The Container for Logos

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When I began the servant-leadership concentration with Gonzaga, I did not understand the depth in which my professors would serve me to grow, mature, and become as they modeled servant-leadership before me. Robert Greenleaf (2002) writes, “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 27). This quote from Greenleaf and the modeling of servant-leadership have shaped who I am as a leader. My philosophy is to create a sacred container where I and those I serve can grow our spirits and our communities by listening to inner wisdom and aligning heart and mind. I am aware that I must embody that philosophy statement because it is through the consciousness of the leader that the container forms.

The servant-leader models a principle-centered empathetic moral capacity. This is best exemplified in Desmond Tutu’s book on restorative justice, he talks in depth about the idea of Ubuntu, which is that we are all interconnected and that your wellbeing is as important as my wellbeing; we have a moral obligation to each other. He writes, “We are bound up in a delicate network of interdependence because, as we say in our African idiom, a person is a person through other people. To dehumanize another inexorably means that one is dehumanized as well” (Tutu, 1999, p. 35). For me, I have been learning to live the Golden Rule and to develop an unwavering compassion for others. For example, I had a difficult time with a board member that had a personal agenda for my organization. Through working on this issue in my papers for class, I was able to move past my judgement toward an awareness that I needed to continue to be the invitation to others even when it does not turn out the way I hoped.

The servant-leader promotes individual and collective actualization. Our healthy independence is needed in order to create healthy interdependence (Horsman, 2016, p. 3). It is through our own self-actualization that we can help others self-actualize, as well as, create dynamics of healthy interdependence. It is not an either-or proposition for the individual and community; rather, both need to be nurtured to wholeness and both aspects can bring wholeness to the other. My wholeness and capacity to live authentically from my inner self gives others permission to do the same. An example of this was at the Abbey where I was openly authentic about an issue. At the end of the week, a fellow student came up to me and said that my authenticity in the beginning set made it easier for her to be unmasked that week.

A servant-leader listens first before seeking clarity before influence, which was best exemplified in the somatic exercises of Theory U. In groups, we would make gestures of ideas we were working with individually. Our groups would model those gestures as structure one; then they would listen to the collective intuition and move those structures into a physical model of wholeness in structure two. Wholeness does not mean perfection as much as it means the next step in the evolution of the issue. In my prototype paper for the strategy class, I was asked to dig deeper for what wanted to emerge, even if it was not the perfect answer. The way my group modeled my next level of wholeness was still imperfect. I know that once I move to the next level, there will be another evolution waiting to emerge always moving me toward logos.

The servant-leader practices foresight, which is about “getting to the right questions rather than the right answers” (Horsman J. , 2016, p. 1). I think this best exemplified in the idea of logos or the center of wholeness. Leaders can either be in self-embeddedness moving away from logos, or transcending the self and moving towards logos. Foresight is about getting our narrow view out of the way to listen for and quickly act upon what is emerging from the collective intelligence. Before the foresight course, I was embedded in a way of thinking that stopped my ministry from moving forward. I could not see an answer because of my own filters. When I allowed myself the stillness to listen, something very new emerged as my next step, which is to focus on working with spiritual leadership to create sacred containers for the soul. The foresight experience helped me move from self-embeddedness closer to logos.

The servant leader models the capacity for systems thinking, which is awareness of the systems from the personal to the global scale. It is moving through the stages from micro to macro thinking, which means having both the grasp of the local and individual impact of our decision and their implication on a global and spiritual scale. There has been a great deal of personal inner growth and healing through this concentration, which has been my micro system. I have also learned that the macro reflects the micro. The more I embody presence, centeredness, and the capacity to listen for intuition, the more the relationships and systems around me will also move toward wholeness. An example was knowing that I needed to leave the work I was doing in Las Vegas. I was led through a series of events to Spokane where I have been doing my inner work. Because I have been listening within in a new way, something new has begun to emerge for my ministry, which will affect the macro and the relationships around me.

Through the capacities taught in servant-leadership, I am better able to embody my philosophy statement to create a sacred container where I and those I serve can grow ourselves and our communities by listening to inner wisdom and aligning heart and mind. I am still working on my ability to live all the capacities to their fullest. I also know servant-leadership will always be about my ongoing unfoldment closer to logos as I learn to embody the humble presence of God.

# References

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