

A Servant Leader's "Deliverables"—Part 2

by Dennis Hooper, published in the Houston Home Journal on Tuesday, July 5, 2005

Several weeks ago, I quoted a daily devotional that stimulated multiple columns on servant leadership. I asked readers to identify what products or services they and their colleagues need from their leaders.

About thirty of you responded--thank you! I was more of an editor this week than an author, as I worked to include as many of these submissions as I could. Yes, these are real people in real jobs, giving genuine thought to the good and bad bosses they've experienced and to their own performance.

"I want a clear understanding of my purpose and tasks, enough training to be successful, and routine feedback about how I am doing (good and bad)." Curt T

"A servant leader knows the team members personally, having at least a basic understanding of their top personal priorities and family needs. The leader acknowledges good effort, even when the outcome is less than desired." Carol K

"Good leaders have integrity as well as humor. They provide support and remove obstacles that hinder me from growing and contributing my best." Tom S

"The servant leader helps people define their problems through thoughtful listening, insight, and questions. They don't fix everything, believing in the capacity of the people, knowing the solution is inside each person. This is very freeing and empowering." Cathy S

"I want my leader to acknowledge that my opinions and ideas are valid, even if they differ from his. I expect a decision-making process that is consistent and involves those affected by the decision." John W

"The leader I admire is open about what is happening in the company. He advocates our team to the executives. He is very interested in our personal experience over and above the numbers, though he also asks for an accounting with those." Sara H

"I desire opportunity for personal development, for assessments from sources I trust, and for additional responsibility. I expect commitment to agreements we have made to each other." Dick M

"The people being served need to be thought of as individuals, not just a conglomerate group. Yet the leader has to be strong enough to hold each team member accountable to the high standards of the organization." Linda G

"My leader really wants my insight, feedback, and ideas. He asks what tools it will take to get the job done and is willing to get them for me. He makes me stretch beyond what I believe is possible, towards what he sees is my potential." Loren T

"Good leaders are barrier busters, removing obstacles that impede people's ability to get the job done. They search for opportunities for their team members to grow and advance." Gary G

"Servant leaders encourage their people when they are down, helping them physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually." Bob B

"Servant leaders welcome truth-telling and differing points of view when considering options. They provide access to themselves and other leaders for coaching, mentoring, instruction, feedback, and expertise. They build relationships that model a healthy tone for the organization's culture." Wendi C

"The leader should never stop growing, always improving with education and new skills." Mary C

"Servant leaders make their team members feel significant. Each person genuinely feels like he or she makes a difference" Alison H

Many others provided thoughts, and many of these provided more ideas than there is room to share. Can you imagine how enlightening it is to be able to dialogue with each of these individuals?

Suggestion: Go talk to the people you lead. You serve them best when you give them what they need.