

BUILDING REWARDING RELATIONSHIPS USING YOUR LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS

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by
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Leadership *The EPL Way*

Executive Summary

In this paper we will...

- **Firstly** introduce a **powerful model of authentic credible leadership** based on core expectations of an exceptional leader
- **Secondly**, reflect on **authentic credible leadership for rewarding relationships**
- **Thirdly**, discuss four **leadership traits conducive to building rewarding relationships**

1. Key Characteristics of Admired Leaders

Based on feedback from employees in unrelated research projects, the three most frequent responses about admired leadership were:

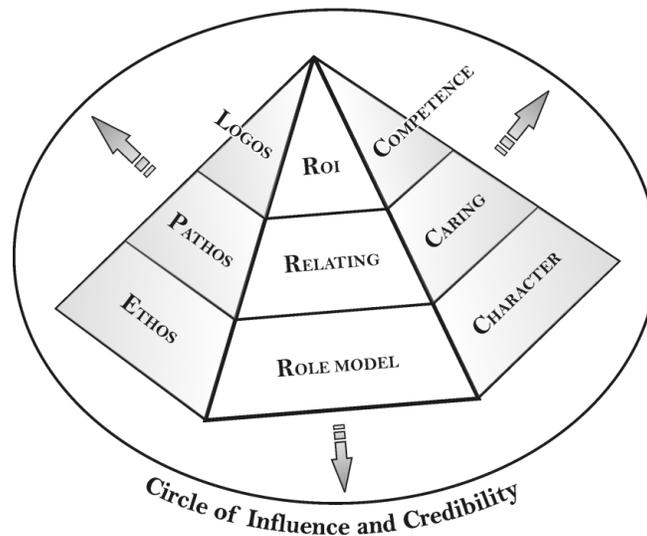
Manning & Curtis (2003)	Kets de Vries (2001)	Zohar & Marshall (2000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity • People Skills • Competence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Life skills • Social Life skills • Cognitive Life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual Intelligence • Emotional Intelligence • IQ

The three most admired leadership traits identified by employees validate the early Greek philosophy branding a **credible person** by three sequentially arranged words:

- **Ethos** ☞ character, Integrity
- **Pathos** ☞ caring, compassion
- **Logos** ☞ competence, Meaningful life and work

This is also the brand of **Leadership *The EPL Way*** as represented in the model below:

THE EPL WAY PYRAMID OF LEADERSHIP, INFLUENCE AND CREDIBILITY



The circle around the Pyramid represents the Circle of Influence and Credibility of the leader. *Credibility* and *credit* share the same root origin, *credo*, meaning *I trust*, or *I believe*. A loan officer checking your credit is literally checking on your store of believability.

2. In search of authentic credible leadership

Integrity statistics

The importance of authentic credible leadership for relationship building is confirmed by the first trait of admired leaders referred to earlier: **Integrity (Character)**. **Integrity or Character** is a primary trait of an authentic leader. Secondary persona traits have no enduring worth in a long-term relationship.

In two unrelated studies in the USA 85% employees placed integrity and honesty at the top of characteristics of admired leaders.

The outcome of lack of integrity in leadership and business in South Africa is seen in an Access Point Survey in 2003 where:

- 69% of South African workers indicated that they distrust their colleagues
- 66% employees indicated that they distrust their immediate bosses.

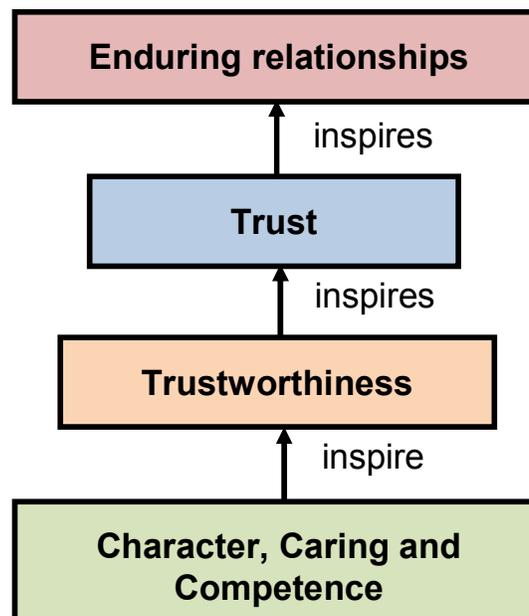
Character building behaviour

Cashman sees **authenticity** as the central core of effective relationships. Imagine a relationship without authenticity!

An authentic credible leader has a character-based, **inside-out approach** to personal and interpersonal effectiveness. The inside-out approach says it is futile to put personality ahead of character, to try to improve relationships with others before improving ourselves. Inside-out means that to **have** quality relationships, **be** the kind of person who generates pleasant relationship. If you want to be trusted, **be** trustworthy (Covey, 1994).

The opposite of inside-out, namely **outside-in** results in unhappy people who feel victimised and immobilised, who focus on the weaknesses of other people and who blame the circumstances they feel are responsible for their own situation (Covey, 1995).

Quality, enduring relationships are also built on **trust**. Trust is built on trustworthiness which, in turn, is built on character, caring and competence (see model).



To summarise, ongoing constructive relationship building requires the leader to:

- be authentic, genuine
- demonstrate integrity or character – it builds trust
- live inside-out
- be trustworthy

3. Building rewarding relationships using your leadership strengths

The 30 statements in the following Questionnaire all represent important leadership qualities. From these and other a number of core leadership qualities are emphasised:

Ethos (Character) related leadership qualities

It should be noted that most of the Ethos related leadership traits are prerequisites for building quality relationships.

- Integrity
- Authenticity, genuineness
- Humility
- Radiating positive energy
- True North directedness
- Lead balanced lives
- Being proactive – accountable, response-able
- Abundance attitude
- Intentionally virtues living
- Being a source of inspiration

Pathos (Caring) related leadership qualities

- The spirit of service
- Giving honest sincere appreciation
- Synergy through partnership – winning with people
- Listening authentically
- Thinking win-win or no deal

Logos (Competence) related leadership qualities

- Competent and skilled as leaders
- Add value to self, others and the organisation
- Accountable for their decisions and behaviour
- Motivate and inspire others
- Manage from the left (brain) and lead from the right

Self-Assessment

Identify your top seven leadership strengths. Then ask yourself how these top leadership qualities could contribute to building rewarding relationships.

In the remaining part of this paper we will reflect on how leadership strengths can contribute to building rewarding relationships. Four of these leadership qualities will be discussed.

ETHOS

1. Integrity – character and persona
2. Radiant energy by applying the 3:1 ratio positive emotions

PATHOS

3. The spirit of service
4. The partnership principle supported by the power of synergy and a win-win orientation

1. Integrity

What is Integrity?

When employees were asked to define Integrity in behavioural terms they used words like *believability* and *credibility*. They use well-known catch phrases like, *They practice what they preach*, *They walk the talk*. Integrity or credibility is mostly about **congruence between words and deeds**. Integrity is the foundation upon which many other qualities are built, such as respect, dignity and trust.

Integrity is inside-out

One of the reasons many people struggle with integrity issues is that they tend to look outside themselves to explain any deficiencies in their own character. But the development of integrity is an inside job. Ultimately you are responsible for your choices and your behaviour.

Our lives are defined by the sum of
our choices.

Integrity and reputation

Your integrity or character is who and what you are. Reputation is what you are supposed to be. Reputation grows like a mushroom, it is made in a moment. Your character is built in a lifetime. If a good reputation is like gold, then having integrity is like owning the mine (Maxwell, 1997).

If I take care of my character,
my reputation will take care of itself.

Assess your Integrity

Please choose one rating in response to each statement by circling the number that corresponds to your rating.

Rating

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Infrequently
- 3 = Sometimes
- 4 = In most situations
- 5 = In all situations

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I tell the truth unless there is an overriding moral reason to withhold it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. My friends and colleagues know they can depend on me to keep my word | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. My friend and colleagues would say that my behaviour is very consistent with my beliefs and values | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. When a situation may prevent me from keeping a promise, I consult with those involved to renegotiate the agreement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. My colleagues would say that I am the kind of person who stands up for my convictions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Interpreting your Score

20 or more: Your level of integrity is praiseworthy. It is quite an achievement in these days to maintain such a high level of integrity.

Below 15: It will enhance your relationships and career if you could deliberately invest in practicing what you preach.

Character and Persona

Is your leadership arising from your *Character*, or is it coming from your *Persona*, the external personality we have created to cope with life circumstances?

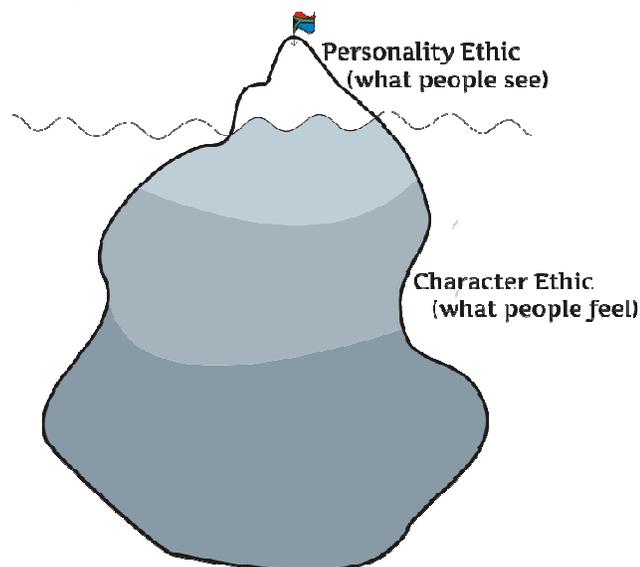
Qualities of character include authenticity, purpose, openness, trust, congruence, compassion, and creating value. When we are **In-Character**, we transform circumstances and open up possibilities and potentialities.

Persona is the personality or *mask* we wear to cope with our life experiences. Persona is built to *protect us* from external stressors, as well as internal fears, limitations, and inadequacies. The purpose of persona is to *protect us* and help us cope. Qualities of the persona include image, safety, security, comfort, control, fear and winning at all costs. When we are **In-Persona** we seek to cope with circumstances.

Character is associated with leading from the *inside-out*, guided by authenticity. **Persona** is associated with leading from the *outside* and is guided by image, self-interest, avoidance and uneasy presence. Unfortunately our tendency is to work harder on our persona, i.e. our image, than on our integrity.

Personal Mastery is not about eliminating persona. It is about increasing character to such a degree that character is primary and persona is secondary.

To have character supporting persona – the inner supporting the outer – is the goal of Personal Mastery (Cashman, 1998). **The Iceberg Model** below illustrates the relationship between character and persona. Image, techniques, and skills are important for one's success in life, as long as it is supported by character ethic.



2. Radiant energy by applying the 3:1 ratio positive emotions

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Chronic fatigue syndrome has become one of the top ten complaints of patients in doctor's rooms. It seems that approximately 20 per cent of men and 30 per cent of women experience a more serious fatigue syndrome. Contributing factors are meaninglessness, depression, junk food and lack of exercise.

People who do not experience meaning in life and who are unhappy, have a low morale, are often without courage and life energy and tend to be unproductive. Speaking of life energy – *one out of three persons experience a lack of life energy*. Literature states that seven out of ten South Africans do not deem their lives as meaningful. More than 40 per cent of employees in South Africa feel depressed about their conditions at work.

What is life energy?

Life energy (L-energy) is the life-giving force which enables us to...

- Think, feel and do
- Communicate and relate with people
- Move
- Work
- Have enough energy and vitality for each day

Where does Life Energy come from?

Energy input comes from the following sources:

- Universal energy
- Food
- Oxygen
- The sun, heat, light and electromagnetic energy
- Exercise
- Water
- Spiritual energy, e.g. enthusiasm, passion, love, kindness, inspiration
- Mental energy, e.g. creative ideas
- Emotional energy, e.g. joy, excitement, fun

Energy input to each cell takes place via the bloodstream and nervous system. Oxygen and nutrients reach the cells through arterial and fine capillary blood vessels. Electrical impulses which ensure the release of nutrients and oxygen are being guided to the cells via the nervous system.

Life Energy Index

The aim of this short questionnaire is to get an indication of your life energy index.

Award marks as follows:

- For each statement, award a mark between 0 and 4 according to the following scale:

0 = Not at all

1 = Very Seldom

2 = Sometimes

3 = Often

4 = Mostly

- Write your mark in the block in front of each statement
- Add up your marks and write your total score in the bigger block at the end of the questionnaire.

1. I have enough energy and vitality for each day
2. I enjoy my daily tasks or my work
3. I think people enjoy my company and generally experience me as a positive person
4. My thoughts and feelings about life are generally cheerful and happy
5. I am passionate and enthusiastic about my life

20

TOTAL

Interpretation

16 – 20: You are seemingly particularly energetic, cheerful, bubbly and a happy person

13 – 15: Your energy level seems to be relatively high. You are doing well and maintain a positive outlook on life.

10 – 12: Your energy level is on a critical balance between good and low. Determine whether it is only temporary.

Below 10: Your life is characterised by limited life energy and little excitement. Determine whether this is your nature, or if your life circumstances contribute to this.

How do we lose life energy?

- **Spiritual:** Energy is lost when a person strays too far from his/her True North, when experiencing meaninglessness, or the person becomes depressed.
- **Physical:** Any physical activity uses energy. Energy is also lost or used due to lack of sleep, physical deterioration due to ageing, illness, physical pain or inflammation.
- **Thoughts:** Negative thoughts are one of the biggest causes of energy drainage.
- **Emotions:** As in the case of destructive thoughts, a lot of energy is used by negative emotions such as worry, anger, aggression, fear and sadness.
- **Relationships:** Demanding and destructive relationships are another big cause for energy loss. In contrast, positive relationships are a source of energy.
- **Work situation:** One loses energy from work anyhow. However, when the work is stressful and unpleasant, it drains the last bit of energy out of you.
- **Life and living circumstances:** It includes factors such as...
 - unpleasant accommodation,
 - little or no greenery like a lawn, trees
 - too cold or too warm environment
 - noise
 - crime, lack of safety
 - bad or lack of service
- **Financial uncertainty:** Energy is also lost through financial problems and worries.

The metaphor of the body as a bottle of energy

A person's energy expenditure can be explained by hand of a metaphor. See your body as a bottle filled with energy during the night while you sleep. A good night of peaceful sleep fills the bottle to the brim by the time you wake in the morning. From the moment you wake up, each movement you make, each negative thought and emotion, use some of this energy. The positive or negative influences of people around you and your environment are all factors using your available energy. Fortunately, you replace some of the energy during the day by what you eat, the oxygen you take in, and the positive encounters with pleasant people during the day.

Energy expenditure

Two guidelines determine the use of energy:

- Firstly, energy flows in the direction of our thoughts and attention. What do you focus on?
- Secondly, energy that is not used constructively, is lost, it is wasted energy. It is like a light in your house switched on unnecessarily, or a tap that leaks.

What do we usually waste our energy on?

We waste energy when we worry about something **nothing can be done** about. Statistics show that 80 per cent of worries never materialise.

We waste energy when we **become angry or unhappy** about trivialities, such as with inconsiderate motorists.

We waste energy when we **become irritated** with the habits and mannerisms of others. Unless you are in a position to change such habits or mannerisms, don't let them negatively impact on you.

We waste energy when we **listen** to the news on the radio or watch news on TV, or watch a programme which is making you angry, irritated or despondent.

We waste energy when we **complain** day after day about the same thing, things that cannot be changed in any case.

In addition to the waste of energy on **destructive things**, it also **damages your health**:

- raises your blood pressure
- raises your LDL cholesterol count
- increases the adrenalin and cortisol level in your body, which is harmful if not used what it is meant for
- inhibits your immune and digestive systems
- raises your risk for cancer, heart-related illness, rheumatism, stomach ulcers, migraine and acne
- damages the protective myelin sheath protecting your nerves through which electrical impulses escape, resulting in energy loss

Maintaining life energy through positive thoughts and feelings - the 3:1 ratio

Dr. Barbara Fredrickson discovered that experiencing positive emotions in a 3-to-1 ratio with negative ones, leads people to a tipping point beyond which they naturally become more resilient to adversity and effortlessly achieve what they once could only imagine. With *positivity*, you'll learn to see new possibilities, bounce back from setbacks, connect with others, and become the best version of yourself.

Radiating positive energy

The countenances of principle-centred people are cheerful, pleasant and happy. Their attitude is optimistic, positive and upbeat. Their spirit is enthusiastic, hopeful, believing. This positive energy is like an energy field or an aura that surrounds them and that similarly charges or changes weaker, negative energy fields around them. They also attract and magnify smaller positive energy fields. Be aware of the effect of your own energy and understand how you radiate and direct it. Positive people see the oak tree in the acorn and understand the process of helping the acorn become a great oak.

3. The spirit of service

The word service has its roots in a Latin word *servare* meaning *to protect*, so when we serve we protect and look after, and this can be a very uplifting experience (Williams, 2005).

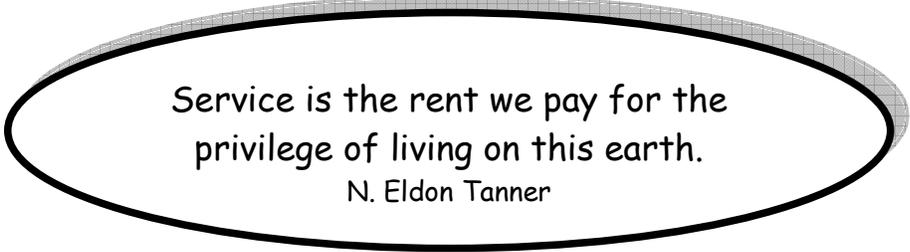
In a world obsessed with external power, control and domination, serving with our hearts filled with caring cuts across boundaries and sees through appearances, and reminds us of the power that resides in the centre in each of our beings – the power to do good and to be good.

The term Servant Leader was first used by Greenleaf in 1970 in an essay *The Servant Leader* (1977). Greenleaf (1991) defines leaders who display spiritual characteristics as servant leaders. According to him servant leaders are leaders who have a natural feeling that they want to serve first, then conscious choice brings them to aspire to lead. The best test to determine if a leader has a servant heart, is to ask the question: *Do people that they serve become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous and more likely to become leaders themselves?*

The servant leader is different from the individual who is motivated by selfish goals. Winston Churchill captured the spirit of servant leadership when he said, *What is the use of living if not to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone?*

Service, therefore, is at the core of leadership. Without the spirit of service you cannot move toward a higher standard of leadership.

Service-oriented leadership does not mean you always do what the people want. Service must be conducted within the bounds of moral values – it must be *truthful* service. If you are committed to truthful service, you may not always tell people what they want to hear. Gandhi was not afraid to tell the people the unpleasant truths they had to hear to meet their individual responsibilities. Leaders committed to truth and service and not to power and popularity can do this (Nair: 59).

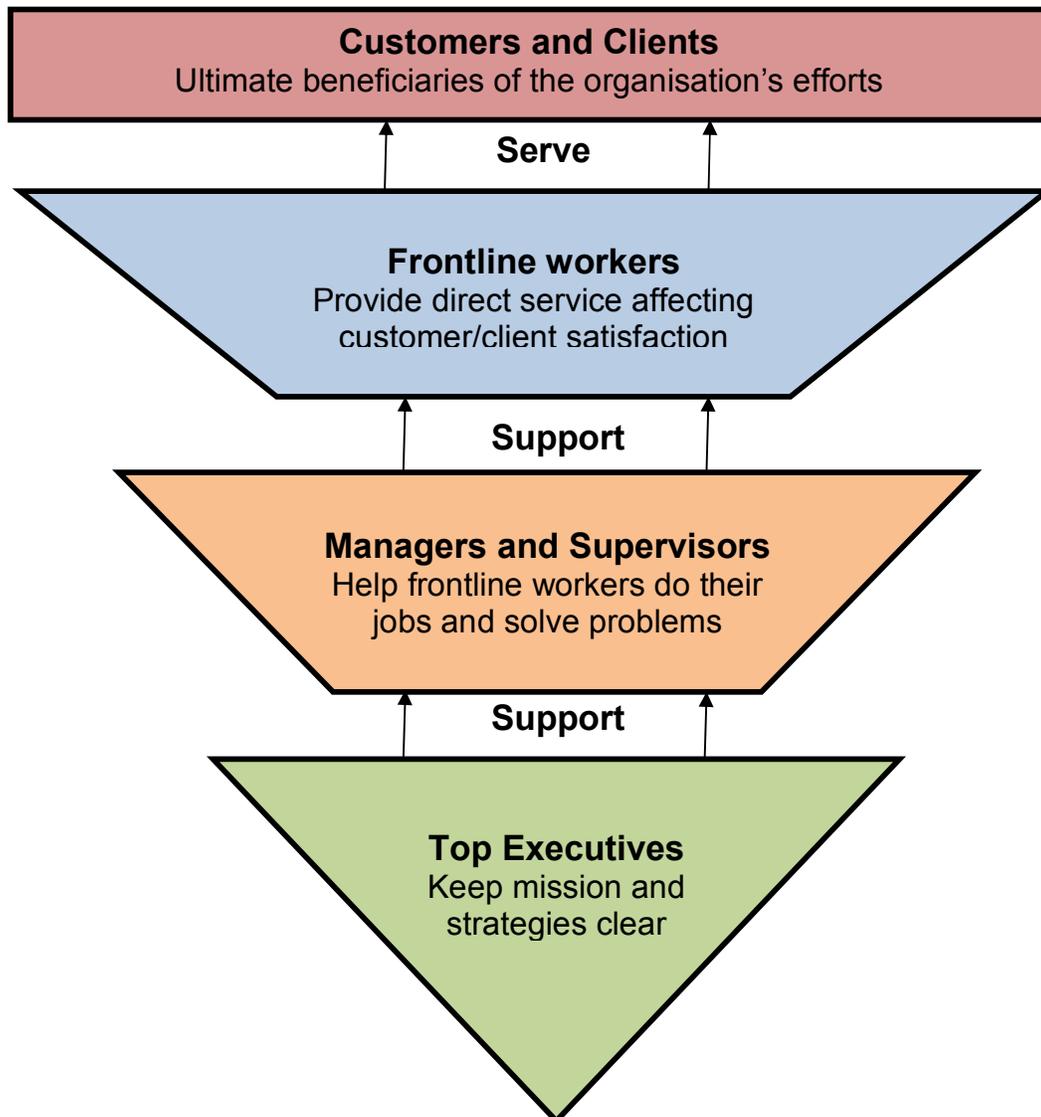


Service is the rent we pay for the
privilege of living on this earth.

N. Eldon Tanner

A **key question** every leader must ask him or her-self is, *How do I want to be of service to others?* Ultimately, a leader is not judged so much by how well he or she leads, but by how well he or she serves. All value and contribution are achieved through service.

At the heart of service is the principle of *interdependence* and *stewardship*. Interdependence is a cornerstone of synergy and partnership. Having captured the essence of serving authentically, i.e. interdependence and stewardship, the statement of Peter Block in his book *Stewardship* will have deeper meaning: *There is pride in leadership, it evokes images of direction. There is humility in stewardship it evokes images of service. Service is central to the idea of stewardship.* This is why service-oriented top executives abide to the upside-down pyramid approach to leadership (see Figure on the next page):



As leaders, when we move from a control-oriented to a service-mindset, we acknowledge that we are not the central origin of achievement. This shift is an emotional and spiritual breakthrough. The more we serve and appreciate others, the more we cooperatively generate value-added contribution.

Service in any form is comely and beautiful. To give encouragement, to impart sympathy, to show interest, to banish fear, to build self-confidence and awaken hope in the hearts of others, in short, care about them and to show it – is to render the most precious service.

The true nature of a servant leader, then, can be defined as:

- Commitment to moral values
- Commitment to truth
- Interdependent-orientation

- Abundance orientation
- Humility
- Responsible and accountable
- Stewardship
- Empathetic, caring, supportive
- Inside-out attitude, maturity

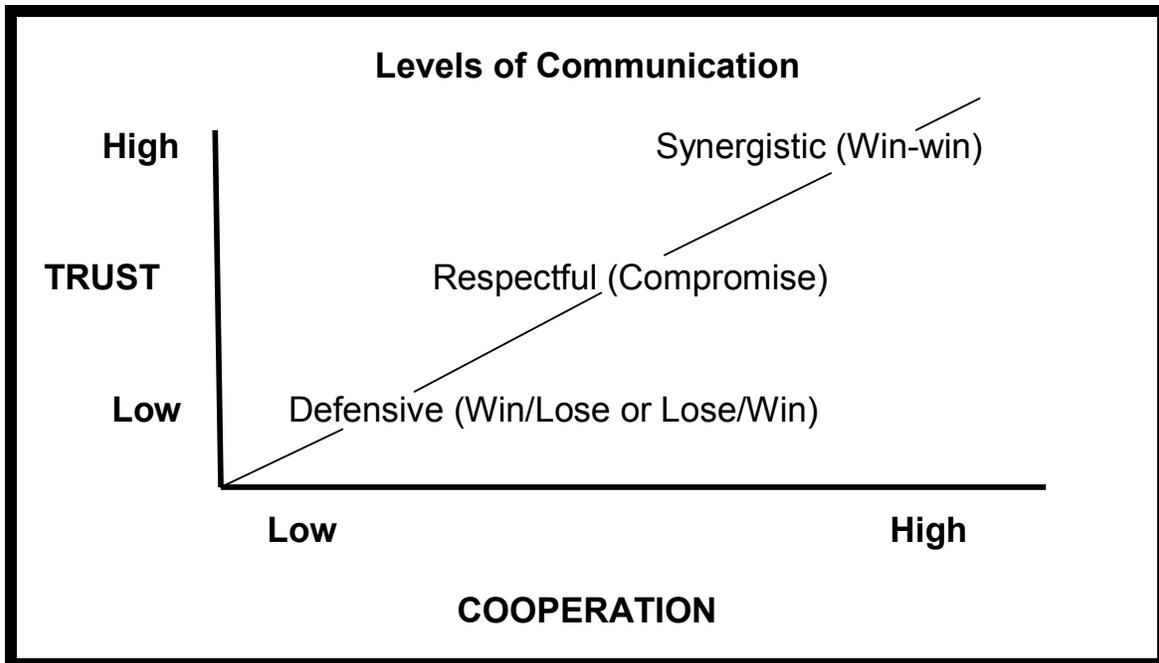
To **summarise**, Nair identified five steps that will make service the centrepiece of leadership:

- Focus on **responsibilities**, not on rights. Begin with a charter of duties of man and the rights will follow as spring follows winter (Gandhi)
- Emphasise **values-based** service. An enduring spirit of service, one that will lead to a higher standard of leadership, requires a values-based approach
- Make a commitment to **personal service** through direct contact
- Understand the **needs** of the people you wish to serve – get involved, *feel* their need
- **Reconcile power** with service. Power is to be used for the benefit of those whose trustee you are.

4. The Partnership Principle

Leaders get things done with people. Working together increases the odds of winning together. This is one of the cornerstones of the partnership principle. However, a number of partnership principles support synergistic, win-win cooperation:

- 1) Winning together is based on the assumption, *You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things (Mother Teresa).*
- 2) When you partner with others, you lose nothing.
- 3) If you desire to cultivate *win-win* relationships, embrace the partnership principle.
- 4) The whole is greater than the sum of its parts – the synergy principle
- 5) Synergistic partnership is characterised by high cooperation and high trust.



- 6) A win-win partnership implies that all the partners are better off because of the partnership.
- 7) The partnership principle presupposes an **abundance orientation** – enough for every one as opposed to a scarcity mentality. An abundance orientation flows out of a deep inner sense of personal worth, security and maturity.
- 8) A partnership where relationship bank accounts are high and involved parties are committed to win-win, creates the ideal springboard for tremendous synergy.
- 9) A partnership **values and embraces the differences** between partners. This is the essence of synergy, valuing mental, emotional and other psychological differences between people. By valuing different perceptions you give each other **psychological air**.

The three stages of the Partnership Principle

For leaders to learn the Partnership Principle, three stages should be mastered (Maxwell, 2004):

Stage 1: I (we) want to make a difference

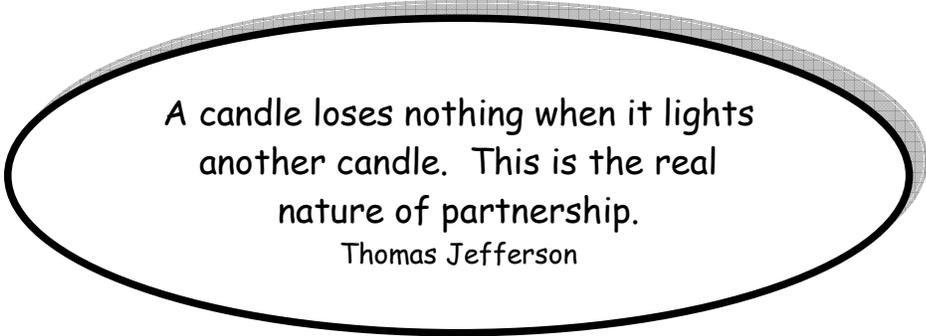
This is the *self-directed* stage. The focus is on me (us) and what I (we) can do. That is not to say you were doing anything wrong. The only problem is that one is too small a number to achieve greatness.

Stage 2: I (we) want to make a difference with people who want to make a difference

To make a difference it is important to partner with difference makers. Such people should have the same passion and mission as yours who also need others to make a difference. This is called the *sharing stage*.

Stage 3: I (we) want to make a difference with *people* who want to make a difference doing *something* that makes a difference

The third stage is called the *significance stage*. The power comes from partnering with people who want to make a difference doing something that makes a difference.



A candle loses nothing when it lights
another candle. This is the real
nature of partnership.

Thomas Jefferson