

A Business Based on Service

By Cherian Mathew



Servant Leadership was introduced to me by my mentor and company founder at the first company convention I attended in Goa, India in the year 2002. I had been in the network marketing for almost eighteen months by then and was an extremely hard working, aspiring, self-motivated networker building in the Middle East. It was quite an amazing experience for me as

I saw this concept being practiced by the founders of my company and its top leaders alike. All of them together were serving the 400 odd participants by organizing, setting up, cleaning up, and helping to facilitate the event.

Even though I noticed it as a participant, it became clear as a philosophy and leadership style as it was discussed over the five-day. I recognized it with a lot of excitement and cheer, because I could relate this with my own philosophy of leadership I wanted to practice in my life. I had not seen or experienced such a thing in my ten years of working life when I was working in the corporate environment. The only servant leaders I had observed until then were my parents who had sacrificed their lives to help me and my brothers become the best we could be.

Over the past fourteen years of being a network marketer, I have understood the concept, tried my best to practice it, and my life flourishes through it. The greatest blessings I have experienced have come as a result of serving others in my business and having been able to cherish their achievements, however small or big. It's addictive to be able to contribute to someone else's achievements.Â

During my formative years in this profession, I believed the model of my company requires me to work in teams to become successful. I also discovered that the earlier I make someone in my team earn and succeed, the easier it will be for me to hold on to that partner in my team. Hence my focus has always been on helping and supporting

my partners to achieve. My early partners James, Mathew, Satish, and Jerry were my focus for my first few months until they started earning weekly checks. I noticed my income was always four times theirs.

No one has become successful in network marketing without creating wealth for his or her colleagues in the organization. My income started growing exponentially the more I concentrated on making others successful and increased my efforts on their behalf. This was the most exciting thing I have ever done in my business and still continue to do after fourteen years.

Over these years I have done the same in many countries partnering with many people. Most of them have achieved success beyond their wildest dreams and continue to practice the same in their teams. I am convinced network marketing can produce untold wealth by way of helping and serving others.

Servant leadership is an ancient philosophy. In the fourth century BC, Chankya wrote in his book *Arthashastra*, “The king [leader] shall consider as good, not what pleases himself but what pleases his subjects [followers]... the king [leader] is a paid servant and enjoys the resources of the state together with the people.”

Servant leadership can be found in many religious texts, though the philosophy itself transcends any particular religious tradition. Jesus said, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be servant of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”—Mark 10:44-45

Islam teaches that “the leader of a people is their servant,” and other world religions have long embraced the philosophy of servant leadership.

The following characteristics are essential to the development of a servant leader:

- One of the most important attributes is *listening*. Without being able to listen, one can never guide and help. Prospecting is all about asking the right questions and listening to the answers. Listening to the prospect, partner, and team leader entitles one to focus and understand the context, meaning, and background. As I embarked upon my journey in network marketing, I had a tough time listening to others. I used to practice more talking and wanted others to listen. Easier said than done, listening is a quality that’s often lacking in network marketers.
- Another main quality of a servant leader is *empathy, not sympathy*. Sympathy is quite common in human relations. However I learned my lessons sympathizing with many in my early days of business building. Some of my leaders would have reasons for not achieving targets, not doing activities, not getting sign-ups, not attending team meetings and trainings, not communicating, and so on. I learned

that by sympathizing with them, I was actually making them weak. Instead, I learned to empathize. Now I could correct them and give solutions rather than crying with them over their own faults.

- A servant leader understands and is aware of his or her *values and feelings*, *strengths*, and *weaknesses*. Living by one's values is crucial for defining the values of the team. What is acceptable and what is not should be made known to each and every team member. A servant leader should understand his own strength or weakness, as well as find ways and means to help support the group with that strength and help solve weaknesses by harnessing the strengths of others.
- While building my business I came across individuals who require *mental and spiritual support*, as many of their limiting beliefs and experiences had prevented them from exploring their true potential. Hence, as a servant leader, I had to foster and develop each person's emotional and mental wellbeing in my team-building efforts. Engaging with such individuals and helping them break their barriers is an achievement which provides a level of fulfillment that is priceless.
- I also learned the *art of persuasion*. Persuasion is part of the fabric of network marketing and developing this skill is fundamental for success in our business. In the traditional world one is persuaded by fear of losing the job or being demoted for not achieving targets or tasks. In our business it's the joy of success and abundance that persuades people to act. That makes persuasion very powerful and meaningful for me and hence I use this skill to move people to achieve greater success in life. Servant leaders are good at persuading their flock to achieve their goals. This approach compels individuals to take advantage of their inherent talent and skills to do that what needs to be done, or to see an issue through your perspective.
- During the past fourteen years in my company I have been able to excite, motivate, and engage people in my *vision* for them and have committed my time and effort to help them achieve it. I have successfully done this with hundreds of individuals in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Together we have created success stories through servant leadership. I have developed a sense of intuition for how the past, present, and are all interconnected.
- Servant leadership leads to powerful *relationships* among individuals. Relationships are what matters in the business world. Most corporate trainings give a lot of importance to relationship development and growth as that is the only way to retain a customer for life. A servant leader fosters his business growth through the relationships he or she develops with people over time.

- The wholesome experience of recruiting, identifying the “why” and purpose of an individual, creating a plan of action, working together on that plan, imparting skills and knowledge, caddying one’s partners, and guiding them to business success and eventually life’s success requires a lot of *communication* between individuals. This eventually leads to relationships which often surpass the strength and value of blood relationships.

Everyone cannot be a servant leader, as it requires you to be a *servant* before the world makes you a *leader*. Mahatma Gandhi was a great example of this. People who believe in this philosophy and who strives everyday to live a life of a servant leader eventually build massive teams—which in turn practice the same philosophy and reach millions of people around the world. Network marketing is the only business model in the world where servant leadership is seen at its best, has created success for millions of people, and will remain as the most resounding business-building value in the world. Servant leadership will lead you to success which can be passed on for generations. I am working hard every day to practice servant leadership.

CHERIAN MATHEW is a network marketing leader who heads a global organization of half a million distributors. He started building his team in Bahrain, expanded into neighboring Middle Eastern countries, and from there into Africa and India.

Born in a small Indian village, Cherian dreamed of being able to help his parents move beyond their limited world. After eleven years of employment in the corporate world and no way in sight to achieve his goals, Cherian finally discovered network marketing, the vehicle that would allow him to realize his childhood dream—and many more.

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