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Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership: An Action Plan

The goal of the philosophy of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970) is the creation of caring, inclusive, respectful communities? How is this accomplished? Are there specific qualities or competencies needed to build a foundation that nourishes servant-leaders? How will these qualities transfer to all types of environments and institutions? How can people personally monitor their professional growth, strength, and development as servant-leaders while facilitating the philosophy within their organizations?

Dr. Crippen has been involved over 30 years in responding to these questions locally, nationally, and internationally. Her research and experiences validates the importance of aspiring servant-leaders to know themselves first, through ongoing and consistent self-reflection; second, by listening to feedback and engaging in conversation with colleagues; and finally, by investing in others through the development of relationships. It is important that we treat all people as valuable, capable, and responsible.

Servant-leaders know the stabilizing effects of integrity, humility, and trust in organizations. By putting the needs of others first, while supporting diversity and creating a sense of belonging, organizations are able to negotiate conflicts and build strong collaborative teams. Together, we shall use the Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership (Sipe & Frick, 2009) to frame an action plan for the implementation of the servant leadership philosophy into our lives and organizations. These working pillars are weight-bearing units that can be seen, touched and measured. Without pillars, the superstructure (servant leadership) would collapse (p. 7).

Critical Actions:

- Make insightful, ethical, & principle-centered decisions.
- Help others meet their highest priority development needs.
- Listen earnestly & speak effectively.
- Strengthen relationships, supports diversity, & create a sense of belonging.
- Imagine possibilities, anticipate the future, & proceed with clarity of purpose.
- Think and act strategically, lead change effectively, & balance the whole with the sum of its parts.
- Worthy of respect, inspire trust & confidence, & establish quality standards for performance.