

Considering All the Hassles, Why Do You Lead?

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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?”

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

Lencioni and I also recognize that a few leaders aspire to use their natural capabilities and experiences--plus their investments in skill development--to serve individuals who are working together with their teammates to accomplish a mutually beneficial 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.” And some of you might roll your eyes in derision.

Yet you are the intended audience for Lencioni’s book. Perhaps you don’t yet understand the concept of servant leadership or how to lead that way. If there’s any truth in that statement, I encourage you to challenge yourself to explore the concept. 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. (You may find Lencioni’s assertion here: www.tablegroup.com/about/#ohhealth . Scroll down to the third paragraph in “Our Story.”)

If you’d like to learn more 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.