

Chapter 3: The High Cost of Servant Leadership

Leadership Affirmation

“I give myself permission to rest, to restore, and to set boundaries. When I care for myself, I lead with greater clarity and purpose.”



Summary

This chapter reflects on the often unseen personal toll of leadership. While servant leaders sacrifice much for the betterment of others, it is essential to intentionally prioritize one’s health, well-being, and mental clarity. Leadership rooted in self-neglect ultimately harms both the leader and the community they serve. True leadership sustainability requires ongoing care for body, mind, and spirit.

Skill Focus

- Self-Care and Wellness Leadership Practices
- Boundary-Setting and Sustainable Leadership

Section 1: Reflect

1. In what ways have you sacrificed your own well-being in service to others?

2. How did those sacrifices impact your physical health, mental health, or personal relationships?

3. What are the costs of neglecting your well-being in leadership roles? How have you witnessed or experienced these consequences?

4. Reflect on a time when prioritizing your health or boundaries made you a more effective leader. What happened?

Section 2: Apply

1. List three specific self-care or wellness practices you can integrate into your routine this month.

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2. Identify one leadership responsibility or commitment you can adjust, delegate, or pause to protect your well-being.

3. Write one boundary you will intentionally set this week in your professional life to support a healthier work environment for yourself and your team.

4. Who in your leadership community models healthy, sustainable leadership? How might you learn from or connect with them?

Section 3: Build Your Toolkit

Leadership Wellness Inventory:

Take a brief personal assessment. Rate yourself 1-5 on the following:

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Well-Being Statement	Score
1. I get adequate sleep and rest.	
2. I take regular Breaks during the workday	
3. I set clear boundaries between work and personal time.	
4. I engage in activities that restore my energy (hobbies, exercise, creative pursuits).	
5. I ask for help or support when needed.	
6. I say “no” when something will overextend me.	
7. I reflect regularly on my leadership experiences and emotions.	
TOTAL	

Leadership Wellbeing Profile Report (next page):

This wellness report offers a brief, research-informed snapshot of the habits and behaviors that shape your overall wellbeing and leadership effectiveness. It is not a diagnostic tool, but rather an opportunity to reflect on key domains that influence your energy, resilience, and capacity to lead sustainably. By increasing awareness of these areas, you can identify strengths to build on and opportunities to support your continued growth as a leader.

The goal is not perfection; it’s **awareness, pattern recognition, and targeted growth.**

Your Wellbeing Domains

1. Sleep & Rest

Statement: *I get adequate sleep and rest.*

Your Score: _____

Interpretation:

Very Low:	1	Sleep and rest may be insufficient, increasing the risk of fatigue and reduced emotional regulation.
Below Average:	2	Rest is inconsistent; energy may fluctuate.
Average:	3	Adequate but variable rest; opportunities to strengthen routines.
Strong:	4	Generally restorative sleep patterns.
Very Strong:	5	Consistent, high-quality rest supporting resilience.

Coaching Insight: Sleep is a foundational leadership resource; small improvements often yield outsized benefits.

2. Workday Breaks

Statement: *I take regular breaks during the workday.*

Your Score: _____

Interpretation:

Lower scores often reflect sustained cognitive load and reduced recovery time. Higher scores indicate healthy pacing and self-regulation.

Coaching Insight: Micro-breaks (2–5 minutes) can significantly improve focus and decision quality.

3. Workday Breaks

Statement: *I take regular breaks during the workday.*

Your Score: _____

Interpretation:

Lower scores often reflect sustained cognitive load and reduced recovery time. Higher scores indicate healthy pacing and self-regulation.

Coaching Insight: Boundary clarity is strongly associated with lower burnout and higher job satisfaction.

4. Energy-Restoring Activities

Statement: *I engage in activities that restore my energy (hobbies, exercise, creative pursuits).*

Your Score: _____

Interpretation:

This domain reflects proactive replenishment. Lower scores often indicate depletion; higher scores signal strong self-care habits.

Coaching Insight: Leaders who regularly recharge demonstrate better emotional availability and strategic thinking.

5. Asking for Support

Statement: *I ask for help when needed.*

Your Score: _____

Interpretation:

Lower scores may reflect self-reliance or reluctance to burden others. Higher bands indicate healthy interdependence and psychological safety.

Coaching Insight: Seeking support is a resilience behavior, not a deficit.

6. Saying “No”

Statement: *I say “no” when something will overextend me.*

Your Score: _____

Interpretation:

Low scores often correlate with overload and role strain. High scores reflect assertiveness and sustainable workload management.

Coaching Insight: Strategic “no’s” protect your most important “yes’s.”

7. Leadership Reflection

Statement: *I reflect regularly on my leadership experiences and emotions.*

Your Score: _____

Interpretation:

Lower scores may indicate reactive leadership patterns. Higher bands reflect emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and adaptive learning.

Coaching Insight: Reflection is one of the strongest predictors of leadership growth.

Personalized Recommendations

If your lowest domain is Sleep & Rest:

Focus on consistent routines, wind-down practices, and reducing late-evening work.

If your lowest domain is Workday Breaks:

Try micro-breaks every 90 minutes to reset cognitive load.

If your lowest domain is Boundaries:

Experiment with “shutdown rituals” at the end of the workday.

If your lowest domain is Energy Restoration:

Schedule one restorative activity per week, and treat it like a meeting with yourself.

If your lowest domain is Asking for Support:

Identify one area where delegating or requesting help would reduce strain.

If your lowest domain is saying “No”:

Practice one small, strategic “no” this week.

Next-Step Action Plan (30 Days)

Week	Focus Area	Action	Success Indicator
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			