

Wise Decision-Making for Servant Leaders

Servant Leadership Conference

September 26, 2014

Leading Wisely

Decision by Decision

- Stay Awake
- Plant Seeds
- Live Whole
- Listen to the Call
- Love the Questions

Recognizing Our Common Wisdom

- Core wisdom principles from Greenleaf and diverse spiritual traditions and their application to effective decision-making
- Operating procedures that guide the process for wise decision-making
- Criteria for judgment that provide standards for wise decision-making

Principle 1: Respect All Persons

Greenleaf: “The servant-leader *is* servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. ... 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. 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?

... only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening *first*.” (The Servant As Leader)

Wisdom Traditions: Golden Rule, ahimsa

Respect All Persons: Operating Procedures & Criteria

- OP 1A: Expand the listening process.
- OP 1B: Create seats at the table for the marginalized.

- Criterion 1A: Choose what contributes to the common good.
- Criterion 1B: Choose what takes into account the poor and the powerless.

Listening Practice

- 1. Tell a 2-minute story of success or achievement
- 2. Listen for the information/facts
- 3. Listen for the feelings
- 4. Listen for the values
- Process: 1 tells story; 2,3,4 feedback what they heard; 1 ends with reflection

Principle 2: Appreciate the Wholeness of Being Human

Greenleaf: "... implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share. ... An institution starts on a course toward people-building with leadership that has a firmly established context of *people first*. ... And this requires living by a sort of rhythm that encourages a high level of intuitive insight... One is at once, in every moment of time, historian, contemporary analyst, and prophet..."(The Servant As Leader)

Wisdom Traditions: Religious Founders as Models

Appreciate Wholeness: Operating Procedures and Criteria

- OP 2A: Explore all the ways of human knowing.
- OP 2B: Make room for silence.

- Criterion 2A: Choose what values the whole person.
- Criterion 2B: Choose what brings balance and integration.

Wholeness Practice

- Feet on the ground—what is the earth saying
- Waist—flexibility/options/movement
- Gut—gemut/affectivity
- Heart—values/core priorities
- Shoulders—what are you carrying/can you carry
- Mind—Reason

Principle 3:

Recognize Interconnectedness of All

Greenleaf: “Economic performance is cyclical and the penalties are usually borne by the powerless. Too many firms are manipulated as financial pawns for short-term gain with little regard for social consequences or even for the long-term good of the firm. The sense of business responsibility is inadequate for the influence that business wields.” (The Institution As Servant) “When you look at anything or consider anything, look at it as “a whole” as much as you can before you swing on it.”

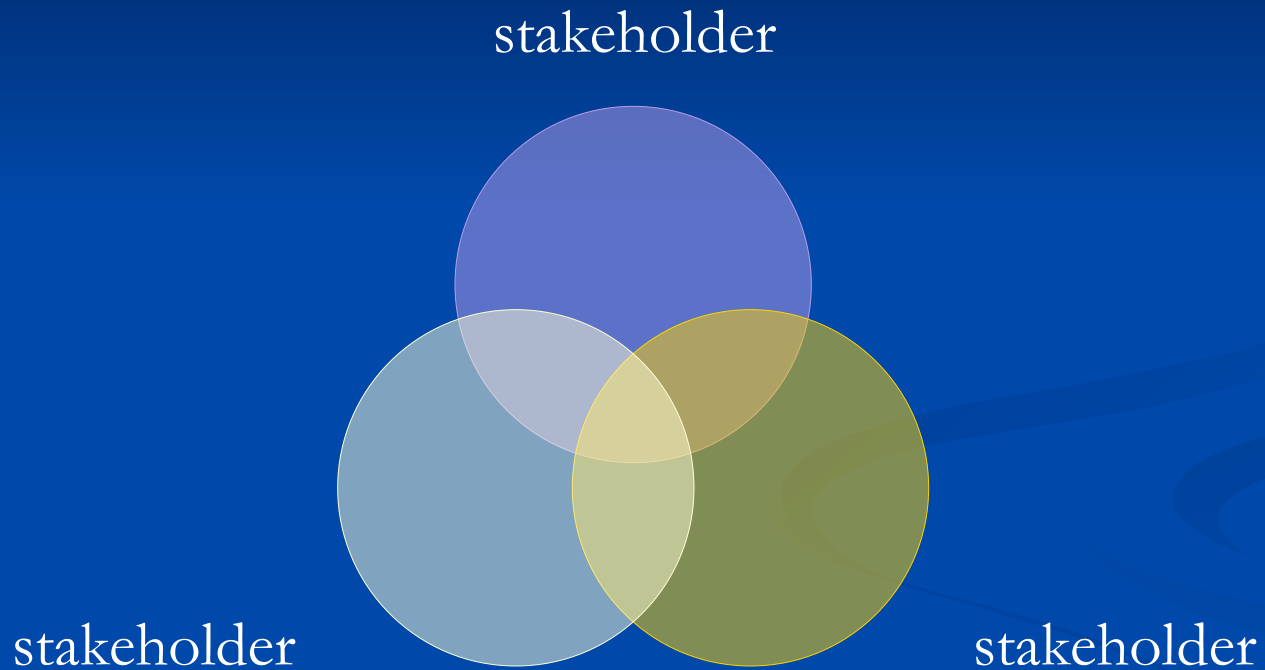
Wisdom Traditions: Interdependence

Recognize Interconnectedness: Operating Procedures & Criteria

- OP 3A: Consider how systems will be impacted.
- OP 3B: Research effects on community and environment.

- Criterion 3A: Choose what responds to needs of whole community.
- Criterion 3B: Choose what attends to the long-term health of the earth.

Systems Thinking Practice



Principle 4:

Value Inner Wisdom and Personal Experience

Greenleaf: “The opening of awareness stocks both the conscious and unconscious minds with a richness of resources for future need. ...it is value building and value clarifying and it armors one to meet the stress of life by helping build serenity in the face of stress and uncertainty. ... Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity.” (The Servant As Leader)

Wisdom Traditions: Stories of interior knowing

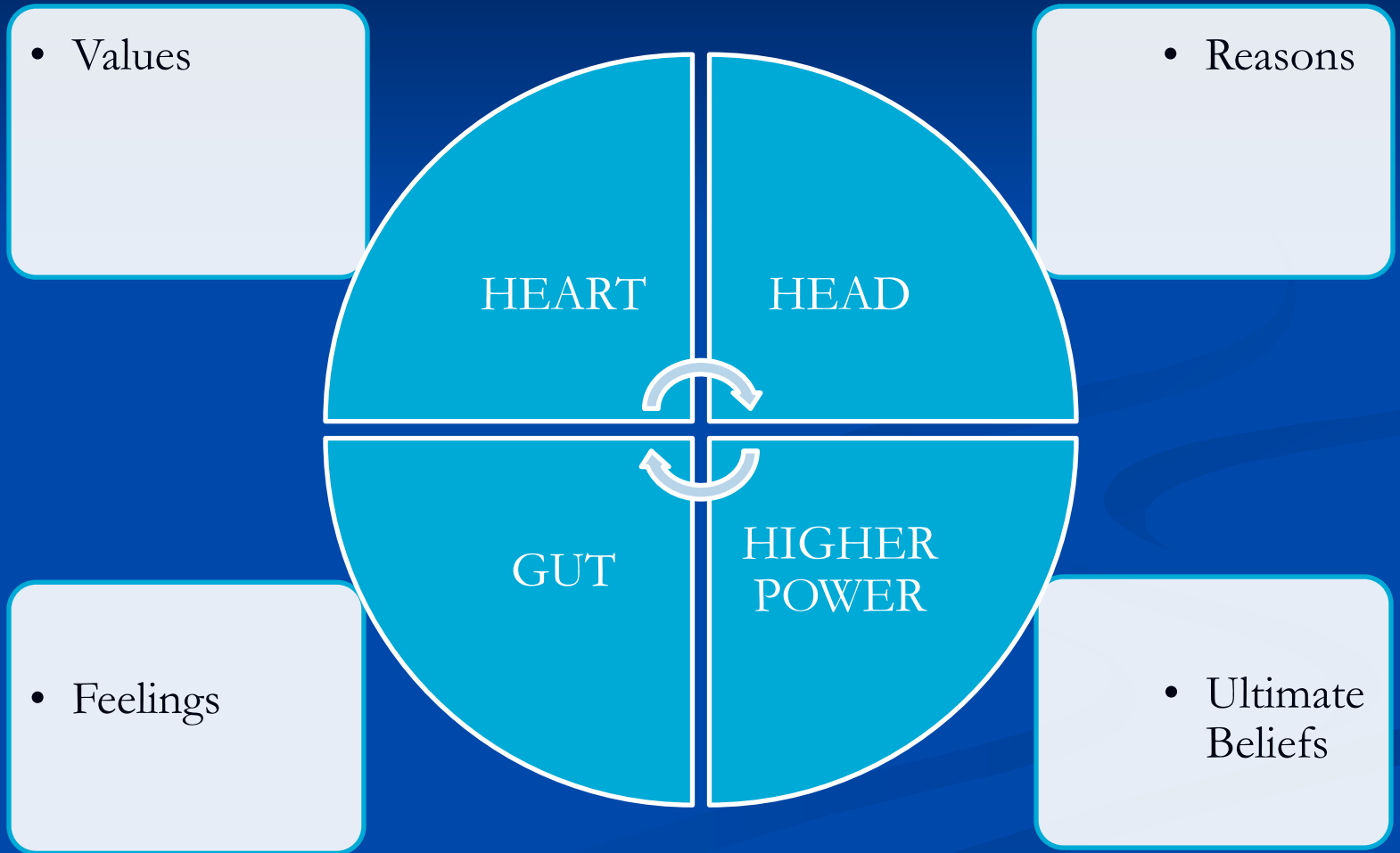
Inner Wisdom:

Operating Procedures & Criteria

- OP 4A: Reflect on experience deeply and broadly.
- OP 4B: Inquire into values, vision, best practices.

- Criterion 4A: Choose what addresses the full reality of the present experience.
- Criterion 4B: Choose what is most constructive to life.

FourFold Reflection Practice



Principle 5: Attend to Preservation and Transformation

Greenleaf: “Listening is an attitude, an attitude toward other people and what they are trying to express. It is openness to communication—openness within the widest possible frame of reference—openness to hear the prophetic voices that are trying to speak to us all of the time.” (Servant Leadership)

Wisdom Traditions: South Africa—”ubuntu

Preservation and Transformation: Operating Procedures & Criteria

- OP 5A: Be attentive to origins and foundations.
- OP 5B: Practice radical creativity.

- Criterion 5A: Choose what preserves the core focus and vision.
- Criterion 5B: Choose what moves toward the boldest possibility.

Transformation Practice: Personal Appreciative Inquiry

- Discovery: What is my positive core?
- Dream: What would my boldest possibilities look like?
- Design: How do I choose to shape my future?
- Destiny: What key inspired actions can I take in the next 3 months?

Based on *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* by David Cooperrider and Diana Whitney (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2005)