Feedback in servant leadership

Carlo Orlando
Workshop V13

How do you see yourself

How do you see yourself?

What do you really believe about yourself?

Why are you a leader?

Historical personal reflection or classroom case • CTLS Leaders Lab recording · recording

How do you see yourself

Write privately about the first two questions.

With a willing partner, take one minute each for the third question. Listen without interpreting the other person’s motive.

You may write, speak, observe, or pass.

The servant leader’s desire

Do the people I serve grow because of my leadership?

Carlo Orlando · LDSL 773 · Servant leadership and John 13 • Greenleaf, 1977/2002

The servant leader’s desire

Identify one observable sign of growth in a person being served.

Use roles instead of names. Discuss what the leader would need to learn from that person.

Honest to the last 10 percent

Overall, I know that I struggle to take assessments. I either get stuck on questions or believe that I am working well in areas that I am not or working poorly in areas where I am succeeding, so I need feedback from others.

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Honest to the last 10 percent

Choose one ordinary leadership habit that is difficult to see or admit. Describe what another person might observe.

Share only by choice, or use a fictional example. Ask one clarifying question without diagnosing.

Why feedback is important

When leaders ignore formation, virtues are assumed rather than cultivated (Patterson, 2003). Formation is an important part of servant leadership (Sendjaya, 2015). It is the idea of continuous growth, continuous building. It is even an identifier for servant leadership (New International Version Bible, 1978/2011, Ephesians 4:11–13).

What role does feedback (both giving and receiving) play in effective leader-follower communication?

Why feedback is important

Answer the feedback question privately.

With a partner, identify one condition that would make useful feedback easier to give or receive.

Move beyond the surface

When problems arise for leaders, they are there to provide solutions. They do this by carefully analyzing the challenge at hand and organizing resources and people around that challenge in a specific way to fix it and move on to the next problem. Sometimes, a leader's primary role can be problem-solving. If the problem is solved and it is clear that organizational goals are being met, then it is likely a case where single-loop learning is sufficient. Single-loop learning focuses on resolving immediate issues within the established framework (Tagg, 2007).

Move beyond the surface

Leaders must move beyond the surface to examine organizational systems and the mental models guiding current practices (Argyris, 1997).

Move beyond the surface

Use a fictional recurring missed handoff.

First propose a fix within the current process. Then identify an assumption in the process that may need to change.

What evidence would help you choose between the two responses?

How to receive and evaluate feedback

The leader who allows followers to ask follow-up and clarifying questions also creates an environment that supports a positive leader-follower dynamic (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Northouse, 2022).

How to receive and evaluate feedback

Use the fictional missed handoff.

One partner gives a brief concern. The receiver pauses, restates the concern, and asks a clarifying question.

Switch roles after two minutes. Notice what helped you understand.

How to give feedback as a servant leader

Good leaders communicate, but great leaders adjust their communication strategies based on their followers and the situations they are leading through (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Leaders often align their communication approach with their personal preferences and approaches (Eisenberg et al., 2017).

Communication strategies dialogue · LMOL 605

How to give feedback as a servant leader

Write one observable concern and one question that invites the other person’s perspective.

Take three minutes each to speak, listen, and revise your feedback.

Identify one choice of timing, wording, or setting to carry forward.

Trust as the foundation

Often, trust or the lack thereof limits communication (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). The underlying tension of whether or not a teammate can be open with and honest with one another reflects the communication dynamic (Covey & Merrill, 2006; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006).

Trust as the foundation

With a partner, identify one action that would make it easier for a person to be candid.

Leave names and private stories out. Share an example only by choice.

Break

10 minutes

Power in communication

Servant leadership does not remove the authority of the leader. It shows that authority is something given, something earned, and something understood based on the relationship between the servant leader and those they serve (Northouse, 2022).

Servant leadership and John 13 · LDSL 773

Power in communication

Revisit the fictional handoff with one person holding formal authority.

Discuss what changes for the person receiving feedback. Identify one way to leave room for a candid response.

Mentoring coaching and discipling

Senior leadership should pilot a coaching program to test the viability of a large-scale company-wide rollout. The program’s purpose is to expand the worldview and global competencies of the leaders through intentional exposure and guided conversation.

The pilot should begin with an initial interview between the coach and senior leader to clarify expectations and brainstorm desired outcomes. These outcomes should be co-created—partially defined by the leader and partially shaped by the coach. While coaching is primarily skill-related, empathy is the particular skill being developed here, which aligns with authentic and inclusive leadership theory (Northouse, 2022).

Historical personal reflection or classroom case • CoreStates Experience Report · LMOL 604

Mentoring coaching and discipling

Identify someone whose perspective differs from yours and one skill you could learn from them. Use a role, not a name.

Consider how authority could affect honesty. Clarify one expectation before a coaching conversation.

Repair and accountability

Leaders who apologize for their mistakes and live out the reality of ownership and protection for the team and their actions build trust (Covey & Merrill, 2006; Greenleaf, 1977).

While fixing problems ought to be done quickly, communicating culture takes time.

Repair and accountability

Use the manuscript’s three culture prompts to compare communicated intent, visible conduct, and desired culture.

Choose one ordinary mismatch. Write one repair action that another person could observe. Share only by choice.

Empowerment and ownership

Empowering is more than delegating tasks; it is delegating authority. Empowerment is delegating decision-making power. Empowering is trusting others. Serving others by empowering them brings more outstanding and broader leadership out of people. Empowering people gives them room to be creative.

Empowerment and ownership

Select one ordinary responsibility. Map the decision-making power you hold and what could be shared.

Use the two ownership questions in the manuscript. Identify the authority, support, and boundaries the other person would need.

A 360-degree view of you

The practice of a 360 review involves selecting a specific aspect of the individual’s leadership that the reviewer wishes to understand.

The reviewer then collects and examines the data against the desired leadership outcome (Bracken et al., 2001).

Instrument background only; this activity is not a formal or scored 360. Servant Leader Consultation Report · SVNT 601

A 360-degree view of you

Privately list roles that see different aspects of your leadership: supervisor, peer, person you lead, and yourself.

Identify one missing perspective. Do not collect names, solicit ratings, or produce a score.

Servant leadership and spiritual leadership

John 13 shows us that servant leadership is not just something that we do. Before we do it, it comes from who we are (New International Version Bible, 1978/2011, John 13:3–5). However, it does not stop at just what we do. It must continue forward to create space for those who also need to serve others (New International Version Bible, 1978/2011, John 13:14–15).

Servant leadership and spiritual leadership

Read John 13:1–17 from your Bible.

Revisit the opening questions about identity and motive. Reflect on receiving help and serving others.

Discuss your own learning with a willing partner, or continue writing privately.

Feedback translated into action

In each developmental conversation, at least one SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) actionable step is identified (Patterson, 2003). Over time, actions grow from tasks to delegated authority (Greenleaf, 1977). When followers' leadership grows, so does the leader's (Greenleaf, 1977; Patterson, 2003).

What can I do to fix it?

How can I grow?

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Feedback translated into action

Write one action, the feedback you will seek, a conversation date, a 30-day check-in, and a 90-day review.

Share your plan only by choice. Keep your personal notes.

Five minutes are reserved for the separate optional post-workshop questionnaire.

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