

Servant Leadership compared to Followership

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The purpose of this essay is to compare and contrast servant leadership and followership. We will define each and cover the shared traits, values, and responsibilities. Discuss the role of followers and how it differs from that of servant leaders while covering the expectation of a servant leader.

The Civil Air Patrol defines followership as “reaching a specific goal while exercising respect for authority, a positive attitude, integrity, and self-discipline,” whereas a Servant leader, as defined by Robert K. Greenleaf as “The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead”. Many times you will operate as the Servant Leader and the Follower at the same time. Knowing this, it would make sense that they both share a lot of the same ethics, values, and traits. A few examples of these traits and values are respect, selflessness, honesty, commitment, enthusiastic, and being trustworthy, all while being an active listener and critical thinker. They both actively seek responsibility and are proactive, versatile, and flexible in their problem-solving.

While followers have a lot in common with Servant Leaders, their role differs in that while they should actively seek more responsibilities, they have fewer responsibilities than the leader. They don't require the same amount of foresight, conceptualization, or awareness of a task to be able to complete said mission. They are not expected to council, coach, or mentor others or to be a steward of their profession.

Finally, they do not have the same commitment to the growth of Soldiers in a personal and professional way.

Being a servant leader is a demanding role involving a commitment on and off the clock; it's an intimate relationship with your Soldiers involving trust, respect, and humility. Servant leaders must not only accomplish their missions/tasks but to understand and help provide for your Soldiers. A servant leader must commit to the growth of their Soldiers, and to being a steward of their profession. A servant leader offers empathy, patience, and wisdom to a Soldier requiring healing and counsel, training, and expertise to one that is trying to better themselves. It's about always looking out for the Soldier's best interest while still being there for them 24/7, 365 days a year when you don't have the knowledge needed to help a Soldier you must help guide them to resources that can.

In this essay, we compared and contrasted servant leadership and followership. We defined each and cover their shared traits, values, and responsibilities. We discussed the role of followers and how it differs from that of servant leaders while covering the expectation of a servant leader.