START WITH HUMILITY
The Core of Servant Leadership

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Based on the book, available at www.startwithhumility.com
He who speaks without modesty will find it difficult to make his words good.

- Confucius
Definitions

• Ask yourself these questions. Make notes.

– *How would you define “humility”?*

– *How does humility relate to leadership?*
Humility

• Definition: hummas – ‘of the ground’
• Absence of “self exaltation” not “self assertion”
• Close to the people – out of the “ivory tower”
Leadership’s missing ingredient...

Humility

• Humility is...
  – Humanness
  – Vulnerability
  – Keeping your talents in perspective
  – Growing leaders

• Humility is not...
  – Weakness
  – Lack of confidence, low self-esteem, absence of ego
  – Lack of assertiveness, ambition or speaking out
Typical Humble Behaviors

- Admitting mistakes
- Acknowledging when they were wrong (no cover-ups)
- Saying when they didn’t know
- Pushing decision making down
- Communicating well at all levels of the organization
- Being transparent
- Managing emotions
- Being Empathic
- Being Honest
- Not being defensive
- Being open and approachable
- Being an effective listener
- Encouraging involvement
- Giving spontaneous and planned recognition
The Humility Dynamic

- Humanness/Authenticity
- + Humble Behaviors
- Results In
- Trust/Respect
- Equals
- Inspired Followers
“Will humility and CEO’s subtle use of an unexpected level of uncertainty in their communications lead to a new era of greater influence and authenticity for executives? Maybe.”

“One of the key ingredients for increasing CEO influence is to tone down the standard confident rhetoric and replace it with more humble assessments of where a business stands and how it hopes to grow. Transparency and honesty go a long way in building trust.”

Rosanna M. Fiske, Chair and CEO, Public Relations Society of America
Let’s look at some examples…
(our humble leaders)
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(our humble leaders)

• **Craig Weatherup** – former Chairman and CEO of Pepsi Cola Company
  (Board Member of Starbucks and Federated Department Stores)

• **Alex Gregory** – President and CEO of YKK Americas
  (producer of over 7 billion zippers a year)

• **Frederick Franks, Jr.** – 4-star General and Commander of the US Army
  VII Corps
  (leader of Desert Storm Main Ground Attach, Commanding General Army
  Training and Doctrine Command)

• **Linda Combs** – former CFO Office of Management and Budget United
  States of America
  (responsible for $3 trillion US budget)

• **Jim Thompson** – former CEO of the Federation of State Medical Boards
  (national regulatory body of medical doctors)
Humble behaviors can be learned!

• Our goal is not to trivialize humility – not a “false humility”
• Humble behaviors come more natural to some than others...many have to consistently work at humility
• Our research shows that there are behaviors linked to humility...and with practice and discipline leaders can evolve these behaviors
What we learned...

- **Some common behaviors**
  - *Transparent* (say when they don’t know, admit mistakes, acknowledge when wrong)
  - *Approachable* (listen, encourage involvement, want to know)
  - *Open* (not defensive, no hidden agendas, self-effacing humor)
  - *Credible* (trustworthy, communicators, team oriented, give recognition vs. taking credit)
How humility demonstrates itself...

• Leaders who are humble...
  – Are strong mentors ("others oriented," not needing to be in the limelight)
  – Get over the past quicker (not looking for blame or feeding their ego on how well they are doing)
  – Have greater empathy (emotional intelligence)
  – Can make and implement changes quicker (due to trust)
  – See greater innovations (because they are more approachable, open to others’ ideas, better listeners)
Authentic Core

- How you respond to criticism
- How you make decisions
- How you speak
- How you handle failure
- How you give credit to others
- How approachable you are
- How you adapt to change
- How you react to conflict
- How you respond to ethical dilemmas
- How you behave everyday
- How you respond to success
Teaching/Learning
Humble Behaviors (examples)

• How you speak...
  – Be an active listener
  – Ask questions
  – Use “team” language – “we” “us”
  – Constantly be aware of tone and body language
  – Do not always talk first, most, or loudest
Teaching/Learning
Humble Behaviors (examples)

• How you handle failure...
  – Address it!
  – Don’t look to assign blame
  – Don’t be defensive
  – Take responsibility – “I failed”
  – Move on
Teaching/Learning
Humble Behaviors (examples)

• How you make decisions...
  – Start with the “team” impact – not just you (what is best for the organization)
  – Think through how decisions affect all levels in the organization
  – Keep a long-term perspective
  – Respond with empathy
Teaching/Learning
Humble Behaviors (examples)

• How you deal with problems...
  – Surface the problem – don’t avoid
  – Don’t maximize – Don’t minimize
  – Be tough on the problem, gentle with the person
Question

- How can you apply these “humble behaviors” in your leadership?
- What can you take away from today’s session?
- How can you apply and sustain your “take aways”? 
But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

- The words of Jesus - Matthew 23:12