

# Leading at a **HIGHER** Level

When you are leading at a higher level, the development of people is of equal importance to performance.

by Ken Blanchard

For years, The Ken Blanchard Companies® has defined leadership as an influence process. We believed that anytime you tried to influence the thoughts and actions of others toward goal accomplishment in either your personal or professional life you were engaging in leadership. In recent years, The Ken Blanchard Companies has changed its definition of leadership to “the capacity to influence others by unleashing the potential and power of people and organizations for the greater good.”



**KEN BLANCHARD** HAS HAD AN EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT ON THE DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AND COMPANIES. HIS PHENOMENAL BESTSELLER, *THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER*, CO-AUTHORED BY SPENCER JOHNSON, HAS SOLD 13 MILLION COPIES. HE IS CHIEF SPIRITUAL OFFICER OF THE KEN BLANCHARD COMPANIES, AN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND CONSULTING FIRM HE CO-FOUNDED IN 1979 WITH HIS WIFE, MARGIE.

We made this change for an important reason. When the definition of leadership focuses only on goal accomplishment, some people think that leadership is only about results.

The key phrase in our new definition is *the greater good*—what is best for all involved. We think leadership is a high calling. Leadership should not be purely for personal gain or goal accomplishment; it should have a much higher purpose than that.

### Leading at a Higher Level

While leaders can be successful in the short run by emphasizing goal accomplishment, what tends to fall by the wayside is the condition of the human organization. Those leaders don't always take morale and job satisfaction into consideration—only results.

In business, with that kind of leadership, it is a short leap to thinking that the only reason to be in business is to make money. There is an either/or added to people and results. Leaders falsely believe that they can't focus on both at the same time.

When you are leading at a higher level, you have a *both/and* philosophy. The development of people is of equal importance to performance. As a result, the focus of leading at a higher level is on long-term results and human satisfaction. Leading at a higher level, therefore, is a process. We define it as the process of achieving worthwhile results while acting with respect, care and fairness for the well-being of all involved.

### Four Key Steps

The Ken Blanchard Companies has found that in organizations where leading at a higher level is the rule rather than the exception, leaders do four things well.

#### 1. They set their sights on the right target and vision.

Great organizations focus on three bottom lines instead of just one. In addition to financial success, leaders at great organizations know that measuring their success with people—both customers and employees—is just as important as measuring the success of their financial bottom line.

In these organizations, developing loyal customers and engaged employees is considered equal to good financial performance. Leaders at these companies know that to succeed they must create a motivating environment for employees, which results in better customer service, which leads to higher profits.

#### 2. They treat their customers right.

To keep your customers today, you can't be content just to satisfy them. Instead, you have to create raving fans—customers who are so excited about the way you treat them that they want to tell everyone about

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you. Companies that create raving fans routinely do the unexpected on behalf of their customers and then enjoy the growth generated by customers bragging about them to prospective clients.

### 3. They treat their people right.

Without committed and empowered employees, you can never provide good service. You can't treat your people poorly and expect them to treat your customers well. Treating your people right begins with good performance planning that gets things going in the right direction by letting them know what they will be held accountable for—goals—and what good behavior looks like—performance standards. It continues with managers who provide the right

amount of direction and support that each individual employee needs to achieve those goals and performance standards.

### 4. They have the right kind of leadership.

The most effective leaders realize that leadership is not about them and that they are only as good as the people they lead. These kinds of leaders seek to be serving leaders instead of self-serving leaders. In this model, once a vision has been set, leaders move themselves to the bottom of the hierarchy, acting as a cheerleader, supporter and encourager to the people who report to them.

Leadership needs to be about more than just self-interest. It's only when you realize that it's not about you that you can begin to

lead at a higher level. Effective leadership starts with looking at yourself—who you are, what you stand for and how you take initiative when you don't have position power. This is leadership not based on false pride or fear but grounded in humility and focused on the greater good. With the right kind of leadership, leading at a higher level can become a reality. The result is an organization where people and profits both grow and thrive.

### Great Leadership Begins with a Serving Heart

At The Ken Blanchard Companies much of our work has focused on leadership behavior and how to improve leadership style and methods. In recent years we have

## DEVELOPING A LEADERSHIP POINT OF VIEW

I would like to share with you my thoughts on how to develop your leadership point of view. Not only will this help you clarify your thoughts on leadership, it will also prepare you to share your leadership point of view with others.

### Why is developing a clear leadership point of view important?

Once you have developed a clear leadership point of view, it becomes possible to clearly communicate it with those around you. By sharing your leadership point of view with the people who report to you, they will not only have the benefit of understanding where you're coming from but they'll also understand what you expect from them and what they can expect from you. Your sharing can help them—and those around them—explore their own thinking about leadership.

### Elements of a Leadership Point of View

In determining your leadership point of view, you should be able to answer seven questions:

#### 1. Who are the influencers (leaders) in your life?

When we ask people who most affected their lives, seldom do they mention bosses or other organizational leaders. More often they talk about their parents, grandparents, friends, coaches or teachers. What did you learn from these people about leadership? How did their influences help your leadership point of view evolve?

#### 2. Think of your life purpose. Why are you here, and what do you want to accomplish?

If an organization doesn't have a clear purpose and sense of what business it's in, there's something wrong. Yet few people have a clear sense of their life's purpose. How can you make good decisions about how you should use your time if you don't know what business you're in?

#### 3. Which of your core values will guide your behavior as you attempt to live your life "on purpose"?

It has been said that the most important thing in life is to decide what's most important. People don't all value the same things. Some people value wealth and power, while others are more concerned with safety or survival. Success is a value; integrity and relationships are



values, as well. Values are beliefs you feel strongly about because you choose them over other alternatives.

In trying to determine what your values are, you might start with a long list. But fewer are better, particularly if you want your values to guide your behavior. We contend that more than three or four values are too many and can become immobilizing. Pick out what you think are your most important values.

You'll also want to rank the order of your values. Why? Because values are sometimes in conflict. For example, if you value financial growth but integrity is your core value, any activities that could lead to financial gain must first be checked against your integrity value. The Ken Blanchard Companies® values are ranked as Ethical Behavior, Relationships, Success and Learning.

**4. Given what you've learned from past leaders, your life purpose and your core values, what are your beliefs about leading and motivating people?**

Your beliefs are the essence of your leadership point of view. These should flow naturally from the people who have influenced you, and from your purpose and values.

**5. What can your people expect from you?**

Leadership is not something you do to people, it's something you do with people. Letting people know what they can expect from you underscores

the idea that leadership is a partnership process. It gives people a picture of what your behavior will look like under your leadership.

**6. What do you expect from your people?**

Because leading is a partnership process, it is perfectly reasonable—in fact, it's imperative—that you let people know what you expect from them. It gives people a picture of what their behavior will look like under your leadership.

**7. How will you set an example for your people?**

Your leadership point of view should let others know how you will set an example for the values and behaviors you are encouraging. As most parents know, people learn from your behavior, not from your words. Leaders must walk their talk. Developing a leadership point of view by following the method above creates a clear path for you to follow.

**And Finally**

As you develop your leadership point of view, don't be hard on yourself. This might be your first time thinking about your beliefs about leading and motivating people. Incorporate the ideas above and keep working at it. Have open and honest dialogues with those you lead and with those who lead you. The world needs more leaders who are leading at a higher level. Be a leader who makes a positive difference. People are counting on you.

**The most effective leaders realize that leadership is not about them and that they are only as good as the people they lead.**



added to this model by looking at leadership character and intention. Why are you leading—is it to serve or to be served? Answering this question in a truthful way is very important. We believe that if leaders don't have the heart right, they simply won't ever get leadership right.

Robert Greenleaf first coined the term *servant leadership* in 1970 and published widely on the concept for the next 20 years. Yet when people hear the phrase *servant leadership* they are often confused. They immediately conjure up thoughts of the inmates running the prison or trying to please everyone. Others think servant leadership is only for church leaders.

The problem is these people don't understand that leadership has two parts: vision and implementation. Because of this, they think you can't lead and serve at the same time.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

**Setting the Vision vs. Implementing the Plan**

The first part of leadership—setting the vision—is where a leader defines the direction, and communicates what the organization stands for and wants to accomplish.

Once people are clear about where they are going, the leader's role shifts to a service mindset for the task of implementation—the second aspect of leadership. How do you make the dream happen? This is where the servant aspect of servant leadership comes into play.

In his book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins contends that true leadership—the essence of what people long for and want desperately to follow—implies a certain humility that is appropriate and elicits the best response from people.

He found two characteristics that describe great leaders: will and humility. Will is the determination to follow through on a vision/mission/goal. Humility is the capacity to realize that leadership is not about the leader; it's about the people and what they need.

According to Collins, when things are going well for typical self-serving leaders, they look in the mirror, beat their chests and tell themselves how good they are. When things go wrong, they look out the window and blame everyone else. On the other hand, when things go well for great leaders, they look out the window and give everybody else the credit. When things go wrong, these servant leaders look in the mirror and ask questions such as, “What could I have done differently that would have allowed these people to be as great as they could be?”

### Serving or Self-Serving?

When we talk about servant leadership and ask people whether they are a servant leader or a self-serving leader, no one will admit they're a self-serving leader. Yet we observe self-serving leadership all the time. What is the difference?

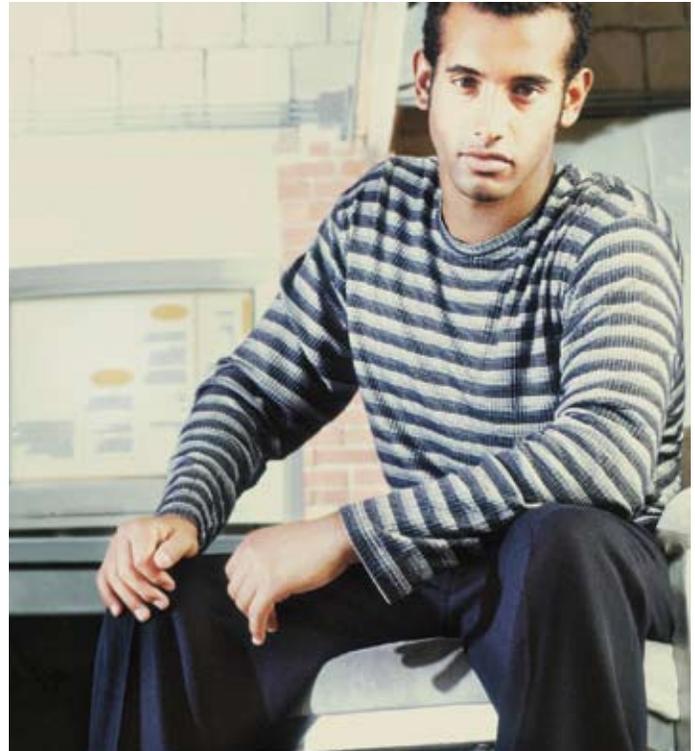
Too many people think that who they are is their position and the power it gives them.

Yet that's not true. Where does your power come from? It's not from your position; it's from the people whose lives you touch. You finally become a true leader when you real-

ize that life is about what you give rather than what you get. The shift from self-serving leadership to leadership that serves others is motivated by a change in heart.

Servant leaders realize that leadership is not about them. It's about what and who they are serving. Effective servant leaders recognize that their jobs are to create and maintain cultures that turn on employees so they can turn on customers.

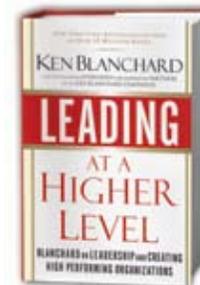
Today's leaders need to be highly skilled in both setting overall vision, and serving in the role of coach and supporter for their people in helping them to get their jobs done. These leaders do that by looking down



the traditional hierarchy and saying, “What can I do for you?” rather than having their people looking up the hierarchy and saying, “What can we do for you?” They constantly try to find out what their people need to be successful. Servant leaders want to make a difference in the lives of their people and, in the process, impact the organization. **SH**



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