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Servant Leadership and Sir Winston Churchill

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SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Bachelor of Arts with

Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the modern leadership theory formally developed in the 1970s by Robert K. Greenleaf, Servant Leadership. The approach of this project concentrates upon the examination and analysis of the many theories offered by different scholars of servant leadership and the leadership traits exhibited by Sir Winston Churchill. First, a detailed and inclusive definition of servant leadership is developed, establishing the traits necessary for an individual to be identified as a servant-leader. This definition, along with the identified necessary traits, are then applied and compared to the leadership traits of Sir Winston Churchill within the second half of the research paper. After a brief account of Churchill's life, the project provides many examples of how Churchill utilizes his servant leadership style. The project identifies potential servant leadership traits exemplified by Sir Winston Churchill throughout his political career, specifically throughout his career as Prime Minister during World War II, and then argues how each trait can be seen throughout his leadership. Ultimately, this thesis successfully argues that Churchill can in fact be classified as a true servant-leader.

Keywords: servant leadership, Robert Greenleaf, Sir Winston Churchill, Prime Minister, World War II, Britain

Dedicated to my friends, family, and wonderful fiancé

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Often, a leader is recognized as one who emerges to guide a group of individuals through times of relative calm or times of chaos and hopelessness, inspiring those that follow them to persevere in the face of adversity or to rally together in order to accomplish a shared goal. Leadership, or the aspiration to lead, is undeniably one of the most highly respected human qualities. However, as a concept, leadership is extremely abstract, represented by a vast quantity of diverse ideals and theories. Likewise, developing a concrete definition of a specific theory of leadership can prove to be an extremely challenging task. Indeed, after generating a basic definition for a theory of leadership, it becomes necessary to define the leadership attributes or characteristics one must exhibit in order to truly identify with that particular theory of leadership. If one is to examine the life of an individual, in relationship to a specific theory of leadership, it is important to understand the characteristics attributed to the specified leadership theory.

Ultimately, this thesis intends to examine and expand upon research concerning servant leadership and whether or not it can be used to define the leadership style of Great Britain's World War II idol, Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill. Thus, while examining important traits of the servant leadership theory, this project also intends to analyze the political career and leadership of Sir Winston Churchill in relation to the

qualities ascribed to a servant-leader. In order to accomplish this, a brief biography will be provided that follows Churchill from birth to the time he took over as Prime Minister of Great Britain during WWII.

Churchill was undeniably an outstanding leader for Britain during World War II, during one of the nation's "darkest hours." However, he is rarely credited as being a servant-leader since the servant leadership theory was not formally developed until the early 1970s. Yet after thorough research of true servant leadership attributes and an exhaustive analysis of Sir Winston Churchill's life, focusing primarily upon his World War II period of influence as Prime Minister of Great Britain, this examination concludes that this great man can be classified as a servant-leader. This research will allow readers to understand that Churchill can truly be identified as a servant-leader.

Extensive research is available in regards to both Churchill and servant leadership, allowing for sufficient information necessary to reach an accurate conclusion to this investigation. Therefore, the following is a brief literature review of the numerous texts which this study utilizes in order to develop its definition and traits of servant leadership, as well as to gain an understanding of Churchill's life and to provide examples of the leadership traits he exhibited as Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1940 to 1945.

Servant Leadership Research

Since the servant leadership theory is such a "new" style of leadership, most of the scholarly information found on the subject was primarily published within the last

decade. Therefore, much of the information presented within this study in regards to the servant leadership theory was written around the turn of the century. Additionally, it is important to note that much of the material focuses upon servant leadership as discussed by its creator, Robert Greenleaf; much of the material directly supports and expands upon the teachings of Robert Greenleaf. Arguably, due to its idealistic nature, it proves difficult to find scholars who openly disregard or criticize Greenleaf's work. Indeed, it becomes difficult to criticize an individual who develops a theory with so many positive features and goals. Therefore, much material can be compiled that allows this thesis to develop a true definition and a valid list of servant-leader traits for readers. As a whole, Greenleaf's view of servant leadership has been highly regarded by leadership scholars, especially those interested in the study of servant leadership. Even after his death, servant-leader scholars realize the importance of considering Greenleaf's words in making legitimate arguments either for or against his theory.

It is important to note that this study of servant leadership is being undertaken due to its vast differences when compared to other leadership theories often used to describe the leadership style of Sir Winston Churchill, such as charismatic, transformational, and transactional styles of leadership. Although they all have traits that are visible within servant leadership, one can see that servant leadership has an extra component, the willingness or desire to serve followers. For instance, charismatic leadership focuses upon the way a leader possesses authority over followers through apparent personality characteristics, such as dominant speech or self-confidence. Transformational leadership focuses upon "the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their

fullest potential” (Northouse 172). On the other hand, transactional leadership focuses “on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers” (Northouse 172). Collectively, one may argue that servant leadership incorporates aspects of all three of these types of leadership, effectively taking them a step forward in order to serve followers, by somehow setting their own needs aside in order to meet the needs of their followers first.

Any research concerning the theory of servant leadership must begin by examining the writing and reasoning of former AT&T executive Robert K. Greenleaf, who introduced the term “servant leadership” and the idea of a “servant-leader” in his 1970 essay *The Servant as Leader*. Ultimately, since Greenleaf coined the term servant leadership he should be viewed as the supreme authority concerning this theory and what it means to be a servant-leader. Thus, in order to gain an accurate understanding of the general elements of servant leadership, research on the topic must examine Greenleaf’s 1970 essay *The Servant as Leader*, as well as his 1977 book entitled *Servant Leadership: a Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. In fact, this study focuses upon Greenleaf’s book, since it includes many of his earliest essays written about his developing idea of servant leadership. Greenleaf’s 1977 book includes many of his most influential and important essays, including *The Servant as Leader*, *The Institution as Servant*, *Trustees as Servants*, and several others.

Within Robert Greenleaf’s book *Servant Leadership: a Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* readers are introduced to his original essay that established the formal theory of servant leadership, *The Servant as Leader*. Therefore,

this book provides readers with a compilation of Greenleaf's original views of servant leadership, seemingly proving to be a "one-stop shop" for researchers. Through his essays, Greenleaf effectively develops and explains his theory of servant leadership, successfully introducing traits of servant leadership and discussing real life examples of this style of leadership in action. For example, within the first chapter Greenleaf introduces his general definition of a servant leader by stating that "the servant-leader is servant first...it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first" ("Servant Leadership: a Journey" 13). Throughout the remainder of his book, Greenleaf successfully illustrates all of the important dynamics of servant leadership including his tenet that true servant leaders ensure that "those served grow as persons... [and] while being served, [they] become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants" ("Servant Leadership: a Journey" 13). With such an intimate look into the writings of Greenleaf, one is able to gain an understanding of his original concept and can begin to better recognize traits of servant leadership, a focus within this thesis. Indeed, *Servant Leadership: a Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* exhibits many necessary qualities to the research of servant leadership and what it means to be a servant-leader. Thus, this book has become one of the premier points of interest in this thesis' research regarding the theory of servant leadership.

Another book that includes servant leadership teachings directly from Robert Greenleaf is *The Power of Servant Leadership*. This book was published in 1998, nearly eight years after his death. Like *Servant Leadership: a Journey into the Nature of*

Legitimate Power and Greatness, The Power of Servant Leadership is a compilation of essays written by Greenleaf on the topic of servant leadership. However, this book includes many of Greenleaf's later writings on the subject. Within the preface, it is argued that this book is "an extraordinary collection of Robert K. Greenleaf's mature and final writings on the concept of servant-leadership" (Greenleaf, "The Power" XIX). Additionally, the book provides a very valuable introduction by prominent servant-leader scholar, Larry C. Spears. Together with Greenleaf's *Servant Leadership: a Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness, The Power of Servant Leadership* proves to be an invaluable source when studying servant leadership.

In order to examine other beneficial information concerning the teachings of servant leadership as discussed in the writing of Robert Greenleaf, research can concentrate upon valuable scholarly journal articles. As a whole, the journal articles examined through research have further validated Robert Greenleaf's definition of a servant-leader and the characteristics that such an individual must demonstrate. However, it is important to note that many scholars have expanded upon his meanings and definition, further developing a more concise definition of servant leadership. Therefore, it is vital to any research of the servant leadership theory to examine such articles in order to develop an idea of servant leadership that is well-founded and calculated.

One of the first articles examined that is relevant to this leadership style is entitled *Leadership: Current Theories, Research, and Future Directions*. This 2009 article written by Bruce J. Avolia, Fred O. Walumbwa, and Todd J. Weber "examines recent

theoretical and empirical developments in the leadership literature, beginning with topics that are currently receiving attention in terms of research, theory and practice” (Avolia, Walumbwa, and Weber 421). Undoubtedly, this informative article discusses the theory of servant leadership. Specifically, Avolia et al. (2009) are able to list characteristics of servant leadership and briefly discuss the findings and arguments distributed by numerous scholars. Therefore, this article proves to be a valuable resource when identifying key components of servant leadership and how it is viewed by many scholars. Within the section specifically written about servant leadership, Avolia et al. mentions the legitimacy of the work put forth by Greenleaf and several other leadership scholars that this thesis examines, further adding validity to the definition and traits that this study intends to identify (Avolia, Walumbwa, and Weber 436-437).

Professors Robert F. Russell and A. Gregory Stone also attempt to identify specific servant leadership attributes in their 2002 essay entitled *A Review of Servant Leadership Attributes: Developing a Practical Model*. Within this 2002 essay, the authors claim that “the paper builds a foundation for categorizing and appraising the attributes of servant leaders” (Russell and Stone 1). Therefore, Russell and Stone’s article will most definitely aid in developing an overarching view of servant leadership, a view that, combined with an examination of the life of Sir Winston Churchill, should allow this research to conclude whether or not he was a true servant-leader. Interestingly, Russell and Stone claim that their article “reviews the servant leadership literature with the intent to develop a preliminary theoretical framework” (Russell and Stone 1). Throughout their article, these authors manage to discuss the validity of the servant-

leader theory of leadership and identify necessary traits of servant-leaders, with many reliable sources to support their claims.

Also, this study focused upon the writing of George Manning and Kent Curtis, in order to provide an overarching, unbiased view of servant leadership. Within their 2003 book entitled *The Art of Leadership*, the authors focus on teaching “central concepts and skills” in many areas of leadership (Back Cover). Primarily, this source was used to examine the servant-leader chapter when attempting to develop an overarching definition of servant leadership. In the end, *The Art of Leadership* proved to be a very valuable source, providing important information, including discussions of the top-down and bottom-up theories of authority transfer. Interestingly, it is the only source used that openly mentions the name of Sir Winston Churchill with servant leadership. Manning and Curtis point out that “Winston Churchill captured the spirit of servant leadership when he said, ‘What is the use of living if not to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone?’” (Manning 121). Therefore, these authors help to provide somewhat of a catalyst to the idea that Winston Churchill could potentially be identified as a servant-leader.

In building upon previously mentioned research to find other articles that would prove beneficial to developing an accurate view of servant-leaders, research turned to the knowledge of an author mentioned by Avolia et al., Larry C. Spears. Spears is a former President and CEO of the *Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership*, where he served between 1990 to 2007. His position as a professor of graduate courses in servant leadership at Gonzaga University further establishes his credibility in the study of the

servant leadership theory; Spears has been involved in the study of servant leadership for a long time, proving his profound understanding of the subject through many writings.

Within his 2009 article entitled *Servant Leadership: Cultivate 10 Characteristics*, Spears focuses upon identifying ten main characteristics that are necessary for servant-leaders to display, which he claims to derive directly from Greenleaf's original essay, *The Servant as Leader*. He had previously introduced these ten characteristics in an earlier article written in 1998. However, this 2009 article is examined within this study due to its currency. Although the traits that Spears identifies within his article are not original concepts, he does an excellent job of discussing the qualities in terms that are easily understood by readers; he reiterates Greenleaf's ideas, in more basic terms. Within his 2009 article, Spears asserts that servant leadership "seeks to involve others in decision-making, is strongly based in ethical and caring behavior, and enhances the growth of [followers] while improving the quality of life" ("Servant Leadership" 20). After introducing the ten characteristics he developed that contribute to servant leadership, Spears goes on to clarify his statements by declaring that "these 10 characteristics communicate the power and promise that servant leadership offers to those who are open to its invitation and challenge" ("Servant Leadership" 20). The ten characteristics detailed by Spears within this article provide researchers with an indispensable amount of information in regards to the traits of a servant-leader. As a scholar and successor of Robert Greenleaf's original beliefs, Spears is able to successfully expand upon Greenleaf's interpretation of servant leadership by providing supplementary information on the topic for present and future study. Spears' contribution to the study of servant

leadership is constant, as he continues to add insight and knowledge about what it means to be a servant-leader.

In another article written by Larry Spears in 2004, *Practicing Servant-Leadership*, one is able to acquire an even better understanding of his views on servant leadership. As a former president of the *Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership*, Spears is able to accurately write about the specific traits and ways to define servant leadership. Undeniably, through his vast knowledge of Greenleaf's own interpretations of servant leadership, Spears is able to communicate to readers very easily. Within this article, Spears again points out the ten characteristics he identified in 1998 and later in 2009 within *Servant Leadership: Cultivate 10 Characteristics*. However, he provides perhaps the most detailed description of each characteristic and how it relates to servant leadership within this 2004 article.

In an additional article co-authored by George SanFacon and Larry Spears in 2010, the pair posits that servant-leaders must “embody motive, means and ends” (SanFacon and Spears 17). Throughout this 2010 article, Spears and SanFacon convincingly argue that “motives are about intentions—why we do something. Means are about methods—how we do it. Ends are about outcomes—what we’re trying to achieve. Each domain has distinct callings for the practice of servant-leadership” (SanFacon and Spears 17). Ultimately, the argument proposed within this article, along with the information advanced by Spears in his 2009 article, offers valuable insight into the study of servant leadership. In fact, these articles have both proven to be crucial to the analysis of servant leadership that this thesis has undertaken by providing both an

effective list of characteristics that servant-leaders employ, as well as a theory of practice that helps to explain how and why servant leadership functions the way it does.

Perhaps the most empirically oriented article examined was written by David T. Chin and Wendy A. Smith. Their collaborative essay is entitled *An Inductive Model of Servant Leadership: The Considered Difference to Transformational and Charismatic Leadership*. Primarily the main use of this essay was to provide a historical look at servant leadership. It provided details of several leaders from the past that exhibited servant qualities, perhaps enough to be identified as servant-leaders. In fact, they validly argue that servant-leader ideals have existed throughout history and can be examined through the lives of many historical figures. Therefore, this source allows this study to account for the foundations of servant leadership in order to more accurately put the current theory into context.

The last primary source of information found that assisted within this study of servant leadership was an article written by the current CEO of the Greenleaf *Center for Servant Leadership*, Dr. Kent M. Keith. Within Dr. Keith's 2010 article, he attempts to explain the meaning of the term "servant-leader." After examining his article, it quickly becomes apparent that Dr. Keith has a deep understanding of servant leadership and the qualities crucial to a servant-leader. Indeed, he does a great job explaining the meaning of the term servant-leader. By the end of his article, Dr. Keith summarizes his view of the meaning of the term as he states that "the true servant-leader is always a servant and sometimes a servant-leader...When the servant discovers the opportunity to make a difference by leading, and steps into a leadership role, then he or she becomes a servant-

leader” (Keith 2). With this explanation of what it means to be a servant-leader, it will ultimately become easier to apply the previously found characteristics in a way that will help this study conclude whether or not Sir Winston Churchill exhibited the qualities of servant leadership.

After an analysis of the literature studied concerning servant leadership, it then becomes necessary to examine the life of Sir Winston Churchill so that this thesis can successfully conclude whether or not the characteristics he displayed, especially during his time as Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War II, can be used to identify him as a true servant-leader.

Churchill’s Life as a Leader

Often, when studying the life of any individual from history, the most effective way to begin is by examining biographies written about the individual. As a vital starting point to the study of the life of Sir Winston Churchill, this thesis examined the biographical accounts of Martin Gilbert, Roy Jenkins, Kay Halle, and the Imperial War Museum. This thesis examined Gilbert’s *Winston S. Churchill: Finest Hour 1939-1941*, Jenkins’ *Churchill: A Biography*, Halle’s *Irrepressible Churchill*, and the Imperial War Museum’s guidebook, *Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms*. Indeed, each biographical tale of Churchill’s life included a little something different than the one before. Nonetheless, together these may all be considered valid and very useful when attempting to draw a picture of Churchill’s entire life; different perspectives often offer exciting details that may have otherwise been missed or overlooked.

Closely resembling a biography, yet very personally written, Stanley Nott's *The Young Churchill* allows readers to get a glimpse of Churchill as a child. At the beginning, readers are immediately introduced to Churchill's family, explaining when and where he was born and under what circumstances. Indeed, this book proves to be important, because by providing a look at how Churchill was raised, one is able to understand the influences upon his life that possibly transformed or affected his leadership qualities. Nott's book provided some of the key details of Winston's life incorporated in this thesis, discussing his family's social standing and his character as a young child. Undoubtedly, through analysis of this material, one is able to see how Winston matured into a dynamic leader.

One of the most unique narratives that this thesis examined concerning the life of Sir Winston Churchill was *Winston Churchill: An Intimate Portrait*, written by Violet Bonham Carter. This book is written by Carter in a unique style, influenced by a similarly unique relationship. From the beginning of this book, Carter informs readers that she "had the supreme good fortune to know Winston Churchill for the best part of [her] life" (Carter Preface). Through her writing, Carter successfully draws a revealing portrait of a man who was called to lead his nation in a time of crisis. Carter's views within this book prove valuable to this study, because of the fact that she knew Churchill and very vividly writes about his life. She claims in the preface that:

I have seen him at close range both in his public and his private life, in war and peace, in good times and in bad. I have had the opportunity to share his thoughts, to watch the workings of his extraordinary mind, to

feel the impulse of his indomitable heart, and on occasion to remember and record his words. (Carter Preface)

After reading some of Carter's book, it becomes easy to see that the relationship she shared with Churchill has allowed her to write a very thorough and unique book about his life. Rather than writing from other biographies or accounts of Churchill's life, Carter is able to utilize details from her own experiences with him and illustrate Churchill's true character.

Another valuable source to the study of the life of Churchill is Max Hastings' 2009 book entitled *Winston's War: Churchill, 1940-1945*. Within his book, Hastings provides scholars with an in-depth examination of Churchill as Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War II. Many critics have acclaimed Hastings' book as one of the best books ever written about Churchill. Piers Brendon of *The Sunday Times* comments that "Hastings presents [Churchill]...as a ruthless, brandy-gulping Tory with the fire and the guts to beat Hitler...In a crowded field, this is one of the best books ever written about Churchill" (Hastings Back Cover). Throughout the book, Hastings successfully introduces readers to illustrious anecdotes of Churchill before and during the war, allowing accurate views of his leadership characteristics to be developed. By the end of this book, Hastings claims that "[Churchill] was the largest human being to occupy his office....it is certain that no other British ruler in history has matched his direction of the nation in peril or, please God, is ever likely to find himself in circumstances to surpass it" (Hastings 483). With the many details this book has to offer, it proves necessary to a study of the life of Sir Winston Churchill.

Forty Ways to Look at Winston Churchill: A Brief Account of a Long Life, written by Gretchen Rubin and published in 2003, also presents a very unique approach to the study of Winston Churchill's life. Within her book, Rubin attempts to draw an accurate picture of Churchill. In doing so, Rubin's "book is divided into forty chapters, each creating a different picture of Churchill" (Rubin 8). Ultimately, Rubin's writing proves to be very interesting as her aim is to "help others to catch a glimpse of Churchill's extraordinary character and life" (Rubin 10).

Perhaps one of the most interesting and valuable sources found that helps to depict the life and views of Churchill is editor Richard Langworth's book, *Churchill by Himself*. Within this book, Langworth has compiled many of Churchill's greatest quotes, often putting them into context so that readers can truly understand the meaning of his statements. Langworth states that "*Churchill by Himself* has a simple mission: to offer readers the most complete, attributed, annotated and cross-referenced collection of Winston Churchill quotations, ripostes, aphorisms, sayings and reflections ever published" ("Churchill by Himself" VII). To some researchers, the study of quotations is a trivial act. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the study of the words of Sir Winston Churchill will prove to be very important as this study will examine his own words to understand how he viewed himself as a leader; a lot can be learned about Churchill through his words. In a sense, the study of Churchill's quotes provides scholars with an autobiographical account of his life and views. Langworth writes that "the reason Churchill is such an appealing source of quotations, I think, is the robust quality of

his words” (“Churchill by Himself” VIII). Arguably, Langworth’s statement is very valid and can be proven as one studies Churchill’s words.

The last book studied was another one of Martin Gilbert’s compilations, this one appropriately entitled *Churchill*. Within the introduction, Gilbert argues that “in this volume I seek to show what [Churchill] did and why he did it” (“Churchill” 13). Throughout this book, Gilbert presents readers with chronologies and important correspondences relative to Churchill’s life; some discuss his character, his ability as statesman, or even look at his life in retrospect or from the view of the entire world scene. Regardless, of which view is presented, this book seems to display Churchill as a servant-leader throughout. Most importantly, the unbiased approach that Gilbert takes when choosing what to write provides this thesis with a very important approach to examining Churchill’s leadership qualities. Although a relatively short book in comparison to the numerous biographies on Churchill, this book will certainly provide some of the most important information used to argue that Churchill was in fact a servant-leader.

CHAPTER 2

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Since its formal establishment, the theory of servant leadership has developed into an increasingly popular style of leadership for businesses and workplaces to attempt to implement as a means of increasing the happiness and subsequent productivity of employees. Servant leadership academic Larry Spears noted within his 2004 essay titled *Practicing Servant-Leadership* that “an increasing number of companies have adopted servant-leadership as part of their corporate philosophy or as a foundation for their mission statement” (Spears, “Practicing” 5). Throughout the last half of his essay, Spears discusses the impact that implementation of servant leadership teachings within workplaces is having upon employee satisfaction and productivity. Spears points out that the introduction of the servant leadership theory within corporations, small businesses, educational settings, and training programs has deeply improved business. Within a compilation of Greenleaf’s writings, Spears declares within his introduction that “servant-leadership crosses all boundaries and is being applied by a wide variety of people working with for-profit businesses, not-for-profit corporations, churches, universities, and foundations” (Greenleaf, “The Power” 8). Therefore, one can see the growth of servant leadership on a broad spectrum, from small training programs or businesses, to large multi-billion dollar corporations.

Although little empirical data exists to support this argument, many articles and books recognize the fact that servant leadership “is an approach that has gained increased popularity in recent years” (Northouse 384). Instead, one must rely upon examining how the servant leadership theory is being utilized by businesses and other workplaces in order to understand its growth and overall increase in popularity over the past few decades. It has undoubtedly become very popular due to its “group-oriented approach to analysis and decision making” in order to make institutions stronger and improve society as a whole (Greenleaf, “The Power” 9).

To truly demonstrate how serious the business world is affecting the promotion of servant leadership, Larry Spears discusses many large companies that have effectively employed servant leadership teachings. Among the list of companies identified by Spears that have adopted servant leadership teachings as a means of increasing employee satisfaction and output include, but are not limited to, the Men’s Warehouse, TDIndustries, and Southwest Airlines (Spears, “Practicing” 5). In order to illustrate how successful servant leadership teachings have been when put into action by companies or other workplaces, he uses TDIndustries as his primary example. Spears points out that TDIndustries’ founder, Jack Lowe Sr., “came upon *The Servant as Leader* in the early 1970s and began to distribute copies of it to his employees....The belief that managers should serve their employees became an important value for TDIndustries” (Spears, “Practicing” 5). Interestingly, he goes on to reveal that, even thirty years after TDIndustries first distributed copies of servant leadership material to its employees, the company still ensures that a copy of Robert Greenleaf’s *The Servant as Leader* is

distributed to all new employees, that any employee who will be in charge of even one individual must undergo servant leadership training, and they have even “developed elaborate training modules designed to encourage the understanding and practice of servant-leadership” (Spears, “Practicing” 5). Although this is just one example of how servant leadership values have been incorporated into modern business and workplaces, it stands as a testament to the validity of its effectiveness and worth.

Undoubtedly, many scholars are beginning to agree with former chairman of the Herman Miller Company, Max DePree, that “the servanthood of leadership needs to be felt, understood, believed, and practiced” (Greenleaf, “The Power” 10). As time passes, this theory of leadership will undoubtedly continue to expand its reach and influence. However, if it is to grow, those that choose to follow or study this style of leadership must first develop a true understanding of its vital attributes and goals. Essentially, one must understand where servant leadership has come from in order to define and understand its goals, so that it can be associated with the lives of historical individuals or passed on to future generations.

Even though this theory has become increasingly popular since its inception in the early 1970s, its basic tenets are ancient; although relatively rare, there have been numerous leaders throughout history who one may argue successfully led by serving their followers. Although this young theory was only formally introduced a little over three decades ago, its general premise can arguably be seen stretching back for centuries as countless leaders have exhibited servant-leader characteristics in the manner in which they have provided instruction to their followers. David T. Chin and Wendy A. Smith

discuss the “dawn of servant leadership” within their 2006 study titled *An Inductive Model of Servant Leadership: The Considered Difference to Transformational and Charismatic Leadership*. Within this study, Chin and Smith identify historical figures such as Jesus Christ, Abraham Lincoln, Mother Teresa, and Martin Luther King, Jr., as servant leaders of years past, according to the extraordinary services they provided to their followers (Chin and Smith 3). They claim that “the common denominator of these servant leaders is ‘service above self and for the good of others’” (Chin and Smith 4). Throughout the remainder of their article, Chin and Smith give recognition to the study of Robert Greenleaf and successfully demonstrate how each historical figure identified fit into the servant leadership definition.

For many of the individuals whose lives have become associated with servant leadership values, since its formal development, little to no research has been done that breaks down the variety of reasons why each person received this distinction. As one studies research on servant leadership, it becomes evident that it is possible to explain what servant leadership is, how it is defined, what its traits are, and how its traits may be compared to the leadership traits of a particular historical figure in order to decipher whether or not that individual can be classified as a servant-leader. Furthermore, with a basic understanding of the definition of a specific leadership style one may find it is easy to take an historical figure and characterize that individual as a specific type of leader. However, in order to truly understand why or if a specific individual can be classified as a specified type of leader, one must first gain an understanding of the leadership theory and its corresponding traits. In order to accomplish this, one must first define the theory

by examining its stated goals or ends, and then develop a list of traits necessary to constitute that style of leadership.

What is Servant Leadership?

Servant leadership is a modern theory of leadership introduced in the early 1970s by former Director of Management Research at AT&T and founder of the *Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership*, Robert K. Greenleaf. Greenleaf devoted much of his life to the study of management and the development of his servant leadership theory, coining the phrase “servant leadership” in his 1970 essay, *The Servant as Leader*. Since this time, many scholars within the Greenleaf Center and abroad have expanded on the theory, helping to develop a definition and to identify its basic traits. However, one must keep in mind that since Robert Greenleaf developed this theory of leadership, he remains the ultimate authority on the subject.

Unlike most other styles of leadership, the theory of servant leadership appears to follow an entirely different view of leadership authority. Rather than following a general top-down or bottom-up approach to authority, it becomes obvious that this style of leadership successfully incorporates both views of power transfer. Servant leadership is a unique style of leadership that “recognizes both the top-down and bottom-up views of authority, and that effectively addresses the interdependent nature of the leader-follower condition” (Manning and Curtis 120). On one hand, a top-down view of leadership authority “holds that leadership authority is based on position in a social hierarchy, and that power flows from the highest to the lowest” (Manning and Curtis 120). On the other

hand, a bottom-up view of authority “contends that power flows from below, because people can always reject a directive. By saying yes or no, the individual affirms or denies the authority of others” (Manning and Curtis 120). Inevitably, successful leaders must realize that their directives must not appear too harsh or forceful; they must fit into a very narrow area of acceptance so that the leader can gain maximum support for their actions.

Within a top-down view of leadership authority, power flows down from the few at the top in charge to the people at the bottom. As a result, support flows back up to enable the few at the top to lead successfully. Examples of this flow of leadership authority can be examined in workplaces, where the frontline workers make up the bulk of the employees at a particular business or corporation, yet control the least amount of power. The basic workers are at the bottom of the pyramid in order to provide a sturdy base that supports the next level, supervisors and managers. Subsequently, the flow of support then transfers to the top of the pyramid, where a few top executives within the company are positioned to send power back down the pyramid. Essentially, the few leaders at the top “delegate authority to managers and supervisors, who may empower employees to act in the interests of the organization” (Manning and Curtis 120). As power flows down from the top, support continues to flow back up to the leaders. The continuation of this system allows the leaders at the top to successfully lead. Ultimately, the top-down approach to leadership authority is the most common view of leadership authority practiced within the United States; typically, the most educated, wealthy, and influential are at the top positions of businesses or corporations, and they delegate authority down a chain of command.

The bottom-up approach involves power flowing from below, from the followers, as opposed to support flowing from below in order to give the leaders at the top the power to delegate authority down the pyramid. Within this model, the followers, the workers from the previous example, hold the power that leaders obtain through the elicitation of trust; followers always have the potential to reject a directive from a leader who appears self-interested. This unusual flow of authority allows the leader to appear less self-interested and a leader that “people will choose to follow, [one] with whom they will prefer to work” (Manning and Curtis 121).

Ultimately, servant leadership revolves around the concept that the transfer of power or authority flows in multiple directions, allowing leaders to both serve those below them and successfully use their power to delegate authority. This blurred view of leadership authority “shows the interdependence common to most leader-follower relationships. An approach to leadership that recognizes both the top-down and bottom-up views of authority, and that effectively addresses the interdependent nature of the leader-follower condition, is servant leadership” (Manning and Curtis 121). By finding a middle ground approach to the flow of power and support, servant-leaders are able to accomplish goals that will be in the best interests of those served. By not totally following a “bottom-up” approach, which some may feel gives those not in leadership positions too much authority, and by not following the original “top-down” approach, which leads to authoritative leadership, servant leadership “emphasizes the power of persuasion and seeking consensus” (Greenleaf, “The Power” 9). Ultimately, according to Spears within his introduction to Robert Greenleaf’s *The Power of Servant-Leadership*,

“some people have likened this to turning the hierarchal pyramid upside down” (“The Power” 9).

To define the aim of servant leadership and of a servant-leader, one must examine the words of Robert Greenleaf. According to Greenleaf in his original essay *The Servant as Leader*, “The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then choice brings one to aspire to lead” (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 13). Greenleaf acknowledges the fact that if a servant-leader is servant-first, then the opposite of a servant-first leader must be a leader-first leader. In fact, Greenleaf proceeds to point out that “The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them are shadowings and blends.... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served” (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 13). He further declares that servant-leaders can be recognized by identifying several details about the goals or outcomes the leaders actions have upon those being lead. Greenleaf claims:

The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 13-14)

Ultimately, servant leadership is seen as a style of leadership that is focused upon the well-being of the followers above that of the leader. It has been said that “Servant

leadership is not about personal ego or material rewards. It is about a true motivation to serve the interests of others” (Manning and Curtis 121). However, it is important to point out that servant leadership, arguably more so than any other style of leadership, is derived from an ethical approach. Avolio et al. once argued that ethical leadership is “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers” (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber 424). Additionally, Peter G. Northouse, a prominent scholar of leadership, notes that “With its strong altruistic ethical overtones, servant leadership emphasizes that leaders should be attentive to the concerns of their followers and should empathize with them; they should take care of them and nurture them” (Northouse 384-385). One must keep in mind that there still exists much more information that further defines servant leadership.

Indeed, this ideal approach to leadership exhibits many qualities that are noticeable within many other styles of leadership. However, many of the traits of servant-leaders are demonstrated in ways that magnify the leader’s ability to serve their followers, who are looking for direction and someone in which to place their trust and confidence. Ann McGee-Cooper and Duane Trammell, two authors cited by the *Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership*, even further define servant leadership within their well-written article *Focus on Leadership* by stating, “the focus of Servant Leadership is on sharing information, building a common vision, self-management, high levels of interdependence, learning from mistakes, encouraging creative input from every team member, and questioning present assumptions and mental models” (McGee-Cooper

and Trammell). Together, the definitions of Robert Greenleaf and other servant-leader scholars concerning this style of leadership provides readers with an in-depth look at what servant leadership stands for and what servant-leaders strive to do. Many other scholars have added extra insight into the description of servant leadership, providing an even more comprehensive definition for scholars to analyze.

According to servant leadership scholars George SanFacon and Larry C. Spears, true servant-leaders focus upon achieving motives, means, and ends. Indeed, they argue that “*Motives* are about intentions—why we do something. *Means* are about methods—how we do it. *Ends* are about outcomes—what we’re trying to achieve” (SanFacon and Spears 17). As a servant-leader, motives evolve as one focuses upon the well-being of others, those whom they lead, above their own; servant-leaders always act ethically, with the intention of helping those they lead by essentially becoming their servant. Often, these motives develop during stressful, trying situations such as war, providing sufficient motivation to urge the leader forward. With a specific intention as a catalyst, servant-leaders are able to successfully respond to their motives, by methodically utilizing their leadership qualities to provide the means to reach their desired end.

Undoubtedly, as people begin to study servant leadership they initially muse over why one would want to become a servant-leader, a style of leadership that calls on putting the needs of someone else above their own. This is a very valid question; what motive could possibly drive someone to become a self-sacrificing leader? The answer is rather ambiguous and primarily revolves around the characteristics and personal beliefs of the individual. Nonetheless, SanFacon and Spears attempt to provide an explanation

as to what potentially attracts one to become a servant-leader and what could possibly motivate them to serve others. They convincingly posit:

As we grow into personhood and fullness, we become increasingly concerned about others. This does not mean that we care less about ourselves at higher stages, but that we include more and more for others for whom we also evidence a genuine concern and consideration.

Through this unfolding, we become increasingly committed to help and serve others. (SanFacon and Spears 17)

This detailed explanation surely helps to better understand why servant-leaders choose to lead by serving others, rather than by authoritative, self-serving means. Inevitably, a better understanding of the motives that drives one to become a servant-leader ultimately provides a better understanding of the means and ends in which they will call upon to successfully lead.

Ultimately, according to SanFacon and Spears, servant-leaders are interested in achieving very specific ends. In reaching their ends, servant-leaders, as frequently mentioned, always look out for the good of their followers above their own when considering their intentions and means to their ends. As leader, one must be willing to accept success, as well as failure while attempting to reach their end. Moreover, they must endeavor to reach a balanced, manageable method in which to approach the problems being faced by their followers. In fact, it is stated that “servant-leaders strike a better balance between *self-interested* and the *common good*. They are, in effect, *called*

to *practice moral symmetry*—to make decisions and take action in ways that balance the *legitimate needs* of all affected” (SanFacon and Spears 17). This approach to the theory of servant leadership appears to be a very valid, inspirational way in which to gain a better understanding of what makes one strive to become a servant-leader.

Robert Greenleaf, in *The Servant as Leader*, expresses the same idea that SanFacon and Spears point out. However, this way of examining and defining the goals of servant leadership is often overlooked. Similar to SanFacon and Spears, Greenleaf also effectively illustrates that servant-leadership revolves around the idea that everything begins for the servant-leader as an initial inspiration to serve. Greenleaf argues that servant-leaders, unlike other leaders, are motivated by “the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first” (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 13). Rather than being motivated by the thought of gaining power or authority over someone or over material possessions, servant-leaders are motivated by the prospects of helping those they serve. Greenleaf points out that “the leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types” (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 13). By establishing the fact that servant leadership, the servant-first approach to leadership, is at one extreme of the leadership spectrum, Greenleaf illustrates that there are greater numbers of leaders that fall between these two extremes than actually within them. Nonetheless, he successfully points out the fact that servant-leaders possess some sort of innate quality that pushes them ahead with the ultimate goal of helping those they lead before they worry about themselves.

He further points out the importance of the utilization of certain means and methods in regards to reaching the servant-leader’s desired ends. As a servant-leader,

these means undoubtedly seek to improve the circumstances of their followers. Servant-leaders are believed to understand the needs of those they serve more clearly than other leaders, inspiring them to use their abilities to better help their followers. Greenleaf posits that ultimately:

A leader ventures to say: ‘I will go; come with me!’ A leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success. A leader says: ‘I will go; follow me!’ while knowing that the path is uncertain, even dangerous. One then trusts those who go with one’s leadership. (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 15)

Once the leader has become determined to lead, they must obviously have followers.

Now that an overarching definition and explanation of the servant leadership theory has been analyzed, it is important to turn attention towards examining the primary characteristics that servant-leaders display. After extensive study of relevant servant-leader characteristics, it becomes possible to compile a list of traits which scholars have been continuously identified as qualities exhibited by servant-leaders; these traits are representative of some of the most visible characteristics that one may recognize within a true servant-leader. It is important to keep in mind that Greenleaf’s original definition of servant leadership continues to be developed by authors and scholars, leading to increased debate concerning the most important qualities that these leaders must exhibit. Nonetheless, this study has compiled ten traits which most scholars of servant leadership would agree help to define servant-leaders.

After providing explanations of each identified trait, this investigation will promptly turn its focus toward a brief summary of the life of Sir Winston Churchill and then toward discovering whether or not examples of his wartime leadership as Prime Minister during World War II can be used to classify him as a servant-leader, according to the standards presented. In actuality, to reach a more viable conclusion, this study will have to determine whether or not Churchill's leadership traits, be they servant-leader traits or not, fit the ascribed definition previously discussed.

CHAPTER 3

SERVANT-LEADER TRAITS

Research of Robert Greenleaf's writings, combined with thorough investigation into the writings of other prominent servant leadership scholars, allows one to compose an accurate and succinct list of the major attributes of servant leadership. Many scholars, especially Larry C. Spears, have pointed out that Greenleaf identified at least ten fundamental characteristics of servant leadership within his book *Servant Leadership*; a majority of the attributes acknowledged within this study were first identified by Larry C. Spears within his article entitled *Servant Leadership: Cultivate 10 Characteristics*. Spears implies that, although the list he accumulates is wide-ranging, additional qualities may exist and be applicable in defining servant leadership ("Servant Leadership" 20). This examination into relevant servant-leader attributes primarily compares the works of Robert Greenleaf, Larry Spears, and Robert F. Russell, and A. Gregory Stone in order to produce an accurate list of ten attributes that contribute to the study of servant leadership. This thesis seeks to create a list of ten attributes necessary to a servant-leader for two primary reasons. First, Spears does a great job of identifying ten servant-leader traits within his article, *Servant Leadership: 10 Characteristics*. However, Spears later points out within his introduction to a book of Greenleaf essays that he realizes "these ten characteristics are by no means exhaustive" (Greenleaf, "The Power" 8). Therefore,

within the list of characteristics advanced by this thesis, I accepted many of the traits identified by Spears and proceeded to include several other traits common throughout other literature on this topic. The second reason I choose to discuss only ten essential servant-leader attributes is to narrow the focus of the study. Undoubtedly, as one studies any theory of leadership, a seemingly endless list of characteristics could be compiled that helps to define that particular style of leadership. However, once the list becomes too extensive, it loses its analytical value. Indeed, one should be able to provide a succinct list of attributes to define a particular style of leadership. Although some of the attributes may overlap and correspond with other styles of leadership, it is the responsibility of the author to explain how each trait is relevant to the study of a particular style of leadership, in this case servant-leadership. Therefore, this thesis provides a short list of ten attributes that I feel are crucial to the study of servant leadership and proceeds to explain how or why each identified characteristic relates to the study of servant leadership.

In agreement with Larry Spears, this thesis argues that it is important to keep in mind that other characteristics may also be relevant to the study of servant leadership. These characteristics help to define the ideals present within servant-leadership. Additionally, according to extensive research, the ten traits identified within this study prove to be sufficient when later attempting to identify whether or not the leadership traits exhibited by an historical figure such as Sir Winston Churchill can be examined in order to classify him as a servant-leader. In order to develop a more manageable way to observe servant-leader qualities, this study focuses upon the traits of initiative, listening,

empathy, awareness, foresight, persuasion, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, trust, and visibility as ten of the most important and identifiable attributes that servant-leaders exhibit.

Although this study has identified ten crucial attributes of servant leadership, one may argue that there are four of the ten that must be regarded as the most important characteristics. For example, after extensive study, this thesis would argue that the attributes of trust, foresight, persuasion, and stewardship are four of the ten identified traits that prove to be the most crucial when examining servant leadership. These four attributes will be explained first. However, one must keep in mind that all of the identified characteristics are important when defining servant leadership.

Perhaps the most basic and common attribute of servant leadership is trust. In order to lead at all, leaders must be able to elicit the trust of the people they serve. Indeed, this is an essential trait of a servant-leader. Readers must keep in mind that throughout scholarly research on servant leadership, as well as throughout this essay, the term trust is used synonymously with the term confidence; if one places confidence within their leader, then they are in effect placing trust in the individual. By placing their faith with a leader, followers are essentially illustrating their belief that the leader will successfully perform particular actions on their behalf. A successful servant-leader must elicit the confidence of those they serve. In return, those served must wholeheartedly believe in the leader's competence, honesty, integrity, and credibility.

As long as the servant-leader is able to maintain the confidence of those being led, it is easier to persuasively convince them to follow. Trust can be obtained through visibility, listening, appearing competent, and through many other methods. However, the primary goal of servant-leaders is to elicit the trust of their followers ethically, by proving to them that they will lead by serving, with the interests of the followers in mind above their own. Ultimately, Greenleaf states:

One's confidence in a leader rests, in part, on the assurance that stability and poise and resilience under stress give adequate strength for the rigors of leadership. [This] stand[s] on a base of intensity and dedication to service that supports faith as trust. (Greenleaf, "The Power" 131)

Thus, the confidence that followers place within their leader is derived from their perception of the leader's potential effectiveness or motives.

Closely related to the idea of "vision," foresight is, in the words of Larry Spears, "the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation, [enabling] servant-leaders to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future" (Spears, "Servant Leadership" 20). This ability to look beyond the present, while regarding the past, provides true servant-leaders with the capability to charge ahead in order to resolve problems. Foresight gives the leader an advantage when encountering a tough situation because it allows them to better understand what needs to be done. Greenleaf discusses the importance of foresight as he declares:

Foresight is the 'lead' that the leader has. Once he loses this lead and events start to force his hand, he is a leader in name only. He is not leading. He is reacting to immediate events and he probably will not long be leader. There are abundant examples of loss of leadership which stemmed from a failure to foresee what reasonably could have been foreseen, and from failure to act on that knowledge while the leader had freedom to act. (Greenleaf, "The Power" 130)

Undoubtedly, this foresight allows servant-leaders to make decisions that will help their followers in the long run.

Persuasion is another critical attribute of servant leadership that may easily go unnoticed. Rather than coercing compliance, servant-leaders aim to convince their followers to willingly follow their lead. According to Greenleaf, "Leadership by persuasion has the virtue of change by convincement rather than coercion. Its advantages are obvious" ("Servant Leadership: a Journey" 30). By convincing their followers of the validity or quality of their decision-making, servant-leaders are able to convince others to follow them, rather than coerce compliance. Greenleaf points out that a leader who successfully uses persuasion is "one who ventures and takes the risks of going out ahead to show the way and whom others follow, voluntarily, because they are persuaded that the leader's path is the right one—for them, probably better than they could devise for themselves" (Greenleaf, "The Power" 44). Obviously, the use of persuasion creates many cost/benefit questions.

The major cost to using persuasion to convince others to follow, as opposed to coercion, is that it often takes more effort on behalf of the leader. By coercing compliance or support, it would undoubtedly be easier for a leader to exploit the needs of their followers in a way that would seemingly force them to comply to the leader's goals or direction. However, the major benefit that is created by the use of persuasion to elicit compliance is that it fosters the growth of consensus among the followers, as well as between the followers and the leader. Inevitably, this byproduct of the successful use of persuasion helps leaders, especially servant-leaders, guide their followers more effectively.

Additionally, within Greenleaf's concept of persuasion, one is able to view an apparent ideal of consensus building emerge. Larry Spears also points out that servant-leaders are effective at building consensus, as they convince others to follow them. Undeniably, leaders can utilize many different types of persuasive techniques that may appeal to their followers by conviction and by the prospect of consensus building. For example, servant-leaders could use public speaking or appearances at public events in order to convince their followers that the path they have in store for them is the right one that will benefit the people, not just the leader. Persuasion is not attainable if the leader appears to use their status for personal gain. Instead, they attempt to influence those they lead by convincing them to follow through their successful application of inspiration, consultation, and personal appeals (Russell and Stone 7). Obviously, a leader can choose to act in whatever manner they choose, simply due to their position of authority. However, a fine line exists between doing what one personally wants to do, and what one

has the support of the people to do. In order to convince their followers their directive is what they should follow, leaders must influence. Greenleaf even asserts within *The Servant as Leader* that influence directly corresponds with successful persuasion. Inevitably, leaders who exercise persuasion to convince those they lead to follow, believe that they should guide people into beliefs and actions that are fully understandable. By fully understanding the direction that a leader intends to take them in, followers are more likely to be convinced to willingly follow and provide support.

The concept of service directly correlates with the next servant-leader attribute discussed, stewardship. Merriam Webster defines stewardship as “the conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care” (“Stewardship”). As a leader, one is in the position of a steward since they are entrusted with the care of those they lead. Through research, it becomes evident that the idea of stewardship is a trait that servant-leaders must exhibit to hold true to the true definition of a servant-leader. As a servant-leader one is in charge, a true steward, who assumes the responsibility of serving the needs of others. Furthermore, throughout this process, one cannot be focused on their own personal needs first, as Greenleaf states. Instead, as stewards, servant-leaders strive to make the lives of those they lead better. Although Greenleaf never directly introduces scholars to the idea of stewardship within his original essay, Larry Spears cites stewardship as one of his ten significant characteristics of servant leadership. Spears reveals that like stewardship, servant leadership assumes a commitment to serving the needs of others first, by stressing the utilization of openness and persuasion, as opposed

to authoritative control (“Servant Leadership” 20). Essentially, one can observe a steward as a manager, not the owner of a business; an owner entrusts the careful management of his company to a manager, whose sole duty it is to carefully and responsibly run the business he has been entrusted to manage. Similarly, one can see how the population of an entire democratic country are in essence the owner of that nation, whereas the leader of the country has been placed in their particular role, that of the manager, in order to look out for the wellbeing of the country. Ultimately, as a leader, servant-leaders strive to be stewards by being committed to serving those who have placed trust within their leadership, confident that they can lead them out of a difficult situation.

The first servant-leader attribute presented by Greenleaf within his essay *The Servant as Leader* is arguably the trait of initiative. After providing a brief introduction and definition of his theory of servant leadership, Greenleaf proceeds to claim that “everything begins with the initiative of an individual” (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 14). Throughout his elaboration of this statement, Greenleaf focuses on the idea that the initiative of an individual is essentially the spark that ignites a fire, whatever the initiative may be. In regards to leadership, he argues that initiative is derived from inspiration, which provides insight that compels others to follow and learn from their lead. Greenleaf posits that “the very essence of leadership, going out ahead to show the way, derives from more than usual openness to inspiration” (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 15). Often, initiative can also be identified as the quality of pioneering. By taking the initiative to lead, to attempt to solve a pressing problem, servant-leaders demonstrate a

sense of pioneering. When there are no apparent answers, servant-leaders are forced to pioneer new methods that will prove to be successful in solving the problems of their followers. Certainly, the attribute of taking initiative is visible within any style of leadership. Nonetheless, it is essential to point out that in order to be classified as a servant-leader; one must display initiative in choosing to lead their people with the intention of serving their needs.

In regards to decision-making, scholars of servant leadership must examine the importance of the characteristic of listening. Listening is identified by many scholars as one of the key attributes of servant-leaders. This is one of the first characteristics discussed by Greenleaf in his essay *The Servant as Leader*. Many other scholars such as Larry C. Spears, Robert F. Russell and A. Gregory Stone, as well as David T. Chin and Wendy A. Smith identify listening as a crucial attribute of servant-leaders. Listening is a vital attribute of servant leadership because it helps lead to confidence among followers, allowing the servant-leader to more successfully lead. In order to make balanced, informed decisions, servant-leaders must listen to the needs of those they lead so that they understand which direction to take when it comes to decision-making. Servant-leaders seek to listen to the group in order to understand their needs and make decisions that will benefit the collective, not just themselves. Whereas many other types of leaders lead according to their own goals or motives, servant-leaders attempt to listen to those they lead in order to truly understand how to lead; communication is vital within any relationship, including the relationship between leader and follower. By listening, “servant-leaders seek to identify the will of a group and clarify that will” (Spears,

“Servant Leadership” 20). Undoubtedly, listening provides the basis for understanding where a situation has originated, the status of the situation at the present, and in what direction to go in order to successfully resolve the problem. Also, by listening, servant-leaders are visibly able to put the needs of those they lead above their own, further allowing them to serve those they guide. Greenleaf wisely states that “true listening builds strength in other people” (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 17). In the end, by listening, servant-leaders are able to motivate those they lead to follow.

Awareness is another critical attribute within servant leadership; it is closely related to foresight in that they work together to allow the leader to successfully guide their followers. This trait makes servant-leaders conscious of problems and allows them to perceive how to appropriately approach each situation. Certainly, a leader that is aware of the situations around them is more effective. Additionally, the trait of awareness is believed to create insight. Greenleaf argues that “the cultivation of awareness gives one the basis for detachment, the ability to stand aside and see oneself in perspective in the context of one’s own experiment, amidst the ever present dangers, threats, and alarms” (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 28). Through awareness, servant-leaders are able to step back from their immediate problems in order to gain insight over them, which help to relieve stress from the leader and inevitably assist them in making more effective decisions concerning the direction to take when solving problems. Ultimately, this attribute proves to be a crucial quality of servant-leaders. As servant-leaders are more aware of situations around them and how they impact those they lead, they are better able to take charge in resolving problems.

Perhaps more so in the servant-leader theory of leadership than in any other style of leadership, the attribute of empathy must be at the forefront. Empathetic leaders attempt to not only understand the feelings of those they lead, but also take their best interests into consideration at all times during the decision-making process. Within many of the examined servant leadership articles, the trait of empathy often coincided with the idea of acceptance; a truly empathetic servant-leader will care about the needs of their followers, while accepting them and their faults. Greenleaf argues that:

People grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are, even though their performance may be judged critically in terms of what they are capable of doing. Leaders who empathize and who fully accept those who go with them on this basis are more likely to be trusted. (“Servant Leadership: a Journey” 21)

Undoubtedly, servant-leaders want to understand the feelings of their followers, their ideas, and their intentions in order to lead in a way that would benefit those they lead the most. Ultimately, many scholars point out that this servant-leader attribute inevitably fosters a sense of confidence between leader and follower.

Another crucial attribute associated with servant leadership is visibility. Robert F. Russell and A. Gregory Stone identify the existence of visibility as a key characteristic of leaders in general. Nevertheless, they argue that “Servant leaders establish appropriate power by visibly interacting with followers” (Russell and Stone 6). Visibility allows the servant-leader to interact with his or her followers in ways that increase confidence,

display empathy, and allow them to listen, become aware of the needs of the collective, provide foresight to potential solutions, provide a means of ethical persuasion, and inevitably display a commitment to those they lead. Due to all of the potential benefits of visibility, it must be regarded as an important attribute that servant-leaders must display.

Ultimately, servant-leaders must possess commitment to the growth of people. As a servant-leader, one becomes more concerned with the well-being of those they lead above their own. Spears posits that this somewhat incomprehensible phenomenon is possible because “servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as [followers]. As such, the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within his or her institution” (Greenleaf, “The Power” 7). It can be argued that Greenleaf essentially presents this ideal when he says that those served by a true servant-leader will inevitably “become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely to become servants” (Spears, “Servant Leadership” 20). Current CEO of the *Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership* Kent M. Keith wisely summarizes the true idea of servant leadership as he states that:

The true servant-leader is always a servant and sometimes a servant-leader. Being a servant, having a servant’s heart, describes the person’s nature and true character. When the servant discovers the opportunity to make a difference by leading, and steps into a leadership role, then he or she becomes a servant-leader. (Keith 2)

In the end, servant-leaders appear to cast away their own interests and become wholly interested in the well-being of the collective. The commitment to the growth of people helps give a leader the sense of initiative and the drive to become a servant-leader, one who wisely directs by serving. Ultimately, servant leadership cannot be looked at as a zero-sum form of leadership, because typically the leader's interest can be seen bound up in the collective interest; a manager may serve those under him in order to help the company succeed and himself maintain a job.

CHAPTER 4

THE LIFE OF SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

Throughout the twentieth century, the world witnessed perhaps some of the most intense political, economic, and military struggles to ever occur; World War I and II, the Great Depression, the rise of Communism, famine, racism, and the increase of terrorism. These great struggles not only represented turning points within the paths of nations and the free people of the world, but demanded dynamic men and women to step forward to take leadership responsibilities. Often, those who stepped forward to lead during these times of strife brought special ideas or goals to the situation, essentially providing the leadership catalyst needed to right the proverbial sinking ship. Authors of *Leadership: Current Theories, Research, and Future Directions*, Bruce J. Avolio, Fred O. Walumbwa, and Todd J. Weber once pointed out that “looking back over the past 100 years, we cannot imagine a more opportune time for the field of leadership studies” (Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber 423). Undoubtedly, many of the great struggles of the twentieth century proved to be turning points within careers that transformed several good leaders into great leaders. Abigail Adams, the wife of former United States President John Adams, once wisely stated, “Great necessities call forth great leaders” (HeartQuotes). Certainly, this has proven to be an exceedingly valid statement, as time and time again leaders have stepped forward to guide their people and, at times, the entire

world out of difficult times. Bill George, a prominent scholar of leadership theory, once said in his 2009 article *Leading in Crisis: Learn These Seven Lessons* that “in a crisis, we learn who the real leaders are” (George 18). It is easy to lead when everything is going well, however, an individual’s true leadership traits become blatantly visible during a time of crisis as he or she attempts to guide their followers through trying times, essentially stepping up and making the greatest sacrifices themselves (George 18). Arguably, this is the time that the quality of true leadership is revealed.

In a time of despair, there are usually only a small number of people who are willing to stand up and lead the collective. In the twentieth century, several men and women stood up to the challenge of leading their followers out of a time of crisis. However, I would argue one man rose up higher than many others and helped reunite a divided world, distinguishing himself as one of the greatest leaders of all time. This incredible man is former Prime Minister of Great Britain, Sir Winston Churchill. Now that this thesis has laid out the foundational definition and attributes of servant leadership, it will now attempt to examine the life of Sir Winston Churchill in the context of that model. Through much research on servant leadership and the leadership qualities exhibited by Sir Winston Churchill during his influential life, particularly as Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War II, this thesis posits that strong evidence exists to suggest that Churchill deserves to don the distinction of servant-leader. Undoubtedly, many people may disagree with this claim, while others may wholeheartedly concur. Nonetheless, this thesis sets out to provide evidence supporting this claim that Churchill could and should be classified as a servant-leader. To facilitate

and narrow this argument, evidence will be presented illustrating the servant-leader qualities exhibited by Churchill during his time as Prime Minister during WWII. This time of crisis provided Churchill the stage on which to demonstrate perhaps the most phenomenal leadership ever displayed.

Many historians and scholars have examined the leadership of Sir Winston Churchill during WWII, arguing that he saved the free world from the tyranny of Adolph Hitler and Nazi Germany. Due to his lengthy, illustrious career as a political leader, he has been defined using a number of different leadership styles, some of which include charismatic, transactional, and transformational. Interestingly, no information can be found identifying Churchill as a servant-leader, since the theory has only recently been established and is still being defined. However, the goal of this thesis, based on the definition of servant leadership developed previously and based on the corresponding traits, is to identify qualities within Churchill's leadership, particularly as Prime Minister during WWII, that would allow one to confidently identify Churchill as a servant-leader. Before examples of this kind can be provided, it is necessary to first provide some background information on the life of this great individual, so that the reader may better understand the context which made him such a successful leader, arguably even a servant-leader. After a brief biography, the final chapter will focus upon providing evidence to support this conclusion, based on examples of servant-leader qualities exhibited by Churchill during his time in power during WWII.

The Life of a Leader in the Making

The life of Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill begins as a tale of a life that could have ended just as unexpectedly as it started. From all accounts November 30th, 1874, was a very hectic time for the Churchill family as young Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill was unexpectedly born into the world nearly two months premature. Instead of being born in “the small but fashionable house in Charles Street, Mayfair which his father had rented to receive him,” Churchill was born in Blenheim Palace, a family estate located in the little English village of Woodstock in Oxfordshire (Jenkins 5). Nonetheless, with only a local Woodstock country doctor present to birth him, young Churchill was successfully welcomed into the world by his parents, Randolph and Jennie Churchill.

Although most people believe that Winston Churchill was born into an exceedingly wealthy English family, history tells us otherwise. In fact, “the Churchills were comfortably off though poor in comparison with the rich Americans and English of the time. But they were a family which ranked high among the nobility. The family goes back to early times” (Nott 4). Indeed, Winston was born into an influential English family, with British and American ancestors. Winston was born the oldest son of Lord Randolph Churchill and Jennie Jerome. Winston’s father, Randolph Churchill, was a prominent figure within the politics of Britain, once holding the important position of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Randolph was the youngest son of John Churchill and became the 7th Duke of Marlborough. Ultimately, the family’s name was made famous through years of service to the British crown. It is understood that the name goes back in

British history as far back as the middle ages. One historian writes that an ancestor of Winston Churchill, “Elias de Churchville, represented Devonshire in the Middle Ages, in the reign of Edward II” (Nott 4). However, the Churchill family name was made truly famous in the beginning of the eighteenth century by a much earlier John Churchill, who “made history by winning many successful military campaigns in Europe for Queen Anne almost 200 years earlier” (“WinstonChurchill.org”). In appreciation of his service to Queen Anne, John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, was presented with “the enormous palace of Blenheim at Woodstock,” which is where Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill was later born (Nott 4). Therefore, one can see that Winston’s surname, although it did not necessarily bring with it immense wealth, brought with it an outstanding sense of pride and honor.

On the maternal side of his aristocratic family, Winston’s mother, Jennie Jerome, was the daughter of a prominent New York millionaire businessman, Leonard Jerome. The prominence of Lady Randolph Churchill’s family can be traced back to the time of the American Revolution, where “the Jeromes fought for the independence of the American colonies in George Washington’s armies” (“WinstonChurchill.org”). Her father, Leonard Jerome, became a very wealthy individual within New York, where he “built a house in Madison Square” and became “very fond of horses and racing” (Nott 7). Leonard Jerome eventually became “chief owner of the New York Times...one of the founders of the Academy of Music in New York” (Nott 7). As an avid fan of horse racing, Leonard “founded both the Jerome Park track and the Coney Island Jockey Club” (Jenkins 6). After reviewing the brief history of the prominent family names that united

to produce Winston Churchill, it becomes easy to see that he possessed great potential and was undoubtedly expected to do great things from birth. Indeed, a seed does not grow without first being planted. One historian interestingly asserts that:

Once combined, these bloodstreams produced a potent synthesis, a dynamo [Winston] equipped with limitless energy, sweeping imagination, tough perseverance, and uncanny foresight. From his father he acquired the traditions of English aristocracy: self-confidence, ambition, and a desire to get to the root of the matter. From his mother, Jennie Jerome, came that pioneering spirit, that total lack of pretence, that hatred of snobbery, and that belief in the powers of one's own star and in the importance of one's personal abilities which had driven forward to a series of new frontiers the men and women who had built the United States.

(Gilbert, "Churchill" 2)

With such an advantageous beginning to his life, young Churchill undoubtedly felt the pressure of living up to the family name, of acting in the name of the crown and country. As a youth, Churchill would begin to develop traits that would benefit him in the future as he would aspire to live up to the pressures of being a Churchill.

Sadly, from many accounts, we know that the family atmosphere in which young Winston was destined to grow up in proved to be distant and non-affectionate, at least in regards to attention from parents; his father was consumed by his political career and his mother seemed to lack the drive to closely care for her children. Shortly after Winston's

birth, his grandfather was made Viceroy of Ireland and asked his son, Winston's father, to join him as his secretary (Nott 11). As the family prepared to join the elder Randolph Churchill in Ireland, Winston's mother entrusting the care of Winston to a nurse named Mrs. Everest. During his early years growing up in Ireland, Churchill's "mother did not see much of him for her time was occupied with a round of social functions" (Nott 12). Despite the distant relationships he shared with his parents, Churchill appeared to respect and love them deeply from all accounts. He absolutely admired his father's skill and determination in politics and he once said of his mother that "she shone for me like the Evening Star. I loved her dearly – but at a distance" (Jenkins 8). Indeed, "despite his loving admiration for his parents, their attitude to Winston was marked by a neglect that was typical of the social mores of high society at that time" ("Churchill Museum" 23). One may argue that this apparent neglect only proved to strengthen Winston as a child, instilling within him a sense of determination to make his parents proud.

Since she spent so much time with him during his most formidable years, many people argue that Winston was greatly influenced by his nanny, Mrs. Everest. She "had a natural instinctive understanding of what children need" (Nott 33). As he grew older and attended school, he was rarely visited by his parents and had it not been for Mrs. Everest, Winston would have been very lonely. It has been said that "his regular pleas for his parents to visit him at school went largely ignored and his emotional needs were only met by his beloved nanny, Mrs Everest" ("Churchill Museum" 23). In fact, "to Mrs. Everest he could tell his troubles. He could confide in her. She would listen to him with a sympathetic ear" (Nott 16). Undoubtedly, as they spent much time together, Mrs. Everest

taught Winston many things and instilled within him an understanding of the life of a common Englishman. It has been said that she was certainly his “central emotional prop” during childhood and that the dependence lasted into adolescence, with her influence lasting forever within the heart of the future leader (Jenkins 10). With Mrs. Everest, Winston was able to play and openly talk, allowing him to develop his imagination and language skills. Churchill himself once said that:

My nurse was my confidante. Mrs. Everest it was who looked after me and tended all my wants. It was to her I poured out my many troubles....Death came very easily to her. She had lived such an innocent and loving life of service to others and held such a simple faith that she had no fears at all and did not seem to mind very much. [She was] my dearest and most intimate friend during the whole of the twenty years I had lived. (Langworth, “Churchill by Himself” 341)

Although many scholars would agree that Mrs. Everest played a very important role in the development of the young Churchill, most would argue that it is difficult to point out any direct trait she instilled within him that lasted into adulthood.

After examining the previous words of Churchill himself regarding Mrs. Everest, I would posit that through viewing her service to others, Churchill realized the value of serving and helping others. Indeed, he learned from her to not be fearful of things he may encounter, but rather, seize the opportunity and try to make the best of every situation through faith and determination. Nonetheless, as previously mentioned, I would

argue that it is the idea of service that Mrs. Everest most deeply engrained within Churchill; he realized that to serve the needs of others is a great, yet rewarding task. Undoubtedly, he also realized that through serving others, one must listen, empathize, and gain the trust of the individual or individuals being served. Ultimately, it is known that Churchill maintained correspondence with Mrs. Everest throughout much of his youth, due to the profound influence she had upon him as a child; he typically referred to Mrs. Everest as “Woom,” within their letters and she referred to him as “My darling Winny” (Jenkins 10). Due to this influence, it is important to consider her involvement with any biographical interpretation of Churchill’s life.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that when Winston was a young child, the value of a superior education was embedded within his mind by his parents. Even though they seemed rather distantly affectionate towards him, they realized that an individual with his class ranking had greater potential to one day become a leading figure in society. Churchill’s parents realized the most important means to this end would be to receive a superior education. However, Churchill did not necessarily see the value in an education, as any child does. In fact, as a prep school student Winston did not attempt to make excellent grades; he was not amused by his teachers, and therefore did not desire to learn even though he appeared to be a brilliant child. In his earliest years of education, Winston attended St. James School at Ascot, “where he was beaten and his health broke,” and then moved to Brighton (Halle 16-17).

Later, in 1888, Winston was educated at Harrow School, where he continued to disappoint his family and teachers by appearing to be a somewhat appalling, stubborn

student. One instructor noted that he was “the lowest boy on the roles” (Wibberley 16). However, most of his teachers realized that he had great potential as a student. Interestingly, while at Harrow School, Churchill once won a prize and the attention of his instructors after “faultlessly reciting 1,200 lines of Macaulay’s *Lays of Ancient Rome*” (Jenkins 19). Later during his last three years at Harrow School, Churchill was placed in the “army form.” He was apparently placed within this “form” due to his lack of interest in most subjects, apart from his growing interest in military and military strategy.

Shortly after graduating from Harrow, he entered the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst on June 28th, 1893, where he began to improve as a student, because he began to enjoy school. At Sandhurst, Winston began to further delve into military topics such as tactics, fortification, military law, and topography as he entered as a cadet (Halle 20). Churchill graduated from Sandhurst in December of 1894.

After graduating from Sandhurst ranked eighth in a class of one hundred and fifty, Winston was “commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 4th Hussars in February” of 1895 (Jenkins 21). As a soldier in the 4th Hussars, he saw military action in India and Sudan. In Sudan, the adventurous Churchill was immersed in the famous 1898 Battle of Omdurman, where he participated by taking charge of the Twenty-first Lancers (Halle 25). While in the Sudan, Churchill was commissioned to write for the London *Morning Post*. Interestingly, while Churchill was in the British military, he provided numerous military reports for *The Daily Telegraph*. He also attempted to win public office in 1899, as he “stood as a Conservative at a by-election at Oldham,” but was defeated (Halle 26). Never to be deterred, Churchill persevered and continued concentrating upon his personal

writing and military correspondence writing; by the time he was twenty-five, Churchill had already published a number of books and worked for newspapers. He would continue to write and publish works for the remainder of his life. Through his writings, scholars can easily notice his outstanding proficiency of the English language. Undeniably, the ability to utilize one's language is an important aspect of leadership. Indeed, this proves to be an important component of the previously mentioned ideal of servant-leadership.

This time of Churchill's life proved to be a very emotionally difficult time, since his father had passed away shortly after Winston graduated from Sandhurst. As previously mentioned, Churchill adored his father and looked up to him with the utmost respect. Many biographies write of how, "[Churchill's] ambition was to emulate his father's success in politics" ("Churchill Museum" 23). In fact, while he studied as a very young child at Brighton, someone asked him what he was going to be when he grew older. The young, witty Churchill confidently responded, "My father is Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I mean to the same one day" (Nott 38). At a young age, one can see determination and an uncanny skill with words developing in Churchill. However, Churchill would have to wait some time before he would find himself within the world of politics.

Soon after he left the military in 1899, Winston became a war correspondent, where he reported on the Boer War, again for the *Morning Post*. In an event that could have changed the world forever, Churchill was captured by the Boers about two weeks after he arrived in South Africa, but luckily escaped unharmed a little less than a month

later on December 13th, 1899 (Halle 26). As previously mentioned, throughout this time of his life, Winston had already written several books and would continue to do so for the remainder of his successful days. Undoubtedly, his genius shines through within his writing, as he describes the military campaigns he witnessed. Indeed, he is the only British Prime Minister to ever have received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In 1900, after his near brush with death in South Africa and after serving the British crown for approximately five years, Churchill returned from Africa a hero, with “eleven different Constituencies [wanting] him to stand for them” (Halle 39). With this opening, Churchill began his political career as he was elected as Conservative Member of Parliament from Oldham. Throughout this term, Winston began to change some of his Conservative political views, becoming a supporter of social reform. Churchill’s initial political ideology was undoubtedly influenced by his father, who was a prominent Conservative. However, Martin Gilbert asserts that:

When Churchill became a Member of Parliament he was a Conservative. But he soon found the Party too slow a vehicle for his purpose. Within five years he had changed over to the Liberal Party, and was attacking Conservatives with some of the most outspoken invective in the history of Parliament. These attacks brought upon him the life-long enmity of many Conservatives; they also showed the nation that he was not a man to mince his words or hide his feelings. (Gilbert, “Churchill” 3-4)

Therefore, in 1904 Churchill joined the rising Liberal Party. Over the next decade and a half, Churchill, along with Lloyd George, dominated the Liberal Party and held numerous political titles, both elected and appointed. Churchill's positions at this time included Secretary of State for the Colonies, President of the Board of Trade, Home Secretary, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, before resigning as the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1915 in order to "join the Army in France" where he "commanded a battalion of Sixth Royal Scots Fusiliers" before returning back to England and to politics (Halle 42, 75). Before leaving to return to the military, however, Churchill proved himself to be a heroic social reformer, always fighting for the rights of the common man. This trait closely resembles the goal of a servant-leader, to always be looking out for the good of those that follow, above your own; this quality will be more thoroughly discussed within the next chapter, as it helps identify Churchill as a true servant-leader.

Immediately after his short military stint during World War I, Churchill picked up right where he left off in the British political arena by eventually being appointed over the next decade as Minister of Munitions, Secretary of State for War, Minister for Air, Colonial Secretary, Chairman of the Conservative Finance Committee, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and again First Lord of the Admiralty. Churchill returned his loyalty, if one may classify it as so, to the Conservative Party in 1924 ("Churchill Museum" 24). Nonetheless, he greatly impacted Britain during his time as a Liberal Member of Parliament "by a series of measures and social reforms for which he was responsible and which later would become the foundations of the Welfare State" ("Churchill Museum"

24). Ultimately, this switch in loyalties appears to have been completely out of convenience. However, this thesis would argue that the primary reason Churchill changed from one party to the other was to remain in a position of power, in order to help the people. Arguably, his social reforms and views on how to win World War II were aimed at securing the freedom and prosperity of Britain not just for himself, but for the entire nation.

Ultimately, Churchill gained his most prestigious and influential title, Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1940 after Neville Chamberlain was forced to step down due to lack of confidence and support by his nation and fellow Members of Parliament. Undoubtedly, he recognized Churchill's unique abilities that would benefit the nation and the allies during the war and, therefore, somewhat reluctantly stepped down. Chamberlain unquestionably realized that Churchill possessed many valuable qualities that would allow him to lead the British people through their greatest struggle; together, with his military expertise and unique combination of leadership qualities, Churchill would surely prove to be the right man for the job. By inviting him back into power within the Conservative government, as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1939, Chamberlain provided Churchill with the opportunity to gain the trust of the British people. Shortly thereafter, after Neville Chamberlain had decided to step down as Prime Minister, "the favourite for the post of Prime Minister, Lord Halifax, ceded to Churchill whose appointment the King reluctantly agreed the next day" ("Churchill Museum" 27). Ultimately, the Conservative Government decided to place their trust back in Winston Churchill, because of the military prowess he possessed, as well as the other numerous

leadership traits he displayed. Although many political figures would have strongly disagreed at the time, many ordinary British citizens would have undoubtedly agreed with a Lancashire housewife, Nella Last, who wrote in a diary that “if I had to spend my whole life with a man, I’d choose Mr. Chamberlain, but I think I would sooner have Mr. Churchill if there was a storm and I was shipwrecked” (Hastings 13). Therefore, one can assume that Churchill exhibited many qualities, arguably servant-leaders qualities, which appealed to the common people of Britain.

Until he was Prime Minister, he had led to the implementation of numerous brilliant ideas and laws that helped Britain maintain its influence throughout the world, but when his country was in dire need of a leader that could unify the British people and ultimately lead to the success of the allies in World War II, the main character that stepped forward was Sir Winston Churchill. As many people today acknowledge that this great man was a great leader, they often may ask, “What made Sir Winston Churchill such an amazing leader? What qualities did he possess or ideas did he believe in that made him capable of leading not only his nation, but a majority of Europe out of World War II as victors?” The next chapter will put forth the argument that Churchill exhibited numerous servant-leader qualities, which made him a successful leader during WWII for Great Britain. Although his leadership qualities have been associated with numerous styles of leadership, no one has ever truly associated him as a servant-leader and provided evidence. Nonetheless, this thesis will conclude by arguing and providing evidence, particularly from his time as Prime Minister during World War II, which identifies Sir Winston Churchill as a servant-leader.

CHAPTER 5

CHURCHILL AS A SERVANT-LEADER

The following paragraphs provide evidence of Churchill's servant-leader traits in action. First, this chapter will examine the four previously mentioned crucial servant-leader attributes, and then proceed to discuss the remaining six, and provide examples of how Churchill exhibited each quality.

Trustworthiness stands as a crucial attribute of servant-leadership, as it is a vital quality for anyone who is attempting to lead others. In order to keep those who follow them happy and willing to provide support, a leader must maintain the confidence and subsequent **trust** of his or her followers. I would argue that Churchill was successful in maintaining the confidence of his followers during his time as Prime Minister during World War II. By always being truthful and open, as well as visible and competent, Churchill undoubtedly retained the trust of the British people as he charged them forward to fight for the preservation of Britain during WWII. Certainly, the British people trusted him due to his initiative to lead and due to his open assurance that they would arise victorious from WWII.

Ultimately, based on Greenleaf's statement that "one's confidence in a leader rests, in part, on the assurance that stability and poise and resilience under stress give

adequate strength for the rigors of leadership,” it is arguable that the confidence and assurance Churchill provided the people of Britain was the primary tool he used to maintain their trust. Essentially, by identifying himself as an individual Englishman, working for the good of individual Englishmen and women, Churchill was able to successfully elicit trust and confidence. The people were able to see his vision and decided to rely upon him to follow through with his goals. Indeed, Sir Arthur Salter realized that Churchill appealed to the confidence of the English people because “when he faced his greatest task he did so, as no other living man could have done—and as he himself could not have done earlier in life—as the embodiment of British history and tradition. He was the essential Englishman—the British ‘Everyman,’ in the sense of being what every man then wished to be” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 125). By appearing so popular and confident in his position of leadership, Churchill was able to lead as a true servant-leader, with the trust of his followers flowing to him openly.

As one examines Robert Greenleaf’s interpretation of **foresight**, it becomes obvious that he placed much emphasis upon this attribute of servant leadership. As mentioned previously, Greenleaf strongly believed that “the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation, enables servant-leaders to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future” (Spears, “Servant Leadership” 20). While many leaders may simply charge ahead recklessly, a servant-leader uses foresight to understand the benefits and consequences of his or her decisions. As a servant-leader, one realizes that they must ultimately look out for the needs of others above their own, which is why foresight proves to be a very

responsible attribute to employ. By looking to the past, servant-leaders are able to responsibly develop solutions to problems facing them and their followers in the present and future. Indeed, this thesis would argue that Churchill exhibited this quality very well during his time as Prime Minister during WWII. Instead of leading blindly, Churchill looked to past mistakes and successes in leadership by himself and others in order to develop strategies which he could employ to lead Britain victoriously through WWII.

Churchill's official biographer, Martin Gilbert, who published many books on the life of this great leader once wrote that he believed Churchill was a "statesman of vision and ability" (Gilbert "Churchill" 1). He undoubtedly displayed foresight as he led the British people into much needed social reform in the early twentieth century and later as he led them through WWII. Churchill once very wisely pointed out that "sometimes, though not always, people, are wise after the event, but it is possible to be wise before the event" (Langworth, "Churchill by Himself" 490). This clearly shows that Churchill believed in the value of foresight as a means to successful leadership.

During his entire career in politics, Churchill was always revered for his outstanding control and employment of the English language. Churchill often utilized his impressive command of words to get the attention of people, important people, even an entire nation. Indeed, this thesis posits that Churchill's masterful use of **persuasion** during his time as Prime Minister during World War II, allowed him to convince others to comply and follow his lead, rather than unethically forcing compliance through coercion. As previously mentioned, by using persuasive techniques to elicit compliance, a leader is more effective at building trust and consensus among his or her followers;

there are numerous persuasion techniques that one can use as a means to a desired end. In Churchill's case, one may argue that he successfully utilized his vivid language in perfect servant-leader fashion to convince the British people and the allies during WWII that they could win, they should win, they would win, even when it appeared as though they could not be successful. Lord Hore-Belisha once rather humorously stated that "[Churchill] gets the last ounce out of the English language—his unique command of which is one of his most persuasive gifts—by his characteristic modulations of voice and by his defiantly Anglo-Saxon pronunciation of foreign words" (Gilbert, "Churchill" 137-138). Although humorous, this statement allows us to see how Churchill used his language as a means of persuasion, a necessary servant-leader attribute, as opposed to coercion.

In a time of trouble, the easiest thing to do is to either give up or hunker down and hope that the trouble passes and leaves you unscathed. Long before Hitler and Nazi Germany posed an apparent threat to the British people, Churchill realized that his country was an inevitable target. Once the threat was realized by other prominent political figures within the British Government, led by Neville Chamberlain, it was almost too late. Through more than a decade of appeasement during the 1920s, Britain was not at all prepared to be drawn into a large-scale war. Once the fear of eventual invasion began to circulate and German bombers began to attack British cities, it appeared that all hope was lost, that an unprepared British people would eventually have no choice but to give in to Hitler's attacks. However, when Churchill rose to the position of Prime Minister on the tenth of May, 1940, he did not allow the British people to

simply surrender. Indeed, as Louis Fischer pointed out, “when war came Churchill was brought into the government. Soon Churchill headed the government and spoke for England. He is England” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 132). Fischer also discusses Churchill’s talent with words as he points out that “he rolls out an ordinary sentence with the rounded finish and force of a carefully polished work of art. Churchill’s English has the simple power of the language of the Bible. His nouns are pictures and his verbs work” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 132). Undeniably, one can see that Churchill utilized language in order to persuade. He would give radio addresses to the entire nation, as well as stirring speeches to his Coalition Government within Parliament in order to keep morale high and to maintain the support of the English people. Churchill never forced the people to follow him. Instead, he persuaded them that he could lead them out of WWII victorious if they would unite behind him as a nation, placing confidence in his direction.

Certainly, by persuading through his words, Churchill was able to evoke a strong sense of patriotism and excitement within the British people. Former British Labour politician Harold Wilson once said that Churchill had:

The power to evoke an undeniable response. Winston Churchill had through his power over words, but still more through his power over the hearts of men, that rare ability to call out from those who heard him the sense that they were a necessary part of something greater than themselves; the ability to make each one feel just that much greater than he had been; the ability which runs like a golden thread through our national history to inspire a slumbering nation so that it can call up those

inner reserves of effort and of character which have never failed [the British people] when our very survival has been at stake. (Gilbert, “Churchill” 165)

Indeed, Churchill inspired a “slumbering” nation as Wilson put it, to stand up and fight for victory during WWII.

Through his stirring speeches to Parliament and the people of Britain, Churchill was undeniably able to build consensus, further allowing him to successfully lead his country forward during one of its darkest moments. Undoubtedly, Churchill successfully utilized his brilliance with the English language to persuade by convincing people to follow his lead, as opposed to coercing their compliance. By convincing his followers to support him and believe in his leadership, Churchill was able to display one of the most crucial servant-leader qualities. As he granted Churchill honorary citizenship of the United States, President John F. Kennedy perhaps sums up Churchill’s ability to persuade others to follow him as he says, “in dark days and darker nights when England stood alone—and most men save Englishmen despaired of England’s life—he mobilized the English language and sent it into battle. The incandescent quality of his words illuminated the courage of his countrymen” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 162). In order to convince people to follow him, Churchill had to make them understand his goals, which he was able to masterfully accomplish through his delivery of words. Within his first speech to the British people and the House of Commons as Prime Minister on May 13, 1940, Churchill utilized his mastery of words to build consensus among his nation in order to persuade the people to follow his lead. He strongly declared:

I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this Government, I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many long months of toil and struggle....You ask what is our policy. I will say, it is to wage war with all our might, with all the strength that God can give us, to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime....You ask what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory. Victory at all costs. Victory in spite of all terror. Victory however long and hard the road may be. For without victory there is no survival. (WinstonChurchill.org)

Undoubtedly, Churchill's ability to persuade so effectively was one of the most important attributes of his leadership.

Next, we will examine Churchill as a **steward** of freedom and hope for the British people. This thesis argues that this quality can be illuminated during Churchill's time as wartime leader. Although some people would argue that Churchill exhibited self-interested qualities during this time, many scholars would strongly disagree. At a time when others did not know what direction to take to victory, Churchill bravely rose to lead and to convince the British people that they had something worth fighting for and used his previously discussed persuasiveness to gain the confidence of the British people. Certainly, he wanted Britain to come out victorious, securing not only his own safety, but also the safety of his country; a solely self-interested leader does not care about his followers at all. Therefore, one may argue that as Churchill went above and beyond to

convince the British people to fight to the end for themselves and their country, he was exhibiting the quality of **stewardship**.

Churchill proved that he was a steward when he took over as Prime Minister in 1940, because he immediately recognized that he was entrusted with the care of something very important. He was entrusted with the life and the well-being of an entire nation and culture that had reigned supreme for hundreds of years. Indeed, this task can often prove to be overwhelming. However, Churchill seized this opportunity to prove himself worthy of such responsibility. Again, as he granted Churchill honorary citizenship of the United States, President John F. Kennedy recognized the triumphs of this great leader as he pointed out that “whenever and wherever tyranny threatened, he has always championed liberty. Facing firmly toward the future, he has never forgotten the past. Serving six monarchs of his native Great Britain, he has served all men’s freedom and dignity” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 162). Undoubtedly, Kennedy is discussing Churchill as a steward, a servant of the British people; he was given political control of Britain and proceeded to lead her through WWII by constantly looking out for the needs of his followers and country.

The famous Churchill biographer Martin Gilbert once stated that Churchill “felt that governments had a duty to their citizens, not only to protect them against foreign interference, but also to help them against unfair social irregularity and hardship.... A nation [deserves] to be treated with respect by its leaders” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 170). Undeniably, this duty that Churchill felt governments had to their people was directly influenced by his idea that as a politician, especially as Prime Minister, one is a steward

of the people and is in charge of looking out for their needs. This is definitely another servant-leader trait that can be linked to Sir Winston Churchill.

Churchill always possessed the desire to lead. Therefore, it is no surprise that this thesis would argue that Churchill possessed the servant-leader quality of **initiative**.

Through his time in the military and his extensive political career, one may argue that only an individual with initiative would choose to lead. Initiative is often identified as the quality of pioneering. Indeed, one may argue that Churchill's attention to social reform and his willingness to lead during WWII would display his pioneering mentality and initiative. He always knew he would be called upon to lead at an important time, but had no idea that the circumstances would be so dire. Nonetheless, he had prepared himself and was willing to bravely lead. In talking about his position as Prime Minister during WWII, Churchill once stated that "I felt as if I were walking with destiny and that my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and this trial" ("Churchill Museum" 2). As a servant-leader, one leads even when times are grim and in the words of Robert Greenleaf, "a 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" (Greenleaf, "Servant Leadership" 13). This statement is discussing the level of initiative that successful leaders must possess. With this in mind, one may point out that Churchill had a natural desire to serve through leadership. This is well illustrated by Churchill's own words shortly after leaving the King, being a newly appointed Prime Minister when he was congratulated by his bodyguard, W.H. Thompson. Thompson supposedly stated that "I only wish the position had come your way in better times, for you have an

enormous task” (Lukacs 27). In response, Churchill eyes are said to have filled with tears as he claimed “God alone knows how great it is...I hope it is not too late. I am very much afraid it is...We can only do our best” (Lukacs 27). This proves that Churchill wanted to lead, in order to make a difference and try to change the world. Although he was fearful of defeat, Churchill never gave up on the ability of his followers and himself to pull through WWII victorious.

Although Churchill is not necessarily known for his **listening**, one may point out that during the time of World War II, he had no choice but to **listen**, if not specifically to the people, then to the threats of Germany. Therefore, through his awareness of the situation, Churchill was able to successfully lead his followers, because he was able to understand their needs even if he was not directly asking for their input. Rather than listening to the words of his followers, Churchill arguably listened to their needs through his own observations. By observing the needs of his followers, Churchill was able to take action on their behalf, whether it was to keep them safe or to try to implement social reform in order to make their lives better. Nonetheless, this thesis argues that Churchill did in fact listen to the needs of his people and act accordingly; he knew that they needed a strong, confident leader during WWII and he provided such a figure. As a wartime leader, he undoubtedly recognized that it was his job to serve the people by leading with their best interests in mind. Therefore, he took it upon himself to empathize with and be visible to his followers, while realizing that he must lead them by gaining their trust and support.

Awareness was another servant-leader attribute which Churchill arguably displayed as Prime Minister. As wartime leader of Great Britain, Churchill was constantly aware of the continuous threat his country and its people faced. Undoubtedly, he was conscious of problems that arose, which allowed him to perceive how to appropriately approach each situation. Perhaps Churchill's greatest time of awareness came directly before WWII, as he became aware of Hitler's growing arsenal and argued for British rearmament, strongly opposing Neville Chamberlain's stance of appeasement. Indeed, "between 1930 and 1939 Churchill was severely criticized because he spoke frequently and clearly in favor of British rearmament. He feared that if Britain were to remain weak, the dictator nations would seek to gain territory by conquest" (Gilbert, "Churchill" 12). Later details prove Churchill's original arguments for British rearmament to be fundamentally sound, although they were largely disregarded almost until it was too late. Nonetheless, once Churchill was appointed Prime Minister, he was able to successfully utilize his awareness of the wartime situation to his advantage, eventually helping to lead the British and allies to victory. Certainly, as mentioned within chapter three, as servant-leaders are more aware of situations around them and the situations affecting those they lead, they are better able to take charge in resolving problems.

In regards to the servant-leader trait of **empathy**, many people would argue that this quality was perhaps Churchill's greatest deficiency. However, this thesis posits that Churchill did not lack empathy at all, even though he may not have openly displayed strong, sentimental feelings to the average person. Nonetheless, those closer to him often

commented on how caring of an individual this brutish, stern looking man could be when necessary. As a British citizen, Churchill could empathize with the feelings of fear and doubt that were sweeping across Britain at the onset of WWII. Undoubtedly, he realized that defeat, especially invasion, by the German Nazis would have a lasting effect upon the entire nation. To Churchill, party, wealth, and social class made no difference, especially during the war. Ultimately, he believed that every British citizen should work toward the same goal, British victory. Churchill once said that nothing had ever impressed and probably moved him so much:

As the calm steady, business-like resolution with which the masses of our wage-earning folk and ordinary people in our great cities faced what they imagined would be a fearful storm about to fall on them and their families at the very first moment. They had prepared themselves for the worst and had braced themselves for the ordeal. They did not see what else there was to do. (Gilbert, "Winston S." 80)

Through Churchill's words, readers can most definitely see an empathetic leader shining through, one who has compassion and sympathy for his followers due to their shared struggles.

Additionally, one can clearly see how Churchill's feelings could be illustrated through his previously discussed persuasive speeches, as he would utilize magnificent crescendos and decrescendos within his voice to get his emotions across to listeners, allowing them to visualize his sense of urgency and sincerity. Indeed, Harold Wilson

once said that Churchill possessed the quality of humanity, which one could argue is a form of empathy because it shows kindness, compassion, sympathy, and understanding. Of this apparent humanity, Wilson states that “The man who could move armies and navies and embrace the world in one strategic sweep could himself be moved to uncontrollable and unashamed tears at the sight of an old soul’s cheerfulness in a shelter or of the street of devastated houses, at the thought of the human realities which lay behind the war communiqués” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 165). Moreover, many of his closest friends have said that they have never known someone in public life that had such a “warm” heart, was so intimate and loyal, and would never fail a friend. An individual once wrote that “there is about him a simplicity which no other public man of the highest distinction possesses” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 112). By standing up to lead the free world out of WWII victorious, Churchill showed that he cared for others and was willing to put his reputation, even his life on the line to ensure the safety and betterment of the British people he cared so much about. He was able to display his empathy in many ways, perhaps the most apparent being through his visibility during his wartime leadership, another trait of servant leadership.

Undeniably, during his time as Prime Minister during WWII, Churchill attempted to be as **visible** as possible to his followers; he realized that **visibility** boosted morale and subsequent confidence. Rather than appearing fearful in the eyes of his followers, Churchill would sometimes astonish people with his appearances. Perhaps the most shocking appearances he would make would be during German bombings of London. During several occasions, Churchill is said to have went out onto the rooftop of his

bunker above his Cabinet War Rooms bravely watching London as the German bombers attacked and British pilots and ground deployments fiercely fought back; his cabinet members would constantly urge him to go back underground to safety, often being disregarded (“Churchill Museum” 5). This displayed Churchill’s bravery and desire to watch over his country, also allowing him to be visible. It has also been very well documented that Churchill “followed a ‘See for yourself’ practice,” which provided a means by which he could be more visible to the British people (Gilbert, “Churchill” 138). Lord Hore-Belisha once commented that “As Prime Minister in war [Churchill] took every opportunity of visiting the battlefronts, the munition factories, the airfields, the bomb-ruined houses of the people. It was all part of his method of getting to know the facts at first hand” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 139). Undoubtedly, it was a very effective means of being visible to the people of Britain.

However, this thesis would also argue that Churchill once again tapped into his impressive abilities with words, using his speeches and public addresses as means of visibility. By visibly interacting with his followers, Churchill was able to effectively establish more support and, subsequently, power. As previously mentioned within an earlier chapter, visibility allows the servant-leader to be seen interacting with his or her followers in ways that increase confidence, display empathy, allow them to listen, become aware of the needs of the collective, provide foresight to potential solutions, provide a means of ethical persuasion, and inevitably display a commitment to those they lead. Therefore, if Winston Churchill is to be classified as a servant-leader, this attribute is imperative.

Ultimately, by rising to the position of Prime Minister, Churchill proved that he was **committed to the growth of people**. In discussing this attribute, it is vital that one discusses it in regards to the fact that a true servant-leader looks out for the good of all of his or her followers above their own personal needs. Undoubtedly, Churchill was committed to the growth and well-being of the British people. Martin Gilbert states that “Churchill’s major service to mankind was to hold up the torch of democracy against the storm of dictatorship, and to stand alone for the unconquered world while other democracies wavered or stood aside, watching tyranny triumph without seeking to halt it” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 170). As a political figure and voice of the British people for many decades, Churchill proved to be a strong advocate for social reform, for helping out the common man. Gilbert writes that before WWII, “[Churchill] had succeeded in introducing into Government legislation a new mood of humanity toward the daily life of workingmen, and toward the problems of those who...had fallen foul of society” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 4). This helps to display Churchill’s commitment to the growth of people, because he was always looking out for those he led.

Often called a warmonger, due to his impressive interest in and knowledge of war and combat, Churchill ultimately wanted peace for his nation. In fact, as a display of commitment to the growth of people, one may look at Max Hastings’ statement that “Churchill never flinched from the necessity to pay in blood for the defeat of Nazi tyranny. But his sole purpose was to enable the guns to be silenced, the peoples of the world restored to their peaceful lives” (Hastings 9). Churchill “considered universal peace and social comfort to be the ultimate aims of free men. He rejected all political

systems which restricted human liberties, or withheld freedom of speech and freedom from arbitrary arrest” (Gilbert, “Churchill” 170). These are all examples of a true sense of commitment to the growth of people, displaying a belief in making the lives of followers better by leading as a servant, thus displaying servant-leadership.

Conclusion

Indeed, this great man stood as an outstanding leader to those who chose to follow him during the greatest war of the twentieth century, proving himself to be ethical, trustworthy, and empathetic, a true steward of a great people and great nation. Ultimately, this thesis has successfully provided a definition of servant leadership and proceeded to identify a list of ten very specific, necessary traits to servant leadership. Additionally, within this last chapter, examples have been provided that help illustrate Churchill’s servant-leader qualities in action, primarily during WWII. Undoubtedly, these examples represent only a few ways in which Churchill exhibits each identified attribute. Nonetheless, readers have been provided sufficient proof to allow them to conclude that Churchill can be classified as a servant-leader according to the facts supplied. Through his initiative, visibility, persuasiveness, stewardship, trustworthiness, empathy, listening, uncanny awareness, and amazing foresight, Churchill most certainly stood as a perfect example of a servant-leader, perhaps the greatest the world has yet to witness, proving his commitment to the growth of people. He undoubtedly rose in true servant-leader manner to show the British people that they had someone they could trust and follow through WWII, with confidence that he would be able to lead them with their best interests in mind, indeed with the best interests of the entire world in mind. Within

the first of three speeches given at a Joint Session of the States Congress, shortly after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, Churchill explicitly points out the fact that he views himself as a servant of his followers. Churchill states:

I am a child of the House of Commons. I was brought up in my father's house to believe in democracy. 'Trust the people'—that was his message....I owe my advancement entirely to the House of Commons, whose servant I am. In my country, as in yours, public men are proud to be the servants of the State and would be ashamed to be its masters.

(WinstonChurchill.org)

Indeed, Churchill stepped forward to lead as a servant of the state and all those within it. Churchill's voice is likewise heard in the words of Greenleaf, "I will go; come with me!"

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