



Initial Leadership Guide

Servant Leadership

The Goal:

The ultimate goal of BunchOBlokes is that men will discover, accept and celebrate their individual uniqueness and personal value and will encourage one another to be transformed to live a full and satisfying life.

For this goal to be realised, men will need to be interested to be invited to a group meeting, usually by a mate, but they will not return if they feel they have been hijacked into something they did not expect. This means that the invitation to attend must be an accurate description of what will happen and the discussion must engage them, by being relevant, and encouraging them to be included. Adult men are happy to express their views in groups, perhaps more so than in other settings, provided there is a high level of trust toward the group, which must be earned by the rules of discussion being clear.

BunchOBlokes:Men Building Men facilitates men to purposefully meet regularly to engage and to encourage one another to build strong souls, by identifying and enhancing their legitimate passions.

We seek to be relevant by getting feedback from groups, to ensure that we are up to date with the topics of interest to your group, and knowing what works and does not work including both problems that you encounter and solutions to problems that you discover.



Servant leadership

For these conditions to exist, group leaders should be willing to facilitate the group by serving it, without wanting to dominate or controlling it. This is hard to do. Believe me, I am an expert at dominating groups. Leadership should be more informal than formal, with the leadership often changing hands to stimulate

others, and to prevent the group becoming dependent upon one person. The group leader's role is to serve the group members by encouraging discussion and participation, not by always being an source of wisdom or the final authority. If men want an expert opinion and they think you have an answer, they will ask you.

Above all else, unless you have very experienced group facilitators, the use of Socratic discussion style will determine the success of your group. Socrates was a great Greek philosopher and teacher who gathered students who were interested in a particular subject. Socrates was unique among the scholars of ancient Athens by presenting himself not as a master of knowledge but as a fellow student working toward the discovery of truth during mostly informal discussions. As it happened, he also was not very good at being Socratic. Jesus, I think was much better at it as he also used this technique by telling stories from everyday life, and then asking questions and as such, was more Socratic than Socrates.

Socratic discussion empowers the group to question the logic and ideas of the instructor even as the teacher gains insight from the student's arguments. As a result, both the instructor and student are better able to order their thoughts and arguments into a stronger, more coherent theory tempered by relentless hammering in the forge of debate. It is also a safe place for anyone to test their ideas and for know-alls 😊 to be brought down a few pegs by good questions from the group.

Socratic Servant leadership implies several characteristics of leadership style including:

- Do not be too ambitious. You are trying to engage men in discussion where they reveal their passions and concerns, not to learn at the feet of a master teacher until they ask for it
- Share the role of meeting admin arrangements, venue and organisation
- Encourage a wide range of interests other than just your favourites to get the informal discussion started, including personal interests such as sport, work, politics, family, etc
- Give everyone an opportunity to tell their story, at length.
- Introduce new members by getting an existing member to summarise other members backgrounds
- Declare that there are no taboo topics, but there are agreed rules of discussion to give people a chance to enter the discussion
- Always encourage a range of topics and points of view
- Listen and ask questions, more than talk
- Clarify and explain to keep the discussion going or when you are asked to
- Do not always be the judge of facts. Prefer to say, "What do you think?" or "I don't know. Let's see if we can find out/figure it out" or "My best guess is..."
- Limit the continued or forceful presentation of "pet" subjects
- When you need a subject, ask the group "what do you want to study" or "what's new or does anyone know anything about such and such"?
- Do not take on lengthy studies on Bible books or similar topics that last several weeks. If you are going to do one, make it last one meeting only. If it was any good, they will ask for more

- Do not use lengthy video presentations, unless they are very good (like Alpha) and are agreed by the group
- Ask all speakers to reach a conclusion that they have applied or will apply to themselves.

Leaders can introduce topics of interest from the BOB: MBM Guides, by asking questions for the Guide or other topics of interest to the group.

Remember that bOb:MBM groups are intend to help men find solutions for themselves. It is not intended to be a debating society, but some rules of debate are important.

Rules of debate

- Make sure that the topic is clear and that there is general agreement to discuss it. Clarify often.
- Keep the discussion going by encouraging everyone to speak. Those who don't participate will become more confident over time.
- Don't allow red herrings to be used to change the subject. Say, "Let's get back to the subject" or more forcefully, "You have just changed the subject..."
- Don't allow the topic to be changed until the speaker has said what the want to say
- Let each person speak without being interrupted
- Do not rush to judgement or prevent ideas from being properly explained
- Prefer real experience, and facts to theory
- Insist on rules of fair play
- Don't allow personal attacks
- Allow only one discussion at a time.



Do not allow

- Contradiction. Hold speakers to account against their own words
- Changing the subject
- Misusing dubious personal opinion or pre conceived ideas, as factual statements
- Begging the question where a statement assumes pre conceived agreement, such as "I am sure you all agree" if it is unreasonable or untrue. Ask the group, "What do you think about that?"
- Using a straw man argument to apply a theoretical criticism to a person or group. Ask, "What brings you to that conclusion?"
- Playing the man instead of the subject

Come to a conclusion

- Get each speaker to summarise their views, by saying, "I think you mean.... is that right"? Eventually they will do it without you reminding them.
- Leaders should not have the last word. Ask participants to summarise in first person, present tense actions, rather than broad theoretical statements.

Allow dissenting points of view

If someone has a contrary view not shared by others, allow them to speak and summarise, then avoid them coming back to that subject until someone else brings it up.

Encourage humour

Don't allow deliberate insults including deflection, denials, dismissal of another's point of view. The use of sarcastic humour will test these boundaries so allow it until it is deliberately offensive, plus it is very hard for me not to be sarcastic. It is the lowest form of wit, but it is witty.

Group process: Forming, Storming, Norming & Performing

Try to lead your group toward acceptance of the Goal, Principles and Guidelines, but it is well recognised that groups follow a clear pattern as they come together. The stages of group life are: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing.

Forming. There are many reasons why men join groups. I introduced myself to a group of blokes in the 60's (who turned out to be Jewish divorcees) in a McDonalds restaurant once, to find out what they were discussing, to which they said, "Our Filipino girlfriends". I replied, "that's a good joke" to which one guy said, "It's not a joke".

Men may join a group if they like the idea, and the person inviting them. The reason the group exists should be clear (even if unstated), as should the principles of the group, such as not telling each other's wives about why you go to McDonalds so much.

Storming. It is very normal for there to be a few strongly stated points of view. Don't worry. Often the people who most passionately express an opposite view, are the one's who are most strongly looking for answers. If you have said that "all topics and views are welcome", then you must expect some contrary views and disagreement among the group, if you are fair dinkum. This is not the same as continually belligerent people who go back and back to the same opinion, that no-one else shares. Eventually you have to tell them that they have had a good go, and it is time for other views.

Norming. This is when people are getting used to each other and are happy to abide by the rules, more or less. Don't force it. It will come.

Performing. Eventually, if they have a clear idea about what they are there for, groups will get around to doing their business. When this happens, you will be amazed at how easily this seems to happen, until the next time a new disagreement or person comes up and the process start again.

Conclusion. Socratic servant leadership requires a leader who sucks it up for the sake of the group, and gives each person the chance to learn by doing, which is what adult men prefer to do. Otherwise, you will serve your group by always allowing time for people to say what's on the mind.

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