individual and a community that truly cares for the good of humanity (Spears, 1998, p. xi). Humility refers to a person’s ability to respond with optimism and courage to the challenge of examining his or her inner identity (Palmer, 1998). Palmer asserts, “A leader must take special responsibility for what is going on inside his or her own self, inside his or her consciousness, lest the act of leadership create more harm than good” (p.



200). Having courage in the face of vulnerability is vital in the humbling of one's self, and through the practice of servant-leadership we are opened "toward a more accepting and empathetic understanding of one another" (Ferch, 2003, p. 10). Furthermore, when we live by these principles, we contribute to healing and to a conscious and deeper sense of community. I believe that by humbling ourselves and acting with love and forgiveness toward others, it is possible to move toward desired goals. By doing so, humans may embrace a more dynamic and inviting way of life. Spears and Lawrence (2002) suggested that "servant-leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work . . . a way of being that has the potential to create positive change throughout our society" (p. 4).

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

A new moral principle is emerging which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 9)

Robert Greenleaf clearly articulated his vision of the interior of a servant-leader with this assertion. This idea of servant-leadership can be traced back to the days of Jesus of Nazareth (Crossan & Reed, 2001; Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1998). Palmer explains, "A leader is a person who has an unusual degree of power to create the conditions under which other people must live and move and have their being, conditions that can either be as illuminating as heaven or as shadowy as hell" (1998, p. 200).

Within the Christian tradition, the Bible contains many stories that characterized Jesus as a servant-leader. One story involves Jesus washing his disciples' feet. Afterwards, He told them:

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you . . . no servant is greater than his master. (John 13:13-16)



Jesus taught about the attributes and characteristics of a servant-leader or simply devoted his time to serving others in numerous ways and for a variety of reasons. Jesus stated, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matthew 20:28). Similarly, Buddhism, with its emphasis on a concern for others and an awareness of the suffering of others (Hahn, 1998), has many of the attributes and characteristics of servant-leadership. The essence of the Buddha’s teaching proclaims, “If you learn to practice love, compassion, joy, and equanimity, you will know how to heal the illnesses of anger, sorrow, insecurity, sadness, hatred, loneliness, and unhealthy attachments” (p. 170).

Jesus’ controversial way of thinking took the entire culture by surprise and challenged the political and religious leadership of the time and region to consider the unexpected and to look at a new and revolutionary idea of leadership (Sande, 2004; Crossan & Reed, 2001). Presently, more than two thousand years later, this idea of leadership continues to develop and grow significantly. Although it might be difficult to separate the name of Jesus from the divine, many of his deeds as described in the Bible apply to the concept and purpose of servant-leadership. Jesus said, for example, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all” (Mark 10:43-44).

Robert Greenleaf (1977), founder of the Center for Servant-Leadership and creator of the idea of leader as servant, brought to people’s attention a more compelling and holistic approach to leadership—a theory replete with provisions for a brighter future. He noted, “The servant-leader is a servant first” (p. 13). This core notion has opened up opportunities for many people nationwide and around the world (even for those who are not necessarily practitioners in the traditional sense of a leader). It has also stimulated new ways of understanding leadership that may challenge the views of various communities and individuals, especially those exercising traditional models of leadership (Spears, 1998; Wren, 1995). Greenleaf (1977) proclaimed, “It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first” (p. 13). Greenleaf seems to refer to something more than a natural feeling and



deeper than an individual wanting to provide a service. The essence of this prophetic-like insight and profound idea is based on the certainty of a promise that can be fulfilled through the ambition of a true leader's actions intended to help and inspire others to "become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become true leaders" (p. 13).

I consider the inner attributes of servant-leadership to be similar to the inner beauty that an individual possesses, particularly in terms of the clarity and the quality of insight that exists to empower that individual in moving toward transcendence. Transcendent growth can lead individuals to achieve something beyond themselves, as they seek first to understand and then to be understood (Covey, 1989, pp. 235-260). As a person becomes immersed in the wonders and principles of servant-leadership, new insights and gifted ideas may result in unlimited and creative ways. A servant-leader is "one who seeks to draw out, inspire, and develop the best and highest within people from the inside out" (Spears, 1998, p. xii).

Ideas of human possibility, the loss of dignity, despair, restricted freedom, oppression, and the potential of servant-leadership evoke many images of our humanity. Ultimately, we can hope for the certainty that servant-leadership can be developed and can flourish in people from all walks of life and in all corners of the world. But how do people, communities, cultures, and nations begin to develop and flourish amid the social injustice that is constantly jeopardizing humanity? What are the elements holding humanity back from advancing toward a more fulfilling and prosperous life? What would it take for a circumstance of oppression, chaos, and injustice to be transformed into a condition of restorative justice characterized by servant-leaders and their actions? I envision a process, perhaps a framework, within which to bring about transformation through servant-leadership. This framework consists of four stages:

Stage 1: Humans experience *restricted freedom and a lack of human dignity*.

Stage 2: Humans require a response involving *choice and self-responsibility*.



Stage 3: Humans can choose to act with *love and forgiveness*.

Stage 4: Humans promote *reconciliation and restorative justice*.

In exploring each of these points in this framework, I consider the idea of affirming servant-leadership as offering hope for reconciliation and the restoration of human dignity.

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

Before I go on to explore each of the framework's four stages, I would like to describe some of my background and circumstances in my growing-up years that exposed me to servant-leaders and influenced me today to believe in servant-leadership as a personal cultural heritage. It is a heritage that I embrace dearly and proudly. This heritage is the root of my passion for studying the concept of servant-leadership and pursuing my own development as a servant-leader.

I was very fortunate to be born in a humble home and share it with seven other siblings in my native Venezuela. At the head of the household was my mother, an energetic young widow full of life, a loving person with the overwhelming stress of raising eight children on her own after my father died. Although most of the time she would come across as a strict and unyielding disciplinarian, my mother from an early age tried to instill in us that nothing worth having comes easy and that we needed to work hard and be disciplined to achieve whatever we wanted in life, and to pursue with tenacity any dream we wanted to realize. My mother is a great woman; she was my first and the most important source of inspiration and hope I have known. It was through her hard work, work ethic, humility, and servanthood that we were able to overcome very difficult and challenging times.

As I think back it seems as if it was not as a result of fate, chance, luck, or coincidence that I was born into poverty into Venezuela, into my particular family and its circumstances, and with specific talents and gifts to possess and hopefully utilize during my lifetime. It would be easy for me to



wonder about or even resent the difficulties of my childhood and think that it was rather inconsistent on God's part to give me the hopes and the corresponding gifts to play professional sports and a desire to pursue high-level education, but to have me be born into a family without the resources to support these aspirations. How could extreme poverty, an illiterate mother, undereducated siblings, or an unsupportive father be part of the intricately designed plan for my life? Despite the difficulty of these obstacles, I always seemed to possess enough motivation and perseverance to overcome them. I always had big dreams for my life. One of the most powerful effects of love is the hope that it plants within us. Hope is as essential to our lives as oxygen. I believe fervently that perhaps through a divine intervention and my mother's example, a strong hope was planted in me at an early age, which allowed me to hold on, to persevere, and to live my dreams.

It was 1975, I was ten years old, and the Major League Baseball's World Series was taking place. As I listened to the radio broadcasts of every game, it was made clear to me that I ought to pursue learning the English language, to play baseball in the major leagues, and to live in the United States of America. At first it was just a thought; later it was more like a serious hope; and then it became my biggest and most desired dream. Even though the main reason I wanted to come to the U.S. was to participate in professional sports, my close second priority was to acquire an education. All of these thoughts and ideas grew so intensely and with so much certainty as I approached my teen years, that I had the hope and drive to pursue my dreams with the tenacity and the passion that have helped me to achieve many of my dreams up to this point in my life.

I began dedicating rigorous effort to my English studies in school, as well as finding the inner discipline to become an excellent student overall. I knew that I was preparing myself for the opportunity to study in the U.S., and I wanted to be ready whenever that opportunity presented itself. I overcame hunger and found the way to focus and learn despite my physical depletion many times; I rose above economic constraints and somehow always found the way to get the school uniform and supplies I needed for



each school year; I prevailed over the doubts that others had about me and found a few good supporters as well as my own personal faith to persevere. In the midst of my demanding studies, I was playing baseball and quickly becoming one of the most talented catchers in the youth league in Venezuela. In my baseball pursuits, I encountered the same barriers or challenges that I faced at school – poor nutrition, financial limitations, and some doubting family members and onlookers. It was difficult to tackle the dream of becoming a world-class athlete without anything to eat some days, without the necessary equipment or money to travel with the team, or to convince coaches and fellow players that such a tall kid could be a catcher. Nevertheless, these challenges were more than just trials for me. They were a daily reality that kept me on my toes and spurred me on to make the decision to either give in to the pessimism of others and my own moments of weakness, or to stick with it and hold tight to my dreams.

When I was recruited by the Boston Red Sox organization to come to the U.S. at the age of fifteen, I was elated, overjoyed, ecstatic—but not completely *surprised*. I realized that my dreams, and the inner strength to pursue them, were finally taking flight. However, my father would not allow me to accept the Red Sox's offer, and my lifelong dreams seemed snuffed out in an instant. I initially filled the void left by my broken dreams with disappointment and sadness, but all this accomplished was to hold me back from moving forward and keeping myself ready for the next opportunity that might come my way. I quit baseball soon after, and I took up basketball to distract my thoughts from all the disappointment I was experiencing. As the almost-cliché saying goes, “When God closes a door, somewhere He opens a window,” and it was quickly apparent that my athletic skills applied to the sport of basketball as well. During the next year, my father died of a sudden heart attack and my family fell into even greater poverty. With my excellent academics and my sports ability, I was able to continue my high school studies and be selected to play competitive basketball on my country's national team, all while working odd jobs to help my mother support our family and raise my younger siblings. I realize in retrospect that God



knew that I needed a purpose to drive me and to inspire me to reclaim my dreams—even if some of them were revised. Although I did not know God intimately as that time in my life, He was continually making His presence known in my life, and He was blessing me in ways that allowed me to love and care for others.

After successfully completing high school and teacher's college in Venezuela, in addition to playing for professional basketball teams and my country's national team, I was given the opportunity to come to the United States to play college basketball and pursue the advanced education I had always dreamed about. Fast-forwarding to the most recent years of my life, I speak English fluently, I enjoyed my years as an athlete and can now coach others to achieve their basketball dreams, I am raising a beautiful family in the U.S., and I have earned a Master's degree and am working toward a Ph.D.

FREEDOM AND HUMAN DIGNITY

Experiencing restricted freedom and a lack of human dignity may be a combination of factors leading to a life of despair, chaos, inferiority, and the development of hatred and bitterness among individuals (Spears & Ferch, 2005). Individuals may experience these feelings associated with oppression and injustice. Especially when an individual's freedom to choose is restricted, he or she may be at a disadvantage in terms of becoming a complete and productive member of society (King, 1969). In contrast, when a person can enjoy the true freedoms that a free society offers, that individual may have a better chance to understand the relationship between freedom and choice. With choice comes a sense of responsibility, which Frankl (1997) suggests is a virtue. William Manchester (1983), in his book *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill*, described how hard and painful World War I was and what happened when Great Britain was finally declared victorious over its enemy. In the story, he tells of the reaction and state of mind of an angry soldier and future leader of the defeated country



that illustrates the consequences of failing to recognize self-responsibility and of acting without remorse in doing harm to others:

“I knew that all was lost. Only fools, liars, and criminals could hope for mercy from the enemy. In these nights, hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed . . . The more I tried to achieve clarity on the monstrous events in this hour, the more the shame of indignation and disgrace burned my brow. What was all the pain in my eyes compared to this misery? In the days that followed, my own fate became known to me . . . I resolved to go into politics.” The soldier was Adolf Hitler. (pp. 650-651)

From this story, it is important to point out that when people take self-responsibility for the freedom of choice, it may guide their actions to respect and promote goodness in others. This is what England endeavored to do by sending humanitarian aid to Germany after the war. In contrast, when a person chooses not to be responsible, his or her actions may lead to the denial of freedom and dignity of other human beings. Because of Hitler’s lack of humility, he refused to choose resiliency and recovery from his loss of dignity, which prompted him to use his power in an unprincipled manner. A servant-leader in this type of situation would draw upon his or her humility and both seek and grant forgiveness in the pursuit of restoration.

CHOICE AND SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

Frankl (1997) contended that many people have the tendency to react emotionally in stressful conditions. Occasionally, these emotional tendencies are displayed in an uncontrolled manner, leading an individual to ignore the responsibility that comes with his or her actions. Hence, one’s action can produce both individual and communal harm, including an act of violence or evil toward humanity. Ferch (2003) explained how a person may act without taking responsibility for self-perpetuated oppression of others:



When a person is hidden, that person's leadership is also hidden, and he or she tends to use hidden measures such as superiority, dominance, and fear. Such measures can be effective, at times achieving powerful results, but they keep those who are led in darkness, subservient, and oppressed. (p. 2)

In the case of Adolf Hitler, I believe that his experiences in WWI affected him in a significantly negative way, leading him to cynicism and then to nihilism. His choices led him to objectify others to the point of extreme oppression and genocide without remorse. To challenge this way of thinking, and move toward a better understanding of humanity, servant-leadership offers a unique and inviting practice of leadership. Servant-leadership places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader (Laub, 1999; Greenleaf, Beazley, Beggs, & Spears, 2003). Greenleaf (1977) was confident that natural servant-leaders exist who are willing to lead and to meet the needs of humanity. As he put it, "Leaders will bend their efforts to serve with skills, understanding and spirit, and followers will be responsive only to able servants who would lead them" (p. 18).

LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

The ability to forgive is one of the characteristics found in a servant-leader. Servant-leaders are willing to seek forgiveness when wronged by others and grant forgiveness to those who have done wrong (Holloway, 2002; Tutu, 1999). Ferch (2003) explained the significance of forgiveness in reconciliation and fostering human relationships built on love:

One of the defining characteristics of human nature is the ability to discern one's own faults, to be broken as the result of such faults, and in response, seek meaningful change. Socially, both forgiveness and the disciplined process of reconciliation draw us into a crucible, from which we can emerge more refined, more willing to see the heart of another, and more able to create just and lasting relationships. (p. 1)

There are remarkable leaders whose lives are characterized by love and



forgiveness. Among them was Martin Luther King, Jr., who encouraged us to love the oppressor. Desmond Tutu engendered love through forgiveness that could heal violence. Nelson Mandela refused to deny the humanity of those who imprisoned him and those who confessed to the most heinous acts against human dignity. Robert Greenleaf's call toward servanthood promoted wisdom and freedom. Finally, President Abraham Lincoln demonstrated redemptive love by hiring his arch-enemy, Stanton. The actions demonstrated by each of these leaders illustrate what Ferch (2003) described as "potent expressions of the interior of the leader oriented toward healing the heart of the world" (p. 3).

The concepts of love and forgiveness are not easy ones for many people to understand and carry out. Desire and discipline are required to understand them, patience and humility to obtain them, and love and commitment to practice them. According to Ferch (2003), forgiveness "requires a form of personal integrity that is hard-won. A certain lifestyle results, reflected in a humble awareness of one's own faults and the integration of strength, hope, and grace with regard to the faults of others" (p. 3).

Early on in our marriage, my wife and I began to engage in arguments in which we exchanged uncontrolled emotional words that we later regretted. Despite feeling love for one another, at times we did not like each other. I was too concerned with self-righteousness and at times felt that my wife was only critical toward me. My typical response was defensive and fueled by emotional reactivity. My responses prevented me from developing a deep awareness of my wife's emotional needs and kept me from seeing the fundamental flaw in my human nature. Fortunately, I found gifted people, friends and mentors, who helped me to understand what it meant to honor Kim in our relationship with love and freedom, and to cultivate humility by asking for and granting forgiveness. This experience has served as a healer of my interior qualities and has lifted my confidence as a servant-leader. Furthermore, it has fortified the key elements of servant-leadership as the forefront of our lives, elements that every true servant-leader should possess. Greenleaf (1977) said that the real motive for healing is for



one's own healing, not to change others, meaning that the true motive to serve others is for our own betterment.

In an effort to seek reconciliation with other religious practices, the late Pope John Paul II showed the world a wonderful example of love and humility, which I believe to be special attributes in a servant-leader. He asked forgiveness of other world religious leaders for any harm they might have suffered in the name of Christianity. He also visited the religion's sacred places and prayed over them. This act demonstrated a sense of love through the act of granting and asking for forgiveness. This story leads us back to the essence of a servant-leader—characterized by humility and committed to seeking forgiveness for the preservation of human dignity. Similarly, Ferch described the notion of love and forgiveness inherent in reconciliation, restorative justice, and servant-leadership: "Movement away from alienation and emotional reactivity into love itself; the depth of love and the integrity . . . is what lifts us to forgive and grow and become deeper, truer people" (S. Ferch, personal communication, April 2004).

Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. signified a keen awareness and understanding of Greenleaf's ideas. Although they were both deeply affected by the oppression they personally experienced, they demonstrated love and forgiveness and transformed their liabilities into assets. They recognized the necessity of suffering to promote a righteous cause and guarded against personal bitterness. Mandela and King demonstrated hope and vision and acted upon the opportunity to transfigure themselves and their society in the midst of that generation's ordeal. In 1964, at the opening of his defense before the Pretoria Supreme Court, Mandela (1994) finished his statement to the court with these words:

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to the struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination. I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die. (p. 13)



After more than 27 years as a political prisoner, Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected president of South Africa in 1994. “From a country of bloodshed and hate, he and those around him effectively built a country of hope” (Spears & Ferch, 2005, p. 109). As Mandela was prepared to sacrifice himself for the love he held for the ideals of democracy and freedom, this same love inspired the foundation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Mandela and Archbishop Tutu demonstrated a greater love by asking the country to offer forgiveness to those who committed human atrocities during Apartheid.

Similarly, Martin Luther King, Jr. was guided by love and commitment and never stopped advocating for peace, justice, and redemption. Demonstrating an emotionally disciplined approach to conflict, he led non-violent protests and encouraged us to love the oppressor. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963) led one of the most amazing civil rights movements in history. He embodied love and forgiveness as a human being and a great leader. Martin Luther King, Jr. encouraged us to respond to hatred and injustice with love:

There will be no solution to the race problem until oppressed men develop the capacity to love their enemies. The darkness of racial injustice will be dispelled only by the light of forgiving love. The degree to which we are able to forgive determines the degree to which we are able to love our enemies. (p. 89)

Mandela and King are true servant-leaders who genuinely care for humanity and seek to serve the needs of others. Their leadership is founded in love, not only for those who are oppressed, but for all of humanity. Loving the oppressor, as King encouraged, communicates Mandela’s ideals of democracy and freedom in the spirit of peace and forgiveness.

RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

On April 27, 1994, for the first time in its history, South Africa celebrated a democratic election in which Nelson Mandela was elected presi-



dent, marking the end of Apartheid. This is the most recent display of servant-leadership, forgiveness, and restoration of hope that humanity has witnessed in modern history. Led by President Mandela and Chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was created. The TRC set out with a specific and drastic vision, asking the people to accept forgiveness and reconciliation as a plan for restorative justice. The commission invited people to come forward and tell the truth regarding political acts of violence. Perpetrators would receive the opportunity to be granted amnesty, and victims' families could find peace in facing and forgiving the perpetrators. There were conditions that perpetrators needed to meet in order for them to be allowed to apply for amnesty (Tutu, 1999):

- The act for which amnesty was required should have happened between 1960, the year of the Sharpeville Massacre, and 1994, when President Mandela was inaugurated.
- The act must have been politically motivated. Perpetrators did not qualify for amnesty if they killed because of personal greed, but they did qualify if they committed the act in response to an order by, or on behalf of, a political organization, such as the former apartheid state.
- The applicant had to make full disclosure of all the facts relevant to the offense for which amnesty was being sought.
- The rubric of proportionality had to be observed. In other words, the means were proportionate to the objective. (pp. 49-50)

“If these conditions were met, said the law, then amnesty ‘shall’ be granted” (p. 50). The commission enacted these conditions into law, giving to the process and the nation an opportunity for a positive outcome. The TRC’s vision of transforming a country of injustice, retribution, and violence into one of freedom, justice, and hope became a reality. In the present, distant from the nightmares of the past, South Africa enjoys the liberties and benefits of a democratic nation.



CONCLUSION

Human beings long for goodness and wholesome leadership in the world. The acts of servant-leaders like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. inspired humanity to seek a new way of living and of dealing with social injustice: to strive for restoration and respect for all human beings. Restricted freedom and a lack of human dignity confine people to a life of despair, hatred, and ultimately, oppression. Freedom of choice and responsibility release the oppressed, allowing them to act responsibly with care for human dignity. Once committed to a journey toward restorative justice, people can begin to love, to forgive, and to seek forgiveness of others. Laub (1999) connected servant-leadership with the search for common goodness in humanity:

Servant-Leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of the those led and the sharing of power, status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization. (p. 81)

Servant-leadership is a type of leadership that creates a solid foundation from which people can reach new heights and help others to come and share a deeper understanding of humility and forgiveness on a personal and communal level. I am convinced that freedom and human dignity can lead a person to make good choices and embrace self-responsibility. This commitment can, in turn, lead the person to love, to forgive, and to seek forgiveness. A model of responsible choice, love, and forgiveness may lead to reconciliation on many levels, finally resulting in a state of restorative justice. Once people reach that point in life, servant-leadership can be developed and it may flourish everywhere. Fundamental strength and courage can be revealed, and only then can goodness be present in every corner of the world.



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