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# THE ART OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP II

**How You Get Results Is More Important  
Than the Results Themselves**



**ART BARTER**

Author of *The Servant Leadership Journal* and *Farmer Able*

THE ART OF  
SERVANT  
LEADERSHIP  
II

How You Get Results Is More Important  
Than the Results Themselves

ART BARTER

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*The Art of Servant Leadership II:  
How You Get Results Is More Important Than the Results Themselves*

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## Foreword

*The Art of Servant Leadership II* is about how leaders can shape a servant-led culture in which people achieve extraordinary results. Art Barter, CEO of Datron World Communications and founder of the Servant Leadership Institute, has written an extraordinary book. It is Art's story, his story of personal growth as a leader and his story of the transformation of a "command and control" organization that was losing money into a profitable, servant led company. This story will inspire you and it will equip you with the knowledge and tools that can otherwise take a lifetime to learn.

Art invites you to be a game changer in how you influence and impact your world. As Art's story unfolds, you will learn the grand design and the specific tactics required to change people's hearts, mindsets, and behaviors.

I met Art at the end of 2004, just as he had completed the purchase of Datron from Titan Corporation. He wasn't in his office, and I found him on the manufacturing floor in a work coat, organizing parts on a shelf. That is Art. He is as concerned about the details as he is about the great vision and concepts that make organizations work. He told me then "I want servant leadership to be the DNA of Datron." As a consultant, trainer, and coach I have worked with CEO's over three decades, yet I have never met a CEO who exemplifies such caring and commitment for people and such perseverance for bold goals *and* the detailed actions of execution.

Art is also willing do the hardest work of all, the work on

himself. This is the gift he gives to you—the reality of what it takes to lead and change yourself and your company. I encourage you to take notes as you read this book because each chapter will arm you with concepts and tools that you can adapt to your own organization. The art and practice of servant leadership will change your life. It changed mine.

Central to this guide are the nine behaviors that are the foundation for creating a servant led organization, a powerful strategy for individual and organizational change. These nine behaviors are a model for living. When we live these behaviors in small and large actions every day, we are at our best and we bring out the best in others. If you have coached or mentored successfully, you were undoubtedly coaching to one or more of the nine behaviors.

You will connect with each of the challenges Art experienced over more than a decade of building a servant-led culture. He will describe how he learned to let go and get out of the way so others could learn and grow as leaders. And you will understand why he had to step back in when Datron was experiencing “culture drift.”

The measurement of success for a servant leader is do those you serve grow? Are they better off because they have come in contact with you? This book is your field guide to growing individuals while you grow your organization. “Time,” Art says, “is your most valuable asset,” and he encourages his managers to have the discipline to invest time in their people.

You will be surprised that one of the most effective strategies to help leaders transform is to put them into a safe environment with a small group of their peers. Let them set their own agenda so they can openly discuss their challenges. They will each grow at their own rate, but that growth is accelerated by their peers. Art will also encourage you to bring in the great leadership teachers of our time. These teachers have the wisdom to engage your team’s spouses and partners, people who are often forgotten in the equation of how we grow leaders.

Art is more concerned with how we get results than the

results themselves. Living by this maxim, he has led Datron to unprecedented financial success, as well as helped Datron through and out of hard times. This story is as real as it gets, and Art is frank about the tension of needing to achieve business results while you and your people are in the process of learning how to be leaders that serve others.

The task of being a servant leader requires that you know yourself: your history, your life stories, and how they have shaped your development as a leader. It means knowing your character, what you stand for, and knowing where you stand. It is a lifelong process. It is the exploration of your creative expression in life. It is your life's work and the hardest work you will ever do. Make no mistake, servant leadership is not easy, but it is what our world needs—the commitment to unite for the greater good, a world in which we help others succeed.

Jeanne McGuire  
Lafayette, California  
January 2018

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the team at the Servant Leadership Institute for their endless patience and support in developing and advising on this book project. They are a great team of servant leaders who inspired and equipped me throughout this project. I especially want to thank the following people:

Lisa Courtemanche, my executive assistant, who has run my life for the past four years. Thank you for your servant's heart and your desire to help me be the best I can be.

Nonie Jobe, my writer and editor, our first project together. You have blessed me with your desire for my voice to be heard in my writings and for this I am eternally grateful.

The leadership team at Datron World Communications, which participated, witnessed, and survived my own transformation. You continue to inspire and equip me each and every day by your desire to get better in serving others, for making a positive difference in the lives around you, and for putting others first in your lives. Thank you for acknowledging that no one is perfect and for the grace you extend to me when my old power leader behaviors come out.

The team at Wheatmark, who have recognized that we have a calling in serving others. Your input on this project and final help in getting this over the finish line for our annual leadership conference is greatly appreciated by the entire team at the Institute.

My family—Lori, my wife and best friend, and Jennifer and Chris, who were on the front lines of my transformation.



ART BARTER

You continue to inspire me to be a better father and husband each and every day. Your support throughout the years after the purchase of Datron in 2004 has been amazing. But most importantly, thank you for your unconditional love during those tough years before I realized I needed to change. I love you!!

## Introduction

Servant leadership is much more than just another leadership style. It's the essence of an organization's substance and character, coming from the heart of its leaders and providing the highest value for those it serves.

Servant leaders, like all leaders, come in all shapes and sizes and from all levels of education and experience. They are true leaders in every sense of the word. But the trait that sets them—and the impact they have on the world—far apart from the norm is that they lead from the heart.

That fundamental characteristic of a servant leader—one who leads with a servant's heart first and foremost—is the driving force behind the extraordinary results experienced by most servant-led organizations. The goal of servant leaders is to inspire and equip those they influence to be the best they can be. By leading with this focus, they grant the real power to make an organization great to the employees within, who become committed and engaged like never before. The myth that servant leadership is soft and not demanding enough to get the results needed in today's markets couldn't be further from the truth. When leaders overlay their education, experience, and mindset with their hearts, I believe they accomplish one of the most valuable and transformational behaviors of a leader—one that brings astonishing results while helping others grow.

Many believe that the academic side of servant leadership can create the transformation required for serving others first.

Others say that hearing the stories of those whose lives and mindset have been impacted by servant leadership—the heart behind it—is what drives the transformation of a leader. I can tell you from personal experience that the best methodology encompasses both approaches, and that neither can stand alone to drive leaders to change their ways and create a mindset of serving.

Many of our clients in the Servant Leadership Institute come to us because they've seen how we have taken the principles of servant leadership and implemented them in our radio company, Datron World Communications, Inc. In 2004 my wife Lori and I decided to purchase Datron World Communications, Inc. from the Titan Corporation. Up to that point, neither of us had ever owned a business. Both of our careers had been in manufacturing, hers in the operations side and mine in the finance and management side. When we purchased Datron, we were sure of one thing: we did not want to run our company with traditional leadership models that focused on results only, power to those in charge, and financial success to the sacred few at the top of the organizational chart. We wanted to run the company as a servant-led organization.

There was only one problem: we knew *nothing* about running a company of this size. All we had was our faith and a desire to be obedient to what our faith taught us. We are forever grateful that in 2003—just the year before—Ken Blanchard had spoken at our church, New Venture Christian Fellowship, and had challenged us to take the tenets of our faith and put them to work in the way we lead others. In other words, he challenged us to be servant leaders. Little did we know that the timing was providential.

I had been a fan of Ken Blanchard for many years prior to meeting him in 2003. I had read most of his books, and particularly his *One Minute Manager*, which I had read from cover to cover many times. But I confess that I had never purposely considered putting others first in *all* I did in life until that first

meeting with Ken. Since that time, he has become a wonderful supporter of the Servant Leadership Institute, an incredible mentor, and great personal friend.

So our first application of servant leadership in our lives was when Ken got the ball rolling in 2003. Then we purchased Datron in November of 2004 and suddenly found ourselves in the role of business owners and leaders of a company. In all honesty, we had no idea what we were doing or what our plan was for the first year. At the time of the purchase, Datron was generating about \$10 million in annual revenue and was losing money. I remember telling Lori that I was sure we could turn the company around so that it could be a profitable \$20-million company. I had no idea how limiting my own mindset was at the time.

Prior to Titan's purchase of Datron in 2001, the company had made a profit and had been in a positive cash flow position for fifteen consecutive years. The challenge arose when its customers in developing countries began placing inconsistent orders. Some quarters would see \$2 million in revenue, while others would see \$5 million. Unfortunately, showing quarterly profits along with growth in revenue was expected by the shareholders of a public company, and that became a challenge for Datron. When we bought it and made it a private company, it changed that landscape; but the inconsistency of our markets created interesting difficulties from a cash-flow standpoint.

We determined to make servant leadership the key ingredient of our mindset, and that allowed us to manage our challenges in a different way. First we created a purpose that said we would positively impact the lives of others, today and in the future. Then we reinforced that purpose by sharing with our employees on a regular basis communications we received from our customers that described the impact our products were having on them and the security of their countries. By consistently communicating that purpose over and over, along with the impact we were having, we were successful in transforming

our mindset into one that served first. Our purpose, supported by values that put our families first, created a driving force in all that we do.

We purposefully did not create any plans that set a growth target for the business, choosing instead to allow our customers to determine our growth. We believed that if we served our customers well, they would return for products and services over and over again. As we served them, they would decide with their checkbooks how fast we would grow. The results were phenomenal—far beyond any growth target we could have conceived in the beginning.

In this book we offer a case study in transforming a company into a servant-led organization. It starts with individual leaders who are willing to begin the inward journey of transformation of heart and soul. They allow the servant leadership behaviors to renovate their hearts, and ultimately this transfers into their hands of service. When their teams see the radical transformation of their leaders, they are inspired to start their own inward journey toward servant leadership, which finally leads to a servant-led organization.

That may sound a bit sentimental or trite to you, and you may think it's an unrealistic model for the competitive corporate world. However, *putting others first in all you do has a way of realigning your focus with your purpose in life and clarifying your principles for living your purpose on a day-to-day basis*. You will discover a new way of thinking—a new mindset—about results and about your responsibility to treat everyone with dignity and respect. At Datron we do not shy away from the need to be financially successful in our business. We don't shy away from setting and achieving goals that stretch our imagination. But we do focus *first* on the importance of obtaining those results in a way that will serve the best interest of everyone in accordance with our values.

Early in our success I was told that when we reached a revenue level of around \$50 million, the management team would need to be upgraded to one with experience in running

that size company. When we received a record order in 2007 I told my team to add a few more zeros to our revenue plan, but that we could do this. From an excellent book called *Mindset*, by Carol Dweck, we had learned that we could reset our internal monologue, or mindset, to a positive, growth-oriented mindset that would allow us to handle this new level of growth. So we changed our mindset to pursue the goal of serving our customer by meeting this need, which meant we needed to up our game. We would still plan our procurement, buy the materials to support that plan, expand the labor force to build the product, and deliver the completed product to the customer by the date requested. We knew how to accomplish all of this; we just had to change our mindset to accommodate a higher volume of activity. Servant leadership gave us the foundation to grow our business substantially with just the normal added expense of additional labor. In other words, by following the principles of servant leadership, we were able as a committed and engaged team to create a growth mindset and far exceed our normal production with basically what we already had. In today's corporate world, that's called increased productivity.

Servant leadership is not a designed program, nor is it the latest fad in management. Servant leadership is a way of life that has a deep impact on those you serve and influence. Implementing servant leadership is not for the faint of heart. It is a very rewarding journey that requires a commitment to behaviors and results at a very high level. Few will take the journey with you, but many will be impacted by your influence.

Early in my career I dreamed of running a division for a large public corporation. The dream included retiring when I was in my forties with a home on the bay in Newport Beach, California, with my yacht docked in my back yard. Interestingly, no one in leadership ever took the time to ask me about my dreams, much less teach me how to get there or even warn me about the sacrifices involved in making my dreams a reality. And I have to say that nowhere in my dreams did I see buying a public company, taking it private, and running it

under a new set of beliefs and a new mindset. It wasn't until I was in my fifties that I even learned the difference between having significance and having success. Success is focused on yourself—climbing the corporate ladder, driving a company car, and traveling around the world in first class. Significance is all about others—using the influence that has been gifted to you to make a difference in the lives of other people.

Early in 2015 we released a book titled *Farmer Able*, a fable about a farmer whose challenges forced him to learn a new way of living, serving others. The story shows how Farmer Able implemented servant leadership in his life and on the farm; but most importantly it shows how servant leadership impacted his relationship with his wife Patience and his daughter Sunny.

The joy that servant leadership will bring to those in your world will more than offset any misgivings you may have about starting this journey. Combine your education, experience, and desire for change to start the journey that will transform your life and the lives of those around you. Join the movement of new leaders—those that lead with their hearts and discover no limits.

## Prologue

I consider myself a witness. I've been here since 1977. And now I've been asked to tell you about it: the many goings on here at Datron World Communications. It's an old story that began when the hourglass of time turned over in 1971, the year the company was founded.

Some call me CEO or president, others call me owner, but those that know me the best call me Art. They have seen me in various forms and emotions over time. What they haven't seen is what I've seen; not just the happenings, but also the manner of them. Many a word, many a joy and even many a tear have passed by me and I've taken them all in. I collect the memories like they were yesterday; precious and not to be forgotten, good or bad.

Power leader I am, transformed by experiences and people to see the light of a new way of leading. I have a role to play today, one that focuses on service above self. As a servant leader my role is to pour my life into others. In doing so, I experience the transformative effect on my life when those around me grow to their own fullest potential. I'm a witness to what can be accomplished by individuals and organizations when leaders decide to serve first. In November 2004, I shared with employees that at times opportunity is missed because it comes dressed in overalls and requires a lot of hard work. I committed myself then to make all we could out of the opportunity put in front of us called Datron.

I'm a witness to the hard work. I applaud those that joined



me in transforming the world of Datron into a servant led organization. I'm in awe of the transformation that took place in the lives around me. I'm thankful for the grace extended by the Datron family that allowed me time to learn and transform my behaviors into those of a servant leader. I'm thankful to God for allowing me to witness this journey.

And what I've beheld at Datron has a certain wisdom to it—a truth of sorts, that service to others above oneself is surely worth the journey. My life has been changed for good. Take the journey and become a witness along with me.

## Create and Communicate

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

**S**ervant leadership is a mindset, and transformation from one mindset to another only occurs through consistent communication that creates an understanding about the value that mindset brings. Communication, then, is a primary tool of servant leaders.

We live in a world where many people don't know who they are, what their purpose is, or how they fit into this thing called life. As children grow up in the turmoil and chaos that too often define our culture, their confusion about life manifests in the choices they make and the masks they wear over the span of their lifetimes. As we go about the business of inspiring and equipping people to be the best they can be, our first job is to help them find purpose. As we help them find and understand their own purpose, we equip them to wholeheartedly embrace the purpose of the families and organizations they serve, and the world is made a better place.

### **Who Are You, and What Do You Stand For?**

What about you? You are unique, and you've been given certain gifts and talents to share with the world. Do you know what they are? What is your passion? What makes you smile as

you get up in the morning and face the day? Do you know your mission and purpose?

In a discussion about leadership with an executive team from another company earlier this year, I heard about a study they had done with hospice nurses, asking them this question: “What do most people talk about in the last season of their lives?” Many of the hospice nurses said the biggest thing people struggle with at the end of their lives is that they wish they had lived the life of the person they had inside of them, and not the person they thought they had to be. They felt they had to be someone else to be accepted, so they gave up their identity and their purpose.

We all have to make a living, and we all have those things that we are passionate about. Sometimes, if we are really fortunate, those two things come together and we’re able to get paid for fulfilling our passion, or we get to work in a company whose mission and purpose we can be passionate about. When the values of the company we work for match our values as individuals, that’s when we’re happy to go to work, take pleasure in what we’re doing, enjoy the people we work with, and enthusiastically embrace our opportunity to make a difference. And when an organization has a team full of happy people, it makes life easier for everyone. The organization performs well, its people are rewarded, and together they make a massive impact on the world around them.

On the other end of the spectrum, we see what happens to those who have no clue about their purpose and have no hope of ever having a meaningful life. The suicide rate continues to rise at an alarming rate especially among teens. According to Statistic Brain Research Institute, the average number of attempted teenage suicides each year is 575,000. Thankfully, the number of those who succeed is much lower (4,600 a year, or twelve a day—one out of every 125 attempted)<sup>1</sup>, but that number is certainly nothing to boast about. One suicide is one

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1 “Teen Suicide Statistics,” Statistic Brain Research Institute, <http://www.statistic-brain.com/teen-suicide-statistics> (accessed 11/7/15).

too many. The point is youth are growing up so confused, with everyone trying to tell them who they think they should be, that too many of them are deciding it's better not to be alive. That's another sad statistic that bears out the fact that the overwhelming majority of people don't know who they are or what they want out of life. People are either afraid to live the life that's inside of them or they struggle to define who they really are. Either way, we as servant leaders need to help them.

There is a caveat here that we, as servant leaders, need to heed. As the world changes at lightning speed around us, we are challenged to change our thinking and enlarge our paradigm about how to help people find out who they are. We must be diligent to live by the values we say we live by, which includes inspiring and equipping those who don't fit within our boxes of social acceptability.

When Lori and I bought Datron in 2004 and were wrestling with what would be the perfect mission and purpose statement for our company, Ken Blanchard gave us some great advice: "Make your mission and purpose statement something that people understand and can latch on to." He told us stories of companies he had consulted with that had written mission and purpose statements that were three pages long! We wanted something that described what was in our hearts and that we were ready to dedicate our lives to, and this is what we came up with: "We want to be a profitable, self-sustaining communications company that positively impacts the lives of others, today and in the future."

Our purpose is to "positively impact the lives of others, today and in the future." That's certainly easy to remember and easy to talk about (especially since we're so passionate about it). Our mission, to be a "profitable and self-sustaining communications company," supports our purpose.

To us, being profitable and self-sustaining includes being debt-free. We don't believe in taking on debt to grow through acquisitions or burdening our organization with debt in any other way. As we grew the company from the \$10-million

level up to the \$200-million level, there were times when we had to take out a line of credit with our bank; but we paid it back as soon as we could, usually within a three- to six-month period. And our mantra of being debt free precludes us from playing games with accounting systems. We don't want to have to explain, "Yes, we're losing money on paper; but we're actually making money." We keep it very simple. We have to be profitable, or we won't be able to sustain what we want to do.

Datron World Communications is a military communications company. When I speak around the country, people often ask, "How can you positively impact the lives of others when you're in a military business?" Here's a story I tell that illustrates our purpose of positively impacting the lives of others:

I started working with the police in Zimbabwe early on, after I joined Datron in the late nineties. On my first business trip to Zimbabwe I met the signals officer in the police department, and I asked him, "How can we help you?" He said, "Here's my problem. When we have presidential elections, people demonstrate in the streets. Some of those people are my friends," he said, "and some of them are even my family members. As an officer in the police department, I want to control those crowds with good communications and not with bullets." I told him we would help him do that, and we started working with him to provide the radios he needed.

After the presidential election of 2008, news articles claimed it would "go down in history as one of the most peaceful elections in Zimbabwe's history" (*New York Times*, April 18, 2008). We were elated that we had provided the communication equipment to make that happen. I called everyone in the company together, read one of the articles to them, and said, "This is why we do what we do. We save lives. That's our purpose."

Before we ship out the radios that our employees manufacture, we ask those employees, "Would you put that radio on your son's or daughter's back if he or she were going into battle?" If the answer is yes, then we ship it. If the answer is

no, then it doesn't go out the door. That's how we bring out the passion of our purpose; there are men and women in the battlefield around the world who are laying down their lives to make this world a better place, and we want to help them do that with the communications equipment we manufacture.

There's an even more widespread application of our purpose. As the CEO of Datron, I deal with a lot of generals in foreign countries where we do business. We're in many nations that are in the hotspot of the world right now, and we're finding that there are a lot of good people in very difficult situations. Everywhere I go, all of the foreign generals I talk to say the same thing: they want to protect the sovereignty of their nations and provide security for their citizens. None of them want to attack other nations. They want to protect who they are and protect the individuals in their countries. The crazier the world gets, the more astounded I am at that. These military leaders are in a position to pick up the phone and send an armored tank after anyone they want to, and yet all they want to do is preserve their nations and protect their citizens, just like we do here in the US. But that's not the kind of thing we hear in the US media. I know for a fact that when the uprisings and demonstrations started in one country where we do business, their army never pulled out their weapons until outsiders started coming into their country—and when they were forced to use their weapons, they used rubber bullets instead of real ones. That's the level of integrity some of the people have who we deal with in the militaries around the world. They want peace; nobody wants war. That is why we do what we do.

We believe we have a noble purpose—one that people can really believe in. Even though our business is a military business, it's not about war—it's about saving lives. We often hire ex-military radio men who understand our products, and they love dealing with us for that very reason.

## Live What You Stand For

As we carry out our own mission, purpose, and core values every day, we have to make sure we live what we stand for. And that includes the premise that if we encounter someone in a foreign nation who isn't at that level of commitment of just providing security and sovereignty, we have to make a decision whether we want to support that military. We've actually dealt with a couple of countries that were riding the fence of a good relationship with the US, and then they did some inappropriate things. In those instances we walked away because we didn't want to do business with them.

As servant leaders, you have to stand up for what's right; and by doing that you have to be willing to walk away from business. Many years ago, one of our customers in a country in the Middle East asked us to backdate some documents on a procurement process, and we said, "No, we won't do that." I told my team to get on a plane and come home. We won't backdate documents or do anything else illegal to get business. We walked away from a \$6-million deal. Interestingly, eight years later that customer came back to us and asked us to take the lead on a \$12-million program because of our level of integrity. They knew they could trust us. You have to live what you believe in, and you can't loosen your values just to get business. Sometimes you have to stand up and say no.

## Communicate to Inspire Your Organization

Servant leaders make sure they are in front of their people all the time, reinforcing the organization's purpose. And that doesn't mean just telling them what orders are coming in and sharing the financial results. In our case, that involves telling our team about the impact they're having in a country. Whenever we travel into a country and win some business, we always come back and share in our monthly employee meetings what's going on, who we talked to, the events we were involved in, information about the customers, and what we learned about how our products will be used to help that country. That's how

we inspire our people—by sharing the stories of what happens with our customers in the places we go.

In late 2016, I traveled to Morocco to sign a \$20-million contract with the Ministry of Defense. It was during Ramadan; and we had been a little hesitant about going because we didn't know if we would be able to get any business done. But by being there during Ramadan, we learned much about the Muslim religion and how they observe their holy month. They fast from both food and drink during the day, from dawn until sunset. They do business for a couple of hours during the day, but most of the business is done at night. Around eight o'clock in the evening, everyone gathers in social areas. They have dinner; and then they sit around and talk for several hours, and they have community. I spent more time out on the lawn, sitting and talking with people and enjoying community than I have in a long time. I got to the point where I really looked forward to the social time each evening. We had an amazing time being there during Ramadan; and yet, because of our preconceived ideas, we had been nervous about going. We share those kinds of experiences with our people to inspire them and help them understand how the equipment they make is impacting lives in the different countries.

We don't utilize the latest and greatest technology in our products, but we provide a radio that's easy to use. And that's just what a lot of countries need. We went into Afghanistan when they first started building up the military there, and 80 percent of the recruits coming into the military couldn't read or write their own language. So the general came to me and said, "Art, I need a radio that's easy to operate. I have to teach people how to read and write and how to use a radio, and I have about a three-month period to do that before I deploy them." So we listened to what he needed, and we told him we'd be back in about a year. A year later I flew into Kabul and delivered the new radios to the general in his office. I said, "We developed this radio just for you." He said, "Art, thank you very much. No one has ever developed a product just for me. They're always



trying to sell me something that they're already selling to other people." When we share stories like these with our people, we find that they're inspired and led to do things that our competitors don't do, and they make the world a better place by doing so.

## **Champion Your Organization's Purpose**

Twelve years ago, we established the Datron Charitable Fund, and since then we've put 10 percent of all profits into the fund. Because of our faith, Lori and I believe we should give 10 percent, or a tithe. We didn't think it was right to give all of that money to our home church; we've let the employees decide where that money goes. Employees can submit grants to our charitable committee, and the committee reviews and approves each grant. In the twelve years since we started the fund, we've given away a little over \$15 million in grants to organizations around the world.

That's how we get our employees to *live* our purpose and values. They love being able to positively impact charitable organizations that have helped them or their families by giving back to them through our charitable fund. They tell us who they want to help out and why, and we do everything we can to make that donation happen. This really inspires our employees. We talk to them about what we do through the charitable fund and why we do it. We let people see our hearts. That's something that a lot of leaders don't do.

By telling the stories about our organization and how we're making a positive difference in people's lives, both with our products and through our charitable work, we champion our purpose. When our people latch onto that purpose, it's unbelievable what they'll do.

When Katrina hit in 2005, a couple of our people wanted to donate some radios to help with the recovery during the first couple of days. They tried to get in touch with the Louisiana National Guard; but when they couldn't reach them, they

reached out to the California National Guard for help. A representative of that group told them, “Yes, we’re going to deploy some equipment there in two days, and we’d love to have some military radios.” Our employees got a list of what they needed, and they came to me and asked, “What do you want us to do?” I was smart enough to just get out of the way and let them do it. I said, “You guys go make it happen.” The team had the equipment made, packed, inspected, and ready to go, all within twenty-four hours.

After we got the equipment ready, a colonel with the California National Guard came to me and said, “Art, we don’t have a way to get the equipment up to Sacramento.” He said, “We’re trying to get a Black Hawk helicopter to fly in to one of the airports down here to pick it up.” The problem, of course, was that the red tape of the United States government wouldn’t allow that to happen. I was sitting in the parking lot at Palomar Airport with the colonel, and he was on the phone trying to put it together. I said, “Colonel, they’re not going to let you make it happen. Let me talk to some companies here and see what I can do.” It was about six o’clock in the evening, and I started calling some of our local air charter companies. When I reached someone in one of the companies, I explained, “We need to get this equipment up to Sacramento around midnight tonight.” The company representative said, “Let me call some pilots.” Within the hour they had a King Air for us. I went back to the colonel and said, “Here’s what’s going to happen. We’re going to load all the equipment onto a King Air and we’re going to fly it up to Sacramento. Tell me what airport it needs to go to. We’ll make sure this equipment gets on that C-130 to Louisiana.” The colonel said, “But we don’t have the money to pay for that.” I said, “You don’t have to pay for it. We’ll make it happen.” He was dumbfounded; when he called his general, he said, “I can’t believe what they’re doing. Here, you talk to Art, the CEO, and he’ll explain what’s going on.” So we loaded the equipment onto the King Air, flew to Sacra-

mento that night, and met the general on the tarmac about one o'clock in the morning. We loaded all of the equipment into his suburban, and it made it on to the C-130 the next morning.

After the California National Guard returned from assisting with Katrina the colonel wanted the Datron employees to see the communications trailer that our equipment was installed in. He also wanted to share some of their experiences with the equipment (all good by the way). It was late summer, early fall in Vista when the weather is perfect for a barbecue in the parking lot. We scheduled the event and the colonel and his staff arranged for the vehicles to be on site in the Datron parking lot. As you can imagine, having a military green Humvee with a large trailer attached with some fairly large antenna's created quite the buzz with our neighbors in the industrial park. That day our employees heard about how their hearts and equipment positively impacted the lives of others. Below is a photo of the colonel and one of his staff with me in the parking lot.



That is what pulls people in a company together—when they team up to make something like that happen, and they do it just to help other people. When you give people a purpose, you can't stop them. They become the champions of your purpose. I'm so fortunate, because as the CEO I get invited to events because of what my employees have done for organizations. It's not me; they've done it all. I get to share the stories and sometimes receive awards, and I always say, "You need to recognize my employees, because it just amazes me what these people have done with their hearts."

If more leaders would lead with their hearts, we could impact the lives of a lot more people.

### **Behaviors and Language of Servant Leaders**

We have identified nine behaviors that we believe are prevalent in servant leaders:

1. Serve first—putting others above yourself in all that you do.
2. Build trust—trusting yourself and extending trust to others.
3. Live your values—letting your words, actions and behaviors reflect your core values.
4. Listen to understand—caring enough to listen to others first; a form of love.
5. Think about your thinking—observing and questioning how and why we think the way we do, to really understand who we are.
6. Add value to others—investing your time in other people's lives; the positive difference you make in them.
7. Demonstrate courage—having tough conversations to help others face challenges and deal with the unfolding of life events.
8. Increase your influence—using your behaviors to influ-

ence others by role modeling, coaching, mentoring, and counseling.

9. Live your transformation—having the discipline and courage to stay the course; serving others above yourself, especially during tough times.

How do I apply these behaviors in my own life, remembering to live them day in and day out? Here's my elevator speech about how these nine behaviors relate to my life, within the context of my daily routine:

1. Serve first. The first thing I do in the morning is make coffee for my wife Lori. I serve first.
2. Build trust. When I drive to work each morning, I pass the bus stop for the school. It reminds me of the work we're doing with the school districts. Based on our work with some of our clients in the education system, we understand that trust is an issue.
3. Live your values. On my route to work, I have to get onto the freeway. In order to get on the freeway, I have to live my values by honoring and respecting people who are already on the freeway. I also have to honor and respect the traffic laws.
4. Listen to understand. After I get on the freeway, I usually get on my cell phone and start talking to people. As a servant leader, I need to listen to understand, so I make a habit of listening more than I talk.
5. Think about your thinking. After I finish my calls, I usually have time on the rest of my drive to work to think about my thinking.
6. Bring value. As I walk through the front door of our facility every day, my most important goal is to add value to someone. I make it personal by putting in a person's name. "What person do I need to inspire and equip today?"

7. Demonstrate courage. I go upstairs to my office, and my assistant Lisa goes over my calendar with me. I often say, “Wow! It’s going to take a lot of courage today to get all of this done!” Or there may be one or two conversations I need to have that day to help realign the thinking of some of our people so they will better understand what we do and why we do it. As their servant leader, I have to have the courage to do that in a way that will help them be the best they can be.
8. Increase your influence. I may remember someone I want to help by influencing his or her thinking. I may be able to increase my influence by mentoring that person.
9. Live your transformation. It’s easy for all of us to give positive feedback to people we like, people we work with really well, and people who are on board with what we’re doing. The challenge is what we do with people who aren’t on board, aren’t happy in life, very rarely smile, and don’t have anything good to say. Our tendency as human beings is to stay away from those people. As I think of such an individual, I may ask, “How am I going to add value today to that person I’m having a tough time with?” As leaders, we need to treat everyone equally. Our transformation is lived through our behaviors.

As servant leaders, our full impact comes with living what we teach. We have to boldly embrace these nine behaviors, as they represent the heart and soul of servant leadership. In fact, everything we do, including the language we use, reveals our level of commitment.

When my kids were young, I was fully dedicated to my career. I had made it a higher priority than my own family and even my health. On weekends (well, Sundays, which was all the weekend I thought I could spare), all I wanted to do was spend time recovering mentally and physically from my hard work all week.

My kids, Jennifer and Chris, had other ideas. They would often come to me and ask if we could do things together as a family that day. My standard answer was, “We’ll see.” After getting this response on a fairly regular basis, I overheard Jennifer, the older of the two, tell Chris one day that “we’ll see” meant “no.” Based on my past behavior, my kids were smart enough to translate what I thought was a non-committal answer into what it really meant—“no.”

Recently I spent some time on the phone with a very special leader I had met just some months before. I’m a member of a select group of leaders who have invested both time and money into learning from some of the best leaders in the world through a monthly conference call. We also spend time one-on-one sharing best leadership practices. On the phone with my new friend, we talked about leadership in our respective companies and discussed our leadership teams. Well into the conversation, my leadership partner asked if she could provide some feedback on what she had observed. “Yes, please do,” I replied.

Her first observation was positive reinforcement. She had not heard the word “but” during my entire description of the leadership within our company. She explained how the senior leadership team of her company had thrown their energy into changing the mindset of their leaders. One of their key focus areas was changing the language their leaders used. The first example she shared was their practice of asking others permission to coach them. They use wording that goes something like this: “I sense an opportunity to mentor you; is it okay if I share with you today”? If the answer is yes, they share their observation or feedback. If the answer is no, They say, “Great! Have a wonderful day. I’ll talk to you later.” I realized she had just done that in our conversation when she asked my permission for her to give feedback.

Her second observation was not as positive. Basically, she “busted” me on using the word “try” when describing our company’s leadership. I think most of my talking points had started

off with, “We try to....” She very politely helped me understand how the use of this word really provides a basis for *not* doing something, rather than being a commitment *to do* something.

This was not my first exposure to the connotation of the word “try.” Early in my career I had been mentored about the same word. It was around the time that Nike had come out with their slogan, “Just Do It.” My mentor explained that you either do something or not; there is no in between. When you say you’ll try, you are not fully committed to the action. You have a safe out to fall back on—“Well, I tried.”

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines the word “try” as:

To make an effort to do something; to attempt to accomplish or complete something; to do or use (something) in order to see if it works or will be successful; to do or use (something) in order to find out if you like it.<sup>2</sup>

There are several phrases that stand out to me in this definition: “attempt to accomplish,” “see if it works,” and “find out if you like it.” When we use the word “try” in our conversations, the people we are communicating with could receive our words within any one of these contexts. More likely, though, people will define “try” based on their previous experiences, either with us or with other leaders.

We have shared how we implemented servant leadership in our companies and created the Servant Leadership Institute to help others do the same. Let’s look at how others might receive my comments on servant leadership if I were to use these concepts of the word “try”:

“We are going to make an effort to implement servant leadership at our company;” or “We are going to use servant leadership to see if it works or will be successful,” or “We are going to implement servant leadership to see if we like it.”

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2 Merriam Webster Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/try> (accessed January 8, 2016).



Compare these statements to the following commitment:

“We will be a servant-led organization. I believe that servant leadership is the only way to lead and serve others, and we will be known as a servant-led company.”

Early on in our implementation at Datron, our leaders thought that servant leadership was just the latest “fad,” and that it would be replaced with something else within twelve months. Their reaction was not directed to me as an individual, nor was it directed to the concept of servant leadership. It was based on the fact that the leadership of the company over the previous ten years had spent a lot of money and effort “trying” different leadership styles to “see if they liked it” or “to see if it worked.” They never committed themselves to operating their business in any particular way. Does that sound familiar?

As I was listening to my new friend politely bust my leadership language, I realized that this little blip in my language—and hence in my thinking and that of my team—was hindering our company’s servant-led culture.

I took over eight pages of notes during our hour-long phone conversation. I am still “thinking about my own thinking”—about the words I use as the CEO, about their impact on others, and about the mindset I have on the language of a servant leader.

Where do you stand as a leader? Are you fully committed to a leadership style? How do those you influence translate the words you say as a leader? Do you use words like “we’ll see” or “we’re going to try...”?

In the end, we leaders need to show our commitment to those we influence. Our message must be clear. When we’re in a senior leadership position, our words send messages to others that reveal the level of our commitment to serve them. I am thankful for this leader’s servant heart. Those I serve will feel her leadership influence through the change in my behavior.

THE ART OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP II

**PERSONAL**

1. Do you have a purpose?
2. Do you know your values?
3. How do you communicate your purpose and values?
4. Do you champion your purpose?
5. How do you live your purpose?
6. Assess yourself on the nine behaviors (1–10)

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SERVE FIRST

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BUILD TRUST

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LIVE YOUR VALUES

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LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

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THINK ABOUT YOUR THINKING

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ADD VALUE TO OTHERS

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DEMONSTRATE COURAGE

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INCREASE YOUR INFLUENCE

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LIVE YOUR TRANSFORMATION

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**TEAM**

1. Does your team have a purpose?
2. Does your team have values?
3. How does your team communicate your purpose and values?
4. Who champions your team's purpose?
5. How does your team live their purpose?
6. Assess your team on the nine behaviors (1–10)

7. What do you need to improve?

7. What does your team need to improve?

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**Chapter One Table Talk Questions**

## About the Author

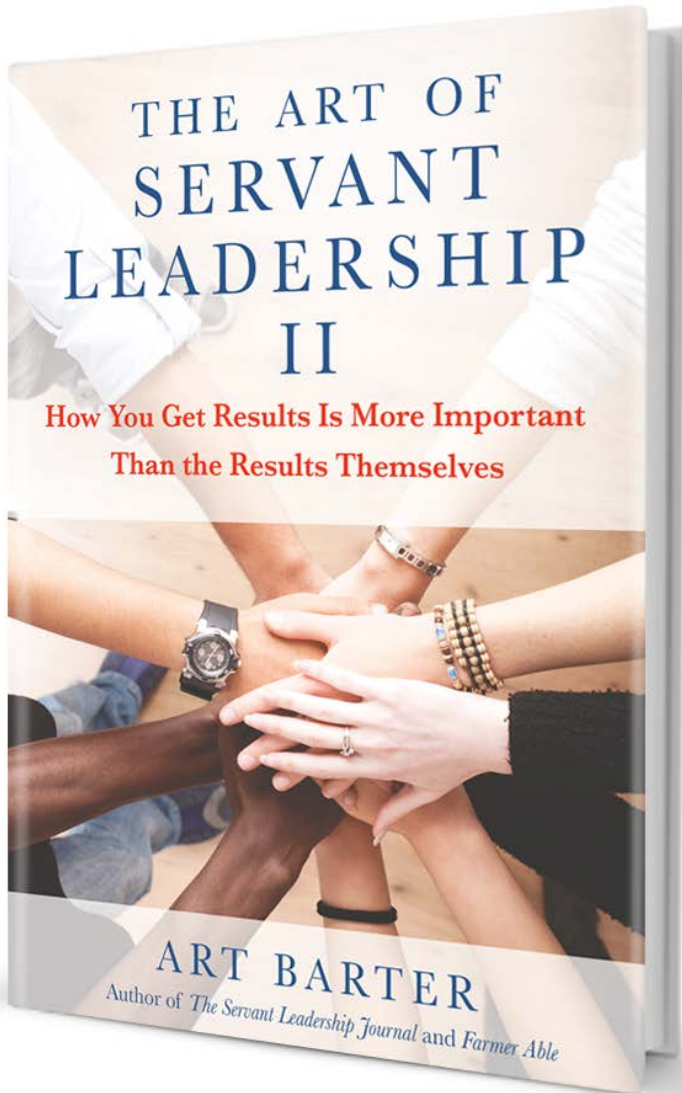


Art Barter believes “how you get the results is more important than the results themselves.” To teach people about the power of servant leadership, Art started in his own backyard by rebuilding the culture of the manufacturing company he bought in 2004, Datron World Communications. Art took Datron’s traditional power-led model and turned it upside down; and together with his management team, began to serve first. The result: a small international radio manufacturer grew from a \$10 million company to a \$200 million company in six years. In late 2016, Datron received a record \$495 million order which Art feels is a direct result of the companies servant leadership culture.

Fueled by his passion for servant leadership and the lessons learned from the implementation of Datron’s culture shift, Art founded the Servant Leadership Institute (SLI) as a vehicle to share his knowledge and to teach others how to inspire and equip those they influence. At the company’s heart is a foundational curriculum covering 45 hours of training for every employee in the organization.

Art is also the author of *Farmer Able* and *The Servant Leadership Journal*. He has been named by the Trust Across America organization as a Trust top thought leader for 2017 and 2018.

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