

**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE**

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 08-05-2019	<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Master's of Military Studies	<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> SEP 2018 - APR 2019
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<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b>  Servant Leadership: A People Business	<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b> N/A

<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>  Webb, Chad, K., First Sergeant, USMC	<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b> N/A
	<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b> N/A

<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street	<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>  N/A
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<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>	<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>  N/A
	<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>  N/A

**12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**  
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.

**13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES**

**14. ABSTRACT**  
Servant leadership is unique and often misunderstood. As Marines, the idea that a leader should serve his or her subordinates is not a widely accepted notion. However, placing an emphasis on the welfare, personal development, family and professional growth of each Marine can enhance a unit's overall success and promote selflessness throughout the organization. Although there are several different leadership styles throughout the Marine Corps, servant leadership is the most effective style because it increases morale, builds trust, and promotes ownership of mission objectives and

**15. SUBJECT TERMS**  
Servant Leadership.

<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>  UU	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>  28	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> USMC Command and Staff College
<b>a. REPORT</b> Unclass	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> Unclass	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> Unclass			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b> (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

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Command and Staff College  
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2076 South Street  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**TITLE:**

**SERVANT LEADERSHIP: A PEOPLE BUSINESS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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AY 2018-19

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*Table of Contents*

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
DISCLAIMER .....	4
PREFACE.....	5
INTRODUCTION .....	6
SERVANT LEADERSHIP: OLD AND NEW.....	7
Marine Corps Manual w/Ch. 1-3 .....	8
MCDP 6-1 .....	8
MCRP 6-11B .....	8
Different Types of Leadership Styles .....	8
IMPACT AND POTENTIAL.....	9
The Art of Leadership.....	9
The Heart of Leadership .....	10
The Way of the Shepherd .....	10
Being Happy at Work Matters .....	11
Proof that Positive Work Cultures are More Productive .....	11
LEADERSHIP REVIEW.....	12
Lieutenant General Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller .....	12
Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune .....	15
PRODUCING CHANGE.....	16
Kotter’s 8-Step Process.....	17
CONCLUSION.....	23
ENDNOTES .....	25
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	27

## **Acknowledgments**

Throughout my Marine Corps career, I have had the honor to cross paths with so many great influences that have helped me become the leader I am today, but I couldn't do any of this without a sturdy home front.

First off, I would like to thank the person who always keeps me grounded and has encouraged me to reach for the stars from day one; my wife Madison. She has always seen more in me than I have myself and challenges me every day to reach my potential. She has weathered multiple deployments, exercises, holidays away from home, and raised our beautiful daughter Nora. All of this while remaining steadfast as I continue to do what I love, serve with Marines.

Next, I would like to thank those that have guided me throughout the process of writing this paper, Dr. Paulo Tripodi and LtCol Ron Rega. Your advice and mentorship throughout this thesis have been greatly appreciated.

Lastly, I would like to thank each Marine that I have had the honor to serve with. Allowing me to be your leader, follower, brother, and mentor has meant the world to me. There have been times where I have questioned my direction, but serving you continues to right my compass. I am grateful to you all. -Be good dudes, and be proud of the decisions you make!

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## **Preface**

When a man or woman decides to serve his or her country, there are many sacrifices that one is willing to make in order to do so. Some decide to do so out of pride for their country, and some use it as a means to better their circumstances. One thing is true of every man or woman who earns the title Marine; the leadership that they are under, even in the earliest years of one's career, will either hinder or enhance their career both in and out of the Marine Corps.

As a young Marine fresh out of high school, independent direction was something I had yet to identify. If not for my first staff non-commissioned officer, I would have likely ridden out my four years with no plan, fiscal readiness, or goals to accomplish in life after the Corps. He took me under his wing and taught me how to become a leader, how to take care of myself, and most importantly, how to take care of others. His passion was to put others before himself. Throughout my three years of serving under Daryl's leadership, I became passionate about my job and learned compassion for the men and women I served with.

Nearly 10 years and several ranks later, I would again find myself under the leadership of a dynamic and inspiring leader. Sergeant Major Mario Fields was unlike any other Sergeant Major I had encountered before. He smiled, cared about the personal needs of his Marines, showed interest in their families, and believed in each and every person he came in contact with. In the more than eight years I have known Sergeant Major Fields, he has never put himself first and has been a perfect example of servant leadership within the Corps. Through the experience and mentorship of these two men, I have found that by practicing a servant leadership model, putting the needs of others first can greatly enhance unit morale, brotherhood, and the output of those with whom one serves.

## Introduction

Servant leadership is unique and often misunderstood. Throughout my career as a Marine, the idea that a leader should serve his or her subordinates is not a widely accepted notion. However, placing an emphasis on the welfare, personal development, family and professional growth of each Marine can enhance a unit's overall success and promote selflessness throughout the organization. Although there are several different leadership styles throughout the Marine Corps, servant leadership is the most effective style because it increases morale, builds trust, and promotes ownership of mission objectives and accomplishment within the organization.

Robert Greenleaf defines servant leadership as “a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world.”<sup>1</sup> Greenleaf, considered by many to be the modern day pioneer of servant philosophy, believes that a successful leader is first and foremost grounded in their purpose of service.<sup>2</sup> In his book, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, Greenleaf proclaims that a servant leader places an emphasis on the growth and welfare of the people within an organization and the communities to which they belong. Greenleaf's essay, *The Servant as Leader*, written in 1970, posits that young servant leaders will begin with a conscious choice to serve others while growing in their ability to lead effectively over time.

Larry C. Spears lists 10 characteristics that define a servant leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, conceptualization, foresight, persuasion, stewardship, commitment to growth, and community building.<sup>3</sup> Servant leaders empower their followers to grow personally and professionally. In the process followers often become leaders because they are inspired by

the leadership they received. Walden Universities Journal of Social Change describes servant leadership as most effective because leaders are not seeking personal gain, but instead, seeking to have a positive impact on the lives of others.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Jim Laub, creator and President of the Organizational Leadership Assessment describes servant leadership as “an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader” and goes on to say that “servant leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization.”<sup>5</sup> In practice, servant leadership is a framework where each leader is able to identify the objectives of the organization along with the needs of their Marines and find a way to effectively meet both; meanwhile, enhancing the morale of the and output of the community.

### **Servant Leadership: Old and New**

As Marines progress in rank, they receive more authority and opportunity to lead. In my experience, and far too often, young Marines get promoted but are not educated on the difference between leadership and authority. When taking charge of other adults, the sole use of authority to discipline or redirect rarely works and takes away from the credibility of a Marine's ability to lead. In the Marine Corps, authority is the level of responsibility to which a specific rank or billet holds. Leadership is the means with which a Marine manages their authority, responsibilities, and personnel. Having the ability to utilize servant leadership to fulfill responsibilities and manage personnel is a better tool for gaining trust and delegating tasks as a leader because it is genuine and promotes the belief that the leader is invested in the success of each Marine.

Although the Corps does not give it a name, servant leadership is present in every facet of what Marines do. The Marine Corps Manual with changes one thru three mentions the words ‘service’ 277 times, ‘welfare’ 29 times, and ‘well-being’ 5 times.<sup>6</sup> As part of one of the Marine Corps oldest active publications, these leadership factors are obviously of vital importance. Serve, lead, inspire, and ensure the well being of others over the needs of ourselves: these are chief principals that provide a source of great pride to leaders who employ them.

In an assessment created by the Marine Corps Leadership Development of the Lejeune Leadership Institute,<sup>7</sup> Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP 6-1) *Command and Control*,<sup>8</sup> and the Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-11B *Marine Corps Values: A User’s Guide for Discussion Leaders*<sup>9</sup> are used to evaluate five distinctive styles of leadership (authoritarian, persuasive or delegating, telling, selling, and participating). The assessment also identifies the appropriate time to utilize each style and the considerations that influence style selection. This assessment points out that these styles can be found throughout Marine Corps doctrine and that most leaders develop an eclectic form of leadership unique to his or her personality style, preferences, and environment. There may be instances where authoritarian styled leadership “telling-style” with one way of communication is required, but it is the position of this author that this style of top-down leadership detracts from the cohesion, team concept, and subordinate leadership empowerment within a command. Consequently, a posture of servanthood is beneficial across all leadership styles.

Given that an assignment in the military is temporary, it is essential to evaluate the feasible application of leadership styles in the civilian sector. In 2016, the leadership and studies program at the University of Norwich conducted a study on 10 different types of leadership and how they relate to the civilian workforce.<sup>10</sup> This study found that servant leadership is more

readily accepted in the civilian workforce and that positional/authoritarian leadership styles are more negatively received. Servant leadership requires integrity and generosity, putting the needs of the team ahead of personal gain. This is a mindset that will serve Marines both during and after their time in service to the country.

### **Impact and Potential**

Servant leadership may come naturally to some, but for others, it is developed over time. The practical application of servant leadership can greatly enhance mission accomplishment. Leaders who are grounded in achieving the goals of the organization while also motivating their team tend to make a stronger impact, gaining the trust and confidence of their subordinates.<sup>11</sup> This is the foundation of servant leadership and it encourages leaders to take a “coaching” stance, rather than an authoritarian style in order to do the most good for the organization. Good leaders, like good coaches, are able to push their team to realize and reach their full potential and will be a source of encouragement to those around him or her to do the same.

An important job of the leader is to identify areas of underperformance and correcting behaviors in a manner conducive to individual and team welfare. Getting to know each and every subordinate is the key to applying good corrective technique. Some personalities may require a sterner approach, while others respond better to lighter correction. Nonetheless, approaching discipline from an avenue of coaching and mentoring will assist in building cohesion and trust at individual and team levels.

Dr. Jeffrey Smith, United States Air Force (retired) refers to servant leadership as organic leadership. In *The Heart of Leadership*, he opens by saying that “the heart of leadership, especially within the profession of arms, is summarized with a single word: influence. Influence

is the ability to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something.”<sup>12</sup> He then describes the influence of leadership on people by identifying two types: mandated (positional) leadership and organic (servant) leadership. Mandate is explained as a form of leadership that says, “You will do this because I outrank you...because I am your boss... because I have the ability to punish you if you do not do it.”<sup>13</sup> Smith describes this style as a weak and ineffective form of leadership and acknowledges it as the most routine leadership practice. When talking about organic (servant) leadership, Smith immediately describes this leadership style as having greater buy-in, higher productivity, increased commitment, and a healthier work environment. When leaders have a personal investment in their subordinates, Smith argues, that commitment becomes clear to the subordinates and as a consequence, production and accountability increase. Without the feeling that they are an important part of the problem-solving process, subordinates are not plugged in and do not feel personally responsible for the success or failure of the mission.”<sup>14</sup> It is the responsibility of the leader to ensure an environment where each person on a team feels that he or she plays an important role.<sup>15</sup>

Another great illustration of servant leadership is the job of a shepherd. According to Leman and Pentek, a good shepherd always knows the condition of his flock and the condition of every sheep. It is his responsibility to guard them against danger, guide them from place to place as a group and put the safety of his flock before himself. The more the shepherd does this, the more the sheep learn to trust him.<sup>16</sup> Once perceived as a threat, the sheep now view their shepherd as a protector and tend to stay in a tighter flock to make it easier for the shepherd to watch over them.

Harvard Business Review published research about the importance of happiness in the workplace: *Being Happy at Work Matters*.<sup>17</sup> Researching dozens of companies and hundreds of

employees, Director of Pennsylvania's Chief Learning Officer Doctoral Program, Annie McKee discovered that positive engagement with employees motivates people to work harder and smarter. The primary trend was "that trusting and supportive relationships were hugely important to their state of mind – and their willingness to contribute to the team."<sup>18</sup> In my experience, state of mind is not a priority to a majority of Marines in a leadership role. The immediate response would likely equate to “sucking it up” or “if the Marine Corps wanted you to have a state of mind, they would issue you one.” This review equally covered the discontent of workers that were under unapproachable leaders with a lack of engagement. Subordinates often described this type of leadership with strong negative emotions that infected the entire organization.<sup>19</sup>

A separate study conducted by Doctors Emma Seppala and Kim Cameron reveals that although it is assumed that stress and pressure motivate employees to perform better, they are not considering the hidden costs incurred; health care expenditures. In 2015, the American Psychological Association reported that an estimated \$500 billion was lost catering to workplace stress, in addition to 550 million workdays.<sup>20</sup> The argument is not to promote a stress-free work environment, but rather be cognizant of the psychological and economic factors that occur when an organization is not in a good place.<sup>21</sup> Characteristics of leaders that in turn help an organization to thrive consist of being interested in, caring, and maintaining responsibility for people, along with inspiring gratitude, trust, and integrity. Greenleaf, Smith, and Maslow mention all of these characteristics in their constructs of servant leadership and psychological needs assessments. By nature, the Marine Corps consists of stress and rapid workflow. As defenders of this nation, there is always looming stress that at any minute we must respond to the nation's call. The point each of these researchers makes that translates best to Marine Corps

culture is that the effectiveness of their leadership drives an organization's culture, and people are more inclined to positively respond when leadership and the workplace are more enjoyable.

### **Leadership Review: Lieutenant General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller**

One of the most well known Marines in the history of the Corps is the late Lieutenant General Lewis B. Puller, more commonly referred to as "Chesty." Widely known for his heroic service in the face of danger on the battlefield, and his five Navy Crosses, anyone who served with him admired his unique and successful leadership. Kathleen Patterson, the Director of Strategic Leadership at Regent University, describes several virtuous constructs that encompass servant leadership: agapao love (people-to-people, or Godly love), humility, altruism, vision, and trust.<sup>22</sup> Chesty displayed and utilized each of these characteristics. To better understand him as a servant leader, the following section will highlight how Puller exhibited each of these constructs.

A firm believer in leading by example, Puller's larger than life attitude was contagious. He had the ability to influence and inspire others not only professionally, but also personally. The well-being of his Marines was his priority. He consistently treated his subordinates as equals by showing them respect, love, and humility. Jon Hoffman best explains it by saying "His men loved him because he was one of themselves, with no interest apart from their interest; because he raised them to his own level, respecting them not merely as soldiers, but as comrades."<sup>23</sup> Patterson explains agapao love in terms of leadership as one that focuses on their employees first, talents second, and how the organization can benefit last with no regards for themselves.<sup>24</sup> Puller demonstrated agapao love time and time again on the battlefield; in particular throughout the battle of Guadalcanal where he would personally ensure that the wounded were properly

cared for and would be saddened at the loss of each of his men. Although he and his men understood their sacrifices, they were still family to him.

Patterson describes humility as the avoidance of self-focus, non-overstatement of one's own merit, and the ability to take recommendations from everyone within the organization.<sup>25</sup> Knowing that great knowledge often times came from experience and not rank, Puller was notorious for seeking out the advice of his junior officers, enlisted personnel, and foreign counterparts. Including his foreign counterparts would prove instrumental as a platoon commander in Haiti where he and his men were effectively able to target numerous enemy camps by utilizing their [Haitian] intelligence and tactics. As a battalion commander in Seventh Marines on Guadalcanal, Chesty was adamant on living under the same conditions as his men. He refused the billeting, hygiene, and mess opportunities that were afforded to the other battalion commanders. He would practice this humility throughout each of his officer ranks, down to ensuring he was the last to eat, sometimes even sleeping on dirt floors to ensure his men were afforded the last cot. This was largely attributed to his being raised in a low-income family and little privilege. It was not new to him, but rather an opportunity to bond with his men.

In Patterson's theoretical model, altruism is defined as an unselfish concern for others often involving self-sacrifice.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the attributes and actions already described by Puller, he had a natural tendency to act altruistically. Brilliant in his battlefield mindset, Puller and his men were separated from the rest of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines and were nearly enveloped by Japanese forces along Matanikau at Guadalcanal. With no rescue plan in sight, Puller was able to signal a destroyer to pick him up and taking him to a known landing site where he would order his men to withdraw under the cover of naval support. This is the type of

person Puller was. Not for recognition, but for his men. Putting his own life on the line time and time again in order to make it safer and mitigate unnecessary risk for his men.<sup>27</sup>

The fourth concept demonstrated by Puller is vision. Vision refers to how an organization's future will look given the abilities of individuals within the organization to reach their potential while also meeting organizational goals. The actions of Puller's enlisted men highlighted the ability of his officers to lead under his example. Due to his vision, Marines were empowered to reach their potential and the organization was able to meet or exceed goals. Puller's career demonstrated that if an officer is diligent, his men would strive to exceed his diligence; if he is thorough, they too will be. If he puts them first, they, in turn, will put their men and their officers first.<sup>28</sup> This philosophy contributes to the overall end state because it encompasses the concept of reflection and development for leaders, followers, and the organization.

One of the most important aspects of being a servant leader is trust. For others to feel comfortable under one's leadership and honestly believe that they have a voice requires trust at each level. This was no different with Puller. He had the ability to foster a bond with his enlisted and officers. He understood that involving them in decision making and explaining the purpose of a task was important because it gave them the knowledge and security to pass down and learn from. In one mentoring session, Puller goes on to say "gentlemen, if you want to get the most out of your men, give them a break! Don't make them work completely in the dark. If you do, they won't work a bit more than they have to. But if they comprehend they'll work like mad."<sup>29</sup> The message received here was that they did not have to work their men for him, but to accomplish the task while taking care of each other. Acts such as this help grow comradery and inspire trust and confidence. Puller's respect for others and genuine concern for the unit greatly helped him

trust and be trusted throughout his career. From Banana Wars, to World War II, fighting at Guadalcanal, and freezing in Korea; there are countless statements of Puller's commitment and passion to his men and their trust and love towards him.

### **Leadership Review II: Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune**

Widely known for his Marine Corps Birthday message and the establishment of the Marine Corps Birthday celebration, Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune was also revered as a passionate leader who loved Marines. His desired relationship for each leader with their Marines was and still is based on trust and engagement, and knowing that they would sacrifice for those they serve with while putting the needs of their Marines in front of their own. Much of Lejeune's efforts revolved around the personal and professional development of Marines and a significant portion of this time was spent with his officer corps and preparing them to nurture their enlisted. Lejeune once said "The relation between officers and enlisted men should in no sense be that of superior and inferior nor that of master and servant, but rather that of teacher and scholar. In fact, it should partake of the nature of the relationship between father and son, to the extent that officers, especially commanding officers, are responsible for the physical, mental, and moral welfare, as well as the discipline and military training of the young men under their command who are serving the nation in the Marine Corps."<sup>30</sup> A true servant leader, Lejeune lived out this philosophy and sought to understand the upbringing, life goals, strengths, and weaknesses of each Marine in his charge. To adopt a servant leadership stance, current leaders in the Marine Corps should seek to adopt this mentality, maintaining good character in order to live up to the father-son expectation set forth by Lejeune in his tenure as Commandant of the Marine Corps.

The most important commonality between Puller and Lejeune was their unique care for Marines, not only as warfighters, but in a personal, more intimate manner. The Marine Corps molds its men and women to follow the orders of their superiors, and if they adhere to the standards set forth by the Marine Corps and Department of the Navy, they may eventually gain the ability to lead. In saying this, the Marine Corps does not layout the style to which one should lead by. Servanthood is a personal touch that requires patience and comes with success and failure. Regardless of the end state, these two gentlemen made it a priority to educate, serve, and enhance the well-being of their Service members in order to prepare them for life inside the Marine Corps, and later when they return to the civilian world. Equally important is the point that both of these men are admired throughout all of the armed forces because of their ability to lead, defend, and win at war. Though they served in some of the most austere conditions, these two men remained true to their commitment to serving those who serve.

### **Producing Change**

In the military, change is inevitable. It is a constant cycle of new faces and leadership styles. Sustainability through the old ways of doing things is not feasible and an organization must change in order to excel. Producing this change is not an instant decision or action. In order to establish change on a large-scale level, it must be a systematic, well planned, and steadily implemented. Attempting to do so too quickly can confuse, decrease morale, and in this line of business do harm to the Marine Corps' most valuable tool: its people.

One of the most sought-after models of producing and implementing change within an organization is the 8-Step Process created by Dr. John Kotter.<sup>31</sup> The Marine Corps is not going to order an overhaul in how it conducts business and develops leaders, but with Kotter's process, it

provides a “how to” for those that desire change within their unit. These eight steps consist of creating a sense of urgency, building a guiding coalition, forming a strategic vision, enlisting a volunteer army, enabling action by removing barriers, generating short-term wins, sustaining acceleration, and instituting change.<sup>32</sup> To understand these steps, it is essential to focus on each one, how they relate to servant leadership and its place within the Marine Corps, and each step can be applied at any level within the organization.

Create a Sense of Urgency. Whenever someone hears the word urgency; it is associated with immediate action. In this case, Kotter alludes to bringing about the attention of others to see that there is a need for change and effectively communicating it to everyone in the organization to ensure they are on the same page. Allowing recommendations and feedback during this process can significantly enhance each members' sense of ownership and team unity in the initiative of implementing change.<sup>33</sup> Allowing for individuals at every level in the Marine Corps to address a need for change, provide feedback, and have a valued part in implementing change provides for each member to have a supporting role. Often, the Marine Corps waits for direction to be distributed from the top down via Marine Corps Order or other official correspondence (positional leadership).<sup>34</sup> To allow Marines to have the foresight to identify vulnerabilities at their level allows for the unit to be in a proactive mode rather than reactive which in turn gives them a sense of value and contribution to the overall outcome.

Build a Guiding Coalition. In this step, Kotter uses the military as an example of summarizing its meaning by saying "a voluntary army needs a coalition of effective people – born of its own ranks – to guide it, coordinate it, and communicate its activities" (Kotter, 1996). No one person can change the way an organization operates. To assist in change, leaders must establish teams that believe and trust in the end-state. It must make sense. It is also essential to

build trust in the unit; creating the mindset that they can accomplish the task.<sup>35</sup> This is where leadership traits embraced within a servant model can be vital. It is the responsibility of each leader to build a team where trust, cohesion, and belief in the goals of the organization are present. Frequently, Marines are told to do something with no known end state. This typically brings about discouragement and lack of enthusiasm for the assigned mission, trends commonly found in authoritarian styled leadership where the leader has dominance and control over his or her subordinates.<sup>36</sup> Social Exchange Theory states that the behavior of leaders shapes the relationship between leaders and followers. Although the actions of the followers also play a role in the relationship, fundamentally, workplace behavior and attitude are largely influenced by the behavior and attitude of leaders. There is a reciprocal relationship between positive attitudes and behavior that should be the responsibility of the leader to initiate and maintain.<sup>37</sup> Positive workplace culture, as a result of servant leadership, breeds a sense of support, cohesion, pride, and accountability that permeates throughout the unit.

Form a Strategic Vision and Initiative. Identifying how the future looks in comparison to how it looked in the past and linking it to initiatives can help make what was once an idea into a vision. This "vision" should be a collaborative effort to create the best approach for the change. It should be clear, concise, and identify precisely what it is the future holds. Analyzing the past, present and future missions, visions, and goals are important because it allows for an organization to analyze what may have worked before, or what strategy may be most practical for moving forward.<sup>38</sup> In "Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025,"<sup>39</sup> the thirty-fourth Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James T. Conway provided this vision. He specifically outlines future threats, challenges, forward mission, philosophy, and principles. Within the vision is a paragraph labeled "committed to taking care of Marines and their families"

where he acknowledges the conditions and needs of our service and its members are continually changing, and it is upon the leaders to ensure they are supporting these critical needs.<sup>40</sup>

Regardless of one's leadership style, some degree of servant leadership is required to fulfill the requirements set forth by Conway.

Enlist a Volunteer Army (Marine Corps). When pertaining to the military, the masses already consists of a volunteer force. It is the enlistment of personnel in the unit that strives for desired change. As previously discussed, a top-level leader can publish the order for change, but it is up to each person under his or her command to execute those desired changes. As a leader, it is important to show a personal stake and confidence in goals that are worth achieving. Kotter explains, "The vision should be heard often and in many ways."<sup>41</sup>The practice of 'saying and displaying' a new vision is something that the Marine Corps continues to get right. Anytime an order is published, it is required that it also be displayed in the workplace, barracks, and common areas within the command. This does not go to say that it is supported. The need for and gain of support can come at the highest and lowest levels of leadership. Getting in front of Marines and portraying this proposal or order as if it is coming from their direct leadership is of utmost importance. It displays that their leaders are interested in the initiation of new orders and seek the cooperation of their unit. If a leader has already built trust within the unit, followers will likely want to adhere to the latest changes because they have confidence in their leader.

Enable Action by Removing Barriers. Removing all inefficient processes to enable personnel to begin making headway toward the vision is next. This could mean changing the organizational structure to align information and personnel to the goal. In military terms, the table of organization of personnel may need to be adjusted in the area of effort in order to maximize the time spent. Where can each person be placed to make the most significant impact?

What skill sets does each Marine possess? These are factors that must be taken into consideration. It is also essential to take into consideration barriers to successful change: self-inflicted confusion, lack of communication, and bad conduct. If a leader is unable to address and overcome these barriers within their unit effectively, their credibility and trust within the organization can deteriorate. In some cases, improperly addressing barriers may result in personnel being relieved of their duties because they have lost the trust and confidence of their superiors.<sup>42</sup> Each Marine needs to be raised with the mentality of carrying on the job of those above him or her. In an instant, they can be called upon to overcome these barriers to carry on the mission.

Generate Short-Term Wins. Short-term wins are intermediate steps toward the finish line. In addition to getting closer to attaining the goal, short-term wins help establish a sense of pride and boost morale within an organization. It encourages more hard work and ignites motivation that would otherwise flame out after a more extended period.<sup>43</sup> In an article published by Harvard Business School, *The Power of Small Wins*<sup>44</sup> identified that of the 12,000 survey's completed by employees of various organizations, 28 percent said that the accomplishment of minor milestones triggered their engagement and happiness at work. These milestones were deemed to give employees a sense of purpose and meaning. This article also identifies two supporting progress tools that endorse motivation and commitment; catalysts and nourishers. Catalysts being actions that support work such as allowing autonomy, providing sufficient resources and time, clear goals, and openly learning from success and failure. Nourishers are referred to as "acts of interpersonal support, such as respect and recognition, encouragement, emotional comfort, and opportunities."<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, because long-term goals can generally

forecast to take years to accomplish, without short-term wins employees may never establish a sense of ownership, or drive to accomplish the goal.

In the Marine Corps, one of the most relevant examples of short-term wins is the War on Terrorism. Many enlisted men and women have spent a majority of their career in a pre- or post-9/11 Corps. Not all of these Marines will bear witness to the many stages of the War on Terrorism. They aren't able to stop terrorism in during the execution of one specific mission, yet they continue to have a contributing effort in fighting the war. Marines have been able to see change implemented in 'short-term wins.' The Corps did not send in an individual unit to end this war, but rather advised a plan, sectorized off by areas of responsibility to which short-term wins would take place. Along the way came success and failure. But not once has the Marine Corps faced this as an unattainable goal, but rather a goal that would take years to accomplish.

Sustain Acceleration. After short-term wins/goals are established, it is important not to get complacent and rest on the laurels of early momentum.<sup>46</sup> As time elapses, tasks can become increasingly tough, making it even more important for a team to remain focused. By this point in the process, organizational change is taking shape and leadership credibility has sustained. At the latter stages of maintaining acceleration, it is essential to begin to embrace the progress as cultural change. When an idea becomes part of the culture it is no longer seen as change, but rather a way of conducting day-to-day work.

Institute Change. The vision is now a reality, and the change needs to become a cultural norm within the organization. Connecting the dots of the new change and the success of the organization is key at this point. It gives a unit its new identity. For this to occur, the results must be favorable and sustainable throughout the changeover of leadership and personnel.<sup>47</sup> In the Marine Corps, the changeover is always imminent, so it is important for experienced leadership

at the platoon sergeant and platoon commander level to be engaged. It is frequent that a new company commander or senior enlisted advisor reports to a unit and observes how the unit operates before making changes. They will also communicate with the platoon sergeants and platoon commanders during the changeover to establish continuity and gain a general awareness of what can be implemented to give the unit the support or guidance they need. If a unit is acting as a well-oiled machine and executing their designated missions, there may not be a need for change.

A servant leader will help others see the importance of a vision and how it is beneficial to the entire organization by motivating and inspiring them. Although this change may be met with resistance, the attitude of a good leader often dictates the direction of the whole team. Part of being an effective servant leader is establishing a bond and trust that no matter what, the person to your left and right knows that you are looking out for their best interest. Even if it means transformation. Often times in the military, the only thing subordinates want is a big picture. Where is this going to lead them? Articulating the vision and letting them know that it cannot be done without them will give them a pride of belonging, and something they can take ownership of. The image must be feasible, imaginable, and desirable to them. With this comes the harsh reality that not everyone is a great team player. Getting the right personnel in the correct position can sometimes be the toughest part of the job.

Producing change must be accompanied by encouragement. Setting intermediate goals that can be celebrated help keep the team engaged and provides a vision of progress. Showing enthusiasm when one of these goals is accomplished will also show them that you care about the same thing and will help prepare them for the final push. As a servant leader, it is important to

get out in front of Marines. Explain to them that things are going to get intense, but that they have a leader who will be with them each step of the way.

### **Conclusion**

The overarching theme to leadership, regardless of style, is mission accomplishment. Can one specific style of leadership accomplish the mission over another? Servant leaders place emphasis on individual growth with mission accomplishment as a byproduct of the leadership style. For many, the idea of putting people before the mission is hard to fathom. Utilizing a servant styled leadership gives Marines a sense of trust, compassion and a desire to want to excel at a personal and professional level. By putting the needs of your followers first, it encourages and motivates them to accomplish any task, be receptive to change, and have a desire to serve their leader for the better of the organization.

One of the most challenging things to do as a leader is to implement change. The success of the unit often measures effectiveness, and if the unit fears the proposed direction, remaining servant to those who serve can be exceedingly demanding. Though this task may seem daunting, it is increasingly rewarding to those who stick around for the result. General Norman Schwarzkopf said it best when he stated “it doesn’t take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle.”<sup>48</sup> The ability to gain the trust and confidence of the unit is pivotal in applying servant leadership. It is a two-way street. The leader must trust the unit and the unit must trust the men in charge. This applies to the military as a whole. Trust is critical for the conduct of military operations and servant leadership provides a framework for establishing trust and helping both individuals and the organization reach its full potential. Adopting a philosophy of servant leadership is more conducive to welfare, morale, and unit

comradery and has been successfully practiced by many historical leaders. As I have demonstrated, General's Puller and Lejeune have validated the effectiveness of a servant leadership attitude in leading Marines. Servant Leadership is unquestionably effective at building and sustaining trust within the Marine Corps and should be employed by any Marine who seeks to fulfill the mission of the Marine Corps.

## Endnotes:

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- <sup>2</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership. A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 6.
- <sup>3</sup> Larry C. Spears, *Servant Leaders: They Share 10 Traits*. (n.p., n.d.) 1-14.
- <sup>4</sup> Tanno & Banner, *The Journal of Social Change*. (Walden University: Minnesota, 2018). Pp. 3.
- <sup>5</sup> J. Laub, *Defining Servant Leadership and the Healthy Organization*. (The Organizational Leadership Assessment Group: n.s., 2016).
- <sup>6</sup> Charles. C. Krulak, *Marine Corps Manual w/Ch 1-3*. (HQMC: Washington, D.C., 1996), 1-22.
- <sup>7</sup> Lejeune Leadership Institute, *Leadership Style Assessment*. (Marine Corps University: Virginia, 2018).
- <sup>8</sup> Charles C. Krulak, *MCDP 6-1*. (HQMC: Washington, D.C., 1996), 83-84.
- <sup>9</sup> Paul K. Van Riper, *MCRP 6-11B*. (HQMC: Washington, D.C., 1997), 83.
- <sup>10</sup> Norwich University, *10 Different Types of Leadership Styles*. (Norwich University: Norwich, 2016).
- <sup>11</sup> Manning & Curtis, *The Art of Leadership*. (McGraw-Hill: New York, 2012), 147-148.
- <sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Smith, *The Heart of Leadership. #Leadership in the 21st Century*. (The Strategy Bridge: Online, 2018). 7-8.
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- <sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Smith, *The Heart of Leadership. #Leadership in the 21st Century*. (The Strategy Bridge: Online, 2018), 7-9.
- <sup>15</sup> Jeffrey Smith, *The Heart of Leadership. #Leadership in the 21st Century*. (The Strategy Bridge: Online, 2018), 8.
- <sup>16</sup> Leman & Pentek, *The Way of the Shepherd. Seven Secrets to Managing Productive People*. (Zondervan: Michigan, 2004), 115-117.
- <sup>17</sup> Annie McKee, *Being Happy at Work Matters. Harvard Business Review*. (Harvard Business: Massachusetts, 2014).
- <sup>18</sup> Annie McKee, *Being Happy at Work Matters. Harvard Business Review*. (Harvard Business: Massachusetts, 2014).
- <sup>19</sup> Annie McKee, *Being Happy at Work Matters. Harvard Business Review*. (Harvard Business: Massachusetts, 2014).
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- <sup>23</sup> Jon T. Hoffman, *Charismatic Leadership. The Art of Command: Military Leaders from George Washington to Colin Powell*. (University Press of Kentucky: Kentucky, 1996), 139.
- <sup>24</sup> Kathleen Patterson. *Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model*. (School of Leadership Studies, Regent University: Virginia, 2003).
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- <sup>32</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*. (Harvard Business Press: Massachusetts, 1996).
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- <sup>36</sup> Tsui, Wang, Xin, Zhang, Fu. *Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom: Variation of Leadership Styles Among Chinese CEOs*. (Elsevier Inc.: n.s., 2004) 5-20.
- <sup>37</sup> Peter M. Blau. *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. (Wiley: New York, 1964).
- <sup>38</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*. (Harvard Business Press: Massachusetts, 1996), 69.
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- <sup>47</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*. (Harvard Business Press: Massachusetts, 1996), 153.
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