



**The Promised Land:
*Robert Greenleaf,
Bruce Springsteen and
Servant-Leadership***

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Goals of the Session

- Provide some exposure to the work of Springsteen
- Reveal the linkages between the work of Greenleaf and Springsteen
- Offer one pathway of analyzing his work as it relates to Servant Leadership (SL)
- Become aware of SL in different forms
- Offer a number of possible research paths using his work

Servant Leadership

- Developed by Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990)
- Influenced by Herman Hesse's essay *Journey to the East* and the Story of Leo
- Greenleaf's intent was to introduce a paradoxical notion—leader as servant
- This paradox offers a critical look at the uses of power and authority in organizations, communities and any system

Who is the Servant Leader?

The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?

The Servant as Leader
Robert K. Greenleaf

Servant-leaders seek to:

- Involve others in decision-making.
- Demonstrate caring and ethical behaviors.
- Encourage the growth of others.
- Improve the quality of organizations and society.

Characteristics of the Servant Leader

In 1991, Larry Spears extracted from Greenleaf's writings ten characteristics of the servant leader:

1. Listening
2. Empathy
3. Healing
4. Awareness
5. Persuasion
6. Conceptualization
7. Foresight
8. Stewardship
9. Commitment to the Growth of People
10. Building Community

Springsteen, Academia & Leadership: Seriously? Yep!

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Suggested Topics for the Symposium

Rubrics to consider are:

- Springsteen and Innovation
- Clarence Clemons: A Chapter Closed and the Challenge of Moving On
- Exploring “Wrecking Ball”
- Springsteen and the Black Preaching Tradition
- Springsteen and the Legacy of Woody Guthrie
- Springsteen and Philanthropy
- Springsteen and the Art of Keeping it Real
- Springsteen and the Art and Technique of Recording
- Springsteen in the 21st Century
- Springsteen and Storytelling
- Springsteen as Narrative Poet
- Springsteen and Gender
- Springsteen and Law and Order
- Springsteen and Psychology
- Springsteen and Pedagogy
- Springsteen and the Role of the Artist
- Springsteen on War
- Springsteen and Community
- Springsteen and Mortality, Absence and Loss
- Springsteen and Sense of Place

Exploring Springsteen

- A Google search of, “Springsteen books” resulted in: About 40,200,000 results
- Some recommended texts:
 - Carlin (2012): *Bruce*
 - Coles (2003): *Bruce Springsteen’s America: The people listening, a poet singing*
 - Harde & Streight (Eds). (2010): *Reading the Boss: Interdisciplinary approaches to the works of Bruce Springsteen*
 - Masciotra (2010): *Working on a Dream: The progressive political vision of Bruce Springsteen*
 - Symynkywicz (2008): *The Gospel according to Bruce Springsteen: Rock and redemption from Asbury Park to Magic*

Brief Bio Information

- Born September 23, 1949, in Long Branch, New Jersey.
- Raised in a working-class household in Freehold Borough. His father, Doug Springsteen, had trouble holding down a steady job and worked at different times as a bus driver, millworker and prison guard.
- Bruce's mother, Adele, brought in steadier income as a secretary in a local insurance office.
- Bruce and his father had a difficult relationship. *"When I was growing up, there were two things that were unpopular in my house,"* the singer later recalled. *"One was me, and the other was my guitar."*

"Factory"

Early in the morning factory whistle blows,
Man rises from bed and puts on his clothes,
Man takes his lunch, walks out in the morning light,
It's the working, the working, just the working life.

Through the mansions of fear, through the mansions of
pain,
I see my daddy walking through them factory gates in
the rain,
Factory takes his hearing, factory gives him life,
The working, the working, just the working life.

End of the day, factory whistle cries,
Men walk through these gates with death in their eyes.
And you just better believe, boy,
somebody's gonna get hurt tonight,
It's the working, the working, just the working life.

Professional Resume

- Signed with Columbia Records in 1972. *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.* released in January, 1973 gains critical acclaim but slow sales.
- Many compared him to Bob Dylan for his introspective lyrics and poetic style.
- Bruce and E-Street Band release *The Wild, The Innocent, & The E Street Shuffle* later the same year, lauded by critics but largely dismissed by the public.
- 1975, after over a year in the studio, Springsteen released a third album, *Born to Run*, which peaked at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 and skyrocketed him to fame.
- October, 1975, Bruce appears on the covers of *Time & Newsweek*

Rise to *Darkness*...

- 1976, Bruce & manager, Mike Appel, have feud which leads to a lawsuit and prevents Bruce from recording for nearly two years.
- May, 1978, *Darkness on the Edge of Town* is released.
- In *Darkness ...*, the characters come to grips with the daily grind of working in the factory, struggling with their own mortality, and “living lives of quiet heroism” (Sanford, 1999).
- “If Springsteen had defined himself as a voice *of* and *from* the working class in his first three albums, he explicitly became a voice *for* the working class on his fourth.” (Harde, 2013)

Finding His Voice—*The Call to Serve*

- “... my characters stand unsure of their fate, but dug in and committed. By the end of *Darkness* I’d found my adult voice” (Springsteen, 1998).
- “...the stress and tension of my father’s and mother’s life that came with the difficulties of trying to make ends meet—influenced my writings. I asked myself new questions. I felt a sense of accountability to the people I’d grown up alongside of. I began to wonder how to address that feeling.” (Springsteen, 1998)
- “*Darkness on the Edge of Town* is a meditation on where are you going to stand? With whom are you going to stand?” (Springsteen, 2009)
- The album represents a shift from Springsteen’s focus on just personal justice and fulfillment to social justice.

Exploring Research Possibilities

A few options:

1. Using the ten characteristics as a framework for understanding Springsteen's impact on others.
2. Art and social change
3. Exploring the promise of "work"
4. The authentic servant-leader journey

Servant Leadership Characteristics

“When I go to tutor this kid Charlie, and I hear him talking and sneering, I’ll think of that song of the Boss; and I’ll think of the “Badlands” one...all those ‘agricultural workers’...they’re in Springsteen songs, and one after another he reaches out and sings about them (maybe to them), because he knows that (a) they’re doing very valuable stuff, and (b) they’re getting a lousy deal, for all the backbreaking, dawn-to-dusk work they put on the line for the growers...”

Listening, Empathy, Awareness & Healing

- “Bruce gives us the facts, all right, so that our minds burn, while we learn all about the back that are burning—in the badlands of our country. The song is a prayer by Americans for America, that’s how I hear *Badlands*... he hopes we’re at least willing to open our ears to what he’s saying, if not our hearts to the people he’s bringing to meet us.”

Coles (2003)

1. Listening

- The servant-leader seeks to identify and to clarify the will of a group.
- He or she listens receptively to what is said and unsaid.
- One also listens to one's inner voice.
- Listening + reflection are essential to the growth of the servant-leader.

Springsteen and Listening

- Springsteen's first few albums were very much about his own experiences, listening to his own inner voice. Finding your own voice provides a foundation for the development of the servant-leader.
- This allows one to move forward and to engage with others in a more authentic fashion. This second dimension of listening involves a relational focus.

2. Empathy

- Servant-leaders seek to understand and to empathize with others.
- People deserve to be accepted for their special and unique spirits.
- One assumes the good intentions of others.

Springsteen and Empathy

- One of the enduring strengths of Springsteen's music is his ability to place himself (and listeners) into the lives of others.
- This ability to empathize with others through songs like "Backstreets" and many others is an example of his empathy as a servant-leader.

3. Healing

- The healing of relationships is a powerful force for transformation and integration.
- It allows for the healing of relationships, and oneself.
- Most people have experienced emotional hurts and broken spirits through the workplace and elsewhere.
- Servant-leaders seek to encourage a greater sense of wholeness in self and in others.

Greenleaf on Healing

- “There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share.”
--Robert K. Greenleaf, *The Servant as Leader*

4. Awareness

- General awareness and especially self-awareness strengthens the servant-leader.
- It helps our understanding of issues involving ethics, power, and values.
- “Awareness is not a giver of solace—it is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed.”—Robert K. Greenleaf, SAL

Springsteen and Awareness

- There are very few Springsteen characters who are traditional leaders.
- There are many more who we consider natural servant-leaders.
- For many of his characters, the American dream is increasingly seen as a ghostly after-image.

5. Persuasion

- Servant-leaders seek to rely upon persuasion more than on positional authority.
- This is one of the clearest distinctions between servant-leaders and traditional leaders.
- The servant-leader is effective at building consensus within groups.

Springsteen and Persuasion

- For servant-leaders, stories speak to both the heart and the head as a means of creating an engaging narrative.
- Bruce Springsteen's narrative approach to storytelling as part of his musical heritage is remarkably strong and persuasive.
- There is much to learn from Springsteen about the power of narrative storytelling as a tool for persuasion.

6. Conceptualization

- Servant-leaders seek to nurture their ability to dream great dreams.
- Servant-leaders are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day operational approach.
- The challenge of being visionary and also keeping one's feet on the ground is a challenge for servant-leaders.

Springsteen & Conceptualization

- We have found that in narrative form Springsteen displays a remarkable ability to capture the tension between current reality and compelling vision that is being sought.
- Peter Senge describes this tension as being a source of power and strength. “The gap between vision and current reality—we call this gap creative tension.” --Peter Senge

7. Foresight

- Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future.

Springsteen and Foresight

- In Springsteen's more recent work such as, "The Rising," "Devils and Dust," and "Magic," his work demonstrates the importance of learning from past mistakes in foreign and domestic policies and the need to make different kinds of decisions in the future.
- In the song "Atlantic City" addresses the risks to that community of allowing gambling to serve as a means of revitalization of a community.

8. Stewardship

- Peter Block has called stewardship, “holding something in trust for another.”
- Robert Greenleaf also believed that people needed to hold institutions in trust for the greater good of society.
- Stewardship assumes a commitment to serving the needs of others.

Springsteen and Stewardship

- In a song titled, “Racing in the Street,” we see a vision of what stewardship looks like in everyday relationships. The commitment between people overrides the desire to be free of responsibility.
- For servant-leaders, the commitment to be a good steward requires a high degree of responsibility.

9. Growth of People

- Servant-leaders are committed to the growth of people.
- Servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value far beyond their tangible contributions as workers.

Springsteen and Growth of People

- In songs like “Factory” and “Promised Land” Springsteen succeeds in sanctifying the seemingly ordinary—the daily grind, raising a family, doing what’s right.
- As mentors to others, we can help others to know that their own struggles, failures, and demons can become a source of strength and wisdom.

10. Building Community

- Servant-leaders understand that much has been lost in recent human history due to the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shaper of human lives.
- Greenleaf believed that true community can be created among those who work in businesses and every other kind of institution.

Greenleaf on Building Community

- “All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group.” —Robert K. Greenleaf

Badlands

Lights out tonight,
Trouble in the heartland,
Got a head on collision,
Smashin' in my guts, man,
I'm caught in a cross fire,
That I don't understand,
I don't give a damn,
for the same old played out scenes,
I don't give a damn,
for just the in betweens,
Honey, I want the heart, I want the soul,
I want control right now
Talk about a dream,
try to make it real
You wake up in the night,
with a fear so real,
Spend your life waiting,
for a moment that just don't come,
Well, don't waste your time waiting,

Badlands, you gotta live it everyday,
Let the broken hearts stand
As the price you've gotta pay,
We'll keep pushin' till it's understood,
and these badlands start treating us good.

Workin' in the fields
till you get your back burned,
Workin' 'neath the wheel
till you get your facts learned,
Baby, I got my facts
learned real good right now,
Poor man wanna be rich,
rich man wanna be king,
And a king ain't satisfied,
till he rules everything,
I wanna go out tonight,
I wanna find out what I got

I believe in the love that you gave me,
I believe in the hope that can save me,
I believe in the faith
and I pray, that someday it may raise me,
Above these badlands

Chorus

For the ones who had a notion,
A notion deep inside,
That it ain't no sin to be glad you're alive
I wanna find one face that ain't looking through me
I wanna find one place,
I wanna spit in the face of these badlands

Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight: *The Promised Land*

“A conflicted young man is driving through the stale desert air, surrounded by vast swarms of nothing. His attempts to find satisfaction in the routine and ordinary are without result...This is one man claiming hope against thoughtless, empathy-deficient centers of power that attempt to impose the limits of their own vision on him. This is one man shouting his promise to make his own identity and life..This is rock “n” roll. This is the beauty and mystery of democracy in practice.”

(Masciotra, 2010)

Art, Narrative, Social Change & Inclusion

- *“The use of art as a vehicle for indexing, defining, presenting, and amplifying a community’s own voice is a powerful tool that can be used in the service of community identity development and organizing”*
(Thomas & Rappaport, p. 322-323).
- *The servant leader, who has integrated and grown from his/her own struggles, better serves a community by understanding the variety of narratives by which a community understands itself, and effectively builds community by surfacing and giving voice to the stories of those not included.*

“Blackbird” The Beatles

- The lyrics were inspired by the civil rights movement in America; the 'blackbird' of the title was said to represent a typical woman facing oppression in the era.

“I had in mind a black woman, rather than a bird. Those were the days of the civil rights movement, which all of us cared passionately about, so this was really a song from me to a black woman, experiencing these problems in the States: 'Let me encourage you to keep trying, to keep your faith, there is hope.' As is often the case with my things, a veiling took place so, rather than say 'Black woman living in Little Rock' and be very specific, she became a bird, became symbolic, so you could apply it to your particular problem.”

Paul McCartney

Giving Voice to the Voiceless

- *Streets of Philadelphia* : Oscar winning song, written and performed for the first mainstream film on HIV/AIDS in the 1993 film, *Philadelphia*. Released in 1994, the song was a hit in many countries, particularly Canada, France, Germany, Ireland and Norway, where it topped the singles charts.
- *American Skin (41 Shots)*: inspired by the police shooting death of Amadou Diallo. Springsteen first performed it in 2000. A performance in NYC led to some controversy in New York City, where the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association called for a boycott of Springsteen's shows.
- *Born in the USA*: misinterpreted by many. This song offers a lament on the treatment of Vietnam Vets coming home from the war.
- *Ghost of Tom Joad* : Besides *The Grapes of Wrath*, the song also takes inspiration from "The Ballad of Tom Joad" by Woody Guthrie. Springsteen had in fact read the book, watched the film, and listened to the song, before writing "The Ghost of Tom Joad", and the result was viewed as being true to Guthrie's tradition. Springsteen identified with 1930s-style social activism, and sought to give voice to the invisible and unheard, the destitute and the disenfranchised.

The Promise of Work

- Both Greenleaf and Springsteen detected the gap between the promise of work, and the reality of working.
- Both sought to highlight the gap between the Utopian dream offered by capitalism and the reality experienced by those not in power.
- “This character (“*The Promised Land*”) realizes work’s false promise as a dream that tears him apart and leaves him lost and broken hearted but at the same time this is a dream that he does not know how to give up.”

(Rhodes, “Utopia in Popular Management Writing and the Music of Bruce Springsteen”, 2004)

“The Promised Land”

On a rattlesnake speedway in the Utah
desert
I pick up my money and head back into
town
Driving cross the Waynesboro county line
I got the radio on and I'm just killing time
Working all day in my daddy's garage
Driving all night, chasing some mirage
Pretty soon little girl I'm gonna take charge.

Chorus: The dogs on main street howl,
'cause they understand,
If I could take one moment into my hands
Mister, I ain't a boy, no, I'm a man, And I
believe in a promised land.

I've done my best to live the right way
I get up every morning and go to work each day
But your eyes go blind and your blood runs cold
Sometimes I feel so weak I just want to explode
Explode and tear this town apart
Take a knife and cut this pain from my heart
Find somebody itching for something to start
There's a dark cloud rising from the desert floor

I packed my bags and I'm heading straight into
the storm
Gonna be a twister to blow everything down
That ain't got the faith to stand its ground
Blow away the dreams that tear you apart
Blow away the dreams that break your heart
Blow away the lies that leave you nothing but lost
and brokenhearted

Authentic Servant Leadership

- *“The journey to authentic leadership begins with understanding the story of your life. Your life story provides the context for your experiences, and through it, you can find the inspiration to make an impact in the world... While the life stories of authentic leaders cover the full spectrum of experiences...many leaders reported that their motivation came from a difficult experience in their lives. “*

George, Sims, McLean, Mayer (2007)

Everyone has a “Badlands”: Learning to Face our own Darkness

- *“Lights out tonight trouble in the heartland, Got a head-on collision smashin’ in my guts, man I’m caught in a fire that I don’t understand...”*
- For the servant-leader, or those who aspire to be one, an awareness of these changing moments, where a shift or a turning point occurs, is a necessary part of our personal journey.
- The price is to be scarred, or as Joan Chittester (2003) puts it, “to be transformed by struggle and scarred by hope.”

Darkness on the Edge of Town

They're still racing out at the Trestles,
But that blood it never burned in her veins,
Now I hear she's got a house up in Fairview,
And a style she's trying to maintain.
Well, if she wants to see me,
You can tell her that I'm easily found,
Tell her there's a spot out 'neath Abram's
Bridge,
And tell her, there's a darkness on the edge of
town.

Everybody's got a secret, Sonny,
Something that they just can't face,
Some folks spend their whole lives trying to
keep it,
They carry it with them every step that they
take.
Till some day they just cut it loose
Cut it loose or let it drag 'em down,
Where no one asks any questions,
or looks too long in your face,
In the darkness on the edge of town.

Some folks are born into a good life,
Other folks get it anyway, anyhow,
I lost my money and I lost my wife,
Them things don't seem to matter much to me
now.
Tonight I'll be on that hill 'cause I can't stop,
I'll be on that hill with everything I got,
Lives on the line where dreams are found and
lost,
I'll be there on time and I'll pay the cost,
For wanting things that can only be found
In the darkness on the edge of town.

Greenleaf & Springsteen: Why? What's the Research Connection?

- Both emerged from families where they coped with a supportive and a non-supportive parent—”The creative option.”
- Both have given voice to stakeholders in organizations, communities and societies that are not considered, have been marginalized or even demonized.
- Both demonstrate the power of paradox as a source of creativity.
- Both experience a following that grows with time.

Questions?

- What artists inspire you?
- Does this art challenge you to pass the test of Servant Leadership?

“The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or at least, not be further deprived?”

To Contact Joe and Larry

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Land of Hope & Dreams

Grab your ticket and your suitcase, Thunder's rolling down the track
Well you don't know where you're going, But you know you won't be back
Well darlin' if your weary, Lay your hand upon my chest
We'll take what we can carry, Ya, and we'll leave behind the rest

Chorus: *Big wheels roll through fields where sunlight streams
Meet me in a land of hope and dreams*

Well I will provide for you, and I'll stand by your side
You'll need a good companion now, for this part of the ride
Leave behind your sorrows, Ya, this day at last
Tomorrow there'll be sunshine, And all this darkness past

Chorus

Well this train, carries saints and sinners, this train carries losers & winners
This train carries whores and gamblers, this train carries lost souls
This train carries brokenhearted, this train carries sweet souls departed
This train dreams will not be thwarted, this train faith will be rewarded
This train hear the steel wheels singing, this train bells of freedom ringing

Chorus