

Considering All the Hassles, Why Do You Lead?

By Dennis Hooper, copyright © 2021, distributed February 16, 2021

Were you aspiring to be a leader when you began your career? What stimulated that desire?

Or were you catapulted into leadership because you were a terrific individual performer? Maybe your hierarchy saw your skill, determination, and reliability, and you were offered a “promotion to management.” Why did you accept? And why are you in a position of authority still?

Maybe you’re in high school or college and haven’t even started your career. Are you and your teachers prepping you at this young age to be a leader? Why do you think this is happening?

Back in 2009, Simon Sinek’s book *Start with Why* shook the leadership world. He pointed out that it’s common when two professional people meet for each to ask, “What do you do?” Only rarely and deeper into the conversation might one ask the other, “Why do you do what you do?”

Patrick Lencioni’s current book, *The Motive*, is all about that question. Lencioni might put it this way: “What is the underlying motive for why you lead?” Oh, he’s not asking this question naively or for research purposes. He’s strongly wanting you to ask yourself this question--objectively!

For twenty years, clients have shared with me various difficult situations they face. I listen carefully, then usually observe, “Being a leader is tough!” Then, with a smile on my face, I ask, “Considering all the hassles involved with being a leader, why do you keep leading?”

Like Lencioni, I have seen many leaders aspire to imagined rewards: authority, upward mobility, money, recognition, and status. These are natural human urges, and since someone needs to plan and organize the efforts of others, organizations have rewarded leaders throughout history.

Additionally, I recognize--as does Lencioni--that some leaders are motivated to use their natural capabilities and experiences (plus their investments in skill development) to serve the team members who are working to accomplish the organization’s collectively shared mission.

If you and I were speaking in person right now, you might ask, “Are you talking about ‘servant leadership’?” I’d answer, “Yes, I am.” Some of you, having heard the term but perhaps not understanding how leaders serve their direct reports, might roll your eyes with skepticism.

Yet you are the intended audience for Lencioni’s book. Maybe you haven’t fully explored the concept of servant leadership or seen how some leaders serve their direct reports. If there’s any truth in that statement, I encourage you to challenge yourself to investigate further. Why?

Patrick Lencioni, with all his research and consulting experience, is convinced that “greater results” and “a more loyal customer base” occur when the leader focuses on serving the individuals being led rather than on personal success. (My reference to Lencioni’s assertion is here: www.tablegroup.com/about/#ohhealth. Scroll down to the third paragraph in “Our Story.”)

In my opinion, there is only one justifiable reason to put up with the many hassles of leadership, and that’s to consciously serve using the many gifts you’ve been given. You DO have a choice!

If you’d like to start learning about servant leadership, consider the article “What Services Do Servant Leaders Provide?” Find it alphabetically on the “Article Archives” page of my website.

Dennis offers you over 400 articles on his website at buildingfutureleaders.com/article-archives. Or you can contact him at dennis@buildingfutureleaders.com or by phone at 770-286-2250.