

## Walter Hailey's Leadership Lessons

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### Lesson #6: Be a Servant Leader and Show How Much You Care. Ask: How Can I Help You with Your Assignment?

When was the last time your boss asked you: *What can I do to help you?* It's not a question most of us have *ever* heard coming from our bosses. Most bosses lead like Dilbert's boss, in the cartoon, *Dilbert*. The boss gives the orders and Dilbert follows obediently questioning the directive every step of the way. Servant leaders are different. Hailey's 6<sup>th</sup> leadership lesson guides us to be servant leaders.

Servant leaders are directed by a few key attitudes that make them atypical. In fact, some of the key tenets of servant leadership are directly contradictory to traditional *Dilbert* leadership models.

What do you need to do to become a servant leader?

**First**, you must genuinely care about your people. While traditional leaders ask themselves how their subordinates can serve them, servant leaders tend to put others first. They continuously ask (themselves and others) how they



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can help.

**Second**, as a servant leader, you must see yourself as a steward of a valuable resource – your people. Servant leaders take the time to coach and train employees. While traditional leaders might simply terminate a subordinate who isn't meeting expectations, servant leaders will try to understand why the employee isn't as successful as he or she should be and assist them in meeting expectations.

**Third**, you must value justice and equality. Servant leaders will take the time to know employees and understand the unique gifts of each employee. Servant leaders are more likely to support diversity efforts and programs that encourage success for employees from diverse backgrounds. They recognize that promoting diversity is good for people and good for business.

**Fourth**, you must understand that indebtedness is a part of leadership. When supervisors view leadership as service, they recognize that both leaders and followers owe each other certain things. They recognize the mutual



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they have to their relationship and are willing to be responsible to each other as they work together.

**Fifth**, and perhaps most important, you need to understand your own ethics and values to be an effective servant leader. Servant leaders lead and are led by a clear moral compass. This moral compass will help you create a positive ethical climate in your organization. Servant leaders are open to others and willing to examine their own attitudes and values.

But the question remains, why be a servant leader? The answer is simple. If we empower our employees to do good work, it only stands to reason that we support their efforts. In the long run, service to others will win over self interest. Successful team members who are led by servant leaders will out-perform self-interest-only team members every time. Really!

Some of the ideas for this article came from: Leadership: A Communication Perspective (4th Edition), Waveland Press, 2004.

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With a Masters Degree in communication, Suzanne began her career helping build one of the largest personal development training company's in the world and later became a protégé of the late Walter Hailey. Today, as President and CEO of The Coaching Center (sponsor of the "legendary" Dental Boot Kamp), Suzanne has over 20 years experience consulting and training over 300 different businesses and leads the most qualified case acceptance team in dentistry. Having successfully dealt with every challenge imaginable in the dental office, Suzanne speaks around the country on topics such as Leadership, Case Presentation and Stopping Cancellations and is a keynote speaker at Dental Meetings and Conventions. Her on-stage style, humorous anecdotes and ability to always deliver a relevant and personal message makes her a winning, engaging and unforgettable seminar leader. Suzanne is one of the main faculty for the Dental Boot Kamp Continuum, which has proudly been delivered across the United States and Canada for the last 20 years, graduating over 35,000 dental professionals. Suzanne can be reached at [suzanne@thecoachingcenter.net](mailto:suzanne@thecoachingcenter.net)