

# EFS SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

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**TOPIC THIS ISSUE:  
SPECIAL COVID-19  
EDITION:  
“Master Your  
Thinking or It Will  
Master You”**



**“Our life is what our thoughts make it.” Marcus**

The one thing we know for sure is that every leader will eventually encounter a crisis of one kind or another. For the last decade, we’ve enjoyed the longest, biggest market expansion in history. As you well know, that recently came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. I don’t have to tell you how it has upended our world.

Regardless of the public health effects, we’re already seeing a business and economic impact. As leaders, we’re faced with a **major leadership challenge—and an opportunity.**

Crises are an inevitable part of our world. However, I want to remind you of something important: the first challenge and the **biggest challenge we face is not the COVID-19 virus and its effects...it is our minds, the way we think! We must first master our thinking or it will master us.**

To win that battle—the battle for our minds—**this issue will focus on three repeated themes that are emphasized in our Servant Leadership Coaching System Process—Your Attitude, Your Mindset, and Your Influence.** I will highlight each of the themes and give some actionable steps to help you and those you serve to make some mind-shifts. Remember fear is normal, but all of us have access to **CONFIDENCE.** Fear is reactive, but confidence is proactive. Confidence feels like bravery when we take **ACTION. Now is the time to take ACTION. What will you put to practice practically from this newsletter? Who will you share it with?**

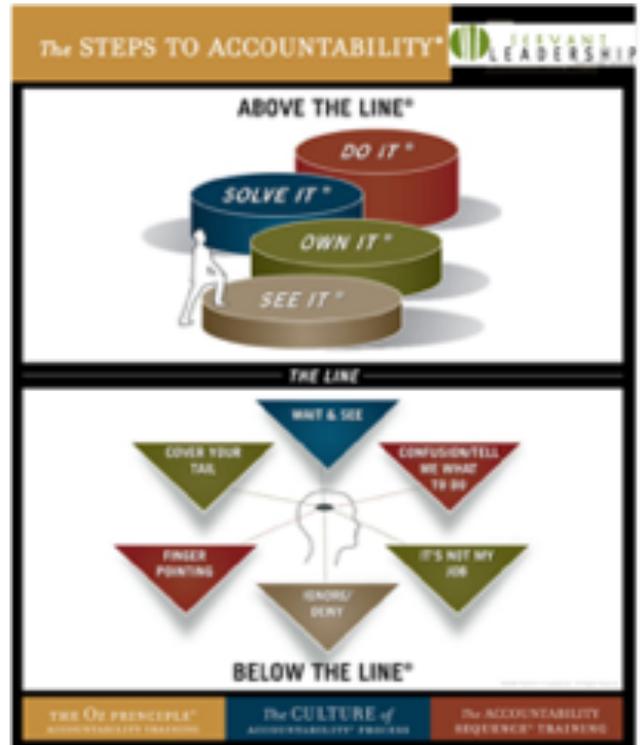
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# YOUR ATTITUDE

Author and pastor, Charles Swindoll pointed out how important the right attitude is to lead. He said:

*“The longer I live I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, or a home. The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. Nor can we change the fact that people will act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent of what happens to me, and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.”*

A good attitude is an extra plus in life. It makes our lives better. And it also makes our leadership better, because leadership has less to do with position than it does disposition. The attitude or disposition of leaders is important because it influences the thoughts and feelings of the people they lead and come into contact with on a daily basis. Good leaders understand that a positive attitude creates a positive atmosphere, which encourages positive and productive responses from others.



If you asked me to identify the single most important aspect of a successful servant leader’s attitude, it would be possessing a whatever-it-takes mindset. The invisible line that separates those who get things done from those who merely dream about them is an attitude to total commitment and ownership. Great leaders are sold out to achieving success—in the face of any problem—and willing to pull out all the stops to help the team and others to win!



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We talk about thinking, acting, and behaving above the line. Above the line the attitude is simple: See It, Own IT, Solve IT, Do IT! In this time of crisis, Above the Line Leaders aggressively pursues solutions. You will never hear them say, "There is nothing we can do about it." Those are the words of someone with a victim's mindset and operate below the line.

Professor and expert on organizational behavior Robert E. Quinn wrote:

A victim is a person who suffers a loss because of the actions of others. A victim tends to believe that salvation comes only from the action of others. They have little choice but to whine and wait until something good happens. Living with someone who chooses to play the victim role is draining; working in an organization where many people have chosen the victim's roles is absolutely depressing. Like a disease, the condition tends to spread.

Unfortunately, the victim disease of below the line attitude has spread throughout America and the world. More and more people have slipped from a can-do above the line attitude to one of helplessness, hopelessness and despair.

**As servant leaders, disown "Below the Line Attitude Thinking!"** Disown any traces of helplessness and hopeless and help your team and others do the same.

**Encourage and empower yourself and other to:**

1. **Never make excuses**
2. **Create an "Above the Line" environment where people are expected to solve their problems. (See IT, Solve IT, Own IT, Do IT)**
3. **Model an "Above the Line" attitude of whatever-it-takes to your team and others**
4. **Challenge people to take responsibility for their performance and how they handle challenge, crisis, and difficulties**
5. **Make everyone feel valued and important as part of the team**
6. **Give solid feedback after team members try to tackle challenge**
7. **Celebrate with team members who are succeeding**
8. **Give people increasing challenges to test their growth and give them wins**

In our current situation, it may seem like a tremendous challenge to inspire people to give up their helpless or below the line attitude and thinking and become more proactive and positive. **But all it takes is a belief in our ability to make a difference. We can make a difference; you can make a difference one person at a time.**



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**16 Best Practices**

See It*	Own It*	Solve It*	Do It*
1. Obtaining the perspectives of others	5. Being personally invested	9. Constantly asking, "What else can I do?"	13. Doing the things I say I'll do
2. Communicating openly and candidly	6. Learning from both successes and failures	10. Overcoming cross-functional boundaries	14. Focusing on the top priorities
3. Asking for and offering feedback	7. Aligning my work with desired company results	11. Creatively dealing with obstacles	15. Staying Above The Line® by not blaming others
4. Hearing the hard things to see reality	8. Acting on the feedback that I receive	12. Taking the necessary risks	16. Sustaining an environment of trust

**YOUR MINDSET**

**It is our thinking that determines our lives.** The greatest impact of this disconnect is a type of *mental damage* or *mental toxicity*. It is probably difficult to consider that many of our leaders, CEOs, political leaders, administrators, educators, celebrities, sports heroes, scientists, and law-makers are suffering from a mental toxicity, but in light of what we are originally created to be, this is the reality; it affects all of us. When I use the term *mental toxicity*, I am not referring to a medical definition, people in an insane asylum, or people being psychologically incapable of sound judgment of what we call "normal" in our societies.

**Toxic thinking is like poison!** A thought may seem to be harmless, but every thought counts. Every time you have a thought, it is actively changing your brain and your body—for better or worse. Caroline Leaf, neuroscientist and author, has studied this extensively:

*"The surprising truth is that every single thought—whether it is positive or negative—goes through the same cycle when it forms. Thoughts are basically electrical impulses, chemicals, and neurons. They look like a tree with branches. As thoughts grow and become more permanent, more branches grow and connections become stronger...As you think, your thoughts are activated, which in turn activates your attitude, because your attitude is all of your thoughts put together and reflects you state of mind."*

**Be Aware of Thinking Patterns**

**ARE WE SPOTTING & ADDRESSING NEGATIVE THINKING PATTERNS**

"The prevailing thinking patterns of a team or organization — its norms and belief systems — will define what it is and what it does."  
Dr. Henry Cloud, Boundaries for Leaders

**"Learned Helpless" Thinking Default**  
Is a change in the "brain's software" that when confronted with **continued negativity** and which you **feel you have absolutely no control over**, in other words if the brain tells your entire system to go passive and shut down.  
(Fear Network takes over shuts down initiation, creativity, solutions, problem solving, new options, and game is over.)

**It "Can't Be Done" Virus**  
Is the current thinking patterns of the team or organization **operating below the line**, especially in times of pressure or stress?

**EFS Culture Operating System**

**GUARD THE CULTURE: Be a Gardener or Negative Thinker**



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We all have been experiencing the effects of our thoughts for our entire lives, yet we may not even know it! For example, have you ever become ill in the wake of a difficult or traumatic time in your life? You may not have made the connection, perhaps just chalking it up to “bad pizza” the night before or to coincidence, when it was more likely to have been the result of toxic thoughts taking their toll on your overall health.

The results of toxic thinking patterns translate into stress in your body, emotions, and spirit. Current research has confirmed that stress is more than just an emotion; it is a global term for extreme strain on your body’s systems as a result of toxic thinking. It harms the body and mind in a multitude of ways, from patchy memory to severe mental health issues, immune system problems, heart problems, and digestive problems. As noted by Caroline Leaf,

*“No system of the body is spared when stress is running rampant. A massive body of research collectively shows that up to 80% of physical, emotional, and mental health issues today could be a direct result of our thought lives...Thoughts are not only scientifically measurable, but we can verify how they affect our bodies. We can actually feel our thoughts through our emotions. Emotions are involved in every thought we build, ever built and ever will build.”*

Not only do we live in a fast-paced world full of stressful circumstances and emotions, but also we have now been hit with a global crisis and the stress can make us feel helpless, hopeless, and a victim. However, each day, we have the choice to take charge of our thoughts and control how stress affects us. We can break the cycle of toxic thinking and toxic habits. Being aware of how toxic thought affects various organs and systems along the way is very important.

Your most vital muscle organ, the heart, is more than just a pump to sustain life. Your heart is sensitive to what you think and feel; in other words, your thoughts directly affect your heart.

**Here are some examples of various heart conditions in which stress is a major contributor:**

- **Hypertension—high blood pressure**
- **Angina—chest pain and spasms of the heart tissue**
- **Coronary artery disease—hardening of the arteries causing a narrowing, which can be triggered by anger**
- **Strokes or cerebrovascular insufficiency—clogging of blood vessels so that brain tissue becomes starved**
- **Aneurysm—ballooning or swelling of a blood vessel on the artery or rupturing of blood vessels.”**

The reality is that your heart is in constant communication with your brain and the rest of your body. The signals your heart sends to your brain influence not just perception and emotional and processing functions, but higher cognitive functions as well. Current research on the heart’s neurological sensitivity indicates that there are lines of communication between the brain and the heart that check the accuracy and integrity of your thought life.

In addition, your immune system and digestive system are highly sensitive to your thought life and habits. When your immune system faces an attack of toxic thinking, it weakens the immune system by preventing it from doing what it was naturally designed to do. Your habits and the way you

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process stress in dealing with toxic thoughts and emotions can lower immunity; however, the effects of the day-to-day stress over time can confuse the autoimmune system response and cause your body to turn on itself, attacking healthy cells and tissues. Have you ever noticed that you get sick when you take a vacation or an extended period of rest? This is a perfect example of how the daily stresses of life add up to negatively affect thinking and habits of life and progressively weaken the immune system.

There is evidence showing that your digestive system comes under attack from toxic thinking and habits as well. Your digestive system works hard under normal conditions to get as many nutrients as possible from everything you eat and drink to keep your bodily processes and organs in an optimal state. However, we know that thinking and emotions have an impact on the levels of stress chemicals released, which invade the digestive system and create a poisonous cocktail that damages your health.

### **Some digestive disorders that can originate from the effects of toxic thoughts and emotions include the following:**

**Constipation**

**Diarrhea**

**Nausea and vomiting**

**Cramping**

**Ulcers**

**Leaking-gut syndrome—when nutrients leak out of your stomach and colon walls and don't make it to your cells**

**Irritable bowel syndrome (spastic colon)—when the intestines either squeeze too hard or not hard enough, reducing optimum absorption of nutrients”**

**This is the bad news, but there is good news as well.** Ancient, timeless principles and neuroscience clearly demonstrate the link between your thoughts, emotions, and habits and your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. The more you manage your thought life and habits, the more you will be able to listen to them and deal constructively with them. Making your habits and inner thought life a priority is a life-giving action rather than a life-threatening one, and it will improve your overall wellness and decrease your vulnerability to sickness and disease.

### **Be a “Gatekeeper” of Your Thinking**

**The definition of a gatekeeper** is as follows: ***an attendant at a gate who is employed to control who goes through it; a person or thing that controls access to something.*** One of the reasons we get stuck in negative thinking patterns is because we create and allow negative thinking to overwhelm our thoughts, and as a result, we become less and less aware of spotting it and denying it access to our brains and, ultimately, our heart mind-set. You must become a gatekeeper and take control of what gets access to your heart mind-set because every thought does matter.

Your prevailing thinking patterns will define your attitudes, values, and, ultimately, your character. **Are you spotting and addressing negative and toxic thinking patterns?** We have established that *servant leadership is more caught than taught*; it comes from modeling and example first and foremost. We know that as we think in our hearts about ourselves, we become who we are meant to be. We also know that what proceeds out of our mouth reflects what is in our hearts. Therefore, we must become intentional gatekeepers of our thinking, spotting negative and toxic thoughts and then controlling them and taking them captive.



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**The 3Ps of Negative Thinking Patterns**

**1. Personalizing:** When you explain an event, circumstance, or situation in relationship to yourself in a negative direction—in other words you make it about yourself and your focus on what you don't have or can't do. Your mindset and attitude is Below the line. **In other words, you think the event occurred and you are helpless and a victim.**

**2. Pervasive:** Instead of seeing a situation as a specific, isolated event, applying to just this one thing, you over generalize it to make it be about everything. **In other words, in your mind, nothing is going well or will go well for you.**

**3. Permanent:** Instead of seeing this event as a single event or a single point in time, you see it as permanent. Your thinking is stuck in the belief that this is just the way it is, and nothing will ever change for you—for example: *Why even try; nothing is going to change. The good old days are gone forever. We will never make it; it is impossible. I wish I could make changes, but every time I try, it never works for me.* This thinking says the current negative event is not something that will eventually pass but has become “the way it is, and the way it will be forever.” It is your new normal. In short, there is just no hope and no reason to hope. **In other words, you think nothing is going to be any different, so why try?**

**Reversing the 3Ps of Negative Thinking Patterns**

Using Dr. Henry Cloud's advice of auditing your own thinking, I have personally experienced the transformational results of reframing and reshaping my thinking. In addition, working with our servant leadership training teams, we have seen others take charge and transform negative thinking patterns.

**First, Use the Control and Divide Exercise:**

<b>What is OUT of My Control</b>	<b>What is in MY Control Right NOW!</b>
1. Draw two columns on paper or in a journal	1. List all of things that are in your control right NOW. Prioritize this list
2. List all of the things that are OUT of your control that are causing your stress, worry, or anxiety.	2. What actions can you take right now?
3. Look over this list and give yourself about 5-10 minutes to stress about it. (Then draw a red X through it!	3. What is most important for you do right now?



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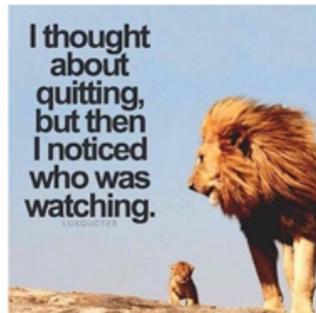
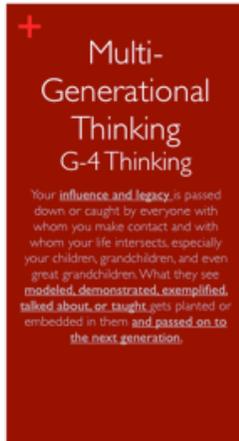
*\*This exercise will help you and your team to immediately lower your stress, anxiety, and sense of hopelessness. You can make a difference and you can take action NOW, when will you do it?*

**Second, Observe, Log, Refute:**

We have incorporated a process of **monitoring 3P negative thinking patterns** through observing, logging, and refuting over the course of 30-60 days. Participants were given a small spiral notebook and asked to log consciously over a 30-60-day training cycle their thinking each time they noticed negative patterns in relation to the 3Ps. They logged and labeled each thought and then gave an argument to counter the negative thought. By grasping the negative thought through writing it down, identifying what it is, and then providing the counterargument, you start the internal process of reversing negative thinking one thought at a time.

**You, too, can experience the transformational mind-renewal process. You can take control of your thinking, which begins with inhibiting negative patterns that may be subtle or unconscious, but over time, each thought does add up.**

**YOUR INFLUENCE**



As John Maxwell has said, "Everything rises and falls on leadership." The question is not one of whether you are a leader; rather, it is a question of how you will lead. All of us lead, whether we are conscious of it or not, intentional or not, purposeful or not. We all will have an influence, and the underlying

question that this book highlights is as follows: **What kind of influence will it be?** We all have influence, but what choices can you make today that will create and cultivate a better future and leave a positive impact on your sphere of influence?

Consider, if you will, all of us, in one-way or another (good or bad) will have an impact and influence for at least 100 years. Yes, 100 years! The next and

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future generations need the treasure of our influence. We must not rob a generation(s) of the wealth that each one of us possesses. Your influence and legacy is passed down or caught by everyone with whom you make contact and with whom your life intersects, especially your children, grandchildren, and even great grandchildren. What they see modeled, demonstrated, exemplified, talked about, or taught gets planted or embedded in them and passed on to the next generation. I call this “imprinting,” building a total context and culture around the message.

The questions each of us has to ask are: **“How are my actions imprinting others?”** How are my responses to crisis, difficult, pressure, uncertainty, and dramatic change impacting the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of others? This is not a unique idea. In the classic movie, *It’s a Wonderful Life*, Jimmy Stewart’s character George Bailey was an ordinary man whose personal sacrifices had real impact and influence on the community and world around him. Blind to his influence and filled with self-pity, he considers taking his own life. Luckily, an angelic messenger shows George a grim picture of what the world would be like without him. George learns that his leadership imprinted everyone around him; the community looked to George’s selflessness as a model for their own lives. A servant leader directs his/her ordinary life to serve others with purposeful, intentional, and habitual influence. We can make a difference you can make a difference in your sphere of influence.

### Here Are 4 Ways We Can Serve and Use our Influence

#### 1. Encourage one another.

We live in such an incredible time! Even when we can’t be physically present with one another, we can still call, text, email, connect on social media, attend and more.

#### 2. Support each other.

Some of the most meaningful things we can do are simple and practical. Check in with your team, make one-on-one meetings your highest priority at work, ask your neighbors how they’re doing, and make your relationship with your spouse and family your highest priority at home. Share whatever you have. Drop off a meal for someone who can’t get out. Pay for the person behind you in a drive-through. Send an email gift card to a friend.

#### 3. How do you Spell Love? SERVE Others.

The Golden Rule, “...loving your neighbor as yourself was the second most important commandment. We influence and demonstrate love in action when we serve others. Everybody around us in our “sphere of influence” is your neighbor.

#### 4. Remind Others: We are in this TOGETHER.

This too will pass! The COVID-19 virus shut down will pass, the situation will pass, the difficulty is real. In this world, it is not if we are going to have troubles, crisis, problems, difficulties, trials, etc. More than ever, we need one another. To serve is to lead.

No one really knows what tomorrow, or next week, or next month has in store for us. If your mindset is right, if you are focused on serving others, if you are intentional about growing yourself, then you will be perfectly positioned to make a difference in this world. This will allow you to have the biggest impact possible.

*“This gives us an opportunity to Shine.”*

**Make them want what you got!**



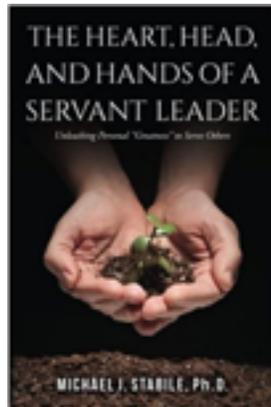
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RESOURCES From FutureNow

We created Resources for you and your team for personal growth and development. This special edition newsletter directs your attention on important areas to lead yourself and others. Use this time to make time in your daily routine for you personal growth and development and encourage your team and others to so also.

Newsletters and Supporting Materials: If you not signed-up for our monthly newsletter and other materials to support you or if you would like team members or family to receive these free resources here is a link to our website to sign-up: There are two places on our website to sign-up on the home page (bottom left) and under publications. <https://www.futurenowed.com>

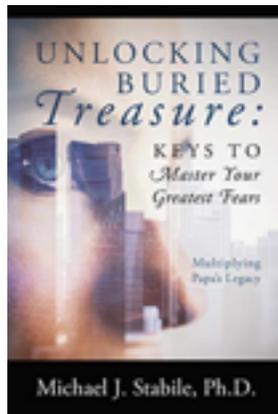
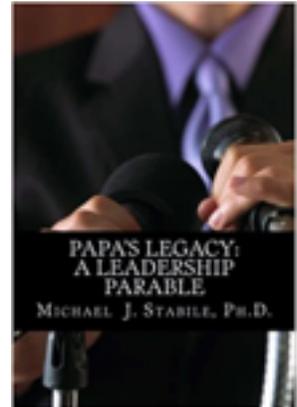
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There are links to Amazon or other book retailers.

The Heart, Head and Hands of a Servant Leader: Unleashing Personal "Greatness" to Serve Others  
Book and Workbook (Workbook is separate)

Book: Parable Stories  
Papa's Legacy: A Leadership Parable



Unlocking Buried Treasure: Keys to Master Your Greatest Fears – Multiplying Papa's Legacy

