

Simple Truths^{of} Leadership

52 Ways to Be a Servant Leader
and Build Trust

Making Common Sense Common Practice

Ken
Blanchard
& Randy
Conley

Simple Truths *of* Leadership

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and Build Trust**

**Ken Blanchard
Randy Conley**

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Ken dedicates this book to his family:
Margie, Scott, Madeleine, Debbie, and Tom McKee,
as well as the Leadership Team of
The Ken Blanchard Companies
for their amazing trusted servant leadership
that brought our company through a pandemic and back.
Good on them and everyone involved!



Randy dedicates this book to
Kim, Michael, and Matthew.
You inspire me every day
to be worthy of your trust.

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INTRODUCTION

Simple Truths

The beginning of my mission statement is “I am a loving teacher and an example of simple truths.” That focus has been central in all of my work, including the study of servant leadership. I have always looked for simple truths that reflect commonsense practices people can use to make their work and life—as well as the lives of the people they care about—happier and more satisfying. To that end, I find it fun and inspiring to work with coauthors who share a similar philosophy—because I have always found that $1 + 1$ is greater than 2.

That’s certainly been the case as I have worked on this book with Randy Conley. Randy’s focus over the last fifteen years has been on distilling the complex topic of trust into simple, actionable principles that help people experience more authentic and fulfilling relationships. In recognition of his work, Trust Across America awarded Randy a Lifetime Achievement Award for being a top thought leader in the field of trust. In addition, Inc.com named him a Top One Hundred Leadership Speaker and Thinker.

When it comes to servant leadership and trust, we both wonder why the principles we see as common sense are so

seldom used in common practice. If today's leaders had a more commonsense approach to leadership, we'd venture to say that 65 to 70 percent of the workforce would not be considered disengaged.

That's one reason our original title for this book was *DUH! Why Isn't Commonsense Leadership Common Practice?* Another reason is that when I would mention that title to audiences, they'd roar with laughter as they recognized the truth in the title. I would immediately get questions about when the book was going to be available. However, when our publisher, Berrett-Koehler, sent out a survey about possible titles and subtitles, two things were clear: first, the word *duh* doesn't translate well from English to other languages; and second, a favorite title rose to the top—*Simple Truths of Leadership: 52 Ways to Be a Servant Leader and Build Trust*, with the cover tagline “Making Common Sense Common Practice.”

We wrote this book because we know a lot of people aren't applying commonsense leadership principles in the workplace. The format for the book is simple. On the left page, we identify a Simple Truth about servant leadership or trust. On the right page, we describe the puzzling lack of use of the concept and briefly explain why it is important. The final element is a call to action for readers—“Making Common Sense Common Practice”—where we break down the concept into ideas that leaders can easily apply on the job. When commonsense leadership is put into practice, everybody wins—leaders, their people, and their organizations.

We've divided the Simple Truths we are sharing into two parts: “Servant Leadership,” which features me, and “Building Trust,” which features Randy. We have two reasons for doing this:

- When servant leadership is effectively implemented, trust abounds among leaders and their people. Servant leadership and trust go hand in hand.
- These two topics highlight our respective areas of expertise.

You can use this book in several ways. Read the Simple Truths in order, pick one truth to read and apply each week of the year, or jump to a subtopic that interests you most. At the end of the book, you'll find a discussion guide for exploring the concepts further with your team.

We hope you'll enjoy reading our book and making some of these Simple Truths an integral part of your leadership style. If you do, we know it will make a difference in your life and the lives of the people you influence.

—Ken

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PART ONE

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

In this part, Ken Blanchard takes the lead with a focus on his lifelong passion of servant leadership as an influence process in which leaders help their people accomplish goals.



Much of my work in the past was focused on leadership behavior and how to improve leadership style and methods. My colleagues and I attempted to change leaders from the outside. But in recent years, we have found that effective leadership is an inside job. It is a question of the heart. It's all about a leader's character and intention.

Why are you leading? Is it to serve or to be served? Answering this question truthfully is so important that I co-edited a book with Renee Broadwell entitled *Servant Leadership in Action: How You Can Achieve Great Relationships*

and Results. In it, forty-five key leaders in our field, including Simon Sinek, Brené Brown, and Marshall Goldsmith, share their points of view about servant leadership. The essence of that book is *you can't fake being a servant leader*.

The most persistent barrier to being a servant leader is a heart motivated by self-interest that looks at the world as a “give a little, take a lot” proposition. Self-serving leaders put their own agenda, safety, status, and gratification ahead of others who are impacted by the leaders’ thoughts and actions.

The shift from self-serving leadership to leadership that serves others is motivated by a change of heart. If leaders don’t get their heart right, they will never become servant leaders. A misguided heart will color their thinking, impact their behavior, and cause them to begin every day by asking “What’s in it for me today?” That’s certainly not servant leadership.

In this part, you will learn more about servant leadership and the power it has to make the world a better place by focusing on the greater good.

—Ken

The Essence of Servant Leadership