

What style of caller are you?

What are your strengths and challenges as a caller? When the dancers are coming to an evening of your calling, what are they expecting? For each question below, choose the one answer that most you most closely exemplifies you, that you agree with or are most striving for.

Why are you a caller?

- ☹ I like to teach.
- ☺ I like to perform.
- ★ I like to be in charge.
- ↑ I like to cause change.

Which phrase most exemplifies your underlying message onstage:

- ↑ "I'm here to make sure you have a good time"
- ☹ "Trust me; it's all going to turn out all right."
- ★ "Just do what I say and the dance will be perfect."
- ☺ "We're going to have fun tonight!"

A perfect evening of dance for you is when:

- ★ Every dance required only one walkthrough – or none!
- ☹ All dancing was smooth, conscious, and precise.
- ↑ The dancers were challenged with new moves and formations.
- ☺ No one frowned or was annoyed all night.

In order to ensure a successful dance evening, what is *least* important to you?

- ↑ Programming dances that are comfortable, expected, and/or common.
- ☺ Having the dancers pay attention to you.
- ★ Fun, relaxed attitude.
- ☹ Allowing dancer variations on the dance.

When talking about last night's dance, what do you want the dancers to be saying?

- ☹ I learned how to dance better; my dancing style improved.
- ↑ The dances were challenging, different than what I am used to.
- ★ The walkthroughs were quick, the dances went off without a hitch.
- ☺ I laughed; I smiled; I had a great time.

Scoring: Count how many of each symbol you chose (↑★☺☹). The symbol you chose the most is your "Leadership style archetype" on the next page. Ties indicate you have strong characteristics of several styles.

Leadership Style Archetypes¹

All styles have strengths and weaknesses. The key is to be aware of your challenge areas and places for development. Note that these are archetypes; you will exhibit characteristics of more than one style.

The Cheerleader: ↑

- Best traits: Good at contrasts, change from the usual staid methods; likes to be as different from norm as possible; good for “uptight” groups; lots of energy; varied programs; raises dance above boring programming; often has lots of energy.
- On a bad day: Likes to be center of attention; can be whiny or pleading; focus is all on leader.

The Top Sergeant: ★

- Best traits: Good in short time situations; brings order; keeps the peace; smoothes chaos; often efficient; good for rowdy or disorderly groups; dancers freed from responsibility and blame; raises dance to higher level of order and consistency.
- On a bad day: Gruff manner, can get angry or shout; dancers may feel constrained/controlled.

The Clown: ☺

- Best traits: Free spirit, instills lightness, joy, whimsy into situation; allows dancers to feel comfortable about making mistakes; crowd pleaser; often good at jokes; raises dance to higher level of fun.
- On a bad day: Not good at discipline or crowd control; can be embarrassing, scattered, or pouty.

The Professor: ☹

- Best traits: Helpful demeanor allows learning and puts fears to rest; “no experience required,” can raise dance to higher level of style; good for groups needing to improve dance skills or learn more background behind dance; often knowledgeable about history and tradition.
- On a bad day: Perfectionist; turns having fun into work; can be pedantic, tiresome.

Remember: No one style by itself makes an effective leader!

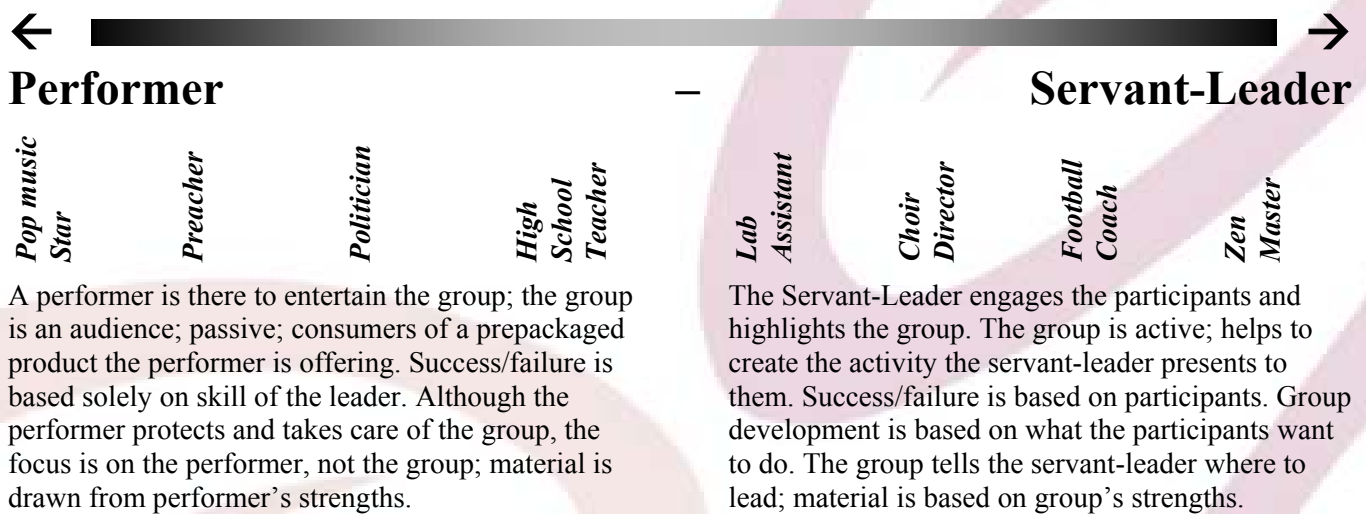
Search for your ‘inner’ clowns, sergeants, cheerleaders, and professors. Identify people close to you that embody those

<i>Emphasis on</i>	<i>Relaxed</i>	<i>Controlling</i>
<i>Dance</i>	Cheerleader	Top Sergeant
<i>Fun</i>	Clown	Professor

¹ While the quiz is all my own, the archetypes and ideas on leadership are adapted from and based on “Styles of Recreational Leadership,” on pages 8-13 of *Recreation with Dance, Movement, and Music*, Glen Bannerman & M. Neil Pugsley ©1999; published by Bridge Resources, Louisville, Kentucky.

traits. What are the words they use, the gestures and facial expressions that exemplify that archetype? Try out their jokes, retorts, motivators, historical anecdotes. Get inside their perspective!

Each archetype has traits that can enhance or detract from the success of an evening. But common to and overarching all the archetypes is the idea of “Servant Leadership.”² Servant Leadership means leading through serving the followers. This philosophy is one of deep respect for the followers.



“Instead of telling people to participate, the [Servant-Leader] creates a situation in which they can participate. ... The [Servant-Leader] is more concerned with what is happening with individuals within the group than with what people think of him/her.”³

There are many situations where being a performer is desirable and appropriate. At a dance, the caller is most effective as a Servant-Leader. Watch the best callers, it is evident in their work. The best dance leaders excel by following; they are leaders by demonstration rather than declaration; they are successful because the group is successful.

For dance callers, Servant-Leadership means to base the calling on the needs of the dancers. The programming – what dances to call when – is based on the dancers on the floor at that moment. How long to keep calling, when to drop out – is based on what the dancers need. How varied to make the program is based on the dancers needs, not the callers need. The best dance leaders draw their strengths from all archetypes while striving to be as fully a “Servant” as possible.

² <http://www.greenleaf.org/leadership/servant-leadership/What-is-Servant-Leadership.html>

³ *Recreation with Dance, Movement, and Music*, Glen Bannerman & M. Neil Pugsley ©1999; published by Bridge Resources, Louisville Kentucky.