


MAX KLAU

DEVELOPING
SERVANT
LEADERS
AT SCALE



HOW TO DO IT,
AND WHY IT
MATTERS

FOREWORD BY
ROSABETH MOSS KANTER

DEVELOPING SERVANT LEADERS AT SCALE

The first move I made after launching the New Politics Leadership Academy was to hire Max. Nobody else knew how to do this kind of deep inner work at scale. Thanks to the approach shared in this book, the thousands of servant leaders who have come through our programs are more connected to their own “why”, more conscious of their own shadow, and more able to lead with clarity and integrity. And now hundreds are elected leaders at every level from School Board to Congress. Max’s approach is proven, tested, powerful, and vitally important at this critical moment for democracy here in the United States and around the world.

—*Emily Cherniack*, Founder and Executive Director of New Politics and the New Politics Leadership Academy, named to the Politico 50, a list of “thinkers, dreamers, and doers driving politics” in 2018

In a world brimming with complex challenges, *Developing Servant Leaders at Scale* is not just a book; it’s a roadmap to a better, brighter future.

—*Laura Gassner Otting*, ABC Contributor and *Wall Street Journal* Bestselling Author of *Wonderhell*

Max Klau’s latest book gives you the tools to cultivate leadership that’s both transformational and deeply human. He challenges leaders to reflect on their core values and step boldly into the courage required to lead with authenticity. This book isn’t just about building better organizations – it’s about building better people. If you’re serious about scaling

servant leadership and fostering inner growth in yourself and others, this is the guide you've been waiting for.

—*Lt. Colonel Amy McGrath*, US Marine Corps (ret.), a political and national security expert, a former fighter pilot and founder of Democratic Majority Action PAC, and former Democratic nominee for the US House and Senate from Kentucky

In a time when our nation is hungry for purpose-driven leadership, *Developing Servant Leaders at Scale* offers a roadmap for the kind of transformation we so desperately need. As a combat veteran, an entrepreneur, and now a member of Congress, I've learned that real leadership isn't about titles or ego—it's about service. And as Max Klau makes clear, true servant leadership begins within. It challenges us to connect with our deepest sense of purpose and confront our own shadow—the fears, biases, and blind spots that limit our ability to lead with authenticity. That inner work isn't optional; it's essential. This book does more than just make the case for servant leadership—it's a how-to guide that presents a proven, tested approach to developing servant leaders at scale. You can take my word for it: This stuff works.

—*Congressman Pat Ryan*, US Representative, NY-18; former Army officer and tech entrepreneur

Klau tunnels through a mountain of literature with a path to inspiring servant leadership at a scale sufficient to address complex 21st century challenges. This is a book to meet our moment, both deeply personal and widely applicable for anyone who wishes to deliver transformational experiences at scale.

—*Julia Fabris McBride*, Chief Learning and Development Officer, Kansas Leadership Center

Max Klau’s groundbreaking work illuminates a profound truth: a leader’s inner development and outer impact are inextricably linked. Through decades of rigorous experimentation and practice, he has created a sophisticated yet practical framework for developing servant leaders at scale. His Flame model elegantly integrates personal growth with organizational leadership effectiveness, while his Journey approach provides a tested methodology for guiding transformational inner work in professional settings. The parallel emergence of Klau’s experientially derived framework and the more recent UN Inner Development Goals (IDGs) reveals a powerful convergence in leadership thinking. At a moment when our world desperately needs purpose-driven leaders, Klau offers hard-won wisdom about how organizations can systematically develop people who lead from a deep sense of calling rather than ego.

—*Steve Boyd*, Founder,
Washington Governors’ School for Citizen
Leadership; Principal, MacDonald Boyd
and Associates, Seattle

Max Klau’s book transcends traditional leadership literature by offering a deeply practical blueprint for building leadership development systems at scale. Drawing from his rich experiences at two major servant-leader organizations, Max demonstrates that effective leadership in today’s challenging world requires both external action and internal transformation. Through vulnerable self-reflection, he reveals how, individually and collectively, confronting our “shadow” – the unconscious forces driving our behavior – is essential for authentic leadership. The Flame model he presents makes a compelling case that scaling leadership development demands more than just skills and knowledge; it requires transformative experiences that foster spiritual growth. This book

is a masterful blend of personal narrative and actionable insights for anyone committed to developing leaders at scale.

—*Hugh O’Doherty*, Founding member,
the Leadership and Peacemaking Global Network

This book is a game-changer for those who want to enter the arena of public service. Max’s approach to servant leadership is not only simple but profoundly powerful – and was instrumental as I prepped for my mayoral campaign. I wholeheartedly endorse this book for anyone who wants to make a lasting difference in the world.

—*Philip Jones*, Mayor of Newport News,
Virginia & Marine Corps Vet

Max Klau is wise. His wisdom is honed from his being, knowing, and doing the hard work of servant leadership development shared through his insightful stories of those experiences in compelling situations. Klau has been there and earns the trust of readers with his refreshing candor and reflection. This book is perfect for readers who seek to empower their organizations toward more purposeful action on their shared missions.

—*Susan R. Komives* is a Professor Emerita from
the University of Maryland. Her books include *Exploring
Leadership and Leadership for a Better World*. She is a
recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the
International Leadership Association

In *Developing Servant Leaders*, Max Klau presents an actionable and timely guide for cultivating leaders driven by service, compassion, and a commitment to the common good. He generously shares hard-won and well-researched insights on what does and doesn’t work when fostering inner

development in leaders everywhere. I couldn't put it down once I started because it contained so many helpful insights.

—*Chalon Bridges*, Chief Experience Officer,
The Flight School.org

Developing Servant Leaders at Scale is precisely the resource needed at a time when the most prominent examples of leadership are ego-centric and autocratic. Max shares a journey of inquiry, experience, and continual learning, which produced a model of leadership development and behavior that is transforming individuals and organizations. His quest exemplifies the power and practice of self-knowledge and reflection and has given us a framework and process with the potential to change us and the world for all people.

—*Katherine Tyler-Scott*, Leadership consultant,
coach, author, and speaker. She is the co-founder
and Managing Principal of KI Thoughtbridge, LLC,
and past President of the International
Leadership Association

Imagine a world where leaders at every level of society are driven to serve others and create lasting positive change for their communities. This is the future that Dr. Max Klau shows us how to build through his groundbreaking approach to developing servant leaders at scale. Drawing on decades of experience training thousands of social entrepreneurs and aspiring public servants, Dr. Klau's integrated frameworks provide organizational leaders and philanthropists with essential tools for cultivating leaders whose inner clarity enables them to create better futures for those they hope to serve.

—*Patrick Dowd*, Entrepreneur and Board President,
The Long Now Foundation

For anyone who aspires to be a servant leader and to create a powerful organizational capacity for change, *Developing Servant Leaders at Scale* illuminates the need and holds the key. Max Klau, through describing his life's work, explains the urgent need of today's leaders to understand the connection between inner and outer change and why it matters at this critical moment.

—*Cynthia Cherrey, President,
International Leadership Association*

Max Klau's book, *Developing Servant Leaders at Scale*, is a comprehensive "Tour De Force" regarding both the conceptual underpinnings and the practical how-to of developing leaders dedicated to the common good. I was privileged to work alongside of and learn from Dr. Klau at City Year for more than a decade as he developed the "Idealist Journey" curriculum. I witnessed the care and evolution of the process. He skillfully guided a cadre of young leaders across the nation capable of navigating a transformative experience in making meaning of a year of community service in our nation's schools and communities. Dr. Klau makes a compelling case for why this work is vital to the future of our society. This book captures the essence, magic and impact as well as the pragmatic steps needed to create a new generation of servant leaders which are so desperately needed as we confront the challenges before us.

—*Charlie Rose, Senior Vice President and
Dean, City Year*

In this thoughtful book, Max Klau skillfully demonstrates how servant leaders might better connect inner and outer change processes in support of flourishing for themselves and those they serve. What sets this book apart is the roadmap it provides to

help organizations do this at scale. I especially appreciated Max's candor about the difficult learning journey that he and colleagues at City Year had to take to iterate a set of reflective and service practices that actually worked for large groups, including initial critics, and not just for a subset of motivated self-selectors. Unlike other books in this genre, this narrative hinges on leadership as a collective capacity, as well as Max's specific contributions. I hope that it finds a wide audience!

—*Matthew T. Lee*, Director of the Flourishing Network at the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University, Scientific Advisor to the Inner Development Goals Foundation, Professor at Baylor University

We are living in an age that desperately needs to develop more (and more!) servant leaders. No one is better positioned than Max Klau to know what's required to take on this daunting but essential task. In this book, Klau blends fascinating personal stories with deep expertise with well-researched theories with practical tools to offer just the roadmap that our organizations, communities, and society need now more than ever. If a central task of leadership is to develop more leaders, this book is required reading for every leader whose impact and legacy matters to them.

—*Jeff Wetzler*, Co-Founder of Transcend and Author of *Ask: Tap Into the Hidden Wisdom of People Around You for Unexpected Breakthroughs in Leadership and Life*

In a world torn by division and crisis, how do we cultivate leaders who truly serve? This groundbreaking book reveals how to develop servant leaders at scale – expanding leadership beyond individual efforts to create systemic change. Drawing

on decades of experience, Max Klau maps a must-read blueprint for leaders who prioritize improving the lives of others.

—*Betsy Myers*, Chief Operating Officer for Obama’s 2008 national campaign; Founding director of the Center for Women and Business at Bentley University and former Executive Director of the Center for Public Leadership Harvard’s Kennedy School; Author of *Take the Lead: Motivate, Inspire and Bring Out the Best in Yourself and Everyone Around You*

In a world increasingly dominated by self-serving leaders who prioritize power over purpose, Max Klau’s *Developing Servant Leaders at Scale* arrives as an urgently needed blueprint for cultivating the kind of leadership our troubled times demand. Drawing from decades of experience building leadership capacity at organizations like City Year and New Politics Leadership Academy, Klau presents a sophisticated yet practical framework for developing leaders who put service above self. His “Flame and Journey” model, refined through years of real-world application, offers organizations a proven approach to nurturing the inner development and outer skills required for authentic servant leadership. This book is essential reading for anyone committed to developing leaders who can help heal our divided world through the transformative power of serving others first.

—*Ejaj Ahmad*, Founder, Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center & Global Youth Leadership Center

Developing Servant Leaders at Scale recognizes a profoundly important, but often overlooked foundation for getting things done and for creating a more just world: As you address local, national, and international challenges, make sure to invest in and nurture the potential of the people who are working hard to make a difference. This book draws upon years of hands-on

work on the ground and the wisdom Klau brings us thanks to his sharp, thoughtful mind, always eager to learn from the people with whom he works. This is a book that will help you make a difference and will make a difference in you.

—*Dan Rothstein*, Co-founder,
The Right Question Institute

DEVELOPING SERVANT LEADERS AT SCALE

How to Do It, and Why It
Matters

BY

MAX KLAU

The Center for Courageous Wholeness, USA

FOREWORD BY

ROSABETH MOSS KANTER



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

For Bev, Bernie, and Sadie.

*And in honor of my father, David Klau (ז"ל), whose life was
the embodiment of servant leadership.*

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QUOTES

The servant-leader *is* servant first. . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions.

– *Robert K. Greenleaf*

For we move—each—in two worlds: The inward of our own awareness and an outwards of participation in the history of our time and place.

– *Joseph Campbell*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Max Klau is the Founder of the Center for Courageous Wholeness, an organization dedicated to helping individuals and organizations integrate shadow, serve others, and scale their impact. He recently served as the Chief Program Officer at the New Politics Leadership Academy (NPLA), an organization focused on bringing more servant leaders—military vets and alumni of national service programs like AmeriCorps and Peace Corps—into politics. Prior to that, he was the Vice President of Leadership Development at City Year, the education-focused AmeriCorps program. He received his doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2005 with a focus on human development and leadership.

His second book, *Developing Servant Leaders at Scale: How to Do It and Why It Matters*, will be published in August 2025. He is a husband, a father, a consultant, speaker, an Integral Master Coach, and a musician. He lives outside of Boston with his wife and two children. Learn more about him at <http://www.maxklau.com/>

FOREWORD

Service, Identity, and Transformational Change

By Rosabeth Moss Kanter

On first blush, I'm an odd choice to write about this book. I'm a Harvard Business School professor and corporate consultant focused more on outward than inward change, oriented more to structures and systems than individual psyches. But I have long viewed service as a pillar of American democracy and national service a major force for change, whether that means doing community work or running for public office. I've had the privilege to support the service movement (and the mission Max Klau describes) from inside.

I served for many years on the national Board of Trustees of City Year, the flagship AmeriCorps program where Klau's ideas about servant leadership were formed. Later I joined advisory councils for New Politics, the parent of the leadership academy Klau seeded and grew. In 2005, I co-founded Harvard University's Advanced Leadership Initiative, which launched its first cohort in 2009 of top leaders transitioning from their income-earning years to their next years of service – and became a model for at least 30 other programs to date around the world. It was clear that those who rise to the top in business, government, and NGOs can still learn a thing or two about leadership that serves others.

Servant leadership is an antidote to selfish, greedy power hoarders who can pepper society with cynicism and let problems fester. My corporate experience made me see the importance of leadership that empowers and lifts others up. That is, empowering, uplifting leadership is important if you want productivity – the ability to meet high performance standards – as well as innovation – the use of imagination to create solutions to perplexing problems. The best corporate CEOs are servant leaders like the ones this book hopes to multiply, operating in the interests of the institution rather than themselves. “Country over self,” as New Politics puts it in looking for people who “answer the call.”

Service opportunities are themselves a path to leadership development. As Klau explains, City Year was dedicated as much to development for the youthful AmeriCorps members as those young people were trained to foster the growth of the at-risk public school students they served. Indeed, service builds leaders. The iconic technology company IBM created its own service corps for rising executives as a major part of their leadership training. Instead of classrooms, diverse teams worked together to address challenges in many parts of the world.

Max Klau helps point the way to this new model by telling his own story. His book is part memoir, part how-to guidebook. It shows that the journey to create great leaders is as challenging as the journey those leaders face – especially when the trainings are not face to face but at distance and scale.

And Klau helps readers see the connection between outer change and inner change, between organizational purpose and individual passion. Transformational leadership involves looking “outside the building,” as I propose it in my recent book, *Think Outside the Building*. But the soul-searching of inner work also helps people see where they are blinded by conventional institutional structures (i.e., “buildings”) and

helps them find their calling and challenge convention with new ideas.

Inner work at scale, as Klau presents it, flourishes in communities. Flip the pages of the book to see how much people take signals from one another and also pride in their connections. The leadership development techniques he offers support individuals but also important support groups and teams, villages and communities. He came to realize that labels matter because they build shared vocabulary that help people articulate their commonalities as well as differences. He saw the importance of stories, a core City Year leadership principle, especially shared stories told to peers who are willing and informed listeners.

Klau stresses the importance of culture and symbols. A shared culture of service can insulate idealists against the destructive forces of cynicism; it can arm people with courage to persevere when the going is tough. Finding one's inner calling in a group also creates a powerful common identity as change agents. Soon after my colleagues and I created Harvard's Advanced Leadership Initiative, and the first cohort arrived, we were surprised most by the strength of the immediate ties that formed within mere minutes of highly diverse (many countries and professions as well as ethnicities) and highly individualistic people coming together in the name of problem-solving. We think the bonding came in response to a new leadership identity, one better suited to working on big societal problems (such as public education, which Klau highlights) than to getting people in hierarchies to toe the line.

There are many approaches to leadership development; it's a booming industry. But by emphasizing servant leadership and how to engage large numbers of people, Klau adds some new dimensions. He offers a candid personal view of the challenges, and he wrestles with how to do it for many people at once and at a distance. There's more than enough room for

everyone who believes in the mission. So let a thousand flowers bloom, and many more. Let empowering tools spread and infuse cultures everywhere with an ethic of service, expressed by leaders who reflect and learn.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter
Arbuckle Professor, Harvard Business School
Founding Chair & Director, Harvard University
Advanced Leadership Initiative (2005-2018)
New book, *Think Outside the Building:
How Advanced Leaders Can Change the World One
Smart Innovation at a Time*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book essentially tells the story of my life's work, and it's been decades in the making. I can't possibly name every individual who contributed to the growth and evolution of this work over the course of 20 years, but I'm going to do my best to honor the major contributions along the way.

My entire career in leadership was sparked by a class on adaptive leadership taught by Dean Williams at the Kennedy School. I had chances to learn from and with Ron Heifetz and spent multiple semesters as a course assistant for Hugh O'Doherty. They were all master leadership educators, and my life has been shaped in profound ways by my time with them all. Hugh also introduced me to Steve Boyd, who connected me with his daughter Mikaela, who was working at City Year at the time. All the work described in this book grew out of that brief meeting with Mikaela at City Year headquarters in Back Bay.

I'm grateful to the many individuals at City Year who influenced this work and shaped my career at that amazing organization. Gratitude to Michael Brown and Alan Khazei for bringing the idea of City Year to life, and to Dr. Andy Munoz, Stephanie Wu, and Rob Gordon for their leadership. Gratitude to Marc Morgan, Bobby Kessling, Daniel Ready, and literally hundreds of other staff and Senior Corps members who were invaluable partners in making this approach to

leadership development powerful and effective. There are far too many to name here, but if you were one of the many City Year staff or AmeriCorps members who played a role in the Idealist's Journey work, thank you for your partnership and contributions. Special thanks are due to Charlie Rose, who was my supervisor for my final several years at City Year. He was an amazing champion for me and this work, and he is one of the most remarkable servant leaders that I have ever met.

Deep gratitude to Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana from the Right Question Institute. As this book makes clear, their work around the Question Formulation Technique was a revelation for me and was a breakthrough in this effort to build an organizational capacity for reflection and inner work. I'm grateful for their wisdom, commitment to democracy, and programmatic brilliance, and hope that this book brings some more much deserved attention and interest to their organization.

Emily Cherniack is a force of nature who saw the potential and value in this work at a time when few others understood its significance. When she invited me to join the New Politics Leadership Academy, it was my belief in her courage, integrity, and leadership that led me to say yes. I'm grateful for the opportunities she gave me and for the chance to learn from and with her during my time at NPLA. I'm grateful to Shaquanda Brown for building from scratch a host of systems and processes to support this work, to Whitney McKnight for more programmatic excellence and being a great thought partner, and to Lucy Arthur-Parately for carrying this work forward so skillfully.

During my time at the New Politics Leadership Academy I had that chance to work with many other amazing colleagues, as well as hundreds of facilitators and program participants. Once again, there are far too many to name individually, but they also played an integral role in the evolution of this work. They are also some of the most inspiring, thoughtful,

courageous, and committed servant leaders I've ever met. If you've been an Answering the Call facilitator or have participated in any of the NPLA programming here's my message to you: I appreciate the time, talent, and genius that you dedicated to this work, and knowing that you are out there continuing to serve our nation at this challenging moment gives me faith in our democracy and hope for our future.

Gratitude to Beth Lapin, a distant cousin who replied to my Facebook post asking if anyone had a place I could use for a writing retreat to complete the final draft of this book. I had a very productive few days of writing at her home in New London.

Gratitude to Debra DeRuyter at the International Leadership Association for connecting me with Fiona Allison at Emerald Publishing, and thanks to Fiona for believing in this title. Thanks, also, to Sashikala Balasubramanian, Yemaya Marsden, and the rest of the team at Emerald for their support and partnership in bringing this book out into the world.

This book would not exist without the love and support of my family. My father passed away just a few months before the publication of this book; he was the embodiment of servant leadership, and there are no words to capture the depth of his impact on my life and on my work. My amazing mom is a remarkable servant leader as well, who also continues to model being creative, sharing stories, building community, and treating others with dignity every day.

Thanks to my awesome siblings, Dan, Deb, Michal, and Nate and their equally awesome spouses and kids. Every conversation we've ever had around the family table has shaped this book in a meaningful way.

To my wife, Bev: I couldn't do any of this without you. Thank you for reading every draft multiple times, sharing your thoughts, pushing my thinking, and supporting me when I disappeared for days on writing retreats. Thanks for being

my rock during the ups and downs that unfolded as I tried to get this book out into the world. Thanks for filling our home with so much joy and love.

To my kids, Bernie and Sadie: My love for you both is infinite. It is my deepest prayer that these ideas serve humanity as we navigate this time of peril and change in the years ahead.

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate aim of the quest must be neither release nor ecstasy for oneself, but the wisdom and the power to serve others. – Joseph Campbell (1988, p. xiv)

We are living through a critical moment in human history. Surrounded by both crisis and opportunity and swept up in the currents of change that move faster and faster each year, we find ourselves confronting multiple overlapping crises unfolding simultaneously. As individuals, communities, organizations, nations, and as a global community, we find ourselves struggling to respond effectively to the moment. We are confronted with the need to find productive ways forward at this time of relentless change and uncertainty.

Amid all this complexity, however, one thing is crystal clear: If we are going to find a productive and positive way through this moment of change and uncertainty, we need more leaders. Not just any kind of leaders, though. All around us we see leaders who crave power and the ability to dominate others, who are driven by selfishness and greed, who use hate and scorn to divide and diminish others, and who seek positions of authority to satisfy personal hungers for significance or love. These are not the leaders we need.

The kind of leaders we need to see a whole lot more of in the years ahead are *servant leaders*. These are individuals who feel a calling to use their gifts and abilities to lift up others.

Whatever power they have, they use to help others become more capable and more free. When they seek positions of greater power or authority, they do so because those positions expand their capacity to serve others. We need to see a lot more of those leaders in the years ahead.

This is a book about how we can develop more of those servant leaders. A lot more.

As the title makes clear, this book pulls together two key ideas: *Servant leadership* and *at scale*.

Servant leadership is both an ancient concept and a contemporary field of study and practice. The notion that true power and greatness comes from living one's life in service to others can be found in all the world's major religions. From Buddha's compassion for the sick and dying to Moses's defense of oppressed slaves to Jesus's mission to serve "the least among us," we find the value of serving others at the heart of spiritual traditions from the East and the West.

The modern incarnation of this concept can be traced to an essay published in 1970 by Robert K. Greenleaf called "The Servant as Leader." Greenleaf was a corporate executive who was deeply disturbed by the chaos and upheaval of the late 1960s. The Vietnam War was raging abroad, the US Government was in crisis as a result of the corruption and deception of the Watergate scandal, and chaos was erupting on college campuses across the country.

In other words, it was a time much like our own.

Greenleaf looked around and saw institutions and individuals who had lost the trust and respect of the wider public because they were so clearly driven by their own hungers for power, material gain, and self-preservation. His response was not to fall into despair, cynicism, or nihilism; it was to recognize that there was another model of leadership that we could look to that had the power to rebuild trust and respond meaningfully to the challenges of the day. He elevated the

timeless concept of “servant as leader” as the path out of the darkness and chaos of the day.

According to Greenleaf, the heart of service was this: One’s deepest motivation was to desire the development and well-being of others rather than oneself. Here’s how he expressed this idea:

The best test [of servant leadership] 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?
(Greenleaf, p. 27)

Since Greenleaf published this essay, we’ve seen the emergence of a vast literature on the topic of servant leadership. You’ll find dozens of books on the topic of servant leadership on Amazon, 1.2 million hits for the phrase on Google Scholar, and 200 million hits if you type the term into Google. The subject has been explored through a myriad of lenses including religious leadership, military leadership, public sector leadership, business leadership, and nonprofit leadership. Clearly, it’s a popular topic that resonates widely in our world today.

This book does not seek to provide an overview of this vast literature. I’m not out to explore the philosophy of servant leadership as an intellectual exercise as readers seeking that kind of treatment of this subject can easily find that content elsewhere. This book accepts the basic principles of servant leadership already presented here:

Servant leaders are individuals who are focused on supporting and developing others, especially those who are marginalized and vulnerable. When they seek positions of power, authority, and influence, they do so out of a desire to

expand their capacity to serve others rather than out of desires to feed personal hungers for power, adulation, or material gain. As a result of how they lead, they leave others healthier, wiser, more free, more autonomous, and more likely to themselves serve others.

Servant leaders stand in stark contrast to leaders who foster dependency, demand obedience, inflame polarization, and invite people to focus on stewing in their own grievances rather than on using their gifts to serve others. That kind of leader causes followers to question their own voice, abilities, and insights in ways that leave them less capable of moving forward on their own.

On the one hand, the concept of servant leadership couldn't be more simple. On the other hand, it's an approach to leadership with the potential to transform the world. Imagine a world where we saw this kind of leadership practiced by political leaders, business leaders, community leaders, and ordinary citizens on a daily basis! My hope is that this book might move us a bit closer to bringing that vision to life.

The other concept at the heart of this book is "*at scale*."

The concept of "at scale" means "at a size or number that makes it possible to meaningfully address the challenge at hand." Challenges like responding to the climate crisis, renewing democracy, or creating racial equity are complex public problems that affect all of our lives. It is clear that we cannot expect one or two heroic leaders to show up and magically solve these pressing public problems for us. Rather, we need vast numbers of individuals stepping up to address these issues skillfully in communities across the nation and the world. If we believe that servant leaders can play a vital role in our efforts to respond meaningfully to the challenges of this moment, then we need a lot of them.

This book presents a proven, tested approach to making that happen. As you'll see in the pages ahead, it took a long

time to figure out an approach that worked. Along the way, I arrived at the following key insight: Creating an effective large-scale leadership development system is a different challenge from developing individual leaders or even small groups of leaders. When we seek to do this work at scale, we include but also transcend the work of individual and small group leadership development. We find ourselves confronting issues that are not readily apparent at the smaller scales, and we must shift our focus to different challenges and undertake different kinds of work.

As an Integral Master Coach, I've got a lot of training and experience in engaging effectively in one-on-one leadership development. I love the work of connecting deeply with a client and accompanying them on a personal journey of transformation. That training and experience informs the approach you'll encounter in this book in foundational ways.

As a leadership educator, I've also got a wealth of training and experience in leading rooms full of people through leadership trainings and workshops. That work is quite different from one-on-one coaching, but it is also work that I love to do. Creating a space in which dozens of individuals grapple deeply with the meaning and practice of leadership is a form of bliss for me. I've done it for years with thousands of groups at this point, and all that training and experience as a leadership educator informs this approach in foundational ways as well.

When we talk about developing servant leaders at scale, though, we arrive at a critical shift in the nature of the work we are doing. The individual and small group work is about *developing servant leaders*. When we seek to do this at scale, we shift to the challenge of *creating a servant leadership development system*. This is about building an organizational capacity to guide thousands of individuals through a powerful and personally meaningful leadership development experience, with consistency and excellence, year after year after year.

It turns out that organizations tend to resist the emergence of this capacity because it challenges some deeply held and largely unexamined assumptions about what leadership development means and how change happens. I've learned through personal experience that the effort to do this work at scale evokes a whole set of issues that must be addressed and challenges that must be overcome that are not apparent when engaging in the work of individual or small group leadership development. I've spent the last 20 years of my life figuring out how to understand and effectively address those challenges, and I've written this book to share what I've learned.

If you are seeking guidance on how to personally develop as a servant leader (“six key skills to become a servant leader” or “three daily practices to grow as a servant leader”), you are invited to look elsewhere, as there are a wealth of resources for individuals seeking that kind of content. If you are an organizational leader in a position to design and implement leadership development experiences for large numbers of individuals, I invite you to read on. If you are a philanthropist who recognizes that leadership development and communal impact are too interconnected to separate, you'll find the ideas presented here to be of interest as well.

MY BACKGROUND

There are six facets of my own background that inform this work in foundational ways: my experience with service programs, my academic studies, my career as an organizational leader in the world of service, my training as an Integral Master Coach, my identity, and my lifelong search for spiritual wisdom.

The first – and I believe the most important – perspective that I bring to this work is my many years of experience as both a participant and a staff member of long-term service programs. My first professional experience following college was to enroll as a participant on a ten-month service program in Israel. It was called *Project Otzma*, and I spent my days tutoring elementary school students in English, running after school programs, painting murals, working with Ethiopian and Russian immigrants, and engaging in educational seminars focused on the history and present-day issues of the region. My days were spent serving others and thinking deeply about the challenges of making the world a better place, and it was the happiest I'd ever been. Following that program, I returned to the United States for two years before returning as a staff member of the same program. I spent the next 10 months serving and supporting nearly 80 participants who themselves were serving others and had my first experiences trying to unleash the full leadership development potential of a demanding long-term service program.

I started graduate school in 1999 but spent my academic summers leading service trips. In 2002, I co-led a group of 15 Jewish college students on an international service trip with an organization called American Jewish World Service (AJWS); we spent five weeks in rural Honduras working alongside a local community to build an irrigation ditch that would bring fresh water to their village and then spent three weeks in Simferopol, Ukraine helping the local Jewish community clear out an overgrown Jewish cemetery in town. In the summer of 2003, I co-led another group of Jewish college students on a similar trip with AJWS. That summer, we spent five weeks in Ghana working with a rural village to build a new schoolhouse in their town, and then three weeks in Kharkov, Ukraine, again helping them to clear out an overgrown Jewish cemetery.

I spent my days working alongside marginalized and vulnerable communities in different parts of the world and engaged in intense discussions evoked by the challenges of seeking to serve others. How do we address the root causes of injustice and inequality? How do we serve others without creating dependency and passivity? How do we confront overwhelming social issues without tipping into despair? How do we grapple with our location in a complex social system that leaves us all privileged in some ways and oppressed in others?

It is hard for me to overstate how formative these service experiences have been in my life. Quite simply, I've learned that when I am in service to others, I experience spiritual peace. No matter how spartan and uncomfortable the living conditions may have been or how intense and demanding the manual labor was on those trips, I felt joy and contentment in my soul.

I also came to believe that service experiences are uniquely powerful contexts for learning and personal growth. At the risk of understatement, the experience of living and working alongside a community in rural Honduras is dramatically different from the experience of sitting in a classroom in the United States and discussing the history of central America, international development, or relationships between the global north and the Global South. On a service trip, you are immersed in a new reality, not just new ideas. You leave behind all that is familiar and comfortable and face daily challenges, questions, and struggles that have the potential to transform you at the deepest levels.

Those experiences led directly to my professional path, which involved a decade working in the national service movement, and seven years working to bring servant leaders into politics (more on that in a moment).