

SAMPLE

Simple Truths^{of} Leadership

52 Ways to Be a Servant Leader
and Build Trust

Making Common Sense Common Practice

Ken
Blanchard
& Randy
Conley

ADVANCE PRAISE

“Ken Blanchard is what the kids call the ‘OG.’ He has led the way in showing us all the value of servant leadership—and how we can be servant leaders. *Simple Truths of Leadership* is the next essential step in our education.”

—**Simon Sinek**, optimist and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Start With Why*

“Ken Blanchard is the most amazing servant leader I’ve ever met. I’m so glad he decided to write this book with Randy Conley to share his principles and practices to help us become better leaders. When you implement the practical ideas shared in this book, you will enhance your leadership, build trust with your team, and improve your relationships. You don’t have to be great to serve, but you have to serve to be a great leader, and this book will show you how. Read it and live it!”

—**Jon Gordon**, bestselling author of *The Power of Positive Leadership*

“What a handy week-by-week guide to building true leadership habits and practices. As always, Ken and coauthor Randy deliver a real-life approach to successful team building as well as principles that will help any reader live a more fulfilling life. Trust is elusive yet can be built. Read this book to discover how.”

—**Laurie Beth Jones**, author of *Jesus, CEO*; *The Path*; and *Jesus, Life Coach*

“Ken and Randy have created a gem of a book packed with timeless yet straightforward leadership wisdom. Highly readable—I particularly liked the format of this book, which is ideal for the busy leader who needs to absorb information quickly in bite-sized chunks. Every reader will bookmark their favourite leadership tips, but more importantly, they will be inspired by the consistent and passionate ethos of trust and service that runs through all fifty-two tips as a singular golden thread. Great work!”

—**Dr. John Blakey**, founder, The Trusted Executive Foundation

“Wow! What a simple yet powerful book Ken and Randy have written! It incorporates all their wisdom and commonsense learning from many years of helping leaders around the world become better by using both their heads and their hearts. As I read the book, I could hear Ken’s voice sharing so many of these concepts and ideas in his speeches worldwide. And Randy truly embodies the principle of trust in all his work. This will be a must-have handbook for leaders for years to come, just as The One Minute Manager has impacted organizations for decades.”

—**Barbara Glanz**, Hall of Fame speaker and coauthor of *The Simple Truths of Service*

“In *Simple Truths of Leadership*, Ken and Randy present why and how their simple truths about servant leadership and trust can produce profound results. They turn the traditional leadership pyramid upside down and put the customer at the top of the organization. A must-read for both new and more experienced leaders!”

—**Richard Orlando**, PhD, founder, Legacy Capitals, and author of *Legacy* and *Love Your Clients*

“There is so much talk about great leadership and so few people putting these ideas into practice. Ken and Randy give you actionable, commonsense lessons on service and trust. And I can assure you these principles will perform!”

—**Cheryl Bachelder**, former CEO, Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, and author of *Dare to Serve*

“Simple yet powerful. Simple yet practical. Simply outstanding. This book belongs on your nightstand. Follow the lessons in *Simple Truths of Leadership*, and not only will you be a better leader, you will live a more meaningful and fulfilling life.”

—**Jesse Lyn Stoner**, coauthor of *Full Steam Ahead!*

“If you are looking for a pathway to servant leadership, Ken Blanchard and Randy Conley have given us an outstanding one. Commit to these commonsense principles and you will soon become a real servant leader.”

—**Howard Behar**, former President, Starbucks

“Today’s best leaders are facilitators—they don’t mark people’s papers, they help them get an A. Servant leadership and trust are the foundation of impactful leadership. Use these fifty-two simple truths to empower your people and build a culture where purpose-driven, passionate people create amazing outcomes!”

—**Garry Ridge**, CEO and Chairman, WD-40 Company

“We often think of great leadership principles as common sense—and then forget to put them into action! Ken Blanchard has written the ultimate guide to servant leadership with real and practical steps to becoming a better leader and person. Read this book and start practicing these truths in your life now!”

—**Marshall Goldsmith**, Thinkers50 Leadership Award, and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Triggers*, *Mojo*, and *What Got You Here Won’t Get You There*

“Servant leadership and trust are essential ingredients to address today’s crises of loneliness and disengagement in organizations. Ken Blanchard and Randy Conley provide wise guidance in this timely, concise, and impactful book.”

—**Michael Lee Stallard**, cofounder, Connection Culture Group, and author of *Connection Culture* and *Fired Up or Burned Out*

“Peanut butter and jelly, baseball and Cracker Jacks, Ken Blanchard and Randy Conley, servant leadership and trust—they just go together. What really strikes me about *Simple Truths of Leadership* are two things: memorable aphorisms and wisdom, not just knowledge. Fifty-two brief chapters, each with a haiku/koan-like simplicity that burrows into your brain like an earworm; they all make such good sense, and on top of that, you remember them. Blanchard and Conley aim at making simple truths accessible and memorable, not only individually but as a whole. The reader emerges from the book with a smile, feeling enriched and wiser for the experience—an experience that will, moreover, stick with you.”

—**Charles H. Green**, founder, Trusted Advisor, and coauthor of *The Trusted Advisor*

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PART ONE

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

In this part, Ken Blanchard takes the lead with a focus on his lifelong passion of servant leadership as an influence process in which leaders help their people accomplish goals.



Much of my work in the past was focused on leadership behavior and how to improve leadership style and methods. My colleagues and I attempted to change leaders from the outside. But in recent years, we have found that effective leadership is an inside job. It is a question of the heart. It's all about a leader's character and intention.

Why are you leading? Is it to serve or to be served? Answering this question truthfully is so important that I co-edited a book with Renee Broadwell entitled *Servant Leadership in Action: How You Can Achieve Great Relationships*

and Results. In it, forty-five key leaders in our field, including Simon Sinek, Brené Brown, and Marshall Goldsmith, share their points of view about servant leadership. The essence of that book is *you can't fake being a servant leader*.

The most persistent barrier to being a servant leader is a heart motivated by self-interest that looks at the world as a “give a little, take a lot” proposition. Self-serving leaders put their own agenda, safety, status, and gratification ahead of others who are impacted by the leaders' thoughts and actions.

The shift from self-serving leadership to leadership that serves others is motivated by a change of heart. If leaders don't get their heart right, they will never become servant leaders. A misguided heart will color their thinking, impact their behavior, and cause them to begin every day by asking “What's in it for me today?” That's certainly not servant leadership.

In this part, you will learn more about servant leadership and the power it has to make the world a better place by focusing on the greater good.

—Ken

SIMPLE TRUTH #1

Servant leadership is the
best way to achieve
both great results and
great relationships.

Organizational leaders often have an either/or attitude toward results and people. For example, leaders who focus only on results may have trouble creating great relationships with their people and leaders who focus mainly on relationships may have trouble getting desired results.

Yet you can get both great results and great relationships if you understand the two parts of servant leadership:

- The *leadership* aspect focuses on vision, direction, and results—where you as a leader hope to take your people. Leaders should involve others in setting direction and determining desired results, but if people don't know where they're headed or what they're meant to accomplish, the fault lies with the leader.
- The *servant* aspect focuses on working side by side in relationship with your people. Once the vision and direction are clear, the leader's role shifts to service—helping people accomplish the agreed-upon goals.

MAKING COMMON SENSE COMMON PRACTICE

This one-two punch of the aspects of servant leadership enables you to create both great results and great relationships:

1. Let your people know what they're being asked to do by setting the vision and direction with their help. In other words, vision and direction, while the responsibility of the leader, is not a top-down process.
2. During implementation, assure your people you are there to serve, not to be served. Your responsibility is to help them accomplish their goals through training, feedback, listening, and communication.

It's important for servant leaders to establish this both/and mindset toward results and relationships.

SIMPLE TRUTH #2

Every great organization has
a compelling vision.

When I explain what a compelling vision is to some leaders in organizations, they either give me a blank look or say something like “I’m sure we have one on the wall somewhere.” So what is a compelling vision?

According to my book with Jesse Stoner, *Full Steam Ahead! Unleash the Power of Vision in Your Work and Your Life*, a compelling vision includes three elements: your purpose (what business you are in), your picture of the future (where you are going) and your values (what will guide your journey).

A compelling vision is alive and well in companies that are leaders in their field, such as Disney, Southwest Airlines, Nordstrom, Wegmans, and Starbucks.

MAKING COMMON SENSE COMMON PRACTICE

Here’s how you can incorporate the three elements of a compelling vision in your organization:

- Make sure the people in your organization know what business they are in. For example, when Walt Disney started his theme parks, he said, “We are in the happiness business.”
- Confirm that your people know where they are going—what good results would look like. At Disney, the picture of the future is that all guests of the parks would have the same smile on their faces when leaving as when they entered.
- Find out if the people in your organization are clear on what values will guide their journey. Disney’s first value is safety. Its next values are courtesy and “the show,” which is about everyone playing their parts perfectly, whether they are a ticket taker or Mickey Mouse. Disney’s final value is efficiency—having a well-run, profitable organization.

If you can share your compelling vision as clearly as Disney does, congratulations! You have just made common sense common practice.

SIMPLE TRUTH #3
Servant leaders turn
the traditional
pyramid upside down.

Most organizations and leaders get into trouble during the implementation phase of servant leadership if the traditional hierarchical pyramid is used. When that happens, whom do people think they work for? The people above them. The minute you think you work for the person above you, you assume that person—your boss—is responsible and your job is to be responsive to your boss’s whims or wishes. “Boss watching” can become a popular sport where people get promoted based on their upward-influencing skills. As a result, all the energy of the organization moves up the hierarchy, away from customers and the frontline folks who are closest to the action.

Servant leaders know how to correct this situation by philosophically turning the pyramid upside down when it comes to implementation. Now the customer contact people and the customers are at the top of the organization, and everyone in the leadership hierarchy works for them. This one change makes a major difference in who is responsible and who is responsive.

MAKING COMMON SENSE COMMON PRACTICE

To make servant leadership come alive, implementation is key:

- Communicate to your people that you work for them, not the other way around. Your job is to serve, not to evaluate.
- Empower your people by letting them bring their brains to work. In this way, they become responsible—able to respond—to their internal and external customers. Your job is to be responsive to them, helping them accomplish their goals.

This creates a very different environment for implementation and makes it clear to everyone who is responsible and to whom.

PART TWO

BUILDING TRUST

Randy Conley takes the lead in this part, focusing on his expertise on the topic of trust as the foundation of a successful organization. Leadership based on trust is crucial for collaboration, innovation, employee commitment, and a healthy work environment.



Let me ask you a question: do you believe trust is important to your success as a leader? If so, raise your hand. Okay, you can put your hand down now.

Why do I think you raised your hand? Because nearly everyone who hears that question raises their hand. Anyone would be hard-pressed to argue that trust isn't critically important to leadership success.

Now let me ask you a second question: do you have a defined strategy and plan for building trust? If so, raise your hand. Anyone?

If you didn't raise your hand, don't feel bad; you're not alone. Most people don't raise their hand when I ask them that question. Why is that? Trust is like oxygen—most people don't think about it until they don't have any.

It can be difficult to know where to start. Trust goes deep and wide. There aren't any magic solutions when it comes to building trust. It requires a comprehensive and sustained approach over time.

That's where servant leadership comes in. Servant leadership is the vehicle to building trust. Servant leaders act in ways that inspire trust in their followers. In his seminal 1970 essay "The Servant as Leader," Robert K. Greenleaf, the father of the modern-day servant leadership movement, wrote that becoming a servant leader "begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead."

Servant leaders are distinguished by putting the needs of their followers ahead of their own. When team members believe their leader has their best interests at heart and is there to support them in achieving their goals, trust in their leader grows by leaps and bounds.

Trust is an outcome, a result of the behaviors we use in our interactions with others. If we act in trustworthy ways, we build trust. If we behave in an untrustworthy manner, we erode trust. It's common sense—but not always common practice.

That brings me to these Simple Truths about building trust. They contain nuggets of wisdom on topics such as the role of trust in leadership, the importance of honesty and integrity and treating people fairly, characteristics of trustworthy leaders, ways to build trust during change and rebuild broken trust, and the incredible power of forgiveness.

It's my hope these Simple Truths will inspire and equip you to be the leader your people deserve. Because everyone should have a leader they can trust.

—Randy

SIMPLE TRUTH #27

**Leadership begins
with trust.**

Some leaders charge headlong into setting strategies and goals for their teams without giving much thought to building trust. Yet trust is the foundation of any successful, healthy relationship. When you have the trust of your team, all things are possible. Creativity, innovation, productivity, efficiency, and morale flourish. If your team doesn't trust you, you get resistance, disengagement, apathy, and, ultimately, failure.

The most successful leaders realize their number one priority is to build trust with their team. Trustworthy leaders demonstrate competence in their roles, act with integrity, show care and concern for team members, and honor their commitments by following through on their promises.

MAKING COMMON SENSE COMMON PRACTICE

Does your team perceive you as trustworthy? If you're not sure, ask them. Here are a few sample questions:

- Do you have confidence in my leadership/management abilities? Where or how can I improve?
- Do I walk my talk? Where can I be more consistent in my behavior?
- How well do I listen to you? Do our interactions leave you feeling heard, valued, and supported?
- Am I dependable? Do you trust that I'll follow through on my commitments?

Demonstrating your vulnerability by having a discussion with your people about trust is a powerful way to introduce servant leadership in your workplace.

SIMPLE TRUTH #28

Building trust is a skill
that can be learned
and developed.

In my work, I have found that people have a common misconception about trust. Many people believe trust just happens, through some sort of relationship osmosis. The truth is that building trust is a skill. And, as with any skill, we can learn it and become better at it with practice. Since trust is either built or eroded by the behaviors we choose to use, we can enjoy more trust in our relationships when we use the right kind of behaviors.

MAKING COMMON SENSE COMMON PRACTICE

In the book *Trust Works!* Ken and his coauthors Cynthia Olmstead and Martha Lawrence share the ABCDs of building trust. I have built on this work by coauthoring our company's Building Trust training program that teaches leaders how to build trust.

Follow these four aspects of the ABCD model to create trust:

- *Able*—Demonstrate competence.
- *Believable*—Act with integrity.
- *Connected*—Show care and concern for others.
- *Dependable*—Honor commitments.

Practicing these ABCD behaviors will foster a growing culture of trust in your relationships at every level, both at home and at work.

SIMPLE TRUTH #29

“Self-trust is the first
secret of success.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

What does it mean to trust yourself? It means to have a confident belief in your mission as a leader. I’ve known leaders who have never taken the time to clearly identify their leadership point of view. What motivates you as a leader? What are your values? What are your beliefs about leading others? If you don’t know the answers to these questions, your leadership could be drawn off course.

A leader without a clear purpose is like a ship without a rudder—it is taken wherever the wind blows. But when you have a clear mission statement like Ken’s (“I am a loving teacher and an example of simple truths”), your energy is channeled in a specific direction. Self-trust begins when you are clear on your leadership mission.

MAKING COMMON SENSE COMMON PRACTICE

Writing your leadership point of view can help you become more authentic, self-aware, and intentional. You can develop your leadership point of view through the following steps, taken from the book *Leading at a Higher Level*. This may sound like a simple exercise, but it can lead to profound discovery about yourself and your leadership style:

1. List the key events and people in your life that have shaped your beliefs about leadership.
2. What lessons have you learned from these key events and people?
3. Based on those lessons, what are your top three to five values when leading others?
4. As a result, what can your team expect from your leadership in the future?
5. What are your expectations of yourself and of others going forward?
6. What is the leadership legacy that you want to leave?

Take your time to think through your answers to these important questions. When you are finished writing, share your work with your team.

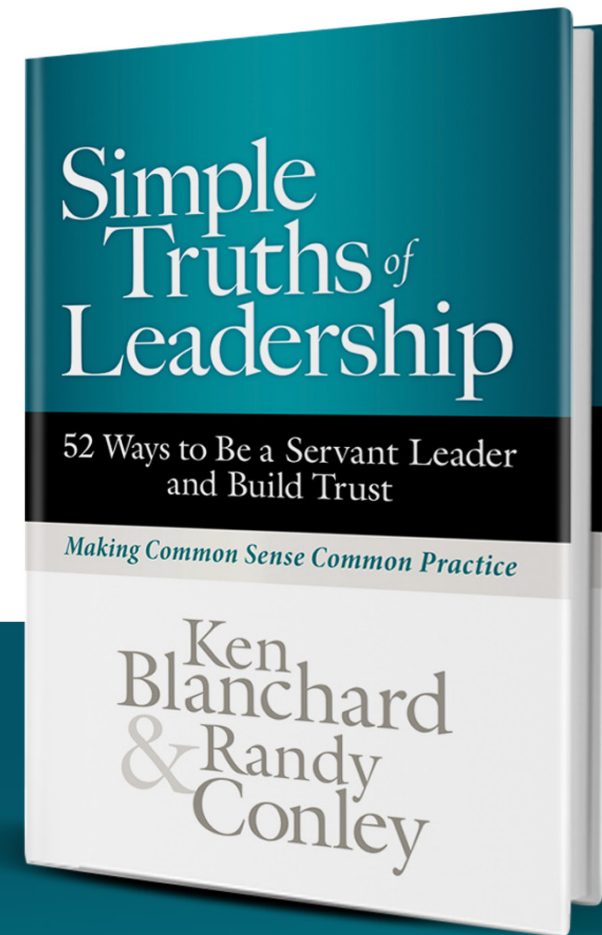


ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ken Blanchard is one of the world's most influential leadership experts. He is co-founder of The Ken Blanchard Companies, a global leader in management training, consulting, and coaching. Ken is coauthor of the iconic bestseller *The One Minute Manager* and more than sixty-five other books, with combined sales of more than 23 million copies in forty-seven languages. In 2005, Ken was inducted into Amazon's Hall of Fame as one of the top twenty-five bestselling authors of all time.

Randy Conley is vice president of global professional services and trust practice leader for The Ken Blanchard Companies. He is a founding member of the Alliance of Trustworthy Business Experts and was named a Top 100 Leadership Speaker by Inc.com. Randy is coauthor of Blanchard's Building Trust training program and contributing author of three books, including *Leading at a Higher Level* with Ken Blanchard. Randy's award-winning blog, Leading With Trust, has influenced more than 4 million readers since its inception in 2012.

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