



Becoming Leo: Servant Leadership as a Pedagogical Philosophy

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Abstract

Teachers must accept that they need (and are required by law) to do more for their students than they have ever before been expected to do. If success in the classroom for every student is a priority, this neither can nor should be readily disregarded. The question is not whether teachers have to better assist struggling students, but rather are they adequately prepared and equipped with strategies to be more involved in ways that might help them overcome the obstacles they face daily. Robert Greeleaf's philosophy of servant leadership is a technique teachers should consider if they aspire to better help students surmount their daily struggles and be more willing to engage in learning. Those that adopt servant leadership and apply its principles in their classrooms will be more equipped to help students face daily obstacles by turning away from authoritative instructional techniques towards a more all-encompassing, communal approach to learning.

Keywords: *Robert Greenleaf, servant leadership, critical spiritual pedagogy*

Introduction

Anyone who has ever stepped foot in a classroom understands that all students at one time or another are going to struggle in some way. Time management, test anxiety, social awkwardness, indifference to learning, organizational skills, parental pressures—all of these (and a host of others) have been well documented by scholars as serious issues that characterize the daily experiences of students in America, impeding the ability of many to find meaning in their intellectual development and engage in classroom activities. Marge Scherer used the phrase “the silent strugglers” to describe these students and suggested broadening its scope to include more than those labeled at-risk. “In a sense,” she stated, “every student struggles with something.”¹ This is an unavoidable part of education every teacher should acknowledge.

Teachers must accept that they need (and are required by law) to do more for their students than they have ever before been expected to do. If success in the classroom for every student is a priority, this neither can nor should be readily disregarded. The question is not whether teachers have to better assist struggling students, but rather are they adequately prepared and

1. Marge Scherer, “Perspectives/The Silent Strugglers,” *Educational Leadership* 63, no. 5 (2006): 7.

equipped with strategies to be more involved in ways that might help them overcome the obstacles they face daily. Are they ready and able to help the silent strugglers Scherer suggested are in need of more assistance? If teachers are to ensure all students receive the high quality educational opportunities they deserve, this has to happen.

The Servant Leadership Philosophy

In this paper I promote Robert Greenleaf's philosophy of servant leadership as a technique for teachers to consider if they aspire to better help students surmount their daily struggles and be more willing to engage in learning. I assert that teachers who adopt servant leadership and apply its principles in their classrooms will be more equipped to help students face daily obstacles by turning away from authoritative instructional techniques towards a more all-encompassing, communal approach to learning. I do not claim this is the only effective approach for teachers to use in helping struggling students. Rather, I am optimistic about what it can do for them in light of the assistance and intervention many need to make it through the challenges of the school day and achieve their intellectual potential. Based on anecdotal and experiential research, I believe that servant leadership as a pedagogical philosophy for teachers is well worth considering.

"Servant leadership," according to the Greenleaf Center, "is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world."² A more spiritual approach to interacting with students than most might be familiar or comfortable with, servant leadership can be a liberating philosophy for those teachers feeling trapped and helpless concerning their abilities to help students in need. For those individuals open-minded enough to consider what it has to offer, servant leadership can encourage positive change in themselves and their students. For those less inclined to consider change, the following may result in some introspection concerning what it means to be a teacher in America today and the role they play in the development of their students.

The Story of Leo

Specifically, it is the story of Leo that can encourage consideration of service as a teaching philosophy. Referenced in the first few pages of his book, Greenleaf admitted that the idea of servant leadership first came to him while reading Herman Hesse's *The Journey to the East* and contemplating the role of Leo in the story. "He is a person of extraordinary presence," we are told. "All goes well until Leo disappears."³ For Greenleaf, Leo embodied the leadership principles he felt were most conducive to having a positive influence over individuals and the groups with which they associated. It was specifically from Leo that the idea for servant leadership was born and it is in Hesse's novella where one can find out more about this character and how he modeled the ideal put forth by Greenleaf. For teachers interested in servant leadership as a pedagogical philosophy, Leo's story is enlightening.

"This unaffected man had something so pleasing, so unobtrusively winning about him that everyone loved," is one of the first descriptions of Leo given by the narrator in *The Journey*

2. "What is Servant Leadership?" *Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership*, accessed April 29, 2015, <https://greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/>

3. Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist, 2002), 21.

to the East.⁴ Relatively ignored by those around him, he is characterized as the “ideal servant” of a group simply called the League engaged in a magnificent and heroic journey, the exact purpose of which is never made clear. Though none are aware of their final destination, all are united in their intentions and confident at the outset they will arrive. Like the students in every classroom, each came with their own baggage and a general sense of direction while none knew exactly where they would end up. As the narrator explained concerning the membership, “Each one of them had his own dream, his wish, his secret heart’s desire, and yet they all flowed together in the great stream and all belonged to each other, shared the same reverence and the same faith, and had made the same vow!”⁵ Though every member had their own goal and purpose for being part of the excursion, the cohesiveness of the group is made clear through Leo’s presence.

In the beginning of the journey all is well. The narrator, himself a member of the League, chronicles episodic sojourns in distant lands where spiritual experiences are had on a seemingly endless trek eastward. The value of Leo to the travelers, who is described by Hesse as simple, natural, and friendly in an assuming way, is clear and his understanding of the excursion’s intentions unparalleled among them. As the narrator stated, “Leo knew all kinds of things, that he perhaps knew more than us, who were ostensibly his masters.”⁶ With Leo present there is an apparent air of confidence and direction among the members. Unfortunately for those on the journey, this would soon come to end.

In a moment of suddenness, Leo disappears without reason. With a “feeling of impending disaster and menacing destiny” the League members awaken to find their faithful servant gone and unable to be found. “This was the beginning of trouble,” the narrator continued, “the first indication of a storm which would break over us.”⁷ With an increasing sense of hopelessness growing within the group, the members begin to question themselves and the certainty of their involvement on the journey. In Leo’s disappearance and the futile search for him, the coterie’s dissolution comes quickly to fruition. As the narrator reflected later in the text, “Hardly had Leo left us, when faith and concord amongst us was at an end; it was as if the life-blood of our group flowed away from an invisible wound...indeed, it did seem as if the prosperity of the League, the cohesion of the whole, was completely gone with Leo’s departure from our little group.”⁸ Without Leo, the group dissolved, each member turning away from the rest and the original purpose of the journey.

It is eventually revealed that Leo was not simply the servant but rather President of the League. His calculated exodus from the group was the beginning of a test of faithfulness to its principles. And in the final moments of the story, it is understood that it was not Leo who abandoned the group, but rather the members themselves. Without his service, unassuming presence, and unifying aura, the wayfarers had become disillusioned and confused as one after another deserted the others and their eastward trek. It is apparent that without Leo—without a self-effacing and selfless leader whose actions were grounded in service to the undertaking rather than individual gain—both the group and its members were lost. As Greenleaf made clear in his book, to lead is to serve. Leo is the model of this maxim. With his service to the group gone, so too was the confidence and faith of every member in themselves and the journey. Again, for the teacher interested in becoming a servant leader in the classroom, the story of Leo offers insight into the

4. Hermann Hesse, *The Journey to the East* (New York: Picador, 1956), 25.

5. *Ibid.*, 23-24.

6. *Ibid.*, 35.

7. *Ibid.*, 38.

8. *Ibid.*, 133.

unassuming presence and quiet influence such an individual can have over others and the group as a whole.

Larry C. Spears, former President and CEO of the Greenleaf Center, summed up the essence of servant leadership in the following statement: “True leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others.”⁹ This was the spirit of Leo and the essence of his involvement with the League. Servant leaders are individuals who have a natural predisposition to share decision-making power, encourage community, and put the needs of others before their own, all of which Leo exemplified during the group’s journey. As Greenleaf asked in his initial essay on the subject, “Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?”¹⁰ Not something that can be attained easily, servant leadership is a life-long process, a way of living and engaging others that has the potential to be instrumental in encouraging change for the betterment of all. According to Spears, “Servant leadership truly offers hope and guidance for a new era of human development and a prescription for creating healthy organizations.”¹¹ For teachers, hope and guidance is exactly what is needed to help them in their day-to-day dealings with students who are struggling or disaffected for whatever reasons.

Characteristics of Servant Leadership

Spears catalogues ten characteristics of servant leadership I encourage teachers to adopt if they want to better help their students work their way through the stress and strain of classroom life.¹² These are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. If teachers became aware of these characteristics and used each in their classrooms, they would better serve their students, especially those who may be struggling in the silent manner Scherer spoke of. The following describes these characteristics and why teachers would be well served if they allowed them to inform their pedagogical philosophies.

Listening and Empathy

The Stoic philosopher Epictetus supposedly said, “Nature hath given men one tongue but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak.” In order to hear what others are saying we must first stop talking, and this ironically includes teachers. Servant leaders are individuals who are deeply committed to hearing the voices of others and those within themselves. They are reflective in nature and are constantly examining their thoughts and actions within the context of the needs of others. They make a conscientious effort to listen to what others are saying, both verbally and non-verbally, and truly care about what is being said rather than simply waiting to speak.

Coupled with empathy, listening is the foundation upon which the remaining characteristics of servant leadership are constructed. One cannot begin to heal, be aware, persuade, or build

9. Larry C. Spears, “The Understanding and Practice of Servant Leadership,” (presentation, Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University School of Business & Leadership, Virginia Beach, VA, August, 2005), 2.

10. Robert K. Greenleaf, “The Servant as Leader,” *Leadership Arlington*, accessed February 1, 2015, <https://www.leadershiparlington.org/pdf/TheServantasLeader.pdf>.

11. Larry C. Spears, “Character and Servant Leadership: Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders,” *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership* 1, no. 1 (2010): 26.

12. *Ibid.*

a community without listening to those around them and understanding their situations. For the teacher considering servant leadership, learning to listen and embracing empathy are essential to moving beyond simple classroom instruction towards understanding the needs of all students and ensuring these are met.

Today, teachers are expected to do much more than simply teach. And gone are the days when students sat neatly and quietly in rows, listening attentively yet passively to the lesson being taught. Rather, teachers today must provide evidence they are adopting strategies to ensure all students are learning. For most, this is mandated by law and even part of their evaluation processes. Yet many are attempting to do so without listening to their students, hearing their stories, and figuring out what their actual needs are. The teacher who wishes to serve their students and who is truly concerned about their development makes listening the most important thing they do. Without listening they cannot hear, without hearing they cannot know, and without knowing they cannot empathize and begin to coordinate their classroom activities to meet the needs of every student and in the process empower them to learn.

Michael P. Nichols stated in his book *The Lost Art of Listening*, “Being listened to means that we are taken seriously, that our ideas and feelings are known and, ultimately, that what we have to say matters.”¹³ Imagine a classroom where students felt this way—understood and empowered, heard and cared for. Imagine what a teacher can do who creates an environment characterized by this feeling among their students. As Greenleaf asserted, “(Listening) begins with a genuine interest that is manifest in close attention, and it goes on to understanding in depth—whence cometh wisdom.”¹⁴ The teacher who becomes a listener will be afforded much greater insight into the needs of their students and have a better conception of what they can do to meet them.

Healing and Awareness

“One of the great strengths of servant-leadership,” Spears stated, “is the potential for healing one’s self and others.”¹⁵ Servant leadership rests on the principle that individuals are not whole and that to serve others is to complete ourselves and them alike. Consider the following passage from Thomas Merton: “We will see that we are human, like everyone else, that we all have weaknesses and deficiencies, and that these limitations of ours play a most important role in all our lives. It is because of them that we need others and others need us.”¹⁶

Merton, a Trappist monk and author of the book *No Man Is an Island*, understood and wrote extensively on the idea that life, regardless of struggle and despair, has meaning and that only through our relationships with others will we come to better understand ourselves. Becoming aware of our own faults and weaknesses and understanding how our interaction with others helps fulfill our lives is critical to being a servant leader. To heal, according to Greenleaf, is to make whole. “There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if,” he stated, “implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share.”¹⁷ The servant leader is aware of their limitations

13. Michael P. Nichols, *The Lost Art of Listening: How Learning to Listen Can Improve Relationships* (New York: Guilford, 2009), 9.

14. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 313.

15. Spears, “The Understanding and Practice of Servant Leadership,” 3.

16. Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island* (New York: Harcourt, 1983), xxi.

17. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 50.

and seeks the opportunity to serve others not only so that they might help them become whole, but also to help themselves in this regard. As Merton stated, “We cannot find ourselves within ourselves, but only in others.”¹⁸

For the teacher interested in becoming a servant leader, the idea of healing might make them initially uncomfortable, especially if only given shallow consideration. Unsurprisingly, many are likely unwilling to admit they have certain weaknesses and faults or acknowledge these might be partially responsible for the inability or unwillingness of students to engage in their classes. As a defensive posture, this is natural and should not deter anyone from considering servant leadership. Few of us like to admit we might lack certain skills and knowledges needed to reach all of our students. To consider this makes us feel like failures and as teachers this is personally unacceptable and antithetical to the function we perform. But to be a servant leader in the classroom means we must first accept the fact that we are neither perfect nor complete, and that our interactions with our students can help us recognize our deficiencies.

Essentially, by focusing on healing our students—helping them become more whole—we are healing ourselves. In healing ourselves we in turn become more capable of healing our students. And as this cycle continues, growth in everyone occurs. Coupled with listening and empathy, healing makes up what one might call the spiritual characteristics of servant leadership. Once these are embraced by a teacher, they can begin to focus on applying these principles in their preparation, instruction, and daily interactions with students.

Persuasion, Conceptualization, and Foresight

Two of the most important ways a servant leader begins to shape and influence an organization and its members are through conceptualization and persuasion. This means they can think beyond immediate, short-term gains and towards future goals and dreams. They do this while considering the communication techniques required to convince others of the direction needed to make these a reality. There is no room for coercion in the lexicon of servant leadership. Rather, a servant leader’s goal should be towards gaining consensus among the group, not coercing members into following a preordained path. In simplest terms, the servant leader is the antithesis of Machiavellianism where power and authority is maintained through deceptive techniques, manipulation, and the engendering of a culture of fear.

Machiavellian leadership focuses its attention on the leader first and foremost and how they can go about maintaining their position of authority. Meanness and the coercive techniques that accompany it have no place in a leadership ideology grounded in service to others. Instead, the servant leader should be capable of conceptualizing the mission and direction of the organization, an approach that encompasses thinking beyond the here and now. Once this is achieved, persuasive rather than coercive methods are used to attain consensus. The results are a clear, growth-oriented plan of action that everyone agrees with and believes they had a hand in crafting.

Conceptualization and persuasion do not characterize a leadership style that is authoritarian, and the teacher as power broker is regrettably still the norm. As previously alluded to, it is hard for a teacher to consider giving up some of their authority; this seems to be incompatible with what we consider the role of the teacher to be and misguided in light of our responsibilities for the intellectual development of our students. We hold the keys to the kingdom and will decide who will use them and when. The teacher that chooses servant leadership understands that a

18. Merton, xv.

coercive philosophy of education is never conducive to real learning. Though our students may do the homework and remember what they have been taught up through whatever assessment is given, if inveigled into doing these things it has the potential to be meaningless.

“The more you rely on coercion and extrinsic inducements, as a matter of fact,” asserted educationist Alfie Kohn, “the less interest students are likely to have in whatever they are induced to do.”¹⁹ A servant leader in the classroom recognizes the futility of manipulation, rejects it as a pedagogical approach, and instead considers the importance of including their students in the conceptualization process. If this is done, simple persuasive techniques rather than coerciveness become the foundation for learning. The result is a classroom where students feel actively engaged in the learning process rather than passively submissive to the authority of the teacher.

Inherently connected to persuasion and conceptualization is the ability of the servant leader to use foresight. According to Spears, “Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future.”²⁰ This mentality is reflected in the following passage from the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu’s *Tao Te Ching*:

When it is peaceful, it is easy to maintain
 When it shows no signs, it is easy to plan
 When it is fragile, it is easy to break
 When it is small, it is easy to scatter
 Act on it when it has not yet begun
 Treat it when it is not yet chaotic
 A tree thick enough to embrace
 Grows from the tiny sapling
 A tower of nine levels
 Starts from the dirt heap
 A journey of a thousand miles
 Begins beneath the feet²¹

Though Lao Tzu may have believed that the capacity for prescience was something anyone could gain through a deeper understanding of and commitment to the Tao, Spears admitted this might be a leadership characteristic one is born with rather than learns. For teachers who truly care about the development of their students, this should not deter them from becoming servant leaders in the classroom who consider past events and present happenings as sources of insight for future decisions and actions. As Greenleaf stated, “(One) must cultivate the conditions that favor intuition...The prudent person is one who constantly thinks of now as the moving concept in which past, present moment, and future are one organic entity.”²² The servant leader envisions the first step of a journey before even taking it; they lead through foresight rather than response and reaction. To do the latter, according to Greenleaf, is an ethical failure on the part of a leader and a negation of their charge.

19. Alfie Kohn, “How to Create Nonreaders: Reflections on Motivation, Learning, and Sharing Power,” *English Journal* 100, no. 1 (2010): 16.

20. Spears, “Character and Servant Leadership,” 28.

21. Laozi, *Tao Te Ching: Annotated & Explained*, trans. Derek Lin (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths, 2007), 129.

22. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 38.

For the teacher, foresight is a technique that can have great benefits in their classrooms if applied consistently. Too often teachers react to what immediately takes place rather than consider prior to each lesson what has happened in the past, might happen in the present, and plan accordingly. The result is a hastily organized experience where the slightest mishap can potentially derail the lesson and disengage students. Though planning ahead is important, this does not mean foresight is being used by the teacher. It rather is applied when reflective anticipation becomes a critical part of the lesson-planning process. Based on previous experiences, servant leader teachers consider what could happen and how students might respond to specific aspects of each day's class. To do this requires practice and constant cultivation; it requires the teacher to acknowledge the past, be aware of the present, and be mindful of what might occur daily.

Stewardship and Commitment to the Growth of People

In their relationships with others, servant leaders must also be stewards committed to the growth of every individual they serve. They are entrusted to hold the wellbeing of others and the institutions they lead above their own and must perform this duty with the interests of all in mind. Consideration of the greater good is critical for the servant leader and their actions should reflect a championing of this conviction. Spears used the word “nurture” to inform this characteristic; the servant leader must do everything they can to foster growth in those they lead. This can range from inclusive decision making to providing assistance to those who might fall on hard times and be in need of even greater help, akin to the silent strugglers every classroom has. St. Francis of Assisi once said, “Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received—only what you have given.”²³ The servant leader is one who yields to others, expecting and taking nothing in return. When they depart, as Leo momentarily did when he left the travelers, it is not for their own sake or personal gain but for the betterment of the group and the individuals they serve.

Nurturing is at the core of education and is what teachers should be doing daily in their classrooms regardless of whether or not they aspire to be servant leaders. The word “educate” derives from the Latin *educare* which means to rear or bring up. Teachers who embrace stewardship understand that nurturing is a critical component of their pedagogy and should inform their daily planning, preparation, and classroom activities. As Greenleaf stated regarding the importance of this role in education, “Raise the spirit of young people, help them build their confidence that they can successfully contend with the condition, work with them to find the direction they need to go and the competencies they need to acquire.”²⁴ Consider how productive the classroom might be where nurturing for confidence, competency, and success characterizes the relationship between every pupil and teacher.

One cannot embrace stewardship without having a deep sense of commitment to others. This commitment translates into genuine care for their wellbeing above one's own and begins through recognition of their value as fellow humans, neither different nor subordinate. As challenging as this may be for those in positions of authority such as teachers, particularly in light of the contemporary emphasis on competition and individual achievement, it is paramount for all

23. St. Francis of Assisi quoted in Edie Fraser and Robyn Freedman Spizman, *Do Your Giving While You're Living: Inspirational Lessons on What You Can do to Make a Difference Tomorrow* (Garden City, NY: Morgan James, 2009), 220.

24. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 185.

servant leaders to embrace this approach. This characteristic is resonant of the following passage from Peter Gabel:

I aspire to see you and to exist in relation to you not as a mere “you over there,” as a mere passing or glancing presence going by, but as a full presence both there and here, the very completion of myself insofar as we emerge into a We that is neither fleeting nor in danger of dissolving back into reciprocal solitudes corroded by mistrust and fear.²⁵

The person who is committed to the wellbeing and growth of those they serve is able to see herself/himself in others and encourage a reciprocal recognition from them. Teachers who embrace this approach are able to recognize in their students themselves; their struggles are their struggles, their successes theirs also. Immanuel Kant in his *Grounding of a Metaphysics of Morals*, specifically the second formulation of his categorical imperative, stated, “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end.”²⁶ For the classroom teacher, commitment begins with an acknowledgement that their students are means to nothing, but rather ends in themselves, all valuable regardless of their backgrounds, efforts, levels of intelligence, or any other determining factor. When the teacher begins to truly see the inherent value of every student—inherently recognizing their own value as well—they can become committed to each individually and begin to put their needs above their own. Only then will they truly begin to serve their students by ensuring the wellbeing of each is provided for.

Community Building

Servant leaders are able to recognize in those they serve an innate desire to be part of something greater than themselves. Describing it as “the lost knowledge of our times,” Greenleaf iterated the importance of community to the philosophy of servant leadership. “Where community doesn’t exist,” he asserted, “trust, respect, and ethical behavior are difficult for the young to learn and for the old to maintain.”²⁷ It is the responsibility of the servant leader to build a sense of community among those they lead and to make sure everyone feels accepted as a meaningful member of the greater group. All should feel valued and respected; none should feel marginalized, ill-treated, or repressed. Consider the following by Robert Bellah:

In my understanding of community shared values and goals do imply something more than procedural agreement, they do imply some agreements about substance, but they do not require anything like total or unarguable agreement. My idea of a good community is one in which there is argument, even conflict, about the meaning of the shared values and goals, and certainly about how they will be actualized in everyday life. Community as I see it is a form of intelligent, reflective life, in which there is indeed consen-

25. Peter Gabel, “A Spiritual Way of Seeing,” *truthout*, June 27, 2013, <http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/17242>.

26. Immanuel Kant quoted in Lawrence Hinman, *Ethics: A Pluralistic Approach to Moral Theory* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2013), 173.

27. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, 52.

sus, but where the consensus can be challenged and changes, often gradually, sometimes radically, over time.²⁸

The teacher committed to becoming a servant leader in the classroom understands Bellah's conception of community as characterized by exchange, reflection, and actualization of group goals. They understand there is need for consensus but never at the expense of the growth of the group or the individual members. They create an environment where values are shared with the understanding these might change periodically as new ideas and goals gradually emerge.

For Greenleaf, the foundation of community building is a word few teachers are comfortable using in terms of their classrooms and students—love. Only when leaders embrace their roles in such a fashion can the importance of community be restored. In the classroom, this means the teacher takes on absolute responsibility for the growth of every student. As servant leader to them all, there is no limit to their liability in this regard. To do this they must love every student, something few teachers are even comfortable talking about let alone expressing concerning their classes. “Love is an undefinable term, and its manifestations are both subtle and infinite,” asserted Greenleaf.²⁹ For the servant leader in the classroom, these demonstrations of caring and concern, though likely unrecognizable to any outside observer, have the potential to profoundly impact a student's development, happiness, and life. Though it may be undefinable, it is known when felt. Servant leader teachers strive to make this feeling characterize their classroom communities and relationships with each student.

As previously stated, all students struggle at one time or another. This is an unavoidable reality of the profession. Are teachers equipped to handle every scenario that presents itself in regards to these struggles? Not likely. Will becoming a servant leader in the classroom make them better prepared and capable of doing so? If one truly cares about one's students, their well-being, and their individual development, allowing the principles of servant leadership to inform one's pedagogy is critical. Striving to become Leo is the first step in a journey that just might last a thousand miles. With our selfless encouragement and service to their growth, the tiny saplings in our classrooms might one day become the trees thick enough for us to embrace.

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