

# SERVICE IN ACTION

A real-world leadership case study from the Service Leaders at [FourSimpleWords.ca](https://www.foursimplewords.ca)

## Building Bridges Through Service

Strengthening the Pathway Between  
Human Connection and Self-Awareness



**A real-world case study from the Service Leaders at FourSimpleWords.ca about how the power of service transforms lives and organizations and the role our minds (and mindsets) play in our ability to serve.**

**Story content graciously inspired by Neuroscientist Abhijit Naskar. Learn more about his thinking and writing [here](#).**

We've all heard the phrase "us versus them." It is a tribal instinct that has been hardwired into our brains over thousands of years of evolution. However, we've recently discovered that this inherent bias could be keeping us from truly understanding one another and from connecting on a profound, practical, and human level.

What if there was a simple solution and new mindset that leads us away from our biases and towards a more connected and self-aware society? As we unravel the transformative power of service, we may find the answers we have been seeking will be found inside ourselves, rather than from others. Service Leaders need to look at our own perceptions about the role our mind (not just our heart) plays in our comfort and ability to embrace service.

Abhijit Naskar, a renowned neuroscientist based in India and author of *The Art of Neuroscience in Everything*, reminds us that our biases are deeply rooted survival instincts. They protect us from what our minds perceive as "dangerous" or "other." While these instincts once served us well, in our interconnected world these biases can create barriers and limit our understanding of one another. Rethinking these biases is key to our individual success and collective survival.

This is where the magic of service comes into play. Nasker challenges us to imagine reaching out to a stranger, offering them help without any expectation of reciprocation. Suddenly, the "them" becomes an "us." The power of service blurs that dividing line, revealing our shared humanity and fostering our



Abhijit Naskar is a celebrated neuroscientist, bestselling author of 100+ books, the world's first poet with 1000+ sonnets and an advocate of mental health and global harmony. As an expert on human behaviour, his contributions in cognitive and behavioural neuroscience have helped the world tackle the issues of mental illness, prejudice, hate, intolerance, discrimination and systemic racism more effectively. Learn more about Abhijit and his positive thinking at [naskarism.wordpress.com](http://naskarism.wordpress.com) You can also find him at [linkedin.com/in/naskarinfo](https://www.linkedin.com/in/naskarinfo)

innate sense of empathy. That very act of focusing away from ourselves is the core of the wisdom in The Four Simple Words: It's Not About Me.

Naskar also emphasizes the contagious nature of service. When we remove ourselves from the equation, focusing on the well-being of others, our biases begin to dissipate. Our actions evolve from transactional to authentic expressions of humanity. And when we see others stepping into service, it becomes easier for us to do the same. Naskar believes that we can retrain our minds to understand the benefits of service far outweigh the hard-wired protectionism of just looking out for me.

Service to others becomes an active way of reimagining how we present ourselves to the world. Naskar believes that the growth this brings will be uncomfortable and inconvenient. In fact, he believes that to be human is to be inconvenienced! We like that thinking, as it reminds us that Service Leadership is not about making things easier for me. Of course, to keep our service sustainable, we can't make it a constant uphill battle with constant sacrifice. And, we know that to be in service means some inconvenience and harder times.

To embrace that inconvenience as a gift, Naskar challenges us to put ego aside and accept that the more aware we are of others' needs, the more human we really are. It is a beautiful and complicated ideal that should be stretching our own notion of what service looks like in our modern world. He sums it up this way: "You are helping people, not because you're charitable, but because you're human."

In other words, to be human is to serve. #GooseBumps



Naskar offers us this insight to help reframe how we imagine the benefits of service: "The greatest wisdom is service." He explains that good service begins when we stop putting barriers (or demands) on ourselves and our needs. When we view ourselves as part of a larger network of humanity, we see that serving others is in fact serving our own needs. Key to making this happen is letting go of the tribal notion that we are unconnected to the people, emotions and needs around us.

And while this seems very unscientific and perhaps too soft for the real world, this thinking aligns with our research at Four Simple Words. We think that Naskar is asking us to step into vulnerability in a way that is more than just sharing how



**FOUR**  
*Simple Words*

Four Simple Words is a movement to transform organizations and lives through the power of service. We have seen the future and it is demanding we embrace service as a way to heal ourselves, build sustainable relationships and solve our 21st-century problems. This case study has been written from an engaging conversation with Abhijit Naskar about what it means to be in service to others. Learn more about the four simple words and our passion for service at [FourSimpleWords.ca](https://FourSimpleWords.ca).

our weekend was or the struggle we are having with aging parents. Good service demands relationship (for 10 seconds, 10 days or 10 years), and in order to build that relationship we need to force our brains to reframe this risk from “this could be harmful” to “this is letting me be me.”

Service then is a tool to more self awareness! Naskar makes a straight line to how service is a tool for the betterment of not just ourselves but those around us. He acknowledges that it is impossible to be free from biases and cultural inclinations. And he stresses the point of this awareness is how we react when asked to choose between self and community. Our primal and social bias may be to turn away from service as it threatens our sense of security. Naskar reminds us that taking action isn't just an act of service. It is an act of human existence.

In many cases, this means that service must be accompanied by courage. It's not always about serving those immediately around us; sometimes, it involves standing up against systemic injustice, even if it means standing alone. It is about understanding the broader implications of our actions and recognizing that every act of service contributes to a larger and more equitable world.

These acts of courage build more than just bridges between people; they also foster a deep sense of self-awareness. As we serve more and in new ways, our brains begin to understand our personal role in our local and global communities, recognizing our power to create positive change.

So, how can we cultivate a culture of service in our own minds? Naskar says the answer lies in our everyday actions. Whether it's helping a stranger on the street, volunteering at a local organization, or standing up against systemic injustice, every act of service counts. It's not about the grandeur of the act, but the spirit with which it is done and the ripple it creates.