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**Dear Servant Leadership Alliance Members:**

Please read the attached excerpt from Robert K. Greenleaf's work entitled *Teacher as Servant: A Parable*. Highlight at least one sentence/paragraph on each page that is particularly thought-provoking and "speaks to you". How might this paragraph reflect the ideals of servant leadership? Relate to leadership challenges in the contemporary workplace? Provide insight for mentoring our current students to help them enhance their learning? Serve as foundation for *spiritual leadership*?

I have agreed to facilitate our dialogue and look forward to listening to the many wonderful insights you have regarding Greenleaf's commentary. See you all on April 2, 2012.

In servant leadership,

*Max E. Douglas*

Max E. Douglas

Professor Management Emeritus

# TEACHER AS SERVANT

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*A Parable*

Robert K. Greenleaf

**LEADERSHIP RESOURCE CENTER  
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The fourth major issue I see is facing the requirements for growth; accepting some process for drawing forth one's uniqueness.

I would like to see a word that has fallen into disuse restored to common usage. That word is *entheos*, from the same roots as enthusiasm, which means *possessed of the spirit*. These two words, *entheos* and enthusiasm, have had an interesting history in the English language, coming down side by side through separate channels of meaning from the sixteenth century. *Entheos* has always been the basic spiritual essence; enthusiasm, until recently, its perverter and imitator. *Entheos* is now defined as the power actuating one who is inspired, while enthusiasm is seen as its less profound, more surface aspect.

I want to use *entheos* as it is now defined, the power actuating one who is inspired; and, at the risk of laboring it, I want to build a concept of growth around this one word. For those who are concerned with maturity seen as becoming, it is important to see *entheos* as the lamp and to keep one's own private lamp lighted as one ventures forth into a confused, pressure-ridden world, but nevertheless a hopeful world for those who can maintain their contact with the power that actuates inspiration. From the little I know of history I cannot imagine a more interesting time to be alive than the times we live in—provided one can make it with *entheos*.

I see *entheos* as the essence that makes a constructive life possible; it is the sustaining force that holds one together under stress; it is the support for venturesome risk-taking action; it is the means whereby whatever religious beliefs one has are kept in contact with one's attitudes and actions in the world of practical affairs; it lifts people above the prosaic and gives them a sense of timelessness; it is the prod of conscience that keeps one open to knowledge, so that one can be both aware and sensitive, when the urge to be comfortable would keep the

relief to take them off. The power of *entheos* makes this possible; and the urge to remove the mask is one of the surest signs of its potency.

Then one becomes *conscious of the good use of time and unhappy with the waste of time*. As awareness opens, one of the measures one takes of the contemporary society is the number of elaborate and seductive devices lurking about that serve no other purpose than to waste time.

A further test is the growing sense of *achieving one's basic personal goals through one's work*, whatever it is—however menial, however poorly recognized. One of the popular illusions in our kind of culture is that one must reach a high status position in order to achieve one's goals. In my observation there is really nothing in status but status, and the proportion of frustrated people is just as great in high places as in low places. I know it is an old truism, but the only place to achieve one's personal goals is where one is. Looking for a greener pasture for this purpose is almost certain to seal off the opportunity for achievement.

Going with some of these tests is the emergence of *a sense of unity*, a pulling together of all aspects of life. Job, family, recreation, church, community, all merge into one total pattern. While there remain obvious allocations of time to specific pursuits, the sense of leaving one and going to another diminishes. Peripheral time-consuming activities that cannot be brought within this unified view are laid aside. None of us needs to accept all of the obligations that others would impose upon us and one way of making the separation between what to accept and what to reject is to test their compatibility with the core of unified activities. As *entheos* grows, one becomes more decisive and emphatic in saying "no!"

Finally, there is *a developing view of people*. All people are seen as beings to be trusted, believed in, and loved; and not as objects to be used, competed with, or judged. It

is a shifting of the balance from use to esteem in all personal relationships. In an imperfect world one never achieves it fully; but there can be measurable progress. This is a critically important test. Unless this view of people becomes dominant, it is difficult for the inward view of one's own significant uniqueness to emerge. Love of oneself in the context of a pervasive love for one's fellows is a healthy attribute and necessary for the fulfillment of a life. Out of this context, love of oneself can be narrowing, introverting, and destructive.

The ultimate test of *entheos*, however, is *an intuitive feeling of oneness, of wholeness, of rightness*; but not necessarily comfort or ease.

These seem to me to be some valid indicators that give assurance that *entheos* is growing. If this kind of thinking doesn't strike a responsive chord with you today, please make note of it, tuck it away in the back of your Journal and look at it ten years—twenty years from now.

In closing I want to return for a moment to work, vocation, and its relevance to growth, to the drawing out of the unique significance of the person.

When your full-time education is complete, don't just look for a job; even for an interesting and remunerative job. Think of yourself as a person with unique potentialities and see the purpose of life as bringing these into mature bloom.

Don't think of your career in terms of finding a nice fit for your skills and abilities. You will find some work more rewarding than other work; but the perfect job doesn't exist. Anyhow, neither the person nor the job stays put.

Since there are no perfect jobs, no ideal fields, take one that challenges you as a piece of work to be done. Make other requirements subsidiary to this one, because nothing else really matters if the job is not rewarding in this sense.

door closed. I like that line from William Blake:

If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything  
will appear to man as it is, infinite.

*Entheos* does not come in response to external incentives. In fact, it may persist when incentives operate to destroy it. The individual cannot will it; it comes when *it* will and sometimes it goes when most needed. But it does grow.

All that can be willed is the search. There is no one pattern I know of. Each must find one's own pattern. One of the great challenges of maturity: find your own growth pattern in the search for *entheos*.

I can suggest some tests. If one has such tests in mind, these might help to plot the individual search. We are reaching, in the end, for *entheos*, the power actuating one who is inspired. First some misleading indicators—some events and conditions that might throw one off:

*Status or material success.* One's external achievement may be impressive and praiseworthy and yet, in the process of achieving, one may be destroying much that is really important.

*Social success.* The non-growth people are sometimes more comfortable to be with.

*Doing all that is expected of one.* Who is doing the expecting, and what do they know about what I should be expecting of myself?

*Family success* can be a misleading indicator. Fine and desirable as it is, if it is an exclusive concern, it can be an egocentric, narrowing development. The family may be taking more out of the wider community than it is contributing.

*Relative peace and quiet.* This may simply mean that the doors of perception are closed.

Finally, busyness—compulsive busyness. Beneath

the surface of much action there is the drive to avoid the implications of growth. "This is for monks in a monastery; I'm too busy," they seem to say. (Read the Mary-Martha story and ask, what does it have to say on this point?)

These are six events and conditions that can be misleading as evidences of growth in *entheos*. These can all be positive and worthwhile; but they don't necessarily add up to growth of *entheos*.

Now, what I believe to be some valid indicators that there may be real growth of *entheos*:

First, two paradoxes, *a concurrent satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the status quo*. One is not so unhappy with one's current level of achievement that one can't live with oneself. Neither is one so pleased with one's level of achievement that one has no incentive to break out of it. Then there is a concurrent *feeling of broadening responsibilities and centering down*. One is constantly reaching out for wider horizons—new levels of experience, and at the same time the idea of "This one thing will I do" is in the ascendancy.

There is *a growing sense of purpose in whatever one does*. The idea of purpose becomes important. Without being obsessive about it, the most penetrating and disturbing of all questions, "What am I trying to do?" becomes a constant query. One never loses sight of this question.

There are *changing patterns and depths of one's interests*. Old interests to which one was once attached drop away and newer and deeper ones take their place. Choices must be made.

As *entheos* becomes a more constant companion, one moves toward the *minimum of difference between the outside and inside images of the self*; one becomes more willing to be seen as one is. Living as we do in an unreal world, to some extent we all wear masks. Convenient as it is to let the mask do what only serenity can really do, I submit that all masks chafe; I never saw a well-fitting mask. It is a great

Whatever your work is, make something out of it that enriches you. Work itself cannot be truly significant except as it is seen as the means whereby the people who do the work find themselves in it. Do your work well; keep your sense of obligation high; cultivate excellence in everything you do; but above all *use* your work, *use* it as a means for your own fulfillment as a person—your own becoming.

If you have goals, be sure to state them in terms of external achievement, not in terms of what you will become. You don't know what you can become, and no one can tell you.

This can be one of the great excitements of life—the surprise when you discover what you have become and realize that more is yet to come. Let your watchword be—becoming!

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