

SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION: EMPATHETIC AND PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP

by:

Neila D. Toledo

School Principal II, Old San Jose Elementary School

A leader who opts to serve is always the initiator of true transformation. For the leaders of educational institutions, servant leadership is not merely a matter of practice but rather a strong calling to lift others, develop potentials, and unite all through humility, empathy, and perseverance. This leadership would motivate faculty, enable pupils, and in the end, all the community would be united for the common cause of growth and care.

As Robert K. Greenleaf, the very mastermind behind servant leadership, stated succinctly: "The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve" (Greenleaf, 1977). The quotations bring to mind the school leaders the great leadership of the past only comes from the very strong requirement of attending to and aiding the others.

Servant leadership is listening to understand that which is often an invisible battle that teachers fight; it further recognizes and respects the students' life experiences brought into the classroom. Such leadership goes beyond working hours and tasks; it connects with emotions, gives support and confidence, thus creating a school where everyone is feeling secure, respected, and appreciated. It has been shown through research that leaders who adopt empathetic practices have more profound relationships with others and the whole institution's social well-being is uplifted (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Leading with purpose also implies and involves clarifying and giving direction to the school with the help of spirit and courage. Servant leaders are aware that improvement requires participation of all. They welcome cooperation, exchange of ideas, and sometimes even the leading role of teachers in their fields. They encourage professional development, not because it is their obligation but as a worthy opportunity for teachers to deepen their passion and become thus even more efficient.

The servant-leadership style has integrity and fairness as the principal factors in decision-making. The headmasters who adopt this approach are gracious and compassionate, which in turn, promotes the trust factor in the school's atmosphere. In agreement with Kouzes & Posner (2017), strong leadership is contingent upon credibility and a dedication to serving others.

Once the principals of the schools implement the servant leadership model, the community starts to thrive. Teachers, students, and parents all get involved; the whole school is changed; the making of good characters leads to the emergence of great ones; the common goal pulls everyone towards it and so improvement takes place.

Eventually, servant leadership though a pitfall of a legacy that outlives the leaders. The influence is not felt only in the school records or programs but rather in the hearts of the people- the teachers who feel valued, the students who are loved, and the community that is one. This type of leadership shows the path, changes lives and builds a promising future.

References:

Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Paulist Press.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2017). The Leadership Challenge (6th ed.). Wiley.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement.

Jossey-Bass.