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# Servant Leadership and the Person-Environment-Occupation Model

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the characteristics of servant leadership.
2. Understand the benefits of servant leadership within an organization.
3. Explore current evidence related to servant leadership.
4. Analyze the person-environment-occupation aspects related to servant leadership.

*Architecture is space structured to serve man and to move him.*

—Etienne Gaboury

The idea of servant leadership may seem contradictory in nature to some individuals. How can one be in a servant and leadership role simultaneously to achieve organizational goals in an effective manner? Greenleaf<sup>1</sup> introduces this leadership construct in an attempt to facilitate possibilities for people in business and other organizational systems to think and function in caring ways for the greater good.

With the evolution of increasingly larger and more complex work systems, as well as ongoing technological advances, it is important to remember the benefits of a “servant” mentality of care and stewardship. Savage-Austin and Honeycutt<sup>2</sup> describe the current organizational climate of a profit-oriented focus with a continuing hierarchical structure that doesn’t create an atmosphere where employees feel valued. The drive to gain a competitive edge and require more from employees to stay fiscally successful is the norm. To counter the trend that minimizes the emphasis on employee needs, Savage-Austin and Honeycutt<sup>2</sup> recommend shifting the focus to servant leadership. Although the social practice of servant leadership in organizations was a significant development in the 1970s, there is an increased need to demonstrate value and concern toward the