Nelson Mandela: Leading in Volatile and Uncertain Environments

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The purpose of this article is to make it possible for leaders to have a better understanding of the overarching idea of servant leadership as well as the qualities that define servant leaders. An examination of Nelson Mandela's style of leadership is used as a model to better comprehend the notion of servant leadership as described by Robert Greenleaf. Greenleaf is widely regarded as the person who pioneered the idea of servant leadership. This report aims to discuss the significance of servant leadership from the perspective of one of the greats in a turbulent and unpredictable environment with base points on leading through service, remembering servant leadership is a choice, and leading with servant leadership. Compassion, respect, and sacrifice are just a few of the components that are essential to the servant-leadership style of leadership. An examination of Mandela's leadership style as that of a servant leader offers a context within which servant leadership can be better understood, while also attempting to determine whether or not leadership in today's world exhibits attributes that are characteristic of servant leadership.

Key words: servant leadership, leadership, characteristics

Agreeing with Nelson Mandela's life and accomplishments, universal acclaim is a powerful source of motivation and education for political and business leaders. The legacy of Mandela's servant leadership continues to live on, generating overwhelming agreement on the beneficial impact he made both during his life and after he passed away. In servant leadership, the leader is required to work hard to meet the needs of their subordinates in contrast to the conventional belief that subordinates should strive to please their superiors. Typically, we see a leader as someone whose subordinates should want to impress. To the philosophy of servant leadership, if you do this, your employees will be able to focus on their work and the demands of the client, resulting in greater productivity. However, only some things are necessarily based on organizational needs. Social issues and environments have a substantial impact on how one leads. The beauty of servant leadership is its global applicability. Anyone may possess the characteristics of a servant leader. This report aims to discuss the

significance of servant leadership from the perspective of one of the greats—Nelson Mandela—in a turbulent and unpredictable environment.

Leading Through Service

"Our human compassion binds us to one another—not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future" (Mandela, 2000, para. 4).

The notion is widely accepted within politics and describes servant leadership as a concept geared at bringing about social equality. In today's world, division is often accepted as the standard. Those on opposing sides, whether in politics or any other arena, are more interested in preventing agreement than in reaching out for mutual understanding. According to Reynolds (2014), servant leadership, with its emphasis on love, care, and service to those who are less privileged, has the potential to be an effective antidote to patriarchal binds. This is because servant leadership can act as a driving force for the generation of discourse on integrative approaches to organizational leadership. Having foresight, awareness, and the ability to listen, empathize, and care for others are essential qualities for leaders during a crisis (Reynolds, 2014). According to the findings of research carried out by Horsman and Spears (2018), the purpose of servant leadership is to start a link with the people being led in a way that results in better societies.

However, that idea is driven by various viewpoints on servant leadership, and egalitarianism is one of those perspectives (Liu et al., 2019). Egalitarianism is predicated on the principle that, in terms of their innate moral standing, all persons are on an equal footing with one another. Additionally, due to the diversity of ways other civilizations interpret the same principles, some communities link servant leadership with empathy and humility (Irving, 2010). This is because of the myriad ways other societies interpret the same ideas. As a result, the philosophy envisioned by Langhof and Güldenberg (2020) may differ in terms of how it is understood and how it is put into practice. However, one aspect of servant leadership stands out from the rest; it is a philosophy of leadership that places a greater emphasis on the qualities of the person rather than the use of scientific methods (Kumar, 2018). Because of this, the implementation of this leadership style in South Africa can be traced back to Nelson Mandela. He was the first African to hold the president's office in the nation.

After a protracted war for the nation's independence, which was eventually won in 1994, the country finally gained its freedom. Nevertheless, according to Arndt (2018), this marked the beginning of the post-apartheid era, even though legal independence had been given in 1961. After Mandela's triumph, a new era of servant leadership was ushered in within this environment. To commemorate the beginning of a new era and give birth to this ideology, South Africa's president appealed to the country's populace, imploring them to join forces and participate cooperatively in the process of national

healing and construction (Falzon, 2015). In doing so, the president did not show any prejudice towards anybody, but concentrated on the country's healing and construction. Therefore, the goal was to maintain justice while contributing to society's general advancement.

Even though many people expected the president to extract revenge, the subsequent acts that he demonstrated were selfless; instead of focusing on repairing and building up the nation, he focused on building up the country. In this sense, he advocated the concept of forgiving one's transgressions while simultaneously remembering them while putting even more considerable importance on fostering growth and bringing people together. The attributes of humility and empathy, paired with a dedication to equality, are characteristics that the president should show in his or her capacity as chief executive (Tilghman-Havens, 2018).

These characteristics should be linked with a commitment to equality. In this situation, Mandela proved that despite his power, he was a humble and compassionate man even though he held that authority. Here is an excellent example: Mandela was concerned about the welfare of all South African people and what would become of them if they were discriminated against. Specifically, he was concerned about what would happen to them. Because of this, he campaigned for peace and collaboration among all the participants in the procedure responsible for the country's extraordinary accomplishments. Again, he ensured that the conditions that led to the division of South Africans remained constant. Mandela could steer his nation toward almost complete freedom from discrimination thanks to his position as an influential leader. As a notable leader, he raised the awareness of his followers by appealing to their more exalted beliefs and aspirations (Morse, 2008). He even encouraged many of his followers to educate themselves, stating that doing so would be the key to their success. Mandela and his business partner Oliver Tambo founded the first African law practice in 1952. Mandela served as the volunteer-in-chief of the campaign at this time, traversing the country to increase people's awareness and organize resistance against prejudicial regulation. In addition, he successfully advanced the Freedom Charter, which the African National Congress (ANC) ultimately accepted.

During the time that Mandela was the leader of the Congress, he was able to motivate his people by assisting them in comprehending the significance of his goals and the principles they represented. He urged them to build their idea of what is vital for the country, such as the battle for equality by getting rid of racial prejudice, and he encouraged them to do so (Friedman, 1962). This energizing leadership has been crucial in assisting the nation in overthrowing the apartheid system and building it into a stable modern democracy. In his lectures, delivered while going to every region of the nation, he motivated and persuaded the people, adding his self-assurance that he could do something to end the apartheid (O'Fallon, 2012). At the same time, he cautioned the populace not to allow themselves to be bullied by the ruling elite and not to fight back, either physically or verbally, no matter how difficult things were.

Mandela began a road toward wealth despite the terrible transgressions committed against him and his fellow Black people in South Africa. According to Mandela, the purpose of the effort was to aid future generations—an idea that has brought international attention to the nation. The country's economy is comparable to that of Western and European nations, making it the most developed nation on the African continent (Fawell, 2006). Therefore, the sacrifices made in servant leadership are not intended to benefit the leaders, but rather the community as a whole and the world in general.

Remember, Servant Leadership is a Choice

"Honesty, sincerity, simplicity, humility, pure generosity, absence of vanity, readiness to serve others—qualities which are within easy reach of every soul—are the foundation of one's spiritual life" (Mandela, 2011, p. 6).

The concept of servant leadership has spread worldwide, both individually and nationally, even though many other leaders have assumed the role after Mandela. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Mandela's chosen ideology made it possible to establish organizations and frameworks that have, to this day, maintained their position as the most authoritative ones (Baker & Baker, 2017). On the other hand, several scandals have recently come to light in the nation as a direct result of changes in those who hold positions of authority. However, the fundamental concepts and underlying institutions have always worked against these individuals. The efforts ultimately resulted in a former president's prosecution, unprecedented in many other nations. Because of this, South Africa's founding fathers' attitude of treating people as servants prevailed. As a result, the nation achieved a position of stability with a reduced number of people suffering.

However, the propensity of the people to elect leaders without the concept is deeply ingrained in their hearts and has put the democracy of the nation and the people's health in peril. Because of this, constant attempts to ensure continuity of the spirit necessitate thorough screening of the political leaders, which is difficult in and of itself. Understanding what it means to practice servant leadership and what it includes is essential to overcoming long-standing problems in South Africa and other nations (Ferch, 2011). The rise to power of individuals uninterested in the welfare of the people in a society, whether developing or already established, poses the greatest danger. As a result, several routines and efforts must be built and maintained to guarantee that servant leadership is the norm across the nation. Establishing regulations that indefinitely exclude someone from running for political office if they have committed acts that violate their integrity is one of the essential steps that may be taken (Ramsey, 2006). In this scenario, the systems must be implemented utilizing procedures designed to assist the general populace, not particular persons or specific organizations (Mitroff, 2004). Commissions on ethics and anti-corruption, as well as a robust judiciary, are examples of such institutions.

Consequently, the reason for the existence of these institutions is to ensure that people are held accountable and responsible for their behaviors. Suppose these institutions are appropriately coordinated with one another and given enough resources. In that case, it will be far more difficult for those in positions of authority to misuse the privileges that come with their jobs (Kincaid, 2017). To guarantee that compliance is mandatory and that failure to do so would result in legal action, a method like this must be implemented at all offices, even those at the local level. Because this strategy and these mechanisms are in place, those with other intents than serving the public will be prevented from participating because they will not have such opportunities (Spears, 2002). Those who feel a sense of duty to help others will find it more exciting to occupy these positions and work toward improving the world and the nation where they live (Song, 2020).

On the other hand, it is common knowledge that charitable acts should start in the family. Therefore, it is essential to establish communities committed to upholding high moral standards. As a result, community and local leaders need to be engaged to guarantee that the correct moral principles are included as an essential component of the people's upbringing (Nandram & Vos, 2010). As a result, the idea needs to have some bearing on family units and communities in which appropriate moral and ethical norms are greatly prized. The initiative effectively ensures that people vying for leadership positions or other significant tasks are prepared to maintain the necessary values and standards by providing them with the necessary tools. Then again, the same procedures and structures already in place in the local community will be able to record individual characteristics to track who should be given leadership responsibilities in the future. The alternative, although giving the impression of being discriminatory, is more expensive, and its effects will have far-reaching repercussions.

Consequently, it is essential to construct profiles of people based on their native communities. Local and community leaders, members of the church, and other people renowned for their strong moral character are one means to achieve this goal (Havenga, 2005). Give these individuals permission to collect and save this information. It will be much simpler to look things up in the past when possibilities present themselves.

Leading with Servant Leadership

"A leader . . . is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind" (Mandela, 2008, p. 28).

A nation may make significant progress in developing its leadership by adhering to the norms established at the international level. The fact that nations that have changed their economies and societies in this direction and pursued that road might serve as a significant source of motivation (Hernandez, 2009). Therefore, a nation may adapt the structures and framework of its institutions to align with a specific country if it has

international links with comparable nations. To reiterate, many of these nations are always eager to engage in commerce with other nations. In return, nations may obtain valuable insights into effective leadership and government from one another (Jaipaul-O'Garro, 2013).

Therefore, servant leadership is essential to improving people's lives in a society, despite the various obstacles it encounters. The evidence shows that progress relies heavily on selfless, servant-oriented leadership (Ferch, 2011). Again, it has been abundantly evident that servant leadership is either the outcome of an individual's character or the consequence of governance structures and mechanisms that make it difficult to operate in any other way (Marinho, 2005). People with the necessary servant leadership characteristics have shown their role's significance. As a result, it is in everyone's best interest to support and protect all activities directed toward establishing servant leadership (Manala, 2014). South Africa managed to become on par with western countries even though it is located on a continent that is still growing. This was a success story that not only benefited this nation, but also set a footprint across the globe.

However, the fact that the modern nation was established on the principles set forth by a genuine servant leader who paved the way for the nation to become what it is today is of the utmost significance. Despite the many obstacles, they have always been overcome by using the infrastructure that was already in place. As a result, those around the globe who have adopted the ideology of servant leadership have seen more success and advancement because of their efforts (Marinho, 2005).

About the Author

Joycelynn Green is a doctoral student at Regent University's School of Business and Leadership. She has always desired to pursue a career as a PharmD. Recognizing the significance of healthcare inequities and hesitation, she determined that working only in pharmaceuticals would not accomplish the aim of reaching individuals who lack the means of communication to comprehend the need for health screening and frequent medical visits. After 10 years in pharmacy, she chose to work with the mental health community, emphasizing self-care and teaching individuals about programs that promote mental and medical stability.

Recognizing that trauma manifests and sounds different for everyone, her objective is to create a middle ground where everyone feels welcomed and accepted in a world of healthcare where misunderstanding and bias influence the support received. She was able to address and help the unspoken taboo demographics of mental health after obtaining her Qualified Mental Health Professional - Adult license.

Her academic credentials include a master's degree in government, healthcare policy, and ethics. She is pursuing a doctorate at Regent University in Virginia Beach in Doctor

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