



# Stuff Every Leader Should Be Doing to Serve Well

Here's some good and healthy habits grounded in Jesus' example from the Gospel. You may also recognize them as the most important characteristics of servant leaders.

## **LISTEN**

Do you sometimes struggle to understand what's on a person's mind, what they want, why they're not following through, what's their beef, etc.? So, you may ask them, only to end up a bit more confused than you were to begin with. Maybe that's because they felt put on the spot, or replied with the 'yearbook answer,' or you misread their swatting at a fly as aggressive body language.

Whatever the case, not to worry. Simply become a better listener. In the course of normal conversations/interactions with people, they've not only likely shared some of the pressing stuff on their minds, but more importantly, something of how they think.

You'll be more effective at serving people when you make a deep commitment to focusing outward on people, listening intently to what they're saying, and understanding what they're saying. Yes, this includes their body language. To pull this off well, avoid interrupting them before they've finished speaking and be sure to give feedback on what they say. And if they do happen to wildly swat at a real, pesky fly -- simply duck.

## **EMPATHIZE**

Some necessary discipline to becoming more empathetic is to approach interactions with an open mind, temporarily bench your own viewpoint, strive to understand the others' intentions and perspectives, and truly value that perspective.

## **HEAL**

Leave everything better than you found it. For starters, ensure that the people you serve have the knowledge, support and resources they need to accomplish something effectively (yeah, never mistake activity for accomplishment). Next, take the appropriate steps to help build their enthusiasm and engage in whatever role they serve.

## Stuff Every Leader Should Be Doing... *(continued)*

### **BE SELF-AWARE**

The ability to look at yourself, reflect on your own emotions and behavior deeply, consider how that affects the people around you, and own it, is key to leveraging your strengths and minimizing your weaknesses as a leader. Not sure how honest you are with yourself? Ask for honest feedback from other people.

### **PERSUADE**

When you want to encourage people to take meaningful action, being persuasive is almost always more effective than being authoritative. Want to inspire? Persuade... and persuade by example first, and well reasoned, healthy dialog second. Want to potentially damage relationships and take advantage of others? Flout them with your authority... real or imagined.

### **CONCEPTUALIZE**

Do you get bogged down sweating the day-to-day small stuff or are you still able to look beyond to the 'bigger picture' with hope? A good leader is able to work through this and develop robust short and long term organizational strategies at whatever level they serve. Anchor yourselves to our mission statement and vision, then make it clear how your people's roles tie in with those objectives. For the short term, stay nimble. For the long term, be sure to develop a focus so that you stay motivated to achieve more distant goals without getting distracted.

### **HAVE FORESIGHT**

If you're good at learning from past experiences, identifying what's happening now, and understanding the consequences of your decisions, you've likely got foresight in spades. To build on this, the Crisis Scenarios Team is steadily introducing some initiatives and tools to help you think more about the current situation and environment, help you understand how future scenarios could emerge and play out, and how to better learn from experience and consider all the angles. In fact, you can see this playing out in practice on all of our specialty teams including Communications, Health & Wellness, Sustainable Living, and Prayer Teams.

### **BE A GOOD STEWARD**

In a nutshell, this is about responsibility. Use reliable measures (your healthy values aligned with the organization's) to take responsibility for the actions and performance of your team, and be accountable for the role team members play in the organization. Lead by example by consistently demonstrating the values and behaviors that you want to see in others, and have the confidence to resolve conflicts with people when they act in ways contrary to those values.



## Stuff Every Leader Should Be Doing... *(continued)*

### **HELP OTHERS GROW**

Servant leaders are committed to the growth and development of everyone on their teams. To accomplish this, ensure that you take the time to understand their development needs and help provide them with the stuff they need to contribute effectively. Also, take the time to discover what they are enthusiastic about, what their personal goals are, and how they want to contribute.

### **BUILD COMMUNITY**

All of what has been mentioned above is key to building a real sense of community -- family -- within CORAC. It's facilitated when you can provide meaningful opportunities for people to interact with one another across the regions and beyond. For instance, there may be nothing better than simply picking up the phone and reaching out to organize a social event for lunch, BBQ dinner or simple tea. Ensure the people in your area of responsibility have multiple ways to connect, encourage them to connect, and be sure to dedicate some of that time to just making friendships without all the concerns of our times.

Finally, encourage people to take responsibility for how they participate and contribute, and remind them often how important their participation and contributions are to the overall success of our mission (i.e. - that they make a real difference)!

