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Dear Reader,

In an age where egos dominate and the people, the masses, don't matter and a handful rule the roost to the detriment of the vast majority, **Jim Heskett** has had the audacity to ask in his piece the question "Why Isn't 'Servant Leadership' More Prevalent?" His research has brought forth Lao-Tzu who wrote about servant leadership in the fifth-century BC: "The highest type of ruler is one whose existence the people are barely aware.... The Sage is self-effacing and scanty of words. When his task is accomplished and things have been completed, all the people say, 'We ourselves have achieved it!'"

It is natural, rightly or wrongly, says Jim Heskett, to relate servant leadership to the concept of an inverted pyramid organization in which top management "reports" upward to lower levels of management. What a beautiful notion, and one which will surely guarantee the end of strife. Read all about it in our cover story.

In our second lead, jointly written by **Noah Sheidlower** and **Kathleen Etkins**, we consider the Millennials and their fresh take on the FIRE (financial independence, retire early) movement, and it's less about taking it easy in retirement. According to Brad Barrett, the host of the "ChooseFI" podcast, reaching financial independence allows someone to live the life they want, but retiring early signifies turning away from everything you've worked toward. The problem with retirement seems to be that people want to add value to their communities and within their own lives — and they believe work is the way to do that.

Bangkok is in the news for all the right reasons, and a few wrong ones. It was the first responder for Singapore Airlines flight SQ321 that got hit by clear air turbulence; it has converted an old cigarette factory into a 102-acre oasis for city dwellers; and, it may have to consider relocating its capital because of rising sea levels. There's plenty more in our column Nature Calling for Action Stations 😊



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INSIDE:



Why Isn't 'Servant Leadership' More Prevalent?

By **Jim Heskett** | 9 min read



Millennials have a fresh take on the FIRE movement, and it's less about taking it easy in retirement

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Why Isn't 'Servant Leadership' More Prevalent?



Jim Heskett | 9 min read

Is the Term “Servant Leadership” an Oxymoron?

Servant leadership (SL) is a concept that triggers a great deal of interest, judging by my e-mail inbox and the number of responses to this month's column. Many comments suggested that: (1) servant leadership is practiced by many respondents, (2) it works, and (3) there are a number of reasons why others don't or can't practice it. Timothy Lynn Burchfield

provided an eloquent endorsement of the concept this way: “Those who serve (vs. power or buy) their way to influence leave a huge legacy to those around them.”

Servant leadership is experienced so rarely because of trends in the leadership environment, the scarcity of human qualities required, demands that the practice places on the practitioner, and the very nature of the practice itself.

As Tahir Quzi put it, “A majority of leaders as agents of principals see themselves as maniacally focused on getting short term results ...” Napoleon Elortegui commented

that “... the organizational model is not geared to move the ‘servant’ person to the top.” It can produce a “culture where leadership is associated with codes like power, selfishness & control,” according to Ranji Cherian. As a result, SL was characterized as “... a risky proposition ... within organizations...” (John Servant) and ... a long and hard road for someone” (Karan Yaramada). Dan Wallace asked, “Where do you go to learn how to lead this way?”

Several commented that SL requires qualities that are all too rare, such as “cardinal virtues” (Katherina Lange), a “paradoxical combination of courage AND humility,” (Lisa Slayton), “(a) high degree of self control... “ (Ashok Jain), and “validation needs (that) have largely been met ... (making it) very challenging for younger people to be servant leaders” (Mike Gatliff). Personal characteristics that get in the way of SL include “Ego (that) makes it difficult to ‘want to serve” (Randy Hoekstra), “greed” (Madeleine York), and “An unhealthy desire to control” (Judesther Marc).

The very nature of servant leadership may influence its spread, according to David Livesley, who said, “Even if it is more prevalent than we think, we will never hear about it; what we never hear about, we never copy.” Steve Hickman added, “... it is a recessive organizational gene... You don’t get promoted if you don’t get noticed.” Christy commented that “SL is not prevalent because it is a Utopian approach that requires a complete paradigm shift for most modern day employees at any level.” Tom Leahy said “... it is exhausting but also fulfilling,” while Myrielle Lemoine attributed its rarity to “everyone from all

levels being stretched too thin...” Several (including John Keck, Michael Darmody, and Mona Bagot) subscribed to the idea that SL can be perceived as a weakness. Anna Caraveli had an interesting take on this notion: “... there is a great deal of ambiguity in defining what strong leadership means ... interestingly, the ‘servant’ concept is not considered ‘weakness’ when applied to a company’s relationship with clients...”

As it has evolved in use, the term itself may pose an obstacle for the concept. That’s the view of Mark Stanley, who commented that “These terms do not fit together- Servant & Leader ... It’s just another way poor leaders attempt to elevate themselves above those they ‘serve’... an entirely unhealthy approach for a leader to take... Our need to be led well is far more important than our need to be served. The more correct notion is that of a ‘Serving Leader’ ... (with) many ‘masters’... when Richard Greenleaf coined this phrase ... he was talking entirely about how leaders serve, not about leaders being servants.” Do you agree? Is servant leadership an oxymoron? What do you think?

Original Article

Servant leadership is an age-old concept, a term loosely used to suggest that a leader’s primary role is to serve others, especially employees. I witnessed a practical example of it at a ServiceMaster board meeting in the 1990s when CEO William Pollard spilled a cup of coffee prior to the board meeting.

Instead of summoning someone to clean it up, he asked a colleague to get him cleaning compound and a cloth, things easily found in a company that

provided cleaning services. Whereupon he proceeded to get down on his hands and knees to clean up the spill himself. The remarkable thing was that board members and employees alike hardly noticed as he did it. It was as if it was expected in a company with self-proclaimed servant leadership.

Lao-Tzu wrote about servant leadership in the fifth-century BC: “The highest type of ruler is one of whose existence the people are barely aware.... The Sage is self-effacing and scanty of words. When his task is accomplished and things have been completed, all the people say, ‘We ourselves have achieved it!’”

It is natural, rightly or wrongly, to relate servant leadership to the concept of an inverted pyramid organization in which top management “reports” upward to lower levels of management. At other times it has been associated with organizations that have near-theological values (for example, Max De Pree’s leadership at Herman Miller, as expressed in his book, *Leadership is an Art*, that emphasizes the importance of love, elegance, caring, and inclusivity as central elements of management). In that regard, it is also akin to the pope’s annual washing and kissing of the feet as part of the Holy Thursday rite.

The modern era of servant leadership began with a paper, *The Servant as Leader*, written by Robert Greenleaf in 1970. In it, he said: «The 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 ... (vs. one who is leader first...) ... The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow

as persons ... (and become) more likely themselves to become servants?»

Now it appears that a group of organizational psychologists, led by Adam Grant, are attempting to measure the impact of servant leadership on leaders, not just those being led. Grant describes research in his recent book, *Give and Take*, that suggests that servant leaders are not only more highly regarded than others by their employees and not only feel better about themselves at the end of the day but are more productive as well. His thesis is that servant leaders are the beneficiaries of important contacts, information, and insights that make them more effective and productive in what they do even though they spend a great deal of their time sharing what they learn and helping others through such things as career counseling, suggesting contacts, and recommending new ways of doing things.

Further, servant leaders don’t waste much time deciding to whom to give and in what order. They give to everyone in their organizations. Grant concludes that giving can be exhausting but also self-replenishing. So in his seemingly tireless efforts to give, described in the book, Grant makes it a practice to give to everyone until he detects a habitual “taker” that can be eliminated from his “gift list.”

Servant leadership is only one approach to leading, and it isn’t for everyone. But if servant leadership is as effective as portrayed in recent research, why isn’t it more prevalent? What do you think? ■

Source:

<https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/why-isnt-servant-leadership-more-prevalent>

Millennials have a fresh take on the FIRE movement, and it's less about taking it easy in retirement



Noah Sheidlower, Kathleen Elkins | 15 min read

At age 36, Jace Mattinson is already over [retirement](#). Four years ago, he sold his lumber company for seven figures, and he had enough saved that he never needed to work again.

He said that was an enticing idea after five “extremely tough” years of owning a business. During that time, he was away from his home in Austin a few nights a week and hustling to run the 135-year-old company he’d acquired. After selling

the company, he needed a long break from anything laborious.

“I was golfing three, four times a week. I was going to the lake. I was doing all my hobbies that I really cared about and enjoyed, ones that for the greater part of a decade I didn’t have as much time to do,” Mattinson told Business Insider.

But after eight months, he decided [retirement](#) was not nearly as fulfilling as he’d imagined. He returned to a job in lumber distribution and

revived his financial podcast. He said he wanted to continue to model a good work ethic for his kids.



Jace Mattinson and his family

Mattinson has all the trappings of someone in the [FIRE movement](#). The acronym, which stands for financial independence, retire early, was coined in the 1990s in the book “Your Money or Your Life” and popularized on blogs like Mr. Money Mustache and the investment site Motley Fool. The idea was to work hard, ideally with multiple income streams, live a life of austerity, invest prudently, and build a big enough nest egg to walk away from work well before the average retirement age of 64.

But millennials, including Mattinson, who finds himself happiest when he has a balance of work and leisure, said they’re not as interested in early retirement — and are creating their own versions of life after work.

Millennials often want the FI without the RE

Devotees of the FIRE movement often [save or invest the majority of their](#)

[income](#). Some take on extra jobs or delay major life milestones like marriage or having kids.

It’s an exclusive club, and many hungry millennials are eager to join it. [ChooseFI’s Facebook group](#) has over 108,000 members, while the [r/financialindependence](#) subreddit has 2.2 million members. But for some FIRE wannabes, the «FI» part of the equation is the biggest focus, and the «RE» half seems to be less of a foregone conclusion.

A popular rule of thumb among this group is the “4% rule,” which says you should aim to save 25 times your annual expenses so you can withdraw 4% of your funds each year after you quit working. Some FIRE participants told BI that their target savings goal is between \$1.5 million and \$2.5 million, though many are working toward more for even greater security.

To be sure, early retirees are a small slice of the population. According to Business Insider’s analysis of American retirees, just 2.2% are 50 or younger. Less than 1% are below age 35. Just 0.75% of all Americans over 18 and under 50 are retired. Still, many BI spoke with retire unofficially or partially retire, taking on less responsibility at a company or moving to a lower-stakes position.

BI spoke to a dozen millennials who have achieved or are on track to achieve financial independence. While some have retired and told BI they’re enjoying it, most feel retirement is pointless and still want to build their careers or give back to their communities.

“The thing I have noticed shift most is

the emphasis on FI and less on RE,” Scott Rieckens, the executive producer of the film [“Playing With FIRE,”](#) said. “I think it’s awesome to see, as it signals that financial independence is the key motive, which it is, and that work and purpose are actually really important. Retiring early to nothing is a bad idea.”

Brad Barrett, the host of the “ChooseFI” podcast, said “vanishingly few” people with the wherewithal to reach financial independence are retiring early. To him, reaching financial independence allows someone to live the life they want, but retiring early signifies turning away from everything you’ve worked toward.

For many, financial freedom goes beyond quitting a job you don’t like. Some said it’s the ability to spend on travel or leisure without much stress — which has become even more important after the pandemic’s peak. Others said it helps them lead a life of purpose, whether that means educating people on a podcast or leading charity efforts.

The problem with retirement seems to be that people want to add value to their communities and within their own lives — and they believe work is the way to do that. As Bill Schaninger, a speaker, author, and thought leader on the future of work, found in research he conducted with Naina Dhingra [for McKinsey](#), 70% of people who were surveyed said they define their purpose through work.

“Many people figured out one of the things that I get a lot of validation from is being clever, solving problems, participating, and working on something bigger than me,” Schaninger told BI.

COVID-19 may have amplified this, he added. “The fragility of our condition, I think, was brought home in a way that maybe many of us had taken for granted,” he said. “And so now it’s like, ‘Well, if I’m going to do this, it has to matter.’”

The millennial version of early retirement

Mitch, 37, said he is about to quit his high-stress job and take a mini-retirement — he has a 22-stop national parks trip planned this summer.

The Minnesota resident and vice president of a building-maintenance company, who asked that only his first name be used because of an ongoing job transition, has a net worth of about \$2 million but said he’s only planning to take a few months off before returning to the workforce in a lower-stress position. All the sources BI spoke with provided documentation of their net worth.

Mitch said he stumbled into the online personal-finance community in his early 30s, which inspired him and his wife to increase their savings to at least 75% of their income by avoiding spending on luxury items. He said even his high savings won’t affect his decision to quit working.

“I think a lot of traditional retirees lack purpose — they take a year or two of retirement and hate it because they do whatever and lose purpose,” Mitch said. “The ones that volunteer, continue to coach and consult, or do whatever it is to sharpen their brain and really have a purpose tend to be some of the happiest retirees.”

Brian Luebben, a financially independent millennial, described having a panic attack shortly after he hit FI and quit his sales job.

“If you have anxiety, financial freedom is not going to solve it,” he said. “If you have depression, financial freedom is not going to solve it. Be careful of the mountaintop moments. When you become a millionaire, when you become financially free, when you do all this stuff, no mariachi band follows you around and performs.”

He argued that achieving financial independence and hitting a specific number is “the simplest part.” After all, there’s a playbook for wealth-building strategies like investing in real estate or building an e-commerce business.

“The most difficult part is figuring out what you do when you have nothing to do all day,” he said. “What do you choose to work on?”

Luebben, who hosts a podcast and runs the entrepreneur resource **The Action Academy** to help other people achieve financial freedom, said people should think through four core questions before they’re even close to achieving financial independence: «What does the perfect day look like? What does the perfect week look like? Who was with you? And where?»

Going through that exercise can help ensure that your identity doesn’t become wrapped up in achieving FIRE, which is something that Grant Sabatier, who took a year and a half off from work after achieving financial independence, struggled with.

“I defined myself by the pursuit of financial independence,” Sabatier, the author of “**Financial Freedom**,” said. “Then, once I reached it, it was like, now I no longer had to do that thing, so what am I going to do? I encourage people on the path to do that inner work. Don’t delay figuring out what you really want, why you’re pursuing financial independence, and what you want to do after.”

Balancing work and fun

Instead of a traditional retirement, many financially independent millennials are finding a balance between work and leisure that works for them.

For Sabina Horrocks, 41, becoming a millionaire was “quite boring.” She and her husband worked in six-figure managerial positions, recently achieving a net worth of about \$2 million, then had a daughter in 2021. They “plowed money into investments early on,” kept daily expenditures low, and purchased rental properties they eventually sold.



Sabina Horrocks with her family

Sabina Horrocks with her family
Sabina Horrocks

She quit her sales operations job but has no intention of stopping work. She's a stay-at-home mom and plans to continue her blog [The Moneyaires](#); she'd also like to become a financial coach or planner.

Blogging and coaching were common post-FI pursuits among the would-be early retirees BI spoke to. Michelle Schroeder-Gardner, 34, runs the blog [Making Sense of Cents](#), and over the past decade, she and her husband have lived mostly in an RV or a sailboat.

By 2017, their blog, advertising sales, and a course they created called Making Sense of Affiliate Marketing had generated nearly \$1.2 million in revenue. By 2018, they had achieved financial independence. After years of 100-hour workweeks, she now spends 10 hours a week on her business, which generates \$600,000 a year.



Michelle Schroeder-Gardner and her husband Wes both quit their 9-to-5 jobs to grow Michelle's blog

Michelle Schroeder-Gardner and her husband Wes both quit their 9-to-5 jobs to grow Michelle's blog.
Michelle Schroeder-Gardner

"I'm able to travel whenever I want. I can work whenever I want. Nothing's really dependent on my work hours," she said. "My plan is pretty much to continue doing this while I like it and continue to make a little bit more money and save as much as I can."

Lauren and Steven Keys, who [quit their full-time jobs in their 20s](#), have a similar outlook.

Steven does freelance work for his former employer but spends much of his time on an online-tutoring service called [CramBetter](#) that he cofounded in 2023. Lauren has one social-media client she works with a couple of hours a month. They also run a financial-independence blog, [Trip of a Lifestyle](#), and earn rental income from a fully paid-off investment property.

"There's this misconception about early retirement that you'll never make another penny ever again and just sit on the beach all day for the rest of your life," Steven said. "We're never going to stop making any money whatsoever ■"

Source:

https://www.businessinsider.com/millennials-retiring-early-fire-movement-financial-independence-millionaire-savings-work-2024-5?utm_source=iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsalert_firemovement&utm_term=marketing_email

Nature Calling for Action Stations (NCfAS#28)

Fear of Flying?

Scientists have long warned that climate change is likely to increase so-called clear air turbulence, which is invisible to radar. A 2023 study found the annual duration of clear air turbulence increased 17 per cent from 1979 to 2020, with the most severe cases increasing over 50 percent (*Dawn, May 22nd, 2024*).

Saga of flight SQ321

One person died and more than 70 were injured when a Singapore Airlines flight from London hit severe turbulence and was forced to make an emergency landing in Bangkok. Flight tracking data suggested the plane dropped more than 1,800 meters (6,000 feet) in just five minutes, causing multiple head injuries to those on board. Singapore Airlines said flight SQ321 took off from London's Heathrow airport and "encountered sudden extreme turbulence" at 11,300 meters (37,000 feet) over Myanmar's Irrawaddy Basin. "We can confirm that there are injuries and one fatality on board the Boeing 777-300ER. There were a total of 211 passengers and 18 crew on board."

"Aviation accounts for 2.5% of global CO₂ emissions, but it has contributed around 4% to global warming to date"

- Wikipedia

An estimated 700 million tourists travelled internationally between January and July 2023, about 43% more than in the same months of 2022, though 16% fewer than in 2019. By regions, the Middle East saw the best results in January-July 2023, with arrivals exceeding by 20% pre-pandemic levels (world tourism aviation 2023 report). Travel demand continued to show remarkable resilience and sustained recovery, amid economic and geopolitical challenges. How clear air turbulence and the saga of Singapore Airlines flight SQ321 will impact these figures waits to be seen.



Aviation accounts for 2.5% of global CO₂ emissions, but it has contributed around 4% to global warming to date. Flying is one of the most carbon-intensive activities.

Bangkok blues

Talking of Bangkok, Thailand may have to consider relocating its capital because of rising sea levels. Projections consistently show that low-lying Bangkok risks being inundated by the ocean before the end of the century. Much of the bustling capital already battles flooding during the rainy season (*Dawn, May 17th, 2024*).

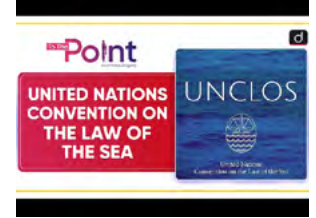
Pavich Kesavawong, deputy director-general of the government's department of climate

change and environment, warned that the city might not be able to adapt with the world on its current warming pathway. "I think we are beyond the 1.5 (degrees Celsius) already," he said, referring to the increase in global temperatures from pre-industrial levels. "Now we have to come back and think about adaptation. I imagine Bangkok will be under water already, if we stay in our (current) circumstance."

Bangkok's city government is exploring measures that include building dikes, along the

"Thailand may have to consider relocating its capital because of rising sea levels"

- Dawn, May 17th, 2024



lines of those used in the Netherlands, he said. But “we’ve been thinking about moving”, Pavich said, noting that the discussions were still hypothetical and the issue was “very complex”.

“Personally I think it’s a good choice, so we can separate the capital, the government areas, and business areas,” he said. “Bangkok (would) still be the government capital, but move the business.”

Bangkok on the front foot

Meanwhile, Bangkok is not suffering a paralysis of analysis and waiting to crash to climate change. In the heart of the city an old cigarette factory has given way to green space (NYT May 13, 2024). Smoggy Bangkok has got a badly needed breath of fresh air. For more than half a century, Thailand’s state owned tobacco monopoly mass produced cigarettes at a sprawling industrial state in Bangkok. A steady stream of heavy trucks brought raw tobacco into the heart of the city and hauled millions of cigarettes away.

“Heatstroke has killed 61 people in Thailand so far this year after weeks of scorching weather across the region, more than in all of 2023. Scientists have long warned human-induced climate change will produce more frequent, longer and more intense heat waves”

– TNI/AFP Saturday, May 11, 2024

But now that cancer-inducing complex has given way to something completely different – green space that has brought a breath of fresh air to Bangkok’s congested, often smoggy center.

“Anthropogenic GHG emissions into the atmosphere constitute pollution of the marine environment” – International treaty UNCLOS

The transformation has been a stunning success, creating a 102-acre oasis for city dwellers. The site, an expansion of the existing Benjakitti Park, includes a mile-long elevated walkway, as well as water purifying wetlands, 8000 new trees, pickle ball and basketball courts and a dog walking zone. The Skywalk, as the walkway is known, has become especially popular with young people. At sunset, as the heat of the day eases, it is often packed with visitors, many posing for selfies.

Thailand bears the brunt

Talking about heat, heatstroke has killed 61 people in Thailand so far this year after weeks of scorching weather across the region, more than in all of 2023 (TNI/AFP Saturday, May 11, 2024). A wave of exceptionally hot weather blasted Thailand in recent weeks, prompting authorities to issue warnings about scorching hot weather on a near-daily basis. The health ministry said that 61 people have died from heatstroke since the beginning of 2024, compared with 37 in the whole of 2023.

Thailand’s northeast -- the agricultural heartland -- saw the highest number of deaths, the ministry said. Scientists have long warned human-induced climate change will produce more frequent, longer and more intense heat waves. While the El Nino phenomenon is helping drive this year’s exceptionally warm weather, Asia is also warming faster than the global average, according to the United Nations’ World Meteorological Organization.

“Just a few years — this is all we have before the ocean consumes everything my people built across centuries”

– Tuvalu’s Prime Minister Kausea Natano

The kingdom this year experienced a delay in its monsoon season, with sweltering hot weather lasting longer than normal. Storms have hit parts of the kingdom this week, lowering temperatures but bringing warnings from the authorities of potential flash flooding.

Afghans caught wrong footed

Flash flooding ripping through Afghanistan’s Baghlan province, in the north of the country, has killed at least 50 people, mainly women and children. Hedayatullah Hamdard, the head of the provincial natural disaster management department, has said the toll could rise. Heavy seasonal rains sparked the flooding, and residents were unprepared for the sudden rush of water.

Carbon emissions a sea pollutant

On the world’s oceans front, the Small island states have won a key climate case in the UN court (*Dawn, May 22nd, 2024*). The UN maritime court has ruled in favor of nine small island states who brought a case to seek increased protection of the world’s oceans from catastrophic climate change.

Finding that carbon emissions can be considered a sea pollutant, the court said countries have an obligation to take measures to mitigate their effects on oceans. “Anthropogenic GHG emissions into the atmosphere constitute pollution of the marine environment” under the international treaty UNCLOS, the International

Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) ruled in an expert opinion.

The case was brought in September by nine small countries disproportionately affected by climate change, including Antigua and Barbuda, Vanuatu and Tuvalu. The case is seen as the first big international climate justice case involving the world’s oceans. “Just a few years — this is all we have before the ocean consumes everything my people built across centuries,” Tuvalu’s Prime Minister Kausea Natano told the court.

“The spiritual quotient is increasingly taking center stage, but the monumental momentum already generated in the wrong direction will take a while yet to reverse”

– Author

The Heat is on!

Both literally and figuratively, the heat is on in a big way. May Allah keep us in His protection, ameen. Even as the Lord turns up the dial on the Heavenly thermostat, Mankind is rushing to set right the many warps that have come to define it, with resource waste a debilitating outcome. The spiritual quotient is increasingly taking center stage, but the monumental momentum already generated in the wrong direction will take a while yet to reverse. In the meantime Mankind must reap the whirlwind, even as it prays with increasing fervor for Allah’s mercy, Hallelujah ■

Column by Adil Ahmad, Correspondent, TGS Octara.Com