

SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

TOPIC THIS ISSUE: CONNECTING THROUGH STORY TELLING

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In this edition of the Servant Leadership Focus Newsletter we focus on story telling. Our goal is to really connect with servant leaders who desire to empower their thinking and be equipped to grow personally and professionally. **And there is no better way to connect with people than by telling stories.** Sharing stories is a great transformational tool.

Those of us who experienced story telling in our families or around a camp-fire as children understand the impact stories have on our experiences and the very formation of who we are and our values. There is new research from neuroscience about the **power of story telling** to shape our brains and thinking. Here are a few stories that you can tell to connect with others and add value to them.

THE PARABLE OF BROTHER LEO

By: Michael Josephson



A legend tells of a French monastery known throughout Europe for the extraordinary leadership of a man known only as Brother Leo. Several monks began a pilgrimage to visit Brother Leo to learn from him. Almost immediately, they began to bicker about who should do various chores.

On the third day they met another monk going to the monastery, and he joined them. This monk never complained or shirked a duty, and whenever the others would fight over a chore, he would gracefully volunteer and do it himself. By the last day, the others were following his example, and from then on they worked together smoothly. When they reached the monastery and asked to see Brother Leo, the man who greeted them laughed.

'But our brother is among you!' And he pointed to the fellow who had joined them.



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Today, many people seek leadership positions, not so much for what they can do for others but for what the position can do for them: status, connections, perks, advantages. They do service as an investment, a way to build an impressive resume.

The parable about Brother Leo teaches another model of leadership, where leaders are preoccupied with serving rather than being followed, with giving rather than getting, with doing rather than demanding.

Leadership based on example, not command. ***This is called servant leadership. Can you imagine how much better things would be if more politicians, educators, and business executives saw themselves as servant leaders?***

A SERVANT’S STORY

By: Carol Malinski

Being truly effective at work is no picnic; sometimes the challenges can be daunting. The story that follows came from a friend and colleague of mine. If you’re brave enough to admit it, this could be you.



On the last Sunday of the long holiday break, I was feeling anxious about going back to work, and couldn’t figure out why. I like my job. I like the people. I even like the problems. But, there is a feeling that comes over me a few times a week, a feeling

of fear and chaos and anxiety. I did not spend a lot of time analyzing this and just shoved the thought aside.

Monday, while catching up, a co-worker came to me and said, ***“Now, while we are still in the relaxed glow of the holiday break, maybe we can spend some time to figure out how NOT to work in the panicked, frustrated mode that we have fallen back to so often.”***

She was describing the feelings I was having about coming back to work! This was not about my co-worker and me; it was about all of us! I was so grateful that she, too, had realized there was an issue, and had taken the next step to address it. We can tackle it now that it’s out in the open.

In the servant leadership training program, we were taught about building trust and thinking about our thinking. In situations like this, I realize the positive impact the training has had on all of us.

I love this story. I love it because it shows the impact of learning about, understanding and applying servant leadership behaviors. These two co-workers decided to trust one another. They didn’t want to just accept their situation; they wanted to work together to make it better. They decided to ***“think about their thinking”*** and not continue down the



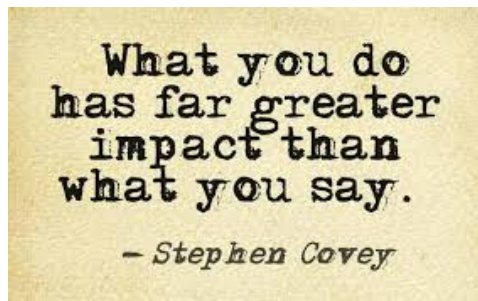
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same old path of fear and frustration. Both have spent several years practicing servant leadership.

Want to help your employees learn to problem solve without you having to point the way? Would you like them to be self-aware and know how to cope with the stressors they may encounter? How about creating an environment where co-workers feel empowered to check in on one another and work collaboratively to improve their situations?

LEADER BY EXAMPLE

By: Michael G. Rogers



I love leaders who lead by example. They are easy to follow and their lessons are so much more meaningful and impactful than leaders that just tell you what to do. Here is a great **leadership story of a leader by example.**

Over 200 years ago, a man in civilian clothes rode past a small group of tired and battle-weary soldiers. They were digging what appeared to be an important defensive position.

The leader of the group wasn't making any effort to help. He just shouted orders and threatened to punish the group if the work wasn't completed within the hour.

"Why aren't you helping?" the stranger asked on horseback.

"I'm in charge! The men do as I tell them," said the leader. He added "Help them yourself if you feel so strongly about it."

To the mean leader's surprise the stranger got off his horse and helped the men until the job was finished. Before he left the stranger congratulated the men for their work, and approached the confused leader.

"You should notify top command next time your rank prevents you from supporting your men – and I will provide a more permanent solution," the stranger said.

Up close, the now humbled leader recognized General George Washington and was taught a lesson he would never forget!

I love leaders that are willing to dig with the team. I have been fortunate enough in my life to have such leaders. I can remember on several occasions a manager of mine working late with me on projects. He could have gone home, but chose to help me instead.

I learned several important things from those leaders. One was that they cared. They weren't just order "barkers," but order helpers as well. My respect and trust for those leaders was off the charts. I was very loyal to them as a result. Have you been blessed enough to have such leaders in your life?



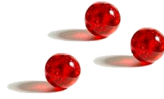
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THE RED MARBLES AND A KIND LEADER

By: Michael G. Rogers

Red Marbles



The Story Of One Man's Life

I love stories that demonstrate **personal leadership**. The influence of good men and women have shaped the character and hearts of millions. Many of these personal leaders have lived humble and relatively unknown lives.

It is difficult to measure the total impact we can have on others lives! Each of us has the power to be personal leaders in our own way. I heard this beautiful, yet simple personal **leadership story** the other day and would like to share it.

The story is told of a man whom the store owner, Mr. Miller, was bagging some potatoes for. This man noticed a small boy who he described as *"hungrily apprising a basket of freshly picked green peas."* He said he was, *"delicate to the bone and feature, ragged but clean."*

The man was looking over some of the new fresh produce on his way out when he overheard the conversation between Mr. Miller and the ragged boy.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?" The hungry boy replied *"H'lo Mr. Miller, Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas... sure look good."*

Each time the little boy would come to the store the conversation would have a similar tone. He would ask him how he was doing and how his mom was. She was sick, and they jjust didn't have much at home and this hungry young boy's attention was always on the fresh produce.

Mr. Miller would always ask if Barry would like to take some home. Barry would reply *"No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with."*

And Mr. Miller would say, *"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?"*

Barry would say, *"All I got's my prize marble here."*

"Is that right? Let me see it." Mr. Miller would take a careful look at it and compliment the boy on his prized marble. *"HmMMMMM,"* Mr Miller would say, *"only thing is this one is blue, and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one at home?"*

The little boy would say *"not exactly,"* but he had one sort of like it.

Mr. Miller would then send the boy home with the marble and peas and asked him to bring the red marble back when he found it.

Mrs. Miller, the store owners wife came back to help the man looking at the produce with an ear turned towards the conversation of the store owner and this little boy.

With a smile she said, *"There are two other boys like him in our community. All three are very poor. Jim (Mr. Miller) just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples,*

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tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with red marbles he decides he doesn't like red marbles and sends them back with a bag of produce searching for another color."

Years later Mr. Miller had passed away. The man who had witnessed his kind acts happened to be in town the night of his viewing. The friends he was visiting wanted to attend and this man decided to join them.

As they arrived and waited in line, offering condolences to the family of this generous man, ahead of them in line were three finely dressed men. One was in an Army uniform and the other two in nice dark suits with white shirts. All were very professional looking.

The three young men approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her and then kissed her on the cheek. They spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her light blue misty eyes followed them one by one, as each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary wiping his eyes in recognizable sorrow.

The man's turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. He reminded her of the story she told him so long ago about her husband's generous bargaining with the marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took the man's hand and led him to the casket. "Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about," she said. "They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size... they came to pay their debt."

Mrs. Miller said: "We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world, but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho."

With loving gentleness, the story is told, she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. **Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.**

