



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT

It feels like yesterday that we celebrated the start of 2015 and now we are almost on the doorstep of 2016. It seems that every year the ride gets faster and faster. With SAIMAS the last half of the year was no different and we hosted a few memorable events.

### Feedback in terms of activities for the last half of 2015:

SAIMAS hosted a workshop at the end of July with the theme “Determining Time Data for Administrative Business Processes”. The workshop presented by Eddie Morrison and was well attended and enjoyed by all.

In the true spirit of SAIMAS, this year’s 25<sup>th</sup> **Annual Conference** on “*Organisational Performance Improvement Solutions*” was held from 21 to 23 October 2015 at the Drakensberg Sun Resort in the Winterton area. To the delight of the council members many new faces attended the conference. We received positive feedback from the delegates in terms of the presentations.

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on 20 May 2016. Final arrangements regarding this event will be communicated in due course.

We would like to thank each and every one for their support this year in all the hosted events. Without your support and attendance there would be no SAIMAS.

Thank you to all the Council members and special thanks to Ms. Gerda Morrison, our Office Administrator, for all your hard work and support.

I trust that you all will have a Blessed Festive season and safe journeys wherever you travel and hold on because the 2016 will be better and who knows maybe even faster....

SAIMAS greetings

Ben Gouws  
December 2015

# MINDFULNESS ARTICLE

By Magriet Engelbrecht



Why would Time Magazine carry “The Mindful Revolution” on its front page (2 February 2014) and why are companies like Google, Apple, Deutsche Bank, Hughes Aircraft, Proctor and Gamble, Starbucks, Reebok and many more spending money on mindfulness training for their staff?

The purported advantages of mindfulness training in a corporate environment include increased focus and mental clarity leading to better decisions; enhanced creativity; reduced anxiety; lowered stress; and higher levels of resilience.

## **Can we take all of this as true?**

Not everyone is doing so. Some critics of mindfulness training at work bemoan the fact that an ancient and holy practise is now used in service of “base motivations” like higher productivity. Still others allege that it is simply another management ploy to squeeze more from their workers. A more serious accusation is that once again management is putting the responsibility for handling personal stress squarely on the shoulders of the workers, while management is responsible for causing or intensifying work stress in the first place; thus it becomes the workers’ issue and they are blamed if they “can’t stand the heat” as if they are deficient, while the underlying causes of the stress are not addressed. Another concern raised is that mindfulness training makes employees tame and acquiescent.

Companies, on the other hand, argue that the inner state of employees impact their performance, managing inner states becomes a company concern. Research shows that mindfulness reduces work-related stress, depression and anxiety and enhances the immune system – leading to reduction in work days lost at huge cost to organisations.

What is mindfulness? Jon Kabat-Zinn, a professor of medicine who founded MBSR (mindfulness-based stress reduction) and can be seen as the father of the current mindfulness “revolution”, defines it as “paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally”. Most of us are hardly ever “present”: our thoughts are either in the past – longing back to particular moments or regretting them – or in the future – fearing it, looking forward to it, planning for it. In essence mindfulness means to be fully present with whatever presents itself in this moment. If you have ever spent hours so caught up in a particular hobby or task that time just seemed to fly by and so absorbed that you were thinking of nothing much except that, you have experienced mindfulness.

Mindfulness excludes multi-tasking, which according to research is not good at all in the corporate environment: it slows you down, leads to errors and can be very detrimental to relationships – as anyone can vouch who has tried to speak to a colleague who at the same time is working on the computer and eating her lunch.

Yet mindfulness should not be confused with concentration. Concentration is a closed state, where you focus so much on one thing that you are not aware of what is going on around you; as a matter of fact, you deliberately shut out stimuli and data that you think you don't need. It is often also strained. Mindfulness, on the other hand, is a "relaxed focus" where you still take in what is happening around you and are aware of how everything connects with and impacts everything else. While driving, for instance, concentration would be to only be aware of the mechanics of driving and the road ahead. Mindfulness would entail being aware of the peripherals as well – the car coming fast from the side, the storm that is about to break, the aeroplane overhead, the trees in bloom adjacent to the road... without being lost in thoughts not pertaining to the present moment and without running a never-ending stream of judgements of the other drivers, the road surface, the bad weather, etc. Mindfulness thus entails not only awareness of the current moment but also acceptance of what is the case in this moment.

So what does mindfulness training entail? Generally what is taught would include techniques for growing mindfulness – some as simple as being mindful while you wash your hands: being aware of the temperature of the water and the sensation as it touches your hands, the smell of the soap, the movements of your hands, the shine of the tap and so forth. It will probably also include meditation training. Meditation, while not essential for mindfulness, greatly enhances it. Google, for instance, has a programme called "Search inside Yourself" which runs for 7 weeks and includes mindfulness techniques and meditation. Intel (the technical company) has a 9 week mindfulness programme where employees learn to quiet their minds, explore emotional intelligence and so forth. Medium has a meditation teacher for 2 days a week and an annual mindfulness and meditation retreat.

My take on this? Of course I agree that the underlying causes of work-related stress need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. However, mindfulness training is such a powerful tool that I am all for giving employees exposure to it. What is learnt there will also be applied in their private lives, with multiple benefits. As for the concern that mindfulness training will make employees meekly accept the status quo, I simply cannot agree. Being more aware of your own reactions and motivations is likely to make you clearer on what is acceptable and what is not and move you from useless or destructive aggression, to strength and from force to taking back your power.

But there are some caveats (requirements) when it comes to instituting a programme of mindfulness training at work.

First, it must be voluntary. Mindfulness is not a quick fix, and unless the participants are dedicated to do the exercises, the money will be wasted.

Second, mindfulness cannot be taught in one session. As should be clear from the above, in companies that have run mindfulness programmes for some time, it is taught over a number of weeks, or with regular sessions every week.

Third, the service provider must be carefully selected. Mindfulness or the experience of meditation is not something you can acquire over a weekend: it has to be lived and embodied. When people are first meditating for instance they may not know how to deal with the feelings that might arise. Meditation opens up pathways to the subconscious that have in most cases not been used for a long time and long-buried emotions might rise to the surface. It takes an experienced teacher to help people understand what is happening.

As an irregular meditator for 18 years, I can vouch for the following advantages of meditation, as seen in my own life: it has helped me handle stress, it has enabled me to get out of obsessive thinking about a particular person or problem, it has cleared my mind when I was tempted to 'go into the storyline' and construct a whole scenario - not based on facts - about what went wrong and it has taught me to deal with discomfort and pain. I can truly say that I am a different person on account of my meditation practice.

But you don't have to believe me: there is ample research - based on the latest technology to come to your aid. Particularly exciting for me is brain mapping. It shows, inter alia, that regular meditation practice, leads to changes in the physical structure of the brain - and these changes happen exactly in those areas that govern functions that we know are affected by meditation, like the handling of anxiety or stress.

Some more good news is that even only 8 weeks of daily 45 minute meditation sessions can alter the brain structure. So why not experience for yourself what "the mindful revolution" is all about?

**About the Presenter:**

Magriet has 14 years' experience as a training and human development consultant. She conducts change management projects; does training in the Enneagram (see conference overview on Enneagram) and its personal and corporate implications and is an executive and life coach. Before embarking into this field, she was Director Communication at the National Department of Agriculture. Magriet holds 4 degrees and a diploma. She has received a number of awards.

# THE SERVANT- LEADER

By Marietjie Lotz

South Africa must be the one country in the world where the topic of leadership is debated to death. Safe to say that one more article in this regard would not raise eyebrows. However, I nevertheless wondered what the state of the nation would have been if we would have been led by another servant leader of the calibre of Mr Mandela during the current political and economic turbulence.

I do thoroughly understand that different times and agendas call for different leadership styles and that for growth to happen, the leadership style has to change in order to execute the vision to move a country forward.

The aim of the first democratic leader of South Africa, a servant leader of note, was to ensure that nation building took place; the next President had economic development as his main objective. Unfortunately, for various reasons, this did not happen according to plan; however the vision for the time was clear. The third democratic leader has prodigious political talent, but has a plethora of challenges to overcome. South Africa is a diverse and complex society and it is difficult to define a clear vision or desired future state when two opposite ends of the scale compete for the same limited resources, while one is trying to accommodate all and sundry. However, if a compelling and attractive vision is not coming to the fore, the current accommodative leadership style might become a major deterrent of success.

And this contemplation of the different leadership styles brought me back to my leadership and management book collection to explore the relevance of the concept servant-leadership in the current milieu.

Servant-leadership, is not such a modern leadership theory, and is regularly questioned because of the fact that it has its roots in philosophy and it does not completely lend itself to well-designed empirical research. Greenleaf (1977) was the first to call for the application of servant leadership in business, education, churches and foundations. The concept has even been romanticised in earlier novels like Hermann Hesse's Journey to the East. Robert F Russel and A. Gregory Stone had the following to say in an abstract published in the Leadership and Organisational Development Journal 23/3 (2002 145-157) "servant leadership is an increasingly popular concept in the repertoire of leadership styles. While an intuitively attractive concept, it is systematically undefined". Although the ideas behind servant-leadership are very old it is still useful in the modern world. It can potentially change organisations and societies because it stimulates both personal and organisational transformation. It is based on an internal self-change that eventually change outward behaviour.

## How is leadership defined today?

The businessdirectory.com has the following to say about leadership:

1. Establishing a clear vision;
2. Sharing that vision with others so that they will follow willingly;
3. Providing the information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision;
4. Coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members and stakeholders.

A leader steps up in times of crisis, and is able to think and act creatively and decisively in difficult situations. Unlike management, leadership cannot be taught, although it may be learned and enhanced through coaching or mentoring, from the same source.

The American entrepreneur, Jim Rohn, says a good objective of leadership is to help those who are doing poorly to do well and to help those who are doing well to do even better. In short, this could be the layman's definition of Servant-Leadership. If a leader lacks the word "help" in his or her vocabulary, he or she can never be a leader – rather a dictator.

### **What is Servant-Leadership then?**

Robert K. Greenleaf first coined the phrase "servant leadership" in his 1970 essay, "The Servant as a Leader." In this essay he explains that this is an age old practice – nothing new, nothing earthshattering – just a normal way of life followed by all upstanding citizens for as long as human kind exist, while securing a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community and sharing all decision-making and power. Sources have it that this is also not a new leadership style *per se*, and although only recently proposed, it has been practiced worldwide for more than 2000 years already (Joseph & Winston, 2005, p.9). It is just that modern behavioural science has not yet developed a formal, confirmed framework to link this style through scientific evidence to the improvement of organizational performance and therefore it is not yet regarded formally as one more leadership style in the leadership arsenal.

As a servant-leader, you are a "servant first" – you focus on the needs of others, especially that of team members, before you consider your own needs. You acknowledge other people's perspectives, give them the support they need to meet their work and personal goals, involve them in decisions where appropriate, and build a sense of community within the team. This leads to higher engagement, more trust, and stronger relationships with team members and other stakeholders. It can also lead to increased **innovation**- something that we desperately need to grow the ailing economy world-wide.

Instead of trying to hammer servant leadership into one of the popular leadership style boxes, one should rather see it as a behaviour pattern that one adopts as you mature over time. It complements the democratic leadership styles, and it has similarities with **transformational leadership** which is often the most effective style to use in business situations. You would find similar characteristics in **Level 5 Leadership** where leaders demonstrate humility in the way they work. The bottom-line is **service to others**. "The great leader is seen as servant first." - Robert K Greenleaf

A word of caution before we all do a backflips while shaking our pompoms and shout hooray; this concept is not the answer to all our prayers. Servant-leadership can be problematic in hierarchical, autocratic cultures where managers and leaders have the sole mandate to make all the decisions and to call the shots. In such an environment, a servant-leader may struggle to earn respect. As a matter of fact, they will be ousted, bullied, belittled and labelled as weaklings because they might be perceived as a major threat to the organization's stability.

### **What are the critical principles of servant leadership?**

#### **1. Service to others:**

According to Carol Smith (2005), authentic leadership does not emanate from power or self-interest but from the fundamental desire to be of assistance to others. The primary motivation of this kind of leader is to serve, and in so doing encourage greatness in others. Just take Mother Theresa as an example. She served the desperate and orphaned of Calcutta. You would find her either with a broom in the hand, or on her hands and knees scrubbing floors while other able bodied inhabitants are sleeping or hiding from the scorching heat. Why would she not command the others to help her with these chores? Because her mission in life, was to serve others.

#### **2. Holistic approach to work:**

What is the relationship between employees, the organization and society as a whole? Why would a person's behaviour in the workplace be a direct opposite from how the person acts and

reacts at home? The Servant-Leadership style encourages people to be the same person, whether at home or in the work environment.

### **3. Promoting a sense of community:**

A sense of community refers to “a group of individuals that are jointly liable for each other, both individually and as a unit” (Smith, p.4). You would find this concept well demonstrated in family businesses, however, there is no reason why community cannot flourish in any other organization. Even Steve Jobs managed to get this one right, although in his own strange way. I read somewhere that when his secretary, who was a single parent, was late the second morning because her old dilapidated Volkswagen did not want to start, he threw her the keys to a brand new sports car and told her never to be late again. Only by establishing a strong sense of community amongst the employees of an organization, would you be able to instill the values that would benefit the long term interests and high performance that would put an organization a cut above all the rest.

### **4. Sharing of power in decision-making:**

This concept makes me think of the typical beer drinking ceremony of most African tribes. Congregated in a relaxed circle under the shade of a huge old tree, one person would assume the servant role, effortlessly filling the calabash and passing it from one person to the next, until everyone has enjoyed the wholesome drink, before the servant can take a sip. By creating a participatory, empowering environment while encouraging every member of the team to play according to its strongest talents, the servant leader creates an effective, motivated organization that will succeed against all odds. The modern-day drawback of this concept is that the traditional hierarchical organizational structure hampers this kind of interaction because of its silo mentality and pyramid orientation while there is always one person at the helm who wants to claim all the fame for him or herself in this power-hungry age.

### **What are the characteristics of Servant-Leadership?**

According to Greenleaf the following characteristics are typical of the servant-leader:

#### **1. Listening:**

You first have to be able to listen in order to accurately communicate and to demonstrate respect. There is nothing more ill-mannered and disrespectful than to pretend that you listen to someone while you know that your mind is absent. To listen respectfully and attentively to what is being said and to pay attention to your own inner voice is a skill that very few people have.

#### **2. Empathy:**

Empathy also relates to active listening and deals with selfless acceptance and understanding of others. It demonstrates your commitment and willingness to bend your effort to serve with understanding and spirit.

The Blackfoot people have the following saying in relation to people who pretend to demonstrate empathy: “Those that lie down with dogs get up with fleas”. This is so true of the ego nature. If you find yourself in an ego dominant environment, that is how everyone will react around there. The ability to show empathy has been lost somewhere, however you could find comfort in what Leo Buscaglia said: “Only the weak are cruel. Gentleness can only be expected from the strong”.

#### **3. Healing:**

If there is one thing that we all desire, then it is to be “whole”. None of us are lucky enough to escape all the lashes of life. Some bounce back quickly while others struggle to regain strength. Some learn to put these life lessons to good use. Others haven't been showered with the same amount of resilience and go through life with a little limp. However, that does not mean they are less worthy than anyone else. One of the outstanding characteristics of the servant-leader is to

identify the “limpians” and to support them to play their rightful role in the workplace. They are brilliant healers.

**4. Awareness:**

Some leaders are so wrapped up in themselves that they are only aware of themselves. They would tell you that as a leader they do not have to get their hands dirty, because they are employed to lead. They leave the management up to the managers because they are there to set a vision and strategy and to keep the ammunition bus on the road by remote control from the golf course. As a leader they do not have to know what is contained in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, because they have an HR section. They do not have to read the financial statements because they have a finance section. Yes, this might be true, but this approach will result in you missing a lot of opportunities to lead your organization to greatness. Lonmin might be a case in point for the lack of awareness. A national tragedy could have been prevented if the owners and leadership of all involved did not take the holey highroad and apply a little more awareness.

**5. Persuasion:**

During wage negotiations we will quickly say to the other party that “we do not have a mandate” to agree to this and that. Group consensus is always of major importance in the workplace. However, the gift of gentle persuasion is not bestowed on to many human beings. In this regard Greenleaf (1970, pp. 3-4) makes the following statement “a fresh look is being taken at the issue of power and authority, and people are beginning to learn, however haltingly, to relate to one another in less coercive and more creatively supporting ways”. It is important to know how to use personal instead of positional power to influence change in an organization. Convincing others and seeking consensus within groups requires maturity and willingness to give and take. Coercion is never acceptable under any circumstances.

**6. Conceptualization:**

A servant-leader has the ability to incorporate the ideals of empowerment, team building and participatory management and service ethics into a way of life. Systems thinking forms the basis for all value and character driven performance in the organization while they build a clear vision. In today’s constant search for building more effective organizations through restructuring, reorganization, re-engineering or whatever method, none of these will be successful for as long as change is not first built on a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing human resources and if leadership does not visibly demonstrate the willingness to walk the extra mile with staff. You have to be considerate of and sensitive to the people working for the organization, their skills, competencies, fears, dreams, hopes and obligations. Effective systems and processes are only effective because the people, who make them work, are effective.

**7. Foresight:**

One can either have foresight, or you can play the guessing game and be consumed by paranoia in the end. One of the gifts of servant leaders is that they have strong intuition and that they can anticipate what will happen in the future. They have learnt the lessons of the past and know how to deal with the realities of the present. They also do not run away from the likely consequences of the future.

**8. Stewardship:**

Stewardship refers to the ability to not only be concerned about the employees, but also the entire organization and its impacts on all of society. They are masters of social conscience and look out for the environment. They are determined to lessen the carbon footprint of their organizations and will motivate their staff to recycle while using green energy to drive the systems in their buildings. They will introduce bursaries for the children of employees and ensure that employees spend family time at home instead of slaving away at work.



### 9. Commitment to the growth of people

Servant leaders are passionate about encouraging and building their staff up and I quote Greenleaf: “The secret of institution building is to be able to weld a team of such people by lifting them up to grow taller than they would otherwise be” (1970, p.14).

### 10. Building community

Servant leaders strive to create a preferred future, but so do many other maniacs. Just think of what Hitler did to build a future Germany, but what differentiate servant leaders from such dictators is their deep desire to pursue the vision of the organization from a human, empathy, passionate and commitment viewpoint. They will rather “pull” their team towards greatness than to “push” them over the edge.

Russell and Stone (2002) has identified the following attributes of servant leaders from scholarly literature:

Functional attributes:	Accompanying attributes:
Vision Honesty Integrity Trust Service Modelling Pioneering Appreciation Empowerment	Communication Credibility Competence Stewardship Visibility Influence Persuasion Listening Encouragement Teaching Delegation

The above attributes need no further unpacking because they are self-explanatory and some have already been addressed under the principles and characteristics of servant-leadership.

Leadership is no longer the sole property of one person who makes all the decisions, instead many great leaders will openly declare that they do not have all the answers and that they leave certain parts of the job to others. This has brought us to a point where we think and act more collectively to bring a wider range of skills, competencies and attributes together to lead modern organizations.

#### Conclusion:

The great Lao Tzu in 600 B.C. said: ‘The greatest leader forgets himself and attends to the development of others’;

Robert K. Greenleaf said: “The servant-leader is servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first”;

Mother Teresa said: “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love”; and Nelson Mandela said: “It is better to lead from behind and to put other in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership”.

Ido Lekota said: “Political leadership is about serving to secure and promote people’s welfare. If world leaders had comported themselves with this fact and servant leadership, the world might not be in this fix”.

My assumptions on what the state of the nation would have been if South Africa was led by a servant leader, mmmmm.....it does not help to frown upon the current state, because change has to happen from the inside out. However, if enough individuals transform into servant leaders, the benefits for the entire country would snow-ball and that would bring about a positive

revolution. It should not be difficult because servant leadership has its roots in Ubuntu, and that is what South Africa is about. As mentioned earlier, Nelson Mandela and many of his contemporaries displayed purposeful, visionary and selfless leadership that has put South Africa on the path of political freedom and stability. However, the culture is fast disappearing because greed has taken over. But it is never too late.

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