

Transcription - Lyle Tard Part 2

Welcome back I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. We are continuing our discussion with Lyle Tard talking about servant leadership and we pick up the discussion looking at how, when and where you can introduce servant leadership in a corporate environment.

That does then bring up the question the time that you have been following this path, this style of leadership, have you seen it blossom?

Oh wow yes. Yes I have. I see myself blossom, I see servant leadership blossom because in all reality servant leadership when people initially hear about it and initially start to interact with servant leadership, it is referred to as weak. When we think about large organizations, powerful organizations that are really moving and shaking things in our world, we're thinking cutthroat, we're thinking do or die, we're thinking hard-nosed take no prisoners. You know, making sure we step on anything and anyone to get ourselves to the top. When in reality, a lot of that stuff is not what it takes for us to be very successful.

I'll tell you a really quick story or an idea. This is a concept that I was taught almost a year ago. I'll call competitive buoyancy. So, if you can imagine, I know we have that game, it's worldwide, it's called Monopoly. I know it's one of Australia's favourite games in the world. Okay, I'll completely kidding. No one really enjoys playing Monopoly. It's the longest game in the world. It's ridiculous, you have this paper money that you really wish it was real and you're buying property. And, you know, if you're mean you really don't understand what's going on, but there are actually people out there who play this for tournaments. And so this idea of competitive buoyancy comes from this. When you're playing Monopoly and you're going around the board and you're buying a property and then you landing on other people's property and you got to pay rent, or you got to pay this or that and all of a sudden you got to go to jail. And somebody else is going on your property and you see them making money, and you're not making any money. The last thing you want to do is to go bankrupt, but you know somebody has got to go bankrupt so someone else can win. And so the moment that you're about to go bankrupt, and you're going to sell all your property to someone, who are you going to sell it to? Are you going to sell it to Jim over here who was an absolute jerk and talked all the time about when somebody was propped open, pay me right now full price, you don't have it? Well then you're just going to have to owe me this amount. Or are you going to give it to Sarah over here, who always gave you a little bit of a break? She reminded you every time that you passed Go that you have to get \$200. She made sure the banker

counted your money every single time. Is she getting the most money? No. But she is a really great individual. Who you want to give your money to? We don't want Jim to win, we don't like Jim. We want Sarah to win.

This is the idea of competitive bouyancy, when you want people, who are amazing people, to be successful. The person that's going to step on everybody else's neck, we don't like that guy. We don't want to see that person succeed. And when we see them in the company, when we see them in our organizations, brown-nosers, those jerks are always riding up other people for the little Tic Tac stuff that all you had to do was have a conversation and be a little understanding. And then you see that person get the promotion, it gets at us, it eats at us. We all want Sarah to win, Sarah is fantastic, she gives everybody a break. She's tough when she needs to be but she's very understanding. She listens, she smiles. She's very good at her job. She understands everyone, she's extremely empathetic and we want her to succeed.

This is what I've seen in the reality of people who are doing very well. And this is what happened in my personal life. This is what I've seen in the businesses that are truly successful. The ones that are not just monetarily successful, but I'm talking about successful within the community, successful with their peers, successful when it comes to giving back. All those elements that we expect out of great organizations. Those are the ones that are doing, the ones that win in competitive buoyancy, and that's what servant leaders do. We're the type of people that are extremely empathetic. We are understanding, we listen first, we're not about trying to step on your throat, as a matter of fact we want your throat to stay really nice and long so you can help with all of us to be successful together. We're all about each other's success. Not the person that's about their own success. Does that make sense?

It does and I'm wondering now whether it goes back further to the education system. Are we actually educating generations to be ruthless, to be cutthroat?

Oh wow, now you're stepping on thin ice there, young lady.

We talk about mentoring people from the time they are in what we call high school and for you is junior college, and bringing them into the workforce with a mindset that is not about being cutthroat but it is about having an open mind like an open parachute. Just going back to the bit about the education system.

Oh sure I can definitely jump in on that. Honestly, Kim, what may not be in my profile, what we may not have talked about here too much, is my career in the

United States Air Force. I've spent 20 years in the United States Air Force and the bulk of my time has been in training and development for individuals between the ages of 19 to 25. And so, I see 10,000 of them, every single year. For the last 13 years, 10,000 different ones, having conversations with these individuals who are wide-eyed, bushy-tailed, with innovation, and dreams, and understandings, and things that they want to do and how they want to change the world. And what happens? They come into places, whether it's in the United States military, whether it's in some of these cutthroat organizations across the world, they come in and immediately they're getting their ideas stifled and pushed down by someone who was 19 to 25 and what they wanted to do and their dreams and their aspirations got stomped on by someone else. And so what we do is, we continue this vicious cycle of smashing young people and not allowing them to realize that the dream that they have can make us all better, greater, smarter, faster. And so what I've had to do as a training and development specialist in United States military, is I've had to draw innovation out of these individuals by saying, listen, I understand that you have a low rank but your low rank does not mean you have a low brain, does not mean you have a small brain, you have an incredible brain and what I'm going to do with my rank that I have, is I'm going to give you an opportunity. I need you to put your name, your idea on these documents, in these spaces and get them out into these areas.

The great thing that we have now Kim, is social media. Now, social media has been revered by many, but been revolted by a lot of people who are a lot older than you because you're a young lady, both of you are. And what happened is, now social media has all this potential for information to be flooded out there and what is happening is these nineteen and they're not 25 year olds, 19 to 35 year olds, are getting a hold of social media and they're putting their name and their innovation on things. And so, what is happening is now, the social media has opened the door for people to get their hands on some of this innovative energy and expertise and these ideas that just pop our heads off. And now we have young people that are getting ahead of the education system.

Educator's need to start understanding that our children, our kids, they are filled with so much more information as they walk into the education system, than any generation prior to, in our history in the world. And so we cannot put ourselves in a place that stifles these young people. As a matter of fact, what we need to do is have way more open dialogue, way more open ended questions for these individuals, way more open-mindedness, way more empathy towards what they're dealing with, so that when we ask them a question we're in the position to actually learn, even as the learner, even as the teacher, even as the professor.

The person that is supposedly the expert.

The great thing that I find in servant leadership is that even though we might be the person leading, it does not necessarily always make us the leader. When you understand, as a leader, that you can be led, it makes you a greater leader. When you understand the people around you or they have the ability to step up and above, what it does, it actually lifts our own platform to be able to concede that we are great leaders and we raised a great leaders. What happens typically, within the United States military, is that when one person gets promoted, the other people are looking around at that person that got promoted to wonder why they got promoted. I'll tell you a little story. I had a leader sit me down in their office and they put two pieces of paper in front of me. One had a list of one person's accolades and then another person had a list of their accolades. One person had accolades about this individual was the leader of this, this person won this award and the other one won that award and then this other person had 5 individuals on their team did this, three individuals on the team were able to go to this program, this person won the team award, these individuals all got officers of the quarter. And so the leader that's sitting in front of me, after I read those two descriptions, asked me, which one of these do I want to promote? Now, I was young and I was silly and I just didn't understand the way the world works and I chose the person with all the individual accolades. The guy got out of his chair and became unglued. "You've got to be kidding me. Lyle's that's not the person I want to promote. I want the person who's making everyone else around them better." And I realized at that point, not just as a leader but even as an educator, as I'm going to go in and I'm going to teach these young people about whatever our task is, what I allow them to be is the best version of themselves. What they're going to do in turn, is they're going to show me how I can be the best version of myself and then everybody who sees our team perform well, they're going to want to see how we became the best version of ourselves. They're going to put us in the position right and then they're going to grow and everyone else around us, we all grow together.

Getting back to our education system, we have so many people who have just been stuck on their curriculum vita or whatever university they matriculated from, whatever is hanging up on their wall and that is their badge of honor. Instead of, making sure these people that we are allowing in our society, are growing up in our society with this information that they've attached themselves to, that it's just to open up their dendrites in their brains and allowing their synapses to fire such incredible ranges and levels, to be able to make our world better. That's what I think, you know, you're exactly right. That's the reason why my company is actually geared toward college students. What I do on a consistent basis, that I would go all around universities and I'm talking to our University students about

becoming servant leaders. This is my passion, this is the age demographic that I desire work with, because if I can get a bunch of 19 to 24 year old servant leaders, I believe that will change this world faster and for the better than our world is changing right now.

I think that what all of that reinforces is the concept of listening and listening and learning in that order rather than learning first to ensure that we've got that continuity of influence and of people focus because we've talked a lot to our other guests about machine learning and robots taking over the world, but there's still going to be an element of people that need to manage that process and unless they understand one another, then we're going to be lost.

Of course. Yes, without question, we are going to be lost.

Okay, we've got very little of our time left. We've talked and talked and talked but we do have one last question I'm interested to hear because you have worked in an environment that we would consider to be fairly structured around rules and regulations and following orders obviously. In a world where this sort of leadership needs to be acknowledged more, how long realistically do you think it would take to become the accepted form of leadership on a broader scale than it is now?

That's a great question and I'm going to do my best to get this answer as short as possible. Clearly this can't be adopted in a day and so the real question is going to be, how desperate is the organization about a culture change? Does the organization realize that they need a culture change because if they don't, if they don't realize that something has to shift within the organization, well then you're never going to see a change. There is no timetable at all. However, it's according to the level of desperation that an organisation has when it comes to their need for change in culture. You know, typically what happens with people, just human nature, when we hit rock bottom, we want to get to the mountaintop as fast as possible. Now if we haven't hit rock bottom it's probably going to take us a lot longer to realize that we need to get back to the top, especially if you've been to the top before. So with that being said, servant leadership, entered into an organization, I'm going to say typically for any or for most organizations, give it three to five years to really take root. It all depends on how, on where that orientation is and how desperate they are for a need for change because you're going to have to show an organization the direction we're going in. Why is it not yielding us the things that you're saying that servant leadership could yield? There's plenty of research, there's plenty of numbers, that'll tell you about a servant led climate and culture in an organization, making the organization and

the customer base grow and develop. I mean, people want to work in a place where there's great autonomy, where there's understanding and there's shared need, shared goals, shared values. They want to work in a place where they are seen and heard and valued. People want to work in a place where the other person that's working on the other side of them, gives a rip about them. People want to work in those spaces. However, it's all about that gorgeous bottom line. And so if we can find a way to turn that bottom line number and show that our executives, our CEOs, or CFOs, if we can show them that that bottom line number, that's going to come in the area of retention, for example, employee engagement, those numbers, and how the customer reacts to the employee, we all love going to the department store or going to the restaurant where the person that's giving us the service, loves what they do. Because if they love what they do, then I'm going to love what they're going to give me and if I love what they're going to give me, I'm going to come back and so we can show this in those types of things, oh wow. Now you're talking about something that's going to really make a company go, but I'd say 3 to 5 years to see a culture like this shift.

We do have one more question even though we really haven't got the time for it but I want to ask, if we were having this conversation in 12 months time, what would you like to look back on and be most pleased to have accomplished?

Oh wow, that's an excellent question. I love it. You know what, I would love to have heard some feedback from some individuals that said, I didn't think that serving others would make that big of a difference and guess what? I saw it happen to me and now that I'm thinking about it, it's not even about them doing it, is that now that I've heard about serving others, I've actually got real genuine stories, real markers in my own life, that I've seen it happen for me. And you know what, this actually might be viable. I don't want someone to come back and say, man I heard your podcast and I'm a servant leader. That would be cool, that would really be great. But it would be more effective for me in 12 months is that I heard there are a bunch of people that realised there are some people who served me and made my life better. Because what I would love, Kim, is for that person that hears this podcast, that says hey someone served me, I would love for that person to go back to the individual, go back to them and say hey you know what? 15 years ago you talked to me about who I was and you know, that day I didn't listen to you but man, it's made such a difference for me now. Thank you so much for the moment that you took, thank you for noticing me, for realizing that I was significant. Thank you so much for speaking or saying or doing something that made me see myself differently and made me see that I could be better than I was before. I'll be honest with you Kim, I'm almost 40

years old now and it's been very few, there's been very few people that have seen me, have known me and they had a pronounced effect in my life, that I was significant in some way, shape, form or fashion. And now I'm on a journey, not to convince them to become servant leaders, but to convince them that they're significant, significant to me in a certain moment. And so 12 months later I would love to be a part of listening to some people saying, hey, you know what someone else was significant in my life and I went and told them that.

It's a fabulous way of getting feedback and it really is the perfect way to finish our conversation with you and I'm looking forward to hearing that has happened in 12 months time.

Lyle, thank you very much for the time that you have spent with us and for sharing all of those insights. I do feel like I understand very much better now than I did 45 minutes ago. We wish you well on your journey and we do certainly look forward to talking to you again at some time.

Yeah it would be so fun. Thank you so much for having me. Take care.

Come back and visit us in Australia.

You don't have to convince me of that. I am coming. And when I'm coming, I'm calling you guys.

There we have the final part of our discussion with Lyle Tard on servant leadership. For those of you who are a bit worried about not hearing Fulyana, she was in attendance, but conveniently she was sitting on the other side of the microphone so we couldn't actually hear her input into the conversation but both Fulyana and I really enjoyed learning from Lyle and we look forward to having another conversation with him in about 12 months time. For now I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.