**Reflective Paper #1**

 **Course:** SOWK 667 S04

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 Leadership is about service. This idea or philosophy is supported by many great leaders in our country as outlined in Made in Canada, LEADERSHIP (Henein and Morissette, 2007). Leadership is defined by four fundamental requirements: **purpose** or reason to lead**, person**al development and the skills and attributes needed, **partnership** or ability to build and sustain relationships and the **process** or plan on how to reach the vision.

**Purpose**

Why lead? For many, like my own purpose, is that of a servant leader. “The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the leader is a servant.” (Max Depree, Leadership Is an Art quoted in Henein and Morissette, 2007). Before I entered into a leadership role I served clients and families with brain injuries. As a front line service provider I felt strongly about my role as that of serving clients. Now that I am in a leadership position I feel that my role is to serve, not only the clients and families that access our services but the staff that provide the hands on assistance to clients. Staff consistently advocate and care for our clients. In turn I see part of my role is to do the same for staff so they are better equipped to fulfil their role.

**Person**

 Henein and Morissette talk about not *who* leaders are but *what they do*. Developing a *platform* that includes your values and vision is the first step. Secondly, developing *competence* that is required to do the job. *Strength*ening your character and *Attitude* is also essential in being a successful leader. (Henein and Morissette, 2007). Over the past few years when I think of my successes and failures as a manager they are linked to these four key concepts. When I was not clear about my vision, things became complicated and I quickly lost sight of what was important. Competence is also essential. Some of the best improvement I have made is learning new skills such as dealing with conflict. Building competence in skills that are weak has made me a better leader and a better person. Strength in character has been a life lesson. Many of the situations we deal with as leaders are difficult. Sometimes it is hard for me not to take things personally although it is essential that I recognize that situations are much bigger than me and my ego. Attitude- the chapter refers to leaders as “merchants of hope” (Henein and Morissette, 2007). This is so true. Who wants to follow someone who cannot paint a better picture than what is currently reality?

**Partnership**

“Leadership is an act of collaboration. It happens through people and for people.” ( Henein and Morissette, 2007). Strong relationships with people are essential to good leadership. Any of the successes I have experienced has not been because of work I have done independently. Relationships with superiors, with colleagues and clients are the foundation to change and have the most positive impact in the services and our experiences at work.

**Process**

The process is explained by Henein and Morissette as having three components: Seeing, Believing and acting. Seeing refers to the vision. Believing relates to the passion and emotion that is required and acting or making things happen in collaboration with the team they are working with. The three component work hand in hand. Without any one of the components success is not realized. In my experience things have not been accomplished because the vision was not clear or communicated, or the idea was there but there was not passion to motivate the idea. I have been the leader and the follower in these situations.

In conclusion Robert K. Greenleaf`s philosophy of servant leadership fits with my understanding of what a good leader is. When I consider myself as serving others first I am more likely to remember why I am doing what I do and less likely to get caught up in the politics and frustrations that exist in the workplace. I do not pretend that this is always easy for me but it is something that aligns with my philosophy and something I strive to achieve in my day to day work as a leader in my organization. The mentors and leaders that have inspired me have also displayed the idea of leadership as a service in their actions and ways that they approach the work that they do.